



A Part, Sewn Together

As the COVID-19 pandemic moves swiftly around our world, we find ourselves apart when the company of our community would be so helpful and comforting. The act of sewing together otherwise “useless” scraps of fabric to make a new whole can be a meditation in itself: a meditation of making something out of nothing, each stitch a tiny prayer. There is great comfort in being snuggled cozy under a blanket, making something with your hands, and being in the company of family, friends and community, though social distancing limits us from the latter. Before social media, quilting bees were social time: for people of all walks of life, making squares with the materials on hand, bringing them together and making something wonderful.

Here’s the idea: Each of us can start our own remote community quilting bee. While we physically distance ourselves, we can each make the blocks of a quilt from the comfort of our own homes using a common pattern and gathered supplies. We can then display our blocks in our homes, in a window or pinned to a wall while we are quarantined as a reminder of our collective spirit. Then, when we are again able to gather together, we can bring our squares together and make a blanket! This blanket can then be used however you’d like - shared amongst your friends, donated to a local shelter, given as a gift to someone affected by COVID-19 or however you may dream.

A Community Quilting Toolkit

A Project for Any Skill Level! The included pattern is very simple to accommodate any skill level. Feel free to modify the pattern to your skill level and simply use this toolkit as a guide to organizing. The finished quilt is a lap-sized quilt.

How to Organize a Group

Organize a Quilting Bee -

1. Designate a group leader (or leaders) to organize a quilting bee.
2. Gather a group of people via social media, email, phone - friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, anyone! [Click here for a sample invite](#) - keep in mind, for a lap size quilt, you'll need to make 24 blocks total.

Here's some organizing ideas for group sizes:

- If you have fewer than 24 people, divide up the number of squares so some people will make more than one. (See the chart to follow for an easy break-down)
 - If you have more, either divide into multiple quilting bees, make several quilts or make a larger quilt!
 - Everyone can make a blanket! Everyone in your group makes 24 blocks, then divide the number of blocks by the number of people in your group (i.e. 24 blocks divided by 3 people = 8 blocks) and send the sum to your group members (i.e. send 8 blocks to each of the others in your group). Everyone will then have a mix of blocks created by each person and 24 blocks total. You can then sew your own quilt top and keep it as a new heirloom and a marker of this time in your life.
 - *Don't want to coordinate a whole group but still want to participate? Keep reading!*
3. Keep in touch through social media, a private Facebook group, emails, or texts to share your progress.
 4. Share your pictures on social media & tag with #apartsewntogether so we can see our community of quilt blocks come together!

Share the Toolkit and start stitching! This is an entry level quilt project that can be done by hand with simple materials, most can be found in your own household. Let the sewing begin!

Don't want to coordinate a group? Don't have enough people or blocks for a full quilt?

If you don't have enough people or blocks, simply use a 11.5" piece of fabric as a block when you lay out your quilt. Or, if you just want to make one block, you can e-mail us at hello@snowshoeandco.com and we'll share our mailing address so you can send it to us when you're ready and we'll add it to a community blanket!

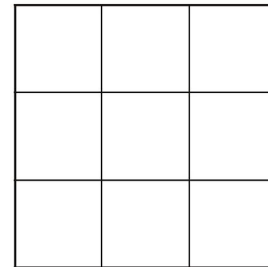
How to Make your Blocks

The process for making blocks is outlined in [Part One](#). This pattern makes a lap sized quilt made of 24 square [blocks](#) total.

Delegate the Blocks

Number of People in your quilting bee	Number of blocks per person
2	12
3	8
4	6
6	4
8	3
12	2

Each block is made of 9 [squares](#) of scrap fabric and this is what each finished block will look like:



Nine-Patch

How to Make your Quilt

Once we can safely gather again, **celebrate with a quilting bee!** Gather with all of the quilters in your community quilt group and follow the directions in [Part Two](#) of the toolkit to complete your quilt.

Ideas on the next life of your blanket

Give, gift, share the finished blanket as a symbol of our strength in working together, of making something beautiful together, despite being apart.

- Share with a family that suffered a loss from COVID-19
- Give to a new mom or family in your community
- Donate to a homeless shelter
- Share within your friend group, pass it back and forth throughout time as a momentum from this time together-apart and as a reminder of what we can make in challenging times

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Part One: Making the blocks

Materials to Gather

Woven fabric

You will need 9 pieces of 4.25" squares per block. Gather material from old clothing, old hand towels, anything you want! Avoid stretchy and knit materials.

Needle

Any sharp needle will do - do you have a little "emergency" sewing kit laying around? That will work!

Thread

Again, anything will work, but ideally a spool of cotton thread. The color doesn't matter, it will be hidden on the inside of your finished quilt.

Ruler

You'll need to measure your pieces of fabric to 4.25" square. If you don't have a ruler, you can measure 4.25" by folding an 8.5"x11" piece of paper in half the "hotdog" way!

