

I've had several requests and questions on how I put the "a little help from my friends" string quilt together, so I decided to make up a quick tutorial on it for everyone.



(click on the photo to see the larger view on flickr)

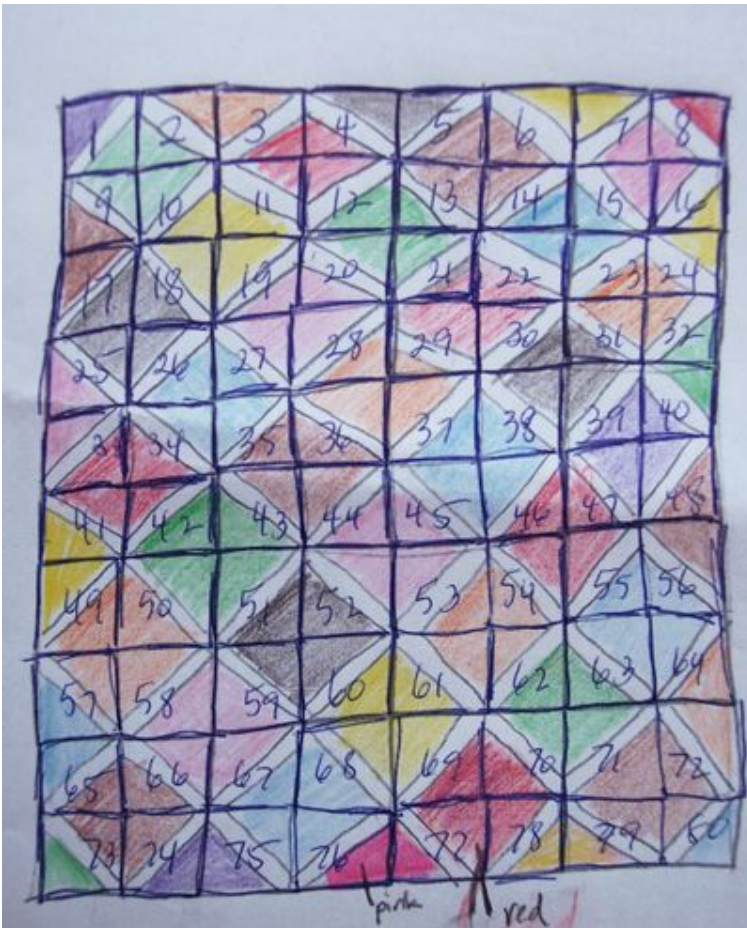
This is a shot of the quilt top you will end up with. It consists of 80 blocks total, 8 across and 10 down, 48X60.

First, cut your scraps into strips, making random widths and sort by color. I used 9 colors. Yellow, red, orange, pink, brown, black, blue, purple, and green. If you want to use different colors, just substitute your color choices instead of what I used. (I cut up way too much fabric and have a ton left, but if you don't cut enough, you can always cut more.)

Second, cut 80 pieces of printer paper to 6.5 inch squares. (A scrap booking tool that comes in very handy for this is the [fiskars 12 inch portable paper trimmer](#).)

Next, cut 80 1.5 inch wide strips of a solid kona cotton (I used white) 10 inches long.

Following the handwritten :) sketch I drew here:



start making your string blocks (they are numbered) and colored.

To do this, first pin down the white fabric down the center of the paper block diagonally



and then lay your fabric strips down on each side to figure out your placement.



Now, starting in the center, with the scrap strip next to the white strip on one side, sew your scrap strip on to the side of the center strip of white with a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam (using a small stitch length like 1.5 or so instead of the normal 3. this will help to tear the paper off when you are done). Make sure you have the right sides of the fabric facing each other.



Then press the strips open. (if you do this after sewing each strip on, your block will be much nicer!)



Continue sewing each strip onto the previous one until that side of the paper is completely covered.



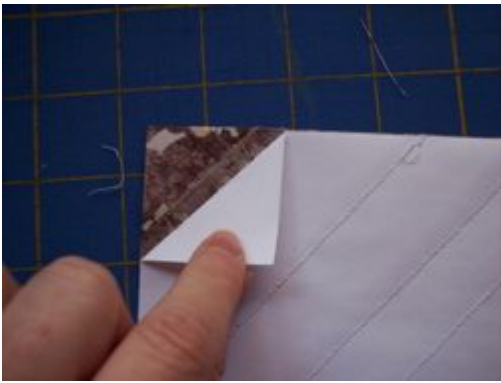
Then repeat with the other side.

Once you have all your strips sewn and have pressed the last strip open (I used 4-5 strips on each side generally), turn your block over and use the paper as a guide to trim away the excess fabric.



As you make all your blocks according to the color in the sketch, it may be helpful to number them on the back for easier placement later. (especially if you have an attack cat that likes to take them and play with them!)

Once all your blocks are made and trimmed, start tearing the paper off the backs of the blocks by folding the paper back onto the seams and tearing it like you are tearing a check out of your checkbook.



Now, take a light starch and iron each block to reduce stretching as you sew.



Last, I sewed the rows of blocks together and then sewed the rows together to make the quilt top. You could also do the same thing by sewing the column blocks together first, then sewing the columns together. The choice is yours!
Tada, your quilt top is done!!