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📺 How to starch fabric before quilting: Lisa Bongean's trick for tiny piecing (video!)

Posted by Jenny Wilding Cardon on February 18, 2019, in quilting & sewing, Moda All-Stars, quilt tips, quilting tutorials, video tutorials, videos

Your jaw might drop when you see what we're sharing with you today. But don't worry: it's in a good way!

Lisa Bongean of Primitive Gatherings is a beloved quilt designer, and a Moda fabric designer too. If you've seen her work, you know she's also an impeccable piecer:



Memory of a Masterpiece from Red & White Quilts

(Yes, our jaws dropped when this incredible quilt was first revealed in our office!)

Our inquiring minds wanted to know: how does Lisa piece so precisely?

We asked, and Lisa gave us her #1 tip. It all comes down to . . . starch. Plain-old, nothing fancy, grocery-store starch.

What's so special about starch? For Lisa, it's the when, where, and why. Especially the when. In the video below she'll reveal her secret: how to starch fabric *before* quilting steps start—before cutting, before sewing, before anything else! You'll get her wheres and whys in the video too:

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Viewing this post in email? [Click here to watch the video online.](#)

Now you have a better idea of why Lisa's astonishing quilts look like this:



Forever Friends from Moda All-Stars: Lucky Charm Quilts

And this:



And this!



Moda Blockheads Sampler quilt from Moda Blockheads

In Lisa's [A Quilter's Journal](#), you'll find many more photos of her gorgeous quilts, along with peeks into her antique-quilt collections and her sewing studio. This might just be one of the most charming photos from the journal (which includes *hundreds* of pics!):



She saves her trimmed-off dog ears in Mason jars. Now every dog (ear) has its day!

How do you use starch when piecing your patchwork?

- I soak my fabrics in starch, just like Lisa.
- I usually use it while pressing my quilt blocks.
- I don't usually use starch at all—but Lisa's got a point. (Pun intended!)

Tell us your starch story in the [comments](#)!



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149 Comments (leave a comment)

I use spray starch but not to the point that Lisa does – guess I need to give it a try!

—Karen on February 18, 2019

I do the same way. I love Magic Spray Sizing from the grocery store.

—Sharon Lowy on February 18, 2019

I generally starch as I am pressing.

—Mary Brott on February 18, 2019

I have just started to use starch but I now think it will be my " new best friend " for quilting. Awesome stuff !!!!

—Barb Dwyer on February 18, 2019

I too use spray starch, but not to Lisa's point.

I too use spray starch in a hit or miss fashion. I don't typically make the small sizes she does, but it is worth a try.

—Stephanie Woodward on February 18, 2019

I use spray sizing before I cut

—Carol on February 18, 2019

I usually starch after my block is done, but her technique makes sense.

—Cheryl on February 18, 2019

I always use starch just like Lisa. It is absolutely mandatory when you are using pre-cut fabrics that you are not washing first. I have found that when I starch and iron them the fabric shrinks quite a lot! I recently cut tiny pieces from a jelly roll and was shocked to see how much smaller the strip was after starching and ironing it! And the starched pieces are a dream to sew with on the machine!

—Averyclaire on February 18, 2019

I starch as I make the blocks. I'm afraid to starch the fabric yardage in case I need to store the leftovers in my stash.

—Jean on February 18, 2019

I usually use starch while pressing my quilt blocks. After seeing how Lisa uses starch, I am definitely going to use her method. The absolute accuracy in her piecing has convinced me that I need to follow her guidance. Thank you so much for this invaluable tip!

—Ann West on February 18, 2019

I don't use starch as a rule but will look into trying it.

—Peggy on February 18, 2019

I don't do a lot of starching but when piecing small units I will definitely try this method.

—Rita Burnham on February 18, 2019

No comment just a question.
Does Lisa prewash her fabric?

Hi Donna, I have an answer for you – nope, Lisa doesn't prewash her fabrics. Thanks for your question! –Jenny

—Donna on February 18, 2019

I ualways use starch when piecing, but she's made me a believer!!! Gonna have to try this tip. Hard part is thinking ahead of what fabric I'll be using! 🧡

—Harriett Murray on February 18, 2019

I haven't used much starch but will surely do so in the future.