Scissors

Sharp scissors will be helpful, but if you don't have scissors, you can also "rip" woven fabric - just notch a small notch where you want to rip and then carefully but with some force tug it apart. Add some extra distance between your next rip to accommodate some fraying that happens when you rip. But really, use scissors if you've got em!

Chalk, Pencil or Pen

You'll use this to mark your seam allowance if you want - it might make it easier! Ideally use chalk, as it washes away, but you can use a pencil or pen.

Use what you have! It doesn't have to be perfect to be wonderful.

If you want to use a sewing machine to piece your blocks, by all means! There is NO one way to make a community quilt. In fact, it's the simple variations that make these blankets so special.

Step-by-step: Making the Block

This pattern makes a lap size quilt, but **you can make any pattern you'd like**. To make a lap size quilt, you will collectively need to make 24 square [blocks](#) total. Each block is made of 9 [squares](#) of scrap fabric and will measure 11.5".

1. Cut 9 x 4.25" squares of fabric for each block. Using a ruler (if you have one) gently mark with chalk or a pencil or pen the backside of your blocks a ¼" from each edge to help you see your seam allowance.
2. Lay the pieces out into the pattern you'd like, in a 3 by 3 grid with the pieces facing up. Not all fabric will have a "front" and a "back", but most will!
3. Cut one length of thread that is as long as your arm-span. Tie a knot in one end and thread the other end through your needle.
4. Starting with the left and middle pieces of a row, stack them together with their right sides facing each other. Then, using your threaded needle, start by pushing the needle through both pieces of fabric on the bottom right corner, ¼" from the edge of the fabric, gently pulling until the knot secures itself against the fabric. Then continue to move the needle in and out of the fabric, creating a running stitch from the bottom to the top of your pieces of fabric - this creates a seam. Once you've reached the top of your seam, tie a small knot and trim the thread. Finger press the seams open: simply flip the fabric to the backside, open the seam up, and press the length of it with your thumbnail to flatten your seams flat.
5. Next, lay the right square to the middle square with the right sides facing each other. Stitch them together in the same way you stitched the previous two pieces. When you're done, you'll have a row of three pieces sewn together! Set aside. Repeat with the remaining two rows.
6. Once all of your rows are sewn, sew the remaining rows together in the same manner. Start with the top and middle row, stack them together with their right sides facing each other. Stitch along the long edge, lining up the blocks and using a ¼" seam allowance. Then, sew the bottom row onto the middle row in the same manner.
7. When your block or blocks are done, hang them in your window as a daily reminder to yourself that **you are not alone, that you made something with your hands, with your friends, with others!** Make as many as you want, organize another quilt group, share a picture with your friends, share your finished block on social media with tag **#apartsewntogether** and behind the scenes with tag **#quarantinequilting**

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Part Two: Making the Quilt

Materials to Gather

This will depend on the style of quilting you choose, but most basically, you will need a needle and thread, pins, safety pins, and sharp scissors. If you choose to do a tie quilt, you will also need yarn and a heavy duty needle.

Step-by-Step: Finishing the Quilt

1. Gather together and bring your quilt blocks. Lay them out on the floor and decide on a block layout.
2. Once you have the layout decided, stack the columns in order from bottom to top and number the columns. This will help you to keep them in order when you begin sewing.
3. Sew blocks together from bottom to top, with right sides facing each other. Iron the seams to either lay open or lay flat towards the same direction
4. Sew the columns together, lining up the blocks in each column and pinning in place before stitching. Start by laying column 1 on your work surface right side up. Lay column 2 on top of it, right side down. Line everything up as well as you can, and then pin. Sew all the columns until all the columns are sewn together, working from one side to the other.
 - a. If you're machine sewing, secure the top corner in your sewing machine and pile the rest of the column in your lap to avoid the fabric adjusting. Avoid fabric hanging off the table as it can cause serious pulling making your sewing very crooked and putting extra pressure in your machine. Also, make sure you're not letting the sewn fabric pile up behind the machine and the fabric that's feeding through is supported well. If you feel any tugging, stop sewing and adjust the fabric.
5. Make a Quilt Sandwich:
 - a. Bottom layer: quilt back (a flat sheet in the size of your quilt should work!)
 - b. Middle layer: batting - choose an old cotton or wool blanket or buy new batting with a slightly larger dimension than your anticipated finished quilt. Use batting that is slightly larger than your finished dimension, so that you can trim any excess and accommodate any shifting that happens during the quilting process.
 - c. Top layer: finished sewn blocks.
6. Assembly
 - a. Choose a large spot on your floor - hardwood or tile is better than carpet. Then clean your floor! This is very important, especially if you're using a white backing.

- b. Iron your backing and lay it out - smooth it out so you have no creases or bumps. Sometimes it helps to use tape around the edge of the backing so it doesn't wrinkle when you are basting.
- c. On top of this, lay out your batting. Smooth it out as well, and make sure it's centered on your backing.
- d. Now, lay your quilt top down and make sure everything is centered and smooth it out. The best way to smooth it out is to get down on your hands and knees. You can either go end-to-end or from the middle out. Do what works best for you - just be sure to be very thorough. Once it's smoothed out it's time to pin it. Use safety pins to pin through all three layers of the quilt. Ideally, leave a border of backing and batting that is evenly distributed around your quilt top. This will allow for minor adjustments as you are quilting.

