

HALF SQUARE TRIANGLES 2 AT A TIME

Half-square triangles (HSTs) are a common unit used in quilting. They are made by sewing two triangles together along their longest side to create a square with a diagonal seam. There are many methods for making half-square triangles, but the most common way is to make HSTs in multiples of 2. In this tutorial, I will show you step-by-step how to make half-square triangles - 2 at a time.

Tools Needed:

You need a few basic tools to create your HSTs, including:

- Fabric
- Ruler
- Pencil or fabric marker
- Sewing machine
- Thread
- Rotary cutter
- Cutting mat



Determine the Size of your Fabric Squares

You can make HSTs 2 at a time in any size you like using this formula:

$$\text{The Unfinished Block Size (including Seam Allowances)} \\ + 1/2 \text{ Inch} = \text{Cut Square Size}$$

In the chart below, I've done the math for you. When the resulting square size ended up at a challenging-to-cut number - I rounded up to the next 1/4 or 1/2 inch. This makes the squares easier to cut - and the small amount of extra fabric will be trimmed off at the end of the process anyway.

You can do exactly the same thing if you want to make your HSTs in some other size that's not on the chart. Just use the formula above and round up to the next 1/4 or 1/2 inch and you are ready to cut your starting fabric squares.

Creating HSTs 2 at a time		
Finished Block Size	Unfinished Block Size - (Includes Seam Allowances)	Cut Fabric Squares to this Size
1 Inch	1-1/2 Inches	2 Inches
2 Inches	2-1/2 Inches	3 Inches
3 Inches	3-1/2 Inches	4 Inches
4 Inches	4-1/2 Inches	5 Inches
5 Inches	5-1/2 Inches	6 Inches
6 Inches	6-1/2 Inches	7 Inches
7 Inches	7-1/2 Inches	8 Inches
8 Inches	8-1/2 Inches	9 Inches
9 Inches	9-1/2 Inches	10 inches
10 Inches	10-1/2 Inches	11 Inches
11 Inches	11-1/2 Inches	12 Inches
12 Inches	12-1/2 Inches	13 Inches

Step 1: Cutting your fabric: Determine the size you want your finished block to be (including seam allowances). Cut one square of each of the two fabrics you will be using - in the size indicated on the chart above.

Example: if you want your finished HSTs to be 6-1/2 inches including seam allowances - you will want to cut 2 squares of fabric at 10-1/2 inches each.

Step 2: Layering your fabric: Take your two fabric squares and place them right sides together, making sure that they are lined up evenly. Pin them together to keep them from shifting during sewing. **See Diagram 1**

Step 3: Marking the diagonal line: Using a ruler and a pencil or fabric marker, draw a diagonal line from one corner of the square to the opposite corner, in both directions - creating four triangles. **See Diagram 2**

Step 4: Sewing the seam: Using a 1/4-inch seam allowance, sew a 1/4-inch seam on both sides of the line you marked in Step 3. Sew carefully to make sure that your seam stays straight and even. **See Diagram 3**

Step 5: Stabilizing your fabric before cutting: All of your fabric edges are now on the bias - meaning they will stretch if not handled very carefully. It does help to use spray starch or Best Press on both sides of the fabric square - before you cut the HSTs apart.

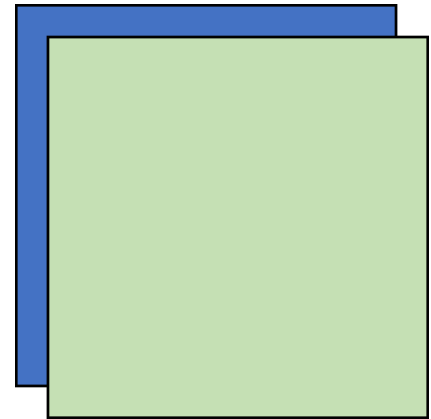


Diagram 1

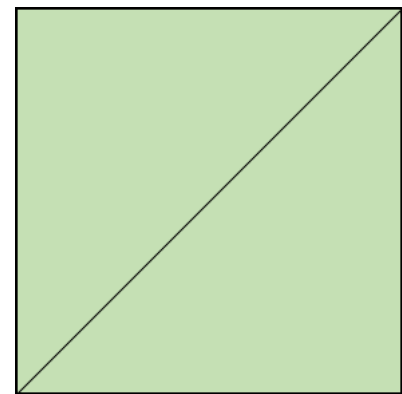


Diagram 2

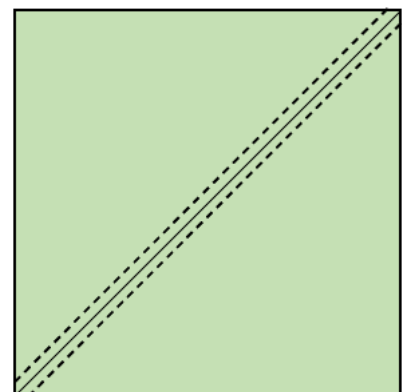


Diagram 3

Step 6: Cutting your fabric square: Using a rotary cutter and a ruler, cut along the diagonal line that you drew in Step 3 to separate the HSTs. You should now have 2 squares made up of two triangles each. **See Diagram 4**

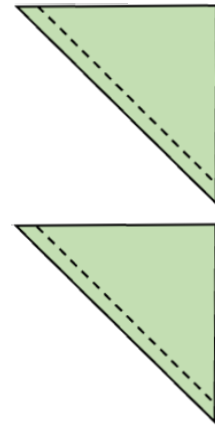


Diagram 4

Step 7: Pressing your HSTs: Open up each of your squares and press them with an iron. Carefully press the seam allowance towards the darker fabric - taking care not to stretch the fabric.

Step 8: Trimming your HSTs: Using a rotary cutter and a ruler, trim each of your squares to the desired finished size of your half-square triangles.

For example, if you want your finished half-square triangles to be 4 inches square, you will need to trim each square to 4.5 inches square.

Once trimmed to the correct size - your 2 Half-Square Triangles are ready to be used in your project. **See Diagram 5**

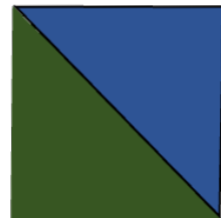
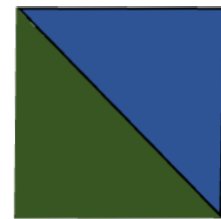


Diagram 5

And that's it! Making half-square triangles - 2 at a time is a great way to quickly create a lot of uniform triangles for your quilting projects. Just remember to measure carefully, sew accurately, and press your seams neatly for the best results.

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