



Spiral Nebula Lap or Wall Quilt

Pattern with step-by-step pictures
to show you how to make this easy quilt
by Helen Howes

Spiral Nebula Quilt

Easy quilt from eight
Fat Quarters
plus one metre...



You will need

One pack of eight fat quarters of
plain fabrics
plus one metre of the contrast fabric
Fat quarters make the blocks, and the binding
Finished size approximately 48 by 48 inches (122 by 122 cm)

Wadding and backing about 52 x 52 inches, or a little bigger.
Use a good quality wadding, preferably a natural fibre, for best results

Cutter with a nice new blade, mat, and a square ruler

Sewing machine - nothing fancy required, with a regular foot for piecing and
a walking foot for quilting. Do not use the "quarter-inch" foot with a blade for
this type of curved piecing

Threads to match for piecing and perhaps a fancy thread for quilting
Scissors, pins etc.

Designed by Helen Howes, all images and text © 2021
www.helenhowestextiles.co.uk

I originally made this from Oakshott fabric, sadly no longer available. You
may need to increase quantities, as these fabrics were extra-wide.

Feel free to use these blocks for your own projects or for charity quilts -
because they are trimmed they work well for multi-maker projects..

A credit is nice...

Start by making Spiral Nebula blocks

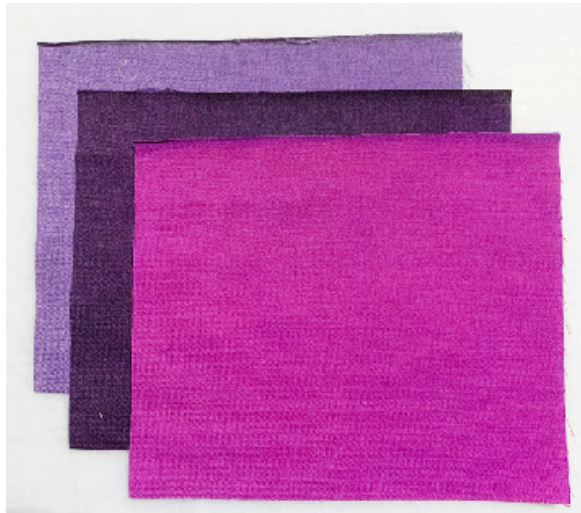
From each of your eight fat quarters, cut nine pieces 6 by 5 inches. This will give you seventy-two pieces for the blocks. Reserve the rest for binding.

From the contrast fabric, cut thirty pieces 6 by 5 inches. You will have a total of one hundred and two pieces

Arrange these into sets of three varying the colours in each set.

Distribute the contrast fabric throughout

When making these blocks, as plain fabric is double-sided, be careful to keep everything the right way up and the right way round - it really helps to work with the mat next to your machine and to press each block only when it is sewn together. Make and check the first set of three blocks but do not trim the rest until you are ready to assemble the quilt top



1

Lay the first three pieces on your mat, exactly on top of each other and Right Sides Up

Cut twice with a gentle curve from bottom to top, and making a gentle swirl shape as shown - do not attempt a



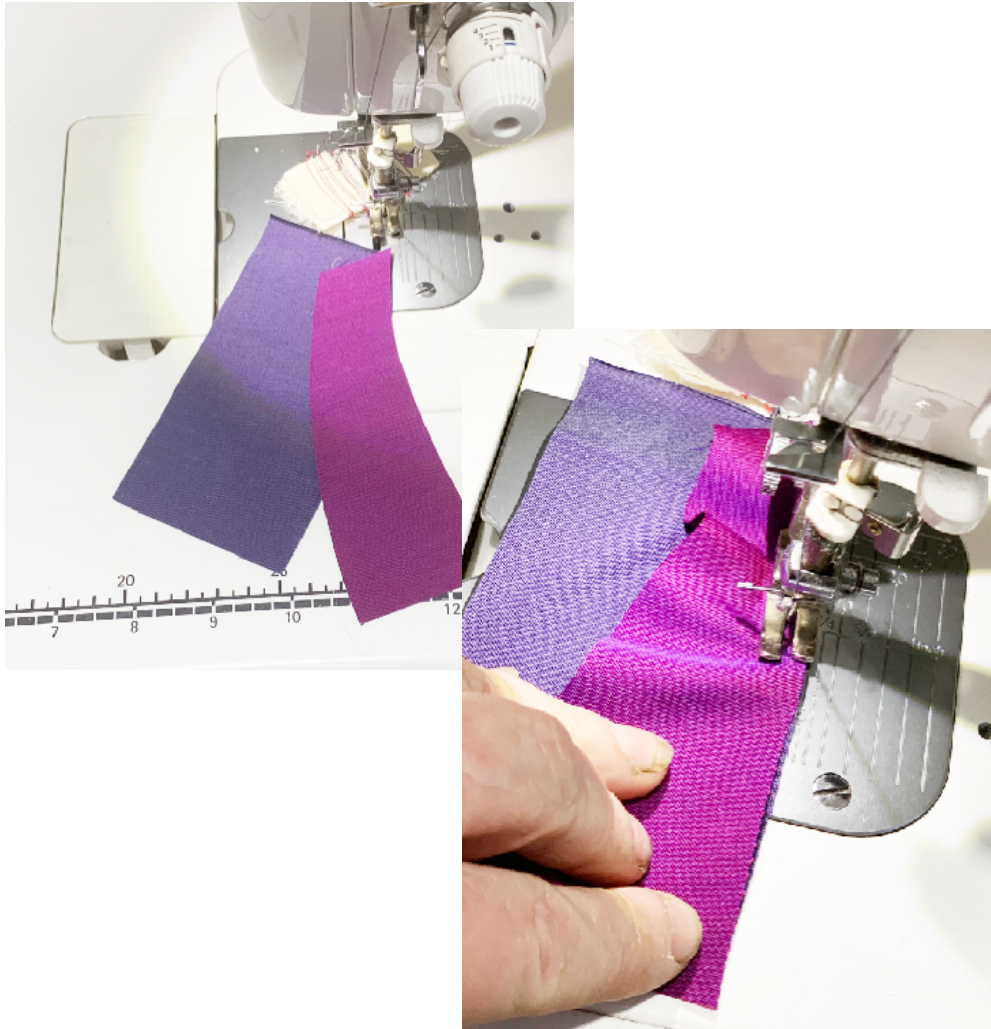
more complex curve, it will make you unhappy when you come to sew...

