



Connect with Us



Subscribe to
Stitch This!

Search for:

We're on Instagram!

LAST CALL for the 30% off sale at ShopMartingale.com! We're flipping the switch and turning off the sale at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time tonight (Friday, May 15)! Visit ShopMartingale.com now before the dock hits midnight! 📺: Nooks and Crannies from "Simple Whatnots: A Batch of Satisfyingly Scrappy Little Quilts" by Kim Diehl. Finished quilt: 16-1/2" x 22-1/2". Download the "Simple Whatnots" eBook and treat yourself to some sewing time this weekend! If you spend \$40 we'll ship your print books for FREE (USA only)! #madewithmartingale #martingaletp #patchwork #quilt #quilting #ninepatch #scrappyquilts #scrapquilts #smallquilts #mini quilts #kimdiehl @kim_diehl_quilts

Follow Martingale on Instagram

Recent Posts

Going-Out-Of-Business Sale: 55% Off Everything! Less than one week to shop...
(No Comments)

Going-Out-Of-Business Sale: Save 55% on everything!
(38 Comments)

Site-Wide SALE: Books starting at \$8!
(1 Comment)

Tags

antique quilts(71)
appliqué(123)
author guest posts(177)
bestsellers(162)
books on sale(221)
Christmas projects(100)
creativity(86)
crochet & knitting(201)
eBooks(75)
embroidery(97)
fabric selection(69)
fast quilts(125)

25 quilt tips from Kim Diehl

Posted by Jenny Wilding Cardon on April 15, 2013, in quilting & sewing, patchwork & applique, quilt tips, quilting tutorials

If you love Kim Diehl, you know about her warm, inviting designs that use simple quilt techniques to get a spectacularly scrappy look. But what you may not know is that nestled within the pages of Kim Diehl quilt books are homegrown "Pin Points"—little bits of sage advice from this rock star of a quilter. Today, we're sharing a whopping 25 of them with you!

Below you'll find quilt tips from Kim Diehl patterns that span four of her bestselling books (save 40% on them this week only). You'll discover how she tweaks appliqué motifs so they're easier to sew, how she makes transporting quilt supplies a cinch with paper plates and cardboard—and how she finally found a way to keep track of her scissors. Read on for Kim's clever ideas!



Kim's Pin Points: Color and Design



- Are you having trouble finding fabric in just the right color for your quilt? The wrong side of a printed fabric may provide you with the perfect color option.

- I've found that the secret to successfully mixing many different prints is to noticeably vary the size and scale of the patterns that are placed next to each other. Whenever possible, I place larger and smaller prints together, rather than positioning those of the same scale side by side. If I find that many of my prints are of a similar size, I'll vary the value of the colors to achieve contrast and add further definition.

- To easily give any quilt an old-fashioned, vintage feel, simply substitute muslin for the background prints called for in the directions. Your quilt will instantly exude traditional charm.
- When arranging your blocks for placement into a quilt top, always position pieces with strong hues in the corners. This will clearly define and anchor your quilt center.
- Remember that the value of any print can change depending upon the colors that are positioned immediately next to it. If I decide to work a light print into a quilt top that largely features darker tones, I will position it next to a medium-toned print to minimize the difference. The medium print acts as a bridge to blend the surrounding colors, and the lighter print adds interest without distracting from the overall look of the quilt.

Kim's Pin Points: Staying Organized

just for fun(106)
 Kim Diehl(67)
 Martingale news(338)
 meet us(75)
 new releases(511)
 on sale(54)
 patchwork(202)
 patchwork & applique(127)
 quick and easy quilts(167)
 quilt-block patterns(84)
quilting & sewing(1400)
 quilting 101(90)
 quilting for beginners(77)
 quilting tutorials(109)
 quilt tips(140)
 quirky question(113)
 reproduction quilts(75)
 scrap quilts(136)