—Carol on February 18, 2019

I starch applique pieces and fabric that will be cut and sewn on the bias.

—Vicki on February 18, 2019

I use liquid starch and spray my fabric laying on garbage bags and let it air dry, turning it every so often. Then I press the fabric and am ready to cut and sew!

—Janice vaught on February 18, 2019

Wow....in reading the comments so far, it looks like I'd better try starching! I will sometimes use Best Press on a block, but I'm not consistent with that either.

—Darlene B on February 18, 2019

I have used starch before piecing and after. I've never used it the way Lisa does but I'm going to start. This method seems less messy, keeps starch off my ironing surface and my iron. I like it!

—Kaye Walker on February 18, 2019

I thought I was starching my fabrics. I have never used that much starch; never took the time to air dry my fabrics, never used a towel on the ironing board.

I need to try this technique. Method looks great for accuracy.

—carol on February 18, 2019

I sometimes use starch when pressing, especially if I have bias edges that need some stabilization. But, I think she's got a good point. Maybe I'll try to starch beforehand next time I'm piecing something intricate!

—Heather Miller on February 18, 2019

I don't usually starch but will give it a try

—Delinda on February 18, 2019

I sometimes use starch when working with small pieces or for complex piecing.

—Sandy on February 18, 2019

I starch before I cut. Love, love, love my starch!!!

—Kathy S on February 18, 2019

I soak my fabrics in starch, just like Lisa. A dear friend taught me to make cardboard. That is what I laughingly call it. She is absolutely right. It makes accurate piecing so much easier. I sometimes cut with an Accuquilt. The cuts turn out perfect when using starch.

—Gal Barabasz on February 18, 2019

i don't starch, but think it's a great idea

—Barbara Browning on February 18, 2019

I generally do not starch unless the fabric is very wrinkly, but I will now!

—Rebecca on February 18, 2019

I starch just like Lisa taught me to! And it really does make a difference on everything I do. My fabrics are pre-washed so I'm not worried about shrinkage (except pre-cuts) but the starch makes cuts just perfect. And then they are so much easier to handle whatever the size.

—Anne at Walden Woods on February 18, 2019

I spray starch before cutting and while pressing my pieced blocks

—emily on February 18, 2019

I sometimes use sizing on fabric but I'm going to give starch a try!

—Deb B on February 18, 2019

I use spray starch on most of my fabrics but not as heavy as Lisa does. But I'm gonna give it a try!

—Susan on February 18, 2019

I always starch before cutting. The fabrics shrink just a little after pressing with steam anyway, so starching helps keep those tiny little blocks consistent size. The smaller the block, the more important this is.

—Shelby Harvey on February 18, 2019

I starch and press my fabric before cutting my quilt patterns.

—Robin S Ratliff on February 18, 2019

I use Mary Ellen's Best Press before cutting my fabric. I sometimes use it when I press my blocks. I always wash my finished quilts before using them so that takes it back out.

—Kay on February 18, 2019

I will starch as I press the block after it is done

—Barbara Lotthammer on February 18, 2019

I use liquid starch and dilute it. The ratio of water to starch is 1:1 for rotary cutting and for die cutting and 1:3(water) for other uses. I heavily starch fabrics prior to running them through the die cutter by spraying yardage and letting it air dry.

—Debra on February 18, 2019

I usually starch when pressing individual blocks.

—Daria Zimmer on February 18, 2019

I use the spray starch before piecing, but I never let it air dry. I'm going to try this on my quilt I'm starting now. Thanks for the tip.

—Linda on February 18, 2019

I have used Best Press but have not used spray starch. I am just starting a new quilt so will try it.

—Janet Maki on February 18, 2019

I don't usually use starch; but in the future, I will try Lisa's technique when working on small blocks or doing mini quilts.

—Chris on February 18, 2019

I use spray starch I cut, but I will be trying Lisa's method.

—Mary on February 18, 2019

I spray starch before cutting but not as much as Lisa does.

—Carolyn Nannery on February 18, 2019

I use liquid starch concentrate from the grocery store, full strength, on the fabric before cutting. I like to get the fabric almost as stiff as paper before cutting. Throughout the piecing process, as I press seams, I may spray some diluted starch when I press.

