

Kaleidoscope Pinwheels

Workshop on September 16, 2010 - Rose Remund

The Kaleidoscope Pinwheel quilt uses only two fabrics; it is composed of 9" square blocks (no templates). It is a highly addictive technique as no two blocks are ever the same and every one is a surprise, so that repetition-averse quilters never get bored with it.

The main fabric should be a busy, medium-to-large-scale novelty or floral print with good contrast, colors you like, a definite visible background and a feeling of movement; i.e., a pattern with varied, multi-directional elements rather than a static line or grid effect. The more varied the components of the print, the more different the blocks will be.

Check your chosen print carefully to determine the vertical design repeat. Measure along the selvage from any easily recognizable point in the design to the next identically placed point. For a wall hanging, a 12" repeat is ideal, providing good variety with minimum waste and moderate yardage requirements. The bigger the repeat, the more blocks you get, and the more variety.

For one set of blocks, you need **eight design repeats**. I like to buy extra fabric for wide borders to show what the original print looks like (you can't tell from the blocks!), so **figure about ten repeats total**. That means, for a 12" repeat, you will need **3½ to 4 yards** of the main print, depending on whether the borders can be cut crosswise or not. This will yield 16 blocks plus nice wide borders (approximately 48" square). If you want to make a bigger quilt, purchase twice as much fabric. I have purchased 10-11 yards of fabric to make twin-size quilts. That way I can use the main fabric on the borders and have some for the back of the quilt, too.

The contrast fabric for the small pinwheels should read as a textured solid but actually have some pattern; true solids deaden the whirly design too much. Make sure it is high contrast to all parts of your print, to avoid muting the double pinwheel effect. Small strips and polka dots also work well, as do small allover prints. You will need only ¾ yard for a wall hanging, 1 yard for a bed quilt.

You do not need to wash your fabrics (although I do). The sizing helps cutting accuracy. Decorator chintz and crisp sateens also work really well. But please stick to **100% cotton**.

SO THE REQUIRED SUPPLIES ARE:

- 10 design repeats of main print (3½ to 4 yards)(more if you want to make a bigger quilt)
- ¾ to 1 yard of contrast fabric (for pinwheels)
- rotary cutter with 6"x24" quilt ruler
- 24" or larger rotary mat
- heavy thread in a high contrast color to secure layers for cutting, & a large-eye hand needle
- sewing machine with ¼" foot (straight stitch throatplate & seam guide are helpful too)
- thread for piecing
- scissors, seam ripper, pins
- optional: 9½" square quilt ruler

Questions: Call Rose Remund