Archives

Archives

Martingale Author Blogs

- Amy Ellis – Amy’s Creative Side
- Amy Smart – Diary of a Quilter
- Barbara Groves and Mary Jacobsen – Me and My Sister Designs
- Barbara J. Ekmeier – Barb’s Favorites
- Bonnie Olaveson – Cotton Way
- Cheryl Brown – Quilter Chic
- Cheryl Lynch – Cheryl Lynch Quilts
- Christa Watson – Christaquilts.com
- Cindy Lammon – Hyacinth Quilt Designs
- Connie Kauffman – Kauffman Designs
- Dana Bolyard – Old Red Barn Co.
- Darra Williamson – See How We Sew
- Debby Kratovil – Debby Kratovil Quilts
- Elizabeth Dackson – Don’t Call Me Betsy
- Gail Pan – Gail Pan Designs
- Jen Eskridge – ReannaLily Designs
- Jenifer Gaston – Jen’s Blog from the Willow
- Jennifer Rounds – See How We Sew
- Jill Finley – Jill’s Studio
- Kathleen Tracy – Sentimental Quilter
- Kim Brackett – Magnolia Bay Quilts
- Margo Duke
- Mary M. Covey – Mary M. Covey Designs
- Pat Durbin – Pat’s Quilts
- Rebecca Silbaugh – Ruby Blue Quilting Studio
- Sara Lawson – Sew Sweetness
- Stacey Trock – FreshStitches
- Sue Abrey – Quilt Times
- Susan Purney Mark
- Tonya Alexander – Eye Candy Quilts
- Vanessa Christenson – V and Co.



- When you begin a new project, take a moment to wind three or four bobbins. You’ll save time later!

- To easily organize patchwork sets or appliqué pieces, especially for travel or classes, try layering them between paper plates. Special notes or instructions can be written directly on each plate, and the plates can be stacked together to keep your work neat, compact, and easily portable.

- If you’re at all like me and are constantly losing your scissors, try this little trick. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions to apply a 3M hook to the side surface of your sewing machine or an adjacent wall...or, throw restraint completely out the window and attach a hook to both! Hang a pair of scissors on your new holder, and they’ll never be lost again.



Kim’s Pin Points: Appliqué



- If you wish to appliqué a particular pattern but the shape appears too difficult, modify the pattern by fattening thin points and plumping narrow inner curves. No one will know it but you!

- Instead of using a single piece of fabric for your appliqué background, try substituting a simply pieced background of two or more neutral prints for added interest and impact.

- To eliminate pinning freezer-paper layers after the appliqué shape has been traced, try holding the tip of a hot iron to the topmost paper layer at spaced intervals around the shape, at least ¼" outside the drawn lines. Hold the iron in place until the layers are fused, and then cut out the shape.

- To achieve consistent seam allowances when cutting appliqué pieces, place a small strip of ¼" masking tape on the end of your thumbnail to use as a visual guide.

Kim’s Pin Points: Machine Sewing

- As you begin sewing a machine-stitched seam, grasp the spool and bobbin threads and pull them gently as the fabric begins to feed under the presser foot. This will enable the fabric to feed smoothly and will also prevent thread snarls.

- For patchwork that includes layered triangles or squares that are pinned together or joined with a diagonal seam, try this little trick. Pin the pieces together as usual, and then place a small dot of basting glue within the seam-allowance layers near each point to prevent them from shifting as you stitch. Your stitched patchwork will always have perfectly aligned edges.



- If you find that your pieced blocks are consistently just a skosh small, even when using a quarter-inch foot, here’s a quick little trick that may make a difference in your accuracy. For sewing machines with incremental needle positions, try setting the needle just one notch to the right of the center position. Sew a test block and measure your results—this slight adjustment can be just enough to compensate for the thread or two that is lost to the fold of fabric when your seam allowances are pressed.

- To increase your accuracy, when you seat yourself at your sewing machine, position your chair squarely in front of the needle. This may seem overly simple, but sitting at even a slight angle to the needle can distort your view as you sew and cause variances in your seam allowances.

Kim’s Pin Points: Pressing

- To save time as you press, position your ironing board next to your sewing machine at table height. You'll eliminate extra steps.

- If your iron doesn't feature a nonstick pressing surface and it begins to show signs of residue build-up, here's a little trick to spruce it up. Unplug the iron and let it rest until the pressing surface is cool to the touch. Next, gently rub a dampened Mr. Clean Magic Eraser over the plate to remove any build-up; wipe thoroughly with a clean dry cloth.

- To easily protect your ironing board surface and keep it in "like-new" condition for longer, try ironing a sheet of freezer paper onto the cloth pad before you begin pressing your appliques. The paper will protect the surface from any fabric adhesives, and once your pressing is complete it can be peeled away and discarded.



- For a quick and easily portable pressing board, particularly for classes, try cutting a square or rectangle of corrugated cardboard from a sturdy box. In addition to being lightweight and disposable, cardboard makes a perfectly flat and firm work area that can be ideal for achieving well-pressed appliqué edges, and the finish enables your iron to glide smoothly across the surface.

