



Quilt-As-You-Go

Exploring different methods
to piece and quilt all at the same time.



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What is Quilt-As-You-Go?

Quilt-As-You-Go, commonly referred by the abbreviation **QAYG**, generally refers to a technique where the piecing and quilting are all done at the same time.

Quilt-As-You-Go
=
QAYG

QAYG methods can basically be broken down into 2 main categories;

1. **Backing fabric and batting are included in the process from the beginning.**
2. **Backing is added later after the blocks and batting have been quilted.**

Why Use Quilt-As-You-Go?

QAYG can be a good choice for different types of quilting projects and for different reasons.

- 1. It can speed up the process for completing small projects by allowing you to piece and quilt all at the same time.**
- 2. It can be especially helpful on large quilts because it allows you to machine quilt in smaller units or sections making it easier to maneuver and handle bigger projects.**
- 3. QAYG can provide an opportunity to do more dense quilting.**

The biggest challenge might actually be deciding ahead of time if you want to quilt-as-you-go. Most methods require making the decision at the start of a project. Although, some allow for deciding later in the process. Think it through from the beginning.

QAYG Techniques

I was both surprised and overwhelmed by the number of QAYG tutorials and videos I found when I started my research.

I also discovered that each tutorial had a slightly different way of doing things.

All these variations made it hard to narrow things down for my presentation.

In the end, I settled on 5 methods that I thought offered the most potential.

The presentation isn't meant to be a comprehensive tutorial on the methods but rather an overview so you will have enough information to decide if or which QAYG method might work for you.

Techniques:

- 1. Stitch and Flip**
- 2. Block by Block without Joining Strips**
- 3. Block by Block with Joining Strips**
- 4. Row by Row or Panel by Panel without Joining Strips**
- 5. Self Binding**

1: *Stitch and Flip*

Stitch and Flip is probably the most recognized technique. The process is very similar to foundation piecing but instead of using a fabric foundation you piece directly onto the batting. It's a common method that works well for making simple quilted projects like pot holders, mug rugs, placemats, and table runners.



1: *Stitch and Flip Basics*

Method Basics:

Stitch and Flip basically involves sewing two fabric pieces together while also sewing through the batting (and sometimes backing). Then the top piece is flipped open, pressed and the next piece is added. Pieces continue to be added until the block/project is complete.

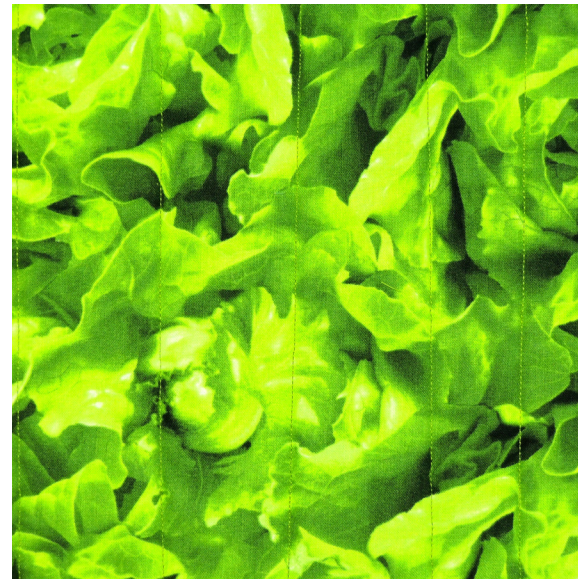
It's perfect for side by side strip piecing or building blocks that start in the center and build outward like a log cabin.



1 : *Stitch and Flip with Backing*

Stitch and Flip can be done with or without the backing fabric in place. It will primarily depend on what type of piecing you are doing and whether you care about how the back looks.

When the piecing starts and ends off the edge like side by side strip piecing, then the backing fabric can be included and the only thing that will show on the back is each seam line running from edge to edge.