Re-arrange the pieces

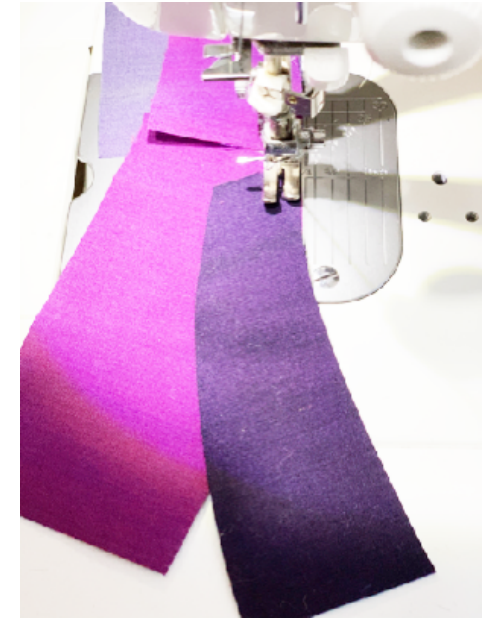
so that you have three blocks with alternating colours, like so...

Pick up the first two pieces from the left side of the top block

Put them Right Sides Together and sew, with a 1/4 inch seam. They won't match beyond the first 1/2 inch, so align the edges as you go, gently making the top piece follow the edge of the lower piece. They do not need pinning and will sew together neatly if you are gentle...



When you reach the bottom, pick up the first two pieces from the second block and carry on sewing without cutting the thread.



This is called Chain Piecing and is a useful skill for all sorts of reasons.

Repeat with the first two pieces from block three, then snip off the top pair, go back up to the top and sew the third piece onto each block in turn...

Press (towards the darker colour if you have a lot of contrast, otherwise in one direction.)

Do NOT press seams open.

You now have three blocks ready to trim.

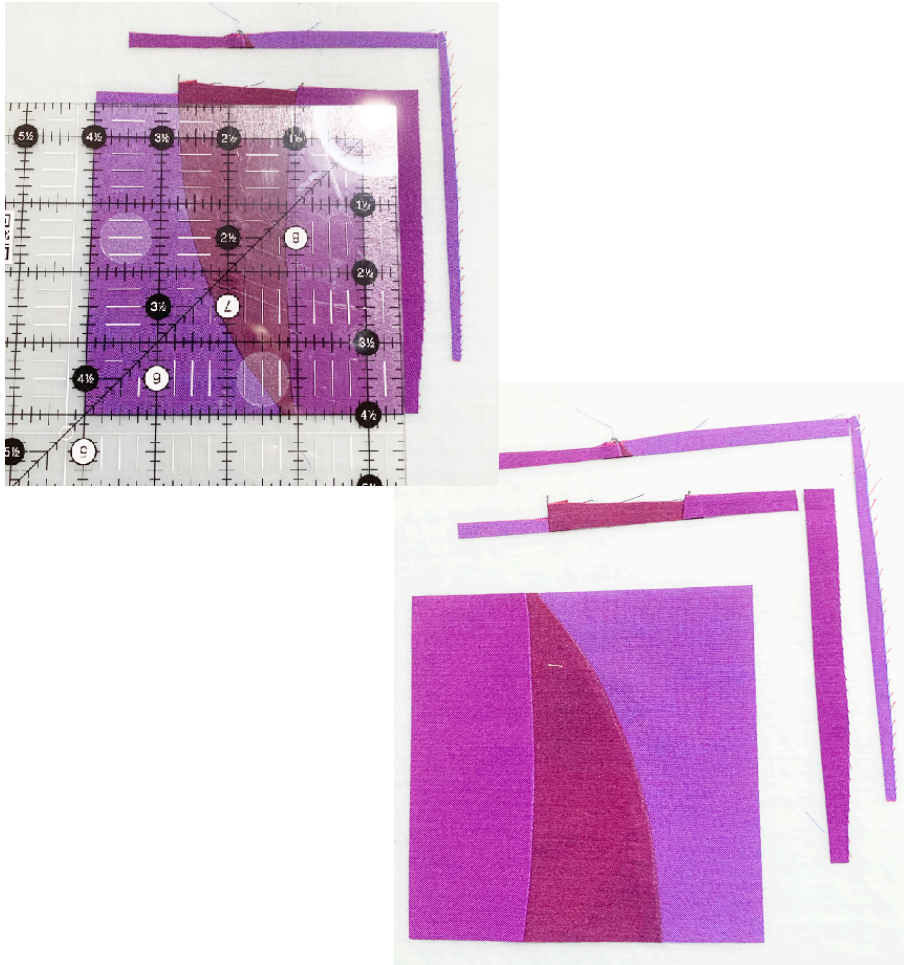
Check the size at this point - if the blocks will not trim to 4-1/2 inches you need to consider your seam allowances, they may be too big