—Barbara Wiggins on February 18, 2019

I've only just begun starching my fabric. I use Best Press and I iron it dry. Lisa's method is great, but it seems like it takes too much time before you actually get into your sewing. I'll have to try her way though.

—Eileen Moss on February 18, 2019

I starch my fabric before cutting. I use either Magic Sizing or Best Pressed depending on how I want to use the fabric.

—Barb Walsh on February 18, 2019

I starch before I cut but not as heavily as she does.

—Theresa Powers on February 18, 2019

Years' ago I was "warned" by a quilt appraiser that using starch would attract "pincher bugs", to nibble on the fabrics eventually, much like they are attracted to the paste on old wallpaper. She recommended spray sizing so for that reason I have used spray sizing since. I presume that if I use spray starch I would have to wash my quilts when completed, which I don't always do. Hopefully, that is an "old wife's tale" and Lisa's gorgeous quilts will last forever.

—Donna Barth on February 18, 2019

I use Best Press and spray before cutting. Then I use again after block is assembled

—Geri on February 18, 2019

I don't usually use starch at all—but I've got to try it now!

—Libby Kupp on February 18, 2019

I've used starch one time, it made sewing so much easier, very precise. I need to make it a habit.

—Sharon Ray on February 18, 2019

I have used starch on precut fabric ever since learning this trick from Lisa. It not only makes the fabric easy to cut and piece, but is pre-shrinks it. I lay my pieces out on a towel to dry and this method also alerts me to fabrics that bleed, as they dry, those that might be a culprit leave some of their dye behind on a light colored towel. Try this method, I think you will like how it improves your overall piecing.

—Carol Garner on February 18, 2019

I am using starch quite a bit more than what I used to and after watching this video I will be doing it even more. Before I mainly did it when I had a lot of angle piecing that I was doing in a project.

—Faith on February 18, 2019

I usually use it while pressing my quilt blocks.

—Theresa J on February 18, 2019

Normally, use starch when I appliqué and when I finish a block.

—Cara on February 18, 2019

It always helps and I have never been sorry that I starched, especially when working with bias.

—Pat Mosley on February 18, 2019

I don't use starch normally but will give it a try next time

—Jeri Lyn Mills on February 18, 2019

Usually use starch when pressing blocks. But I will definitely give this a try!

—Liz Smith on February 18, 2019

I don't usually use starch, but I might try it if I make a quilt with tiny pieces. I have only used it on the few occasions I have done hand applique.

—SandyMay on February 18, 2019

I think I need to give this a try; normally I just spray and iron after a few minutes, but that sure works for Lisa.

—Judy Stolz on February 18, 2019

I usually starch when pressing a completed block

—Hilda Krebs on February 18, 2019

I sometimes starch the fabric before cutting, but usually just use starch when piecing.

—Colette Morton on February 18, 2019

I starch when I remember to do so. But I intend to follow Lisa's advise. Her piecing is beautiful.

—Lynette Wilson on February 18, 2019

I usually use starch when pressing my blocks!

—Judy Patrick on February 18, 2019

I soak my fabrics in starch, just like Lisa. I learned this trick from Lisa a couple years ago. It works like a charm.

—Georgina on February 18, 2019

I have not used starch very often but will try this new (to Me) technique soon.

—Joanne L Wilson on February 18, 2019

Wow! I usually use starch when I press the finished block, I am definitely going to try this! thank you!

—Pam Foss on February 18, 2019

I used to spray with starch but not as heavily. Then I read or heard not to if you don't quilt then wash or it could attract bugs. Since I don't quilt often my tops are stored for awhile and the last thing I want to attract are little visitors. I do steam a lot before cutting my fabric since I don't pre-wash. I know one day the quilting police will be visiting my door.

—Sandra D in Joliet on February 18, 2019

I heavily starch and let it dry before cutting my fabric.

—Judy Magner on February 18, 2019

I found this method to be very interesting and will give it a try. I don't starch a lot, but when I do, I usually spray blocks when I am pressing.