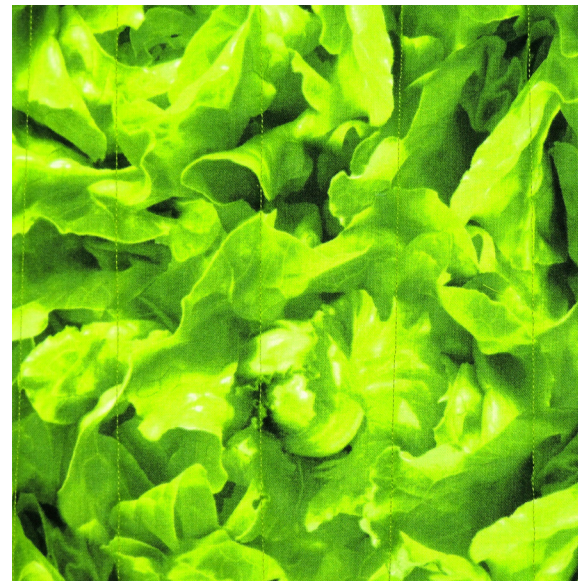
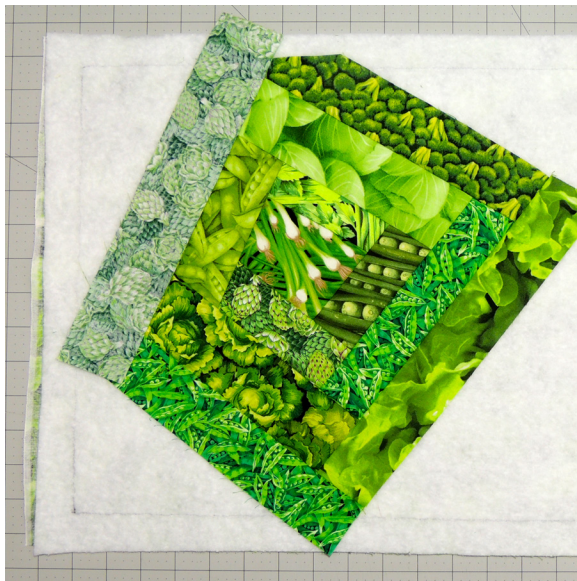
This is a good tutorial for QAYG placemats

<http://www.allpeoplequilt.com/quilt-patterns/table-runners/quilt-you-go-place-mat-pattern>

1 : *Stitch and Flip with or without Backing*

Stitch and Flip also works well with piecing that starts in the center and builds outward. A log cabin block is a good example.

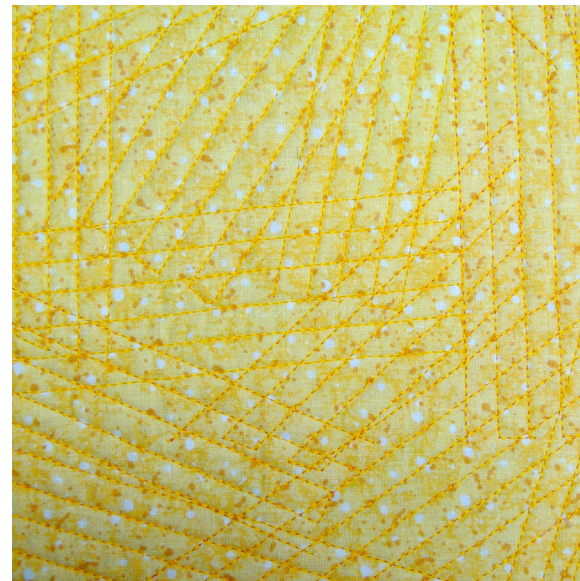
As you piece outward, the stitching lines that show on the back will cross over on the ends. If the backing fabric is a busy print, this stitching probably won't show up that much. It all depends on how much piecing is involved and whether it matters how the back looks. If you don't want this look on the back, then piece without the backing and add it later.



1 : *Stitch and Flip without Backing*

One place where you may *not* want to include the backing is when additional quilting lines are being added as each piece is sewn to the top. The additional quilting lines will cross over each other and create a much messier looking back.