Make thirty-three more sets of three, for a total of 102 blocks...

Press everything really nicely

Trim your blocks to 4-1/2 inches - lay each well-pressed block on the mat right side up and trim two sides making sure you have the 4-1/2 inch lines on your ruler inside the remaining sides, then turn the block round and trim to exactly 4-1/2 inches. This stage is essential, or your blocks will not join together accurately and will look awful...

You have two "spares" just in case...



Lay your blocks out in ten rows of ten arranging them as shown on the cover or as you will, and sew the blocks into their rows right sides together.

Distribute the colours fairly evenly.

You will note that you have two blocks left over - this is deliberate, as at least one will "fail" - or you can use them in the binding...

Press the seams alternate ways in each row and then pin the rows before sewing together, matching the block corners nicely

Layer the backing, wadding and the nicely-pressed quilt top together and pin firmly with lots of pins.

Quilt all over in both directions - I quilted with my walking foot. I started along the block edges then made two wobbly lines through each block in each direction - I like to use a pretty variegated thread for this. Don't forget that you will see the back on your lap quilt, so match the threads there too. When all is quilted, trim the excess wadding and backing level with the edges of the blocks



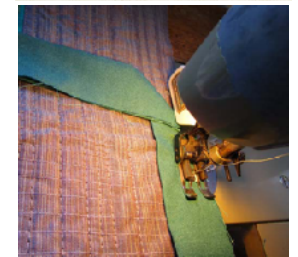
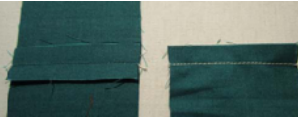


Bind your quilt

Cut 2-1/2 inch strips from the remaining fabric

Sew pieces end to end to make enough binding, plus about six inches and press the seams open.

Press the binding in half, Right Side Out all along the length.

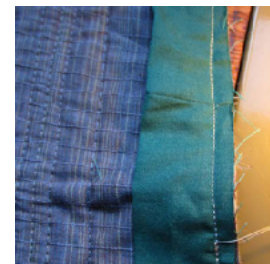
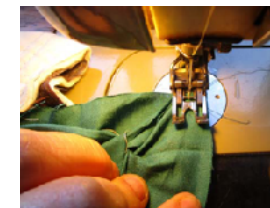


Trim the edges of your quilt

Starting in the middle of a side, put the raw edges of the binding exactly level with the edge of the quilt and, leaving a 6-inch tail, sew along 1/4 inch from the edge. If you have a walking foot, you need it here.

When you get to the corner, stop 1/4 inch from the edge and back-stitch. Remove the work...

Fold the binding away from the corner like so, then down towards the next side, making a neat fold exactly on the edge of the quilt



Starting right at the corner and back-stitching for strength, sew along edge two.

Repeat for all four corners and edges.

When you get to about 6 inches from the start, back-stitch and remove the work. Make a 1/4 inch pleat and pin.

Overlap the raw ends of the binding and cut them off together. Discard the oddments. Undo the pleat. Sew the ends of the binding right sides together with a 1/4 inch seam and finger-press the seam open.

Re-fold the binding and sew across the last part overlapping the stitching.

Turn the binding to the back of the quilt; pin firmly and sew down with a slip-stitch to finish - you will find the corners make a neat mitre as you go..

To bind all by machine, do everything as above but sew the binding onto the back first, then finish by pinning and machine stitching down on the front - perhaps with a fancy stitch?

If you plan to hang the quilt, add a sleeve, see www.modernartquilters.co.uk for a tutorial