—Carol Schon on February 18, 2019

I use homemade starch and spray before cutting. I will have to try Lisa's way. Anything to help with the cutting and sewing progress is worthwhile.

—Diane Russell on February 18, 2019

I don't use starch. However, I usually try something before I say it's not for me. I guess I will give it a try.

—Pamela Jones on February 18, 2019

I've started using Best Press when pressing fabric before I start cutting.

—Bille Shannon on February 18, 2019

I use it when pressing the fabric.

—Mary on February 18, 2019

I haven't been using starch, but I think I need to start!

—Linda Garcia on February 18, 2019

I always heavily starch my fabric before cutting; I find it truly helps with piecing accuracy. I iron the fabric dry, but will try Lisa's way of letting it air dry. I also appreciated her tip about protecting the ironing surface with a towel. Hadn't thought of that.

—Dianne S on February 18, 2019

I don't usually starch but will consider doing it now! Lisa's video is enlightening!

—Brenda Julovich on February 18, 2019

If I plan it, I starch my fabrics like Lisa does (thanks for that lesson, Lisa), however if I have a strong urge to sew NOW, then I will starch as I am pressing quilt blocks.

—Janey B on February 18, 2019

I rep my material before cutting, but I've used my iron to dry it. I guess I'll have to try it Lisa's way.

—Cynthia Scheller on February 18, 2019

I never used starch until the first round of blocks I did for Moda block heads. Now I use it daily. The grocery store king. However I do love best press scents.

—Sandi on February 18, 2019

I starch before cutting. I use liquid starch and put in a spray bottle with water.

—Carmen on February 18, 2019

I was just recently advised to starch before cutting. It helped!

—gail on February 18, 2019

I spray with Best Press which is way more expensive than starch at the grocery store and I can see that I don't get the fabric as stiff as demonstrated in the video. I will try Lisa's way and see if my piecing is better.

—Fran Claassens on February 18, 2019

I don't start—I'll have to give it a try!

—Valerie on February 18, 2019

Lisa after the starch has air-dried, do you press with a dry iron, or do you press with steam? Love this hint!

Good question, Di – yes, Lisa presses her air-dried blocks with steam. Thanks for asking, hope this helps! –Jenny

—Di Gross on February 18, 2019

I soak my fabrics in starch, just like Lisa. I use a inexpensive vinyl tablecloth and place my fabrics onto it and spray them down and leave them to air dry. It works like a dream.

—Lu on February 18, 2019

I usually starch my blocks when I press. Sometimes, if there are going to be lots of little pieces, I starch the yardage.

—Marsha Nelson on February 18, 2019

If I need it stiff I buy a bottle of Stay Flo starch and follow the directions. Reminds me of the old days when we starched all of our clothes and put them in the freezer till we were ready to iron. Yes I saturate and let dry. I usually add vodka to help with the solubility. Honestly though I soak on the wrong side and iron on the wrong side. I think it's a hold over from the scorch days.

—Christi on February 19, 2019

I tend to pre wash. Spray starch and iron. I liked Lisa's results and definitely will be trying her method. 😊

—Elizabeth on February 19, 2019

I starch like Lisa. I find every thing is much more accurate.

—Patricia Phaiah on February 19, 2019

I usually use Best Press before cutting my fabric. I just might give this method a go though.

—Susan L. on February 19, 2019

I use StaFlo liquid starch diluted in Gardening Spray bottles from Dollar Store. I press everything before cutting using plenty of starch and hot iron. No stretching after cutting and the fabric has been preshrunk. I love spray starch!

—Lori1R in South Dakota on February 19, 2019

I use spray starch anytime I am ironing fabric before I start a project whether it is yardage or specialty cuts. I have let it set for a minute but then iron it dry. I will try the air dry then iron next time.

—Deena Dreves on February 19, 2019

Fabric used to come with more sizing than today. If you happen to have a fabric produced in the US that you saved, you will most likely find it is more tightly woven and has sizing. Not removing the sizing was why I rarely prewashed fabrics before cutting and sewing and always starched if I did! I guess this just comes from being a manufacturer's daughter. In the factory, I always noticed a slight odor and sometimes my eyes watered. Years ago, all fabric that was produced for manufacturing had something added in the production that helped keep the fabric clean during the numerous operations needed to sew garments. Yes, things do fall on the floor sometimes!