Kim's Pin Points: Smart Tips for Every Quilter

- For wall hangings that lie smooth and flat, place a second hanging sleeve at the bottom edge of the quilt and insert a small dowel or flat strip of wood that has been cut slightly narrower than the width of the quilt. The added weight will eliminate any ripples and your piece will hang beautifully.

- When "un-sewing" a seam, a clean eraser or the sticky side of a length of masking tape can be lightly rubbed over any remaining threads to loosen and remove them from the cloth.



- Consider using quilting thread when hand sewing your binding to the back of your quilt. The fibers are made to be pulled through the layers multiple times, so there will be less fraying and tangling, and your stitches will be sturdier.

- When you are signing quilt labels or signature blocks, first iron a piece of freezer paper to the wrong side of the fabric to stabilize it. Remove the paper after you complete the writing.

- For quick cleanup after sewing, wrap masking tape around your fingers, adhesive side out, and use it to retrieve fallen threads and fabric scraps from your carpeting and clothing.

Don't miss this recent interview with Kim and Mary Fons on *Quilt with the Stars* at the Fons and Porter website.

Want more of Kim's Pin Points? You'll find them in these books—all 40% off this week only.

Simple Traditions: 14 Quilts to Warm Your Home



See more from *Simple Traditions*

Simple Seasons: Stunning Quilts and Savory Recipes



See more from Simple Seasons

Simple Comforts: 12 Cozy Lap Quilts



See more from Simple Comforts

Simple Graces: Charming Quilts and Companion Projects



See more from Simple Graces

Do you have your own "Pin Points" to share? Leave your quilt tips in the comments!

Related Posts

- Trunk Show of "Tabletop Stitchery" by Gail Pan + Big-Stitch Quilting Demo
- HOT NEW BOOKS: Reproduction Quilts, a Sampler Quilt, and Hand-Embroidery Projects
- What a neat trick! 💡 3-at-a-time Nine Patch blocks



22 Comments (leave a comment)

Before beginning a new project, be sure to clean the bobbin case and underneath the bobbin case.

—Sally on April 15, 2013

Use a digital camera to take photos of blocks as you're piecing them and/or your quilt top as you're laying it out. You can switch fabrics around, take a photo of each layout, and switch back and forth to see which one you like best. A peep hole, that you can buy at a home improvement store, can work as an image reducer. Viewing your quilt through this helps you see the values and if you have too much or too little of a color or value in your quilt.

—Amy on April 15, 2013

If you lose or can't find your quilting glove, cut a piece off a rubbermaid liner and lay the liner on fabric- You can use it to grip the fabric if you machine quilt

—Carol Scott on April 15, 2013

– I use the small office/desktop dish with water-soaked-sponge for wetting my fingers when I do paper piecing so I stopped licking my fingers constantly in order to move & align piecings at the back of paper;

– when shopping for more fabric for my project I carry scraps of once I have lined up and secured with safety pin so that at any time I can take them out of my bag and check if new fabric will match;

– when i make long strips of items to be assembled later (flying geese, squares..) after pressing I secure them with a pin to cardboard roll from used toilet paper (or bigger items around cardboard core from kitchen foils) and roll them around it securing with the another pin at the end – so they stay nicely pressed and background does not fray until the time I need to use them;

—*Hijana on April 16, 2013*

I use my sewing machine for about an hour everyday. Every Saturday I oil my machine according to the handbook instructions. Every other week I change my needle.

—*Mary Ann on April 16, 2013*

I read your Pin Points and learned something new in every category! If these are just a few of your "Points", I'd love to see your book. I'll be working on a country-look quilt for my daughter shortly and know she'd love these quilt looks, too.

—*Janet Sabol on April 16, 2013*

I keep a small camel hair paint brush next to my machine to "wipe" dust and lint from my needle and case when sewing. I use it each time to wipe out my bobbin area when changing bobbins. This method helps to eliminate some of the dust and lint buildup in my machine.

In making rows for my quilts, I put a pin in the upper left hand corner of each row to signify what row it is. First row – one pin; second row -two pins, etc. These same pins are used when pinning the rows together.

I keep plastic zippered bags that curtains, bedspreads, and hosiery come in. Everything pertaining to a quilt project is put into the individual larger bags, including pattern and list of rulers needed. The smaller bags or Ziplock bags are used to store thread, pre-made HST, and cut squares, all of which are included inside the larger bag. Everything is ready to sew and is especially good for retreat projects.