This type of QAYG is great for making pillow tops and panels for bags or other small projects where the back is never seen.



This is the tutorial used for the above sample:

<https://heyletsmakestuff.com/bloomin-quilt-as-you-go-panel-tutorial/>

1 : *Stitch and Flip Pros / Cons / Tips*

PROS:

Stitch and Flip is quick and very easy for small projects.

It's a good way to use up small pieces of batting.

CONS:

Stitch and Flip with the backing included is harder to handle on large projects.

TIPS:

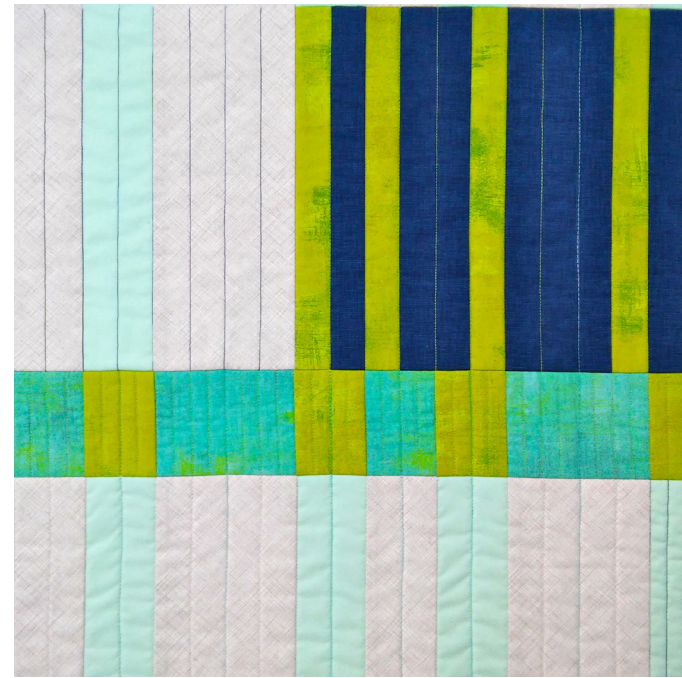
Use a walking foot.

Cut the batting and backing oversize by approx. 1". The quilting tends to draw up the dimensions so it's best to allow for this and trim to size afterwards.

It's can be helpful to draw an outline of the area to be covered with fabric on the batting so each piece of fabric added is large enough to cover the area.

2: QAYG without Joining Strips

Another way to QAYG is to quilt blocks or sections individually. Once the blocks or sections are quilted they are joined together to make the quilt top. Then the top is layered with the backing fabric and minimal quilting lines are added to hold the layers together.



This works well to join blocks made using the Stitch and Flip method. Good choices are string blocks or long sections of string piecing.

It also works well for quilts constructed from panels or sections.

2: QAYG without Joining Strips

Method Basics:

Once the blocks or sections are pieced and quilted, they are sewn together into a quilt top just as you would normally do. There will be added bulk in the seams because of the batting so the seams will be thicker.

1. Tapper the ends of seams to a point to reduce bulk.
2. Steam press seams open. Use a pressing cloth.
3. Layer and baste the backing and add minimal quilting to secure the backing. Typically this is done by stitching along either side of the major seams. Darker or busy prints work best for backing to avoid seams showing through.



This is a good tutorial for a chevron strip quilt without sashing:

<https://maurencracknellhandmade.blogspot.com/2013/09/a-herringbone-quilt-tutorial.html>

2: Without Joining Strips Pros / Cons / Tips

PROS:

It's easier to machine quilt smaller units like blocks or sections.

It's a good way to use up small pieces or strips of batting.

CONS:

It can be harder to match seams because of the extra bulk.

The extra bulk from the batting in the seams can create ridges on the back side.

The seams can show through the backing fabric.

TIPS:

Use low loft batting to decrease the bulk in the seams.

Steam press the seams open to get them as flat as possible.

Use a busy, darker print for the backing to minimize the ridges and show through.