I have begun starching when doing smaller pieces or curved piecing.

—Judi on February 19, 2019

I have never used starch but it does make sense, especially with such tiny pieces. I am presently working on a scrappy stashbuster HST project with over 2000 pieces so this suggestion will come in handy.

—Sue F on February 19, 2019

I generally use it while pressing my blocks, but not as often as I should. This is a great reminder how starching can increase accuracy!

—Patty F. on February 19, 2019

I have not starched any of my material before, but considering how much it has helped Lisa be more precise, you can bet I'm going to start doing it!

—Teri D. Gailey on February 19, 2019

I starch all my fabric before cutting. I do not prewash. I use Faultless Heavy Spray Starch (the one with the blue cap). I get it for about \$1.00/can from my local WalMart. My method is to press the fabric with right side up (I read that the starch saturates into warm fabric better than cool fabric) and then spray with starch (enough to cover the fabric but not as saturated as Lisa does). I let it dry a bit – so that it's not wet but it is sometimes a bit damp. (Sometimes my quilting area is full of starched fabric, drying.) Then I turn the fabric over so that the wrong side is up and press (I don't get as many starch flakes this way). I spray this side, let dry, and then flip so that the right side is up and press again. Press-spray-dry-flip-press-spray-dry-flip-press. I think stiffly starched fabric cuts and sews and presses better — plus I like the smell of starch!!

—Annie on February 19, 2019

I usually use starch when pressing as I piece each block. I am usually way too eager to get cutting and sewing to prep my fabric as Lisa does, but I may need to re-think that.

—cheryl Warstler on February 19, 2019

I have used starch but not consistently. She has given me a new perspective that I will try. It may just be the element I have been missing in the piecing

—Sue on February 19, 2019

I starch my fabrics, especially when using triangles; however, I have always pressed the fabric while it is wet. I will give Lisa's air dry method a try!

—Kristin on February 19, 2019

I don't use starch anymore because of a corn allergy – all commercially available starches are made from corn starch. I do use Best Press, and saturate my fabric, roll it up and put it in a plastic bag so the Best Press reaches all the fibers (like mother used to do, but I don't put it in the refrigerator!). I do press it dry, not iron, press. If I think it needs it, I do the whole process again until I have a fairly stiff fabric. If you use this technique, be sure to keep colors separated as they may bleed or slough surface dye. I can piece like a champ using this technique.

—Sally Atkinson on February 19, 2019

I am a huge fan of Lisa's work and used to starch my work as I pieced. Now when I am working with small blocks, I starch my fabric before hand like her. It is a game changer!

—Regina on February 20, 2019

I'd have to say "All of the above"!! This looks like a great book!

—Gee on February 20, 2019

I use spray starch before cutting, but not as much as Lisa. I will try Lisa method tomorrow on my next project.

—Regina on February 20, 2019

I soak my fabrics in starch, just like Lisa. And, I love how it makes the piecing much easier.

—Donna W on February 20, 2019

When I first read about using spray starch, I thought I'll never do THAT! About half way through making Moda Blockheads I, I decided to give it a try. Now I am hooked and always use it for any quilts with small pieces. It makes a huge difference!

—Kyra Franz on February 21, 2019

I mix my own starch and use a spitzer bottle. Anything in an aerosol can is hard on my asthma and harmful to my pet bird. But I love using starch for accurate cutting and piecing. Thanks Lisa

—Cindy Stefferlen on February 21, 2019

I usually spray starch after my blocks are completed before trimming down to size.

—Kathleen Quinn on February 22, 2019

I don't usually use starch, but I'm sure that it would be useful in working with tiny pieces – another thing I don't usually do unless paper-piecing.

—Maira on February 22, 2019

I usually starch with Best Press after sewing the blocks together. I will now use Lisa's method. Thanks for the info.

—Vivian Bensen on February 22, 2019

For a good while now, I steam press my fabric to get the threads to tighten and then starch the fabric to further tighten and stiffen it before cutting. I found a huge difference in the accuracy of my piecing in doing this first.