7. Sewing

- a. Choose a type of quilting to finish your quilt and connect the three layers of your quilt:
 - **Tie quilting:** RECOMMENDED for first time quilters! Use a heavy-duty needle and yarn to tie knots at even spacing and secure the layers together.
 - **Machine quilting:** If you decide to machine quilt, we highly recommend using a walking foot. A walking foot works like the feed dogs under the needle that pull the fabric through, so you get extra flattening pulling power which helps prevent the stitches from getting strained and tiny, and keeps your fabric from puckering.
 - **Hand quilting:** Use a thread and needle (ideally a thicker thread to show stitches) to stitch through all three layers.
- b. **For tie quilting:** Start at the center and work your way to the outside radially, using a heavy duty needle threaded with yarn to tie through all three layers of your quilt. Push the needle from the front of the quilt to the back through all three layers, then push it back to the front. Tie securely with a square knot and trim the yarn to create a small tassel. Work across your whole quilt until it is completely secured.
- c. **For machine and hand quilting:** Start at the center and stitch a vertical row from the bottom to the top of the quilt. Work out in one direction until you reach the outside edge, with rows of parallel stitches, spacing the rows of stitches to follow your seams may be the simplest approach. Once you reach the edge, turn the quilt and work from the center to the other edge.

8. Finishing

- a. Trim your quilt so that all the layers are squared.
- b. Add binding - Here is a great tutorial on [how to sew a binding on a quilt!](#)
- c. Your quilt is complete!

Resources

Sample Message

Use this sample message to organize your group:

A Part Sewn Together Quilting Bee Sign Up

Hosted by *YOUR NAME HERE!*

Link to the Toolkit Doc with all the details:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lI9hFoIEF2jaMwHlzxthYKEwXkN8KftGM8iA3lRXHA/edit?fbclid=IwAR2UF-BXugMSdw1Nafnr_VfonL6N71OE6wHzfWMVw5EQgq-3T9UQowS5Vsk

One group can include up to 24 people to make 24 squares to make a lap size quilt. If we have fewer people, we will divide up the number of squares so some people will make more than one. If we have more, we could either divide into multiple groups or we could make a larger quilt.

1. Your Name - Your Email
2. Group member name - email
3.

Glossary of Quilting Terms

Backing

The backing is the bottom layer of the quilt, typically made of one solid piece of fabric. A flat sheet works well for this!

Batting

The batting is the middle layer of a quilt - can be made from cotton, polyester or wool. Typically bought according to the size of the quilt. You can also use an old blanket for this layer!

Binding

The binding is the edging of a quilt that encases the raw edges and is the last piece applied to your finished quilt.

Blocks

Blocks are a piece of fabric made from sewing smaller pieces of fabric together.

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Piecing

Sewing together pieces of fabric to form the top layer of the quilt, typically done in blocks.

Quilt top

Pieced fabric, typically put together in blocks and then sewn into one large piece.

Quilting

The final process of sewing through multiple layers of fabric to create one thick layer - typically involves three parts: cloth top, batting middle, cloth bottom.

Running stitch

The running stitch or straight stitch is the basic stitch in hand-sewing. The stitch is worked by passing the needle in and out of the fabric. The needle is always pushed through both layers of cloth starting on the side it is on and ending on the other side.

Seam allowance

The standard seam allowance for quilting is 1/4", which is the measurement between your stitches and the edge of the fabric. Sewing with a consistent seam allowance helps to keep the final measurements consistent and squared.

Square

Smaller pieces of fabric that are sewn together to make a larger, square piece of fabric. In this case, we will be sewing together 9 small blocks to make one large square. A quilt top is made up of these blocks sewn together.

General Quilting Help

Quilting Terms: <https://www.accuquilt.com/blog/resources/quilting-terms/>

Quilt Size Chart:

<http://www.allpeoplequilt.com/sites/allpeoplequilt.com/files/uploads/pdfs/QuiltSizeCharts.pdf>

For Finishing your Quilt

Binding Tutorial: <https://suzyquilts.com/how-to-sew-binding-on-a-quilt/>

Note from the Authors

Please note, this pattern was crafted by the folks at The Perennial Homestead with reference to previous experience, tutorials online and quilting books. We will continue to update based on feedback we receive from you, our community!

We are not making a profit from the distribution of this tutorial. It was created with the simple intention of helping people feel connected at a time of great disconnect. We hope you find this guide useful for a starting point, but also encourage you to explore available resources in your community, online and at the library to create your best community quilt possible! This is a launch pad, a starting point, a link between people. Love to you all!

Have questions? Send us a note at hello@theperennialhomestead.com

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