I put my pre-wound bobbins in a pharmacy plastic pill container and use either pony-tail bobbin holders or plastic tubing cut to inside size of bobbin with a split in its side to wrap around bobbin showing color of thread and keeps the thread from unwinding.

I keep the unused portion of my binding strips in a small plastic container and when making a scrap quilt, I sew these strips together for a scrappy looking binding. Nothing goes to waste around me.

When pre-washing fat quarters, I cut a tiny \ slash in each corner to prevent fraying or to lessen it.

Keep smiling,

—*Lynnita Shipman on April 19, 2013*

I use (only) two machines and cover them with linen tea towels which have been collected from travels, mostly overseas. They keep the dust off the machines and remind me of where I've been until I whip it off to see where I'm going! And, so easy to toss in the washer when they are dusty.

—*Helen on April 19, 2013*

I have a small rectangle of white paper which I laminated, made a hole and put a wool loop through it then hung it on a hook on my sewing machine. When I really can't see to thread the needle I put this behind the needle and bingo the "eye" shows clearly, lately since I now use Superior sewing machine needles I use this more for threading hand needles. Going out shopping for a linen tea towel and the pinhole thing. Thank You.

—*Juliet Wood on April 26, 2013*

I use a trick from dressmaking for sewing my bindings. Run your thread through beeswax and then IRON it. (Ironing is crucial.) It will glide through the binding like butter. Prepare 5 or 6 needles and then sit down and sew a side.

—*betty on April 29, 2013*

So many great hints! My group is going on a cruise with our quilt shop to Alaska. We're doing hand appliqué projects. I'll share your hints with the "Girls" .

—*Deb on August 9, 2013*

I keep a piece of lint roller paper by me when sewing to drop all waste threads on...when full just toss. Keeps me from tripping over the waste can...

—*Marg on August 16, 2013*

What is the name of your machine quilter? What is the name of her quilting book?

Hi Sue, check out You Can Quilt It! by Deborah Poole. Thanks for your question!

~Jenny

—Sue Pope on March 8, 2014

I use small 3m hooks attached to the wall next to my work area for rulers, tape measures, scissors etc. anything I feel can hang and I will need. This eliminates any holes in the wall and things can be moved around as needed. Happy quilting from Manitoba Canada!

—Peggy on October 22, 2014

If your ruler slips, an easy, inexpensive solution is to dab a bit of clear nail polish in key places on the back of your ruler, then dribble a bit of salt on each spot of polish. Let dry, and your ruler will no longer slip.

—Jill Ellis on October 29, 2014

What fabric collection did you use for your "Garden Path" quilt? It's absolutely beautiful!

—Cherith on December 10, 2014

I am huge fan of yours, ever since you spoke and gave a workshop at PQG in Wichita, KS several years ago. The only problem is I am disabled and my 'get-r-done' is overruled by my pain, concentration, and a total lack of enthusiasm. Might you have any suggestions? I do have a day now and then when I feel somewhat like my old self, but then I have so much guilt about the housework I tire myself out doing that first then the day is gone. Help!

WANTS TO QUILT MORE!!

—Sandy Brantley on November 5, 2015

Love all your quilt designs and want my next quilt to be one!

—Susan on April 24, 2016

Are you still teaching. We would like to have you come back to our guild if you can.
Deborah Swanson
716-450-7721
Westfield Quilters' Guild
Westfield NY
Debsew4@stny.rr.com

Debbe, Unfortunately, Kim is no longer teaching. ~Cornelia/Customer Service

—Debbie Swanson on May 22, 2016

When I am starting a new quilt project I pick up a new, unused, large pizza box. It is just the right size for holding my quilt squares, as I assemble them, and all of my sashings and cornerstones. The only problem is when I walk into quilting class everyone thinks I brought PIZZA!

—June A Shockley on October 7, 2018

Hello – I am looking for the name of a book by Kim Diehl that has the pattern Sunday Best. Have posted a picture on my face book page of the pattern in question. Any help you could provide would greatly be appreciated. If you have a copy of this book (with the pattern) for sale, I would be over the moon.

Sincerely
Denise Schellenberger

—Denise Schellenberger on November 15, 2019

This is the great work

—Warner Brown on December 22, 2020

Leave a comment

Name*

Email* (will not be published)

Website

*Indicates required field

Comments are moderated and may not show up right away; rest assured your comment has been received and will be approved soon!