—Rosale Knoll on February 22, 2019

I like to spray starch on, let dry and then press with a dry iron.

—Susan on February 22, 2019

I use fabric sizing before I cut the fabric. It does make a difference in the finished product!

—Trish Probandt on February 22, 2019

I usually starch THE most blocks, I like starching by piecing blocks

—Rommy Van Houten on February 22, 2019

I have used it in the past but stopped because it gunked my iron up so much. I never thought of letting it air dry. Now I will try it Lisa's way. Thanks, Lisa.

—Sue on February 22, 2019

I prestarch fabric that has not been pre-washed. I spray starch fabric if the block is less than 8 inches. Lisa's method makes sense. Thank for posting the video.

—Cheri Bergeron on February 22, 2019

I am going to give this a go when I get ready to make more Lone Star blocks. I've got four on my design board, but need another dozen or so.

—Janet on February 22, 2019

Thank you for the video... I'm thinking I do a combination of starch treatments. I use Best Press while pressing during the construction process. I also spray starch damp fabric that has been washed but not fully dried. I frequently air dry the starched fabric out side in the full sun, thinking that this might tighten the fibers up even further. I really blast with starch if I'm doing applique.

Kay

—kay on February 22, 2019

I always use spray starch, it's a huge help. But never in the amount that Lisa demonstrated. Nor do I generally let it air dry. That would probably avoid the problem of flaking that sometimes occurs when the starch is ironed dry. I'm going to try these tips, especially when cutting/sewing small pieces.

—Pearl on February 22, 2019

I starch when pressing – it helps a lot!

—Patricia Ludwiczak on February 22, 2019

I don't usually starch at all. Looks like I'll have to start!

—Linda Towers on February 22, 2019

A long time ago, it was Jeanna Kimball that taught me to starch the fabric that I am sewing on. She uses boxed starch and air-dries her fabric, too. It is the most wonderful way to keep your cutting clean and perfect. Sewing the starched pieces makes it easier and my blocks come out flatter. When your blocks are flatter, your piecing is much more accurate and fit together better. By using this method my sewn blocks come out to the exact size, need less trimming and there is less ripping involved.

One more note, I do pre-wash my fabric and fold it flat without ironing first. This saves time and I only cut off the portion that I need and starch that when I am about to use it. The left over starched scraps are put in a tote with a tight fitting cover to help keep the bugs away that like to eat starch.

—Mary Ann on February 22, 2019

I haven't used starch, but I can see how it will help

—Susan MacLeod on February 22, 2019

I starch lightly each time I press. So my block gets stiffer as I go a long.

A question. Some quilts have 5 or more yards of background fabric which I starch and iron before cutting. My space for quilting is limited. Does she cut the large sections into smaller sections to make it easier to saturate the fabric?

—Marie Walton on February 22, 2019

I sometimes use a spray starch on my fabrics before cutting. And on my blocks too.

—Sylvia L on February 22, 2019

I starch like Lisa sometimes, it works wonderfully. I should do it more, but I'm usually in too much of a hurry to bother with the preparation.

—Janet Dickson on February 22, 2019

Wow! I use starch but will DEFINitely try Lisa's way. ToDAY. Thanks so much for the video.

—karen on February 22, 2019

I use spray starch when I iron my fabrics and blocks. Maybe I need to do more to get those perfect tiny pieces like Lisa!

—Karen on February 22, 2019

Thank you for the video...I usually starch my block, but now I have learned how AND why to treat the fabric before I even cut it!!!

—Becky Schultz on February 22, 2019

I starch heavily at all parts in the process. I use a concentrated starch full strength- the pieces could stand on end !! The starch has really helped with matching seams and to prevent stretching. When done with every thing, after quilting and binding, I gently wash the quilt!! BEAUTIFUL!!

—Lillian K on February 22, 2019

I don't usually starch but I may need to start.

—Janna Lee on February 22, 2019

I do use a spray starch but not enough according to this, have to be a little more organized and have fabrics ready for the project, but this sounds like it would work great! Thanks for the video and lesson, I'm definitely going to give this a try.

—GwenH on February 22, 2019

I soak my fabrics in starch just like Lisa. I pretty much started doing that when I did the Moda Blockheads #1. I piece with small fabrics and it definitely makes a difference when you don't starch!