Consider wider 3/8" seams to join the blocks. This makes the top fabric more secure within the seam. Plus, when quilting lines are added down both sides of the seam, it's easier to catch and flatten the batting.

3: *Block by Block with Joining Strips*

When you join quilted blocks directly to each other as shown in the previous method you end up with added bulk in the seams due to the batting. One way to eliminate this bulk is to use joining strips between the blocks. When joining strips are used the batting will be nice and flat. No bulk.

Standard joining strip finish at 1/2" so that it covers the seam allowance. However, joining strips can be any width you want. Plus they can be made to appear as sashing or made to blend into the block.



standard 1/2" join

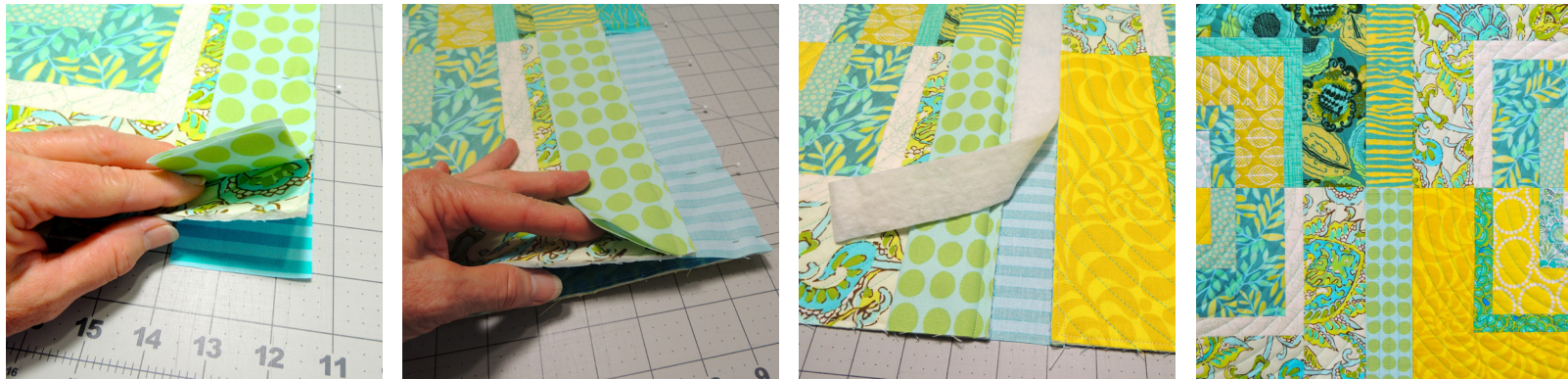


wide 2" join camouflaged

3: Block by Block with Joining Strips

Method Basics For Wide Joining Strips:

1. Cut the front and back joining strips based on the desired width. (see links)
2. Attach both strips to the front and back of one block with 1/4" seam.
3. Press the backing strip out and align it with the back of the next block. Sew.
4. Open up the sewn blocks and press.
5. If using a wide joining strip, insert a piece of batting to nicely fill the gap.
6. Fold over the front joining strip and stitch in place by hand or machine.
7. Add additional quilting to secure the batting in place.



These are two good tutorials for both wide and narrow joining strips. They differ in the cut strip width for the narrow joining strips so try both to see what works best for you.

<http://www.thequiltingedge.com/p/tutorials.html>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_bot4EBj8c

3: *With Joining Strips Pros / Cons / Tips*

PROS:

Works well for large projects.

Seams are nice and flat because there is no batting in the seam allowance.

It's easier to machine quilt smaller units like blocks or sections.

CONS:

Not all designs look good with sashing between the blocks.

But there are ways to camouflage the sashing so it appears to be part of the block.

TIPS:

Before joining blocks, sew 1/8" around the edge of trimmed block to secure quilting.

When adding joining strips, especially narrow strips, check your 1/4" seam to be sure the seams butt together and there is no gap in the batting.

There are many different tutorials available. The cut width of strips varies.

