Tips for Beautiful Pieced Blocks

Piecing Notes:

For those of you who struggle with accurate piecing, the keys I have found are:

- **Work on being super accurate when cutting.**
  - Tools:
    - A good, non-warped cutting mat
    - A good rotary cutter with sharp blades
    - Good non-slip rulers

- **Find the scant 1/4” spot on your own sewing machine/presser foot that will give you the perfect width seam.**
  - Tools:
    - 1/4” quilter's presser foot

- **Be consistent with that scant 1/4” seam.**

- **Trim and square each sub-unit so it has square corners and is the right size for its spot in the block. This makes a huge difference in the accuracy of a finished block!**
  - Tools:
    - Same as above – good cutting mat, rotary cutter and appropriate rulers

- **Whenever possible, make the block (or block elements) larger and then trim to the right size.**
  - Pieced blocks for which this works well:

  Two-Patch

  ![Two-Patch](image1)

  Quarter-Square Triangle

  ![Quarter-Square Triangle](image2)

  Four-Patch

  ![Four-Patch](image3)

  Flying Geese

  ![Flying Geese](image4)

  Half-Square Triangle

  ![Half-Square Triangle](image5)

  Square in a Square*

  ![Square in a Square*](image6)

  3-Piece Half-Square Triangle

  ![3-Piece Half-Square Triangle](image7)
*See our tutorial on using this method for Square in a Square blocks:

**Tools**
  * Fit to Be Geese Ruler
  * Creative Grids 6.5” x 12.5” with intersecting 45° lines at the ruler edge or any other ruler thus marked).
  * Creative Grids or Quilter's Select square rulers from 3.5” - 12.5”

**Sewing Note (from a miniatures quilter who shared this with me):**

  * Try sewing more slowly.
    * Some machines have a speed control that can be set for a slower speed. Even if yours doesn't, speed can be controlled with the foot pedal.
    * This seems to be especially helpful when beginning and ending a seam - that time when it always seems to pull to one side making your seam allowance larger or smaller than an actual scant 1/4 inch. This results in a unit or block that does not measure the correct size.

**Pressing Notes:**

Pressing means something different than ironing and does a different job.

  * **Pressing** is an up-and-down motion rather than a side-to-side motion and is meant to press seams in one direction or another and to open seam intersections without distorting the fabric.
  * **Ironing** is used to take out wrinkles.
  * Pressing seams toward the “dark side” is the norm whenever possible.
  * Using Jo Morton's clipping and pressing trick is an awesome way to reduce seam intersection bulk and improve the look of your blocks.
    * You can see her YouTube video at this link: [https://youtu.be/4bpGBAR6FXM](https://youtu.be/4bpGBAR6FXM)

**Squaring Notes:**

  * When I square my blocks, there are times when I have to make a choice between keeping my points/seam allowances and having a true-to-size block.
  * I always choose to keep my points, and then when it comes time to sew the blocks into the quilt top, I "ease in" the fullness of the sides that are greater than the required block size.