—Jaxine Andersen on February 22, 2019

I heavily starch with either BestPress or Terial Magic on wrong side of fabric, the. Fold it up to let it soak through a bit. I press dry from right side of fabric, then do a quick press on wrong side before folding fabric straight in preparation for cutting. Have had best success with accurate cutting and piecing using this method.

—CarlottaB on February 22, 2019

I don't use starch because I have read the bugs we get in the south will eat the quilt if it has starch. I use Best Press instead.

—Jamie Graham on February 23, 2019

I use starch when pressing all of the fabrics to be used in the project before I start cutting. I usually then press with starch once again after each block is finished before assembling the blocks & rows together. Someone mentioned in an earlier comment that when using starch & ironing, they noticed that their fabrics had shrunk a good bit. I have noticed that possibility before, but then I thought maybe it was just my inaccuracies. I would love for someone to answer this question that I have: If starching & pressing causes the fabrics to shrink, should we allow for this and make all of our blocks bigger or just starch before we start cutting the yardage at the beginning of a project?

—Jackson M. Watkins on February 23, 2019

And then there is Anita Grossman who advocates when the fabric is first purchased, to put it in a large plastic bag, from the bottle, pours in the starch, sloshes it about a bit to saturate the fabric. Then she shoves the bag in the freezer so it is ready, when she is ready, to iron and use. Thanks for showing how to starch precuts.

—Clairequilty on February 23, 2019

I love working with starched fabric. I learned this from Lisa. Thanks again.

—Ann P. on February 24, 2019

I do use starch, but now I know a better way to do it! Thanks, Lisa, for showing us this!

—Jackie on March 1, 2019

Does Lisa wash her quilts when she is finished? There may be no truth to it but the "starch attracts bugs" concerns me.

Hi Lenore, great question! I talked with Lisa and this is what she said: "I wash my quilts only when needed. The types of starch that are in aerosol cans do not have corn in them, which can attract bugs. As long as you use starch and aerosol cans there's no need to wash your quilts before use."

Hope this helps! —Jenny

—Lenore Williams on March 10, 2019

I just started to use starch and like it, but I just had a problem that the fabric ran ! What should I do and is this going to be a problem?

—Jan Scherbinski on March 20, 2019

I have not yet developed the habit of starching but I am impressed with the video and plan to try it more before long.

—Kaye Davis on March 20, 2019

I've been using Best Press lately, I've noticed that with starching it does help keep the fabrics more crisp when piecing. But Lisa's technique is something new to me, I will try this! I love her quilts.

—Louise Wagner on April 1, 2019

Since the top piece will have been starched and ironed (assuming some shrinkage), does Lisa starch the backing fabric, too, before sandwiching and quilting? Just wondering if that will make a difference when the finished quilt is washed??

—Darsi on April 12, 2019

I always starch using both Best Press and grocery store spray starch in combination. This method makes for super accurate cutting! Any starched leftovers get cut into strips or squares and stored for another day.

—Valerie Atterbury on April 17, 2019

Hanging the sprayed pieces on a rack to dry is an excellent idea. I usually try to press too soon.

—Sue in Oregon on August 9, 2019

I do not usually use starch, but do sometimes use Best Press.

—Peggy on October 21, 2019

I am making a quilt top based all on diamonds, i.e., a lot of cross-grain cutting. It seems that pre-treating the fabric with starch or sizing would help avoid fraying and stretching. What about borders and the backing? Should they be pre-treated too, due to shrinkage issues?

The piece will be hand quilted when finished. Does anyone have experience with use of starch or sizing on items to be hand quilted.

—Helen on February 5, 2021

I recently decided to give starching in the exact manner Lisa does for some Mother's Day runners and wall hangings I am making. And I will never again piece unstarched fabric. The points were perfect. It was easier to piece and sew. It was a better result with the pressing of seams and open seams were tremendously easier.

I bought a box of Faultless starch and a drying rack and have started starching all my fabric as step one in my quilting progress. Worth the time and effort. Important to let it air dry fully

—Stacy Maria Trier on April 7, 2022

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