Some require pressing an edge under while others use a double layer folded over.

This double fold uses more fabric but creates a much cleaner edge to stitch down and is easier to do. Read several and see which one makes sense for you.

4: Row by Row

Another QAYG technique that works well for larger quilts is what I call Row by Row. It also works for quilts made from panels rather than blocks. There are no bulky seams from the batting AND it doesn't use joining strips.



4: Row by Row

Method Basics For Row by Row:

1. Sew blocks as usual and piece together into rows. *Do not* sew rows together.
2. Layer the first row with batting and backing and quilt. Include 2" extra backing and batting all around so you have something to hold on to while quilting.
3. Trim the batting / backing flush along the edge where next row will be joined.
4. Attach the next row and the backing with 1/4" seam. Press top and backing open.
5. Fold the top back and position a piece of batting between the layers making sure it butts up against the batting from the first row.
6. Fold the top back over the batting, fuse and continue quilting.
7. Repeat the process until the top is done. The quilt grows row by row.



This is the tutorial I used for the row by row method:

<https://www.candiedfabrics.com/2014/01/15/video-tutorial-quilt-as-go-no-sashing/>

4: Row by Row Pros / Cons / Tips

PROS:

There is never more than a single block width within the throat space of the machine so it's easier to maneuver.

There's no need to piece the backing or deal with large pieces of fabric.

It's easy to create a two sided quilt.

CONS:

The quilting needs to cross over the row seams to insure the batting is secured where it butts together so quilting designs should be chosen accordingly.

TIPS:

Low loft *fusible* batting is very helpful. Or at least use spray basting

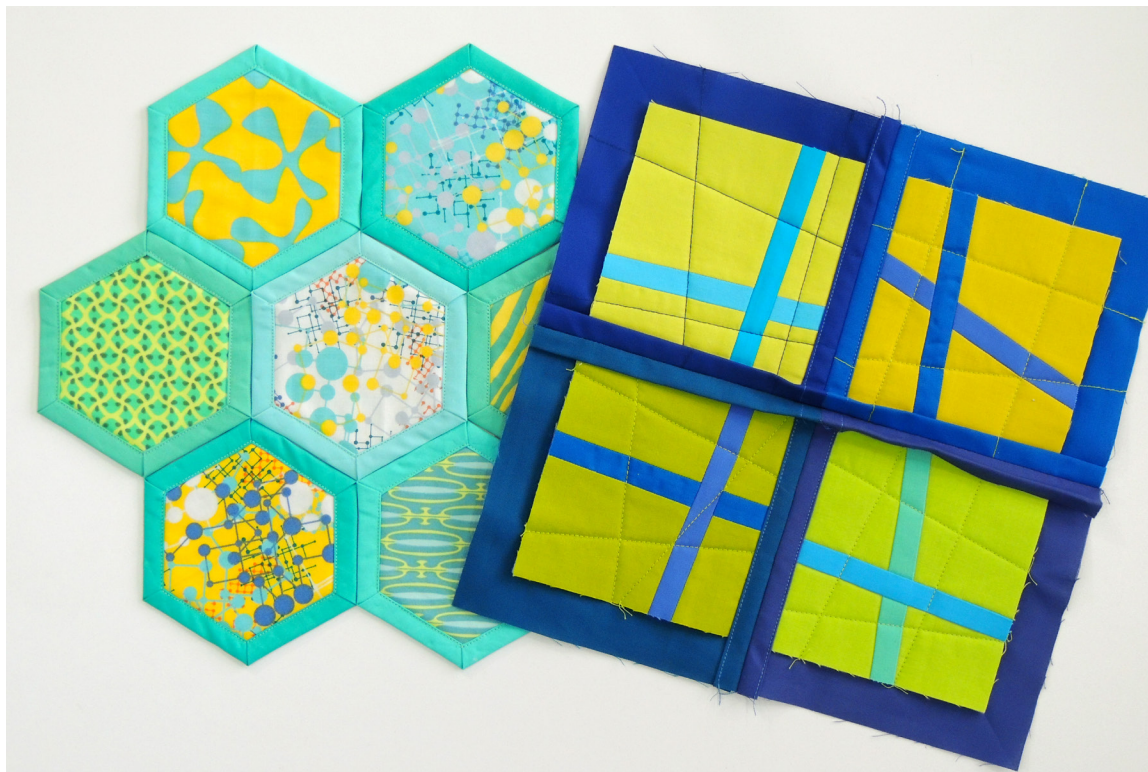
Quilt across the seam that joins the rows to secure the batting all along the seam. Some tutorials even call for stitching or fusing the batting pieces together.

Leave extra batting and backing along the edges so you have something to hang onto while are quilting. The edge will be trimmed before the next row is added.

5: Self Binding

The last QAYG method I'd like to touch on is what I'm calling Self Binding. It's basically done on a block by block basis by layering the block, batting and an *oversized* piece of backing fabric. Once the quilting is done, the backing is folded over to the front to create a finished edge similar to binding.

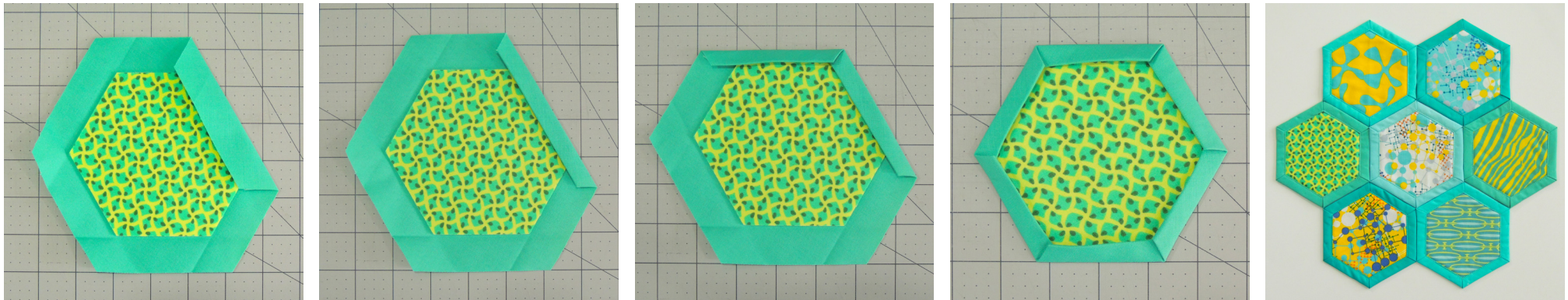
I found tutorials for both hexies and squares that both share a similar approach.



5: Self Binding

Basic Method for Self Bound Hexies

1. Cut front hexie and batting to the exact same size.
2. Cut back hexie a 1" bigger around all sides.
3. Center the front hexie and batting in the exact center of the larger back hexie.
4. Fold the edge of the backing over the top of the front and then fold again in under itself to create a double fold.
5. Continue folding around the outer edge until the entire edge is enclosed.
6. Stitch down with machine top stitching, hand stitching or big stitch quilting.
7. For a larger hexie project, join multiple hexies by hand or with a decorative machine stitch that crosses over both edges to join the sides securely.



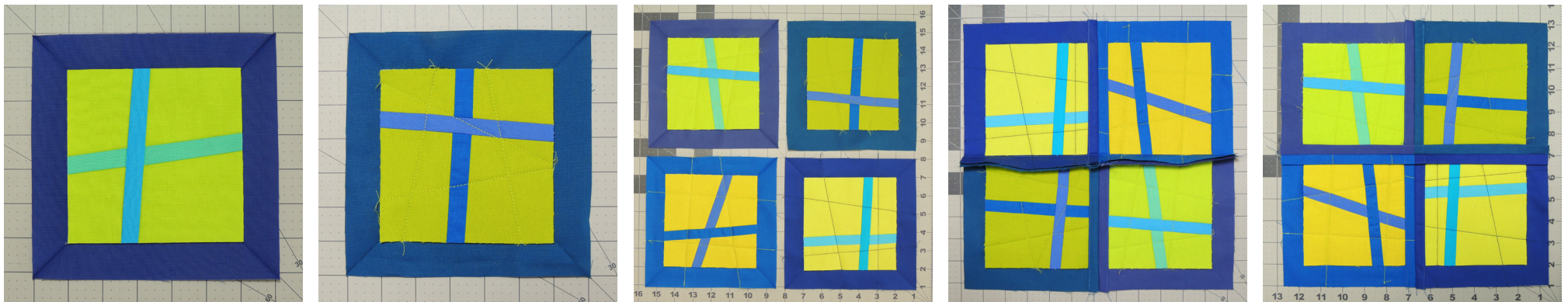
This is the tutorial used for the above sample:

<http://sillygoosequilts.blogspot.com/2012/01/tutorial-quilt-as-you-go-hexagons.html>

5: Self Binding

Basic Method for Self Bound Square Blocks

1. Cut block and batting to the exact same size. Cut backing 1" bigger all around.
3. Center the block and batting directly in the center of the backing.
4. Quilt the center. Do not quilt into the excess backing around the edge.
5. Join quilted blocks together by placing two blocks back to back and sewing the backing only using a 1" seam following along the edge of batting.
6. Double fold the excess backing to the front. Top stitch.
7. Repeat to join blocks into rows, then join rows using the same method



Here are two tutorials using similar self binding methods. A Missouri Star tutorial that frames vintage needlework blocks. And a technique called Fun and Done.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79Tm7oyIDNo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ok67lvPfyl>

5: *Self Binding Pros / Cons / Tips*

PROS:

It's a fun way to create a two sided hexie or square project.

It's an interesting method for framing things other than quilt blocks like vintage needlework as shown in the Missouri Star link.

CONS:

For the square method, there's a lot of bulk at the intersections of the sashing.

It's a little harder to get clean quilting stops and starts that go all the way to the edge of the batting so it may not look as good on the back.

TIPS:

Use a zipper foot for the square blocks.

Low loft fusible batting or even fusible fleece work well.

For square framed blocks, consider making the backing oversize and trimming to 1" beyond the block after quilting is done.

Summary

There are a lot of variations to the QAYG methods I covered. There are also several other ways to QAYG that I didn't cover. What I learned is that it's definitely something I will try more often. The main thing will be to think about which QAYG method to use *BEFORE* I start something new rather than after the fact.

I'd really encourage you to try QAYG.

Select the method that will work best by asking yourself these questions:

1. **What size project are you making?**
2. **What type of quilt design are you using? Can it be adapted to QAYG?**
3. **What type of machine quilting design are you after?**
4. **Can the backing be included up front or added later?**

Additional TIPS:

Clean out the lint from your machine frequently.

Use a press cloth when ironing to avoid getting any residue from fusible batting on your iron.

Resources and Inspiration

I recommend looking at the links I've provided and my Pinterest board to get a better idea of what's possible with QAYG.

There are several good tutorials on YouTube plus a few Craftsy classes and library books on the subject.

This video is a good resource available through the Longmont Library and is also a Craftsy class. *Quilting Big Projects on a Small Machines* by Ann Peterson

Pinterest

For more QAYG inspiration, see the following board on my Pinterest account:

<https://www.pinterest.com/annerdeister/qayg/>

Gallery of QAYG quilts

a showcase of modern/art quilts by Melody Johnson done using QAYG

<http://fibermania.blogspot.com/p/qayg-gallery-of-quilts.html>

Batting (Note: not all fusible batting is two sided)

Hobbs Heirloom Fusible Cotton 80/20 Batting (2 sided fusible)

Fairfield Fusi-boo, a fusible blend of cotton and bamboo (2 sided fusible)

Warm and White (not fusible)

Pellon Fusible Fleece

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<http://www.springleafstudios.com/>