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**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 clock 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 #smalquilts #miniquilts #kimdiehl @kim\_diehl\_quilts

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### The "value" of your smart phone: are you using this quilting trick? 📱

Posted by Jenny Wilking Cardon on April 4, 2018, in quilting & sewing, color, quilt tips, quilting tutorials

We've got a quick quilting trick for you today!

If you've ever struggled with deciphering the values of different fabrics, this is a tip that'll provide lots of "value" when you're choosing fabrics for a quilt, arranging blocks, or just trying to figure out the value of a particular fabric—not value moneywise, but value colorwise! (Light? Medium? Dark? Sometimes it's hard to tell!)

### Value is defined as the relative lightness or darkness of a color.



The secret tool you'll need to help determine fabric values is probably nearby right now—in fact, it may be in your purse or pocket. It's your phone—and if it can take photos, it just might become in-value-able to your quilting life!

I was having some trouble organizing these batiks from light to dark in value. Here's how you can use your smart phone to get the values right:

1. Snap a pic of the fabrics you're struggling to sort by value.



*I couldn't quite tell where the three center fabrics fell on the value scale, and that pesky blue-green print was tripping me up too. Would it read as dark or medium in my quilt?*

2. Tap on the photo you've taken; then choose to Edit the photo (in this example I'm using the camera app on an Android phone; you may have similar editing options on your phone).



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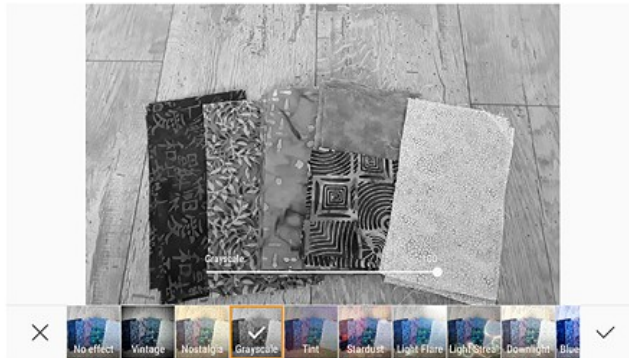
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3. In the Edit menu, you should see a "Grayscale," "Mono," or "Black-and-White" option; tap on that.



4. Now your photo should look like a black-and-white photo, with all the colors removed. All that remains are the values of the fabrics.



5. Now that you can see the values of your fabrics, you can arrange them from light to dark and then use them in a way that produces more contrast in your quilt blocks.



*Photo with the colors removed*



*New arrangement of fabrics from dark to light*

Those medium-value fabrics can be tricky—but now you’ve got a way to put them in their patchwork place!

A wonderful book to give your value-picking skills some practice is *Stashtastic!* by Doug Leko. Doug’s designed a dozen beautiful quilts and each quilt is shown in a different colorway, like this:



*French Twist from Stashtastic!*

The value exercise above will give you special insight into creating all of Doug's gorgeous quilts with *your* gorgeous fabrics! You can see more quilts from *Stashtastic!* [here](#).

We hope you found this little tutorial helpful! **How do you usually determine the values of your fabrics?** Tell us in the comments!

#### Related Posts

- What a neat trick! 💡 3-at-a-time Nine Patch blocks
- How to wash a red-and-white quilt: our staffers' "catchy" secret
- Tips for pressing quilt blocks: to one side, open, or both? (video tutorial 📺 )

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#### 24 Comments (leave a comment)

I've used fabric swatches on a copy machine to make a gray scale, but this simple phone method is brilliant! One of those solutions that's right in front of us but we hadn't even noticed!

—Bette on April 4, 2018

Values of fabrics and how to use them really escape me so I only use precuts or follow pattern fabrics as closely as possible. I would hate to determine it myself and then hate the result with all that money/time tied up in the quilt. :>{

—DanyseF on April 4, 2018

Excelente tip! Gracias por compartirlo

—Ingrid Mijares on April 4, 2018

Great tip on helping us decide the values of a group of fabrics. Since we always have a phone with or near us, we will always have a great quilting tool right at our finger tips! Thanks for this tutorial.

—JoAnn on April 4, 2018

Wow, what a trick! Thank you for sharing. Talking about color arrangements, I usually borrow another set of eyes to help me, which means my husband come to help :).

Christine

—Christine on April 4, 2018

I'm so bad, I usually guess about value or I buy precuts which has all the colors in the group and it's easier.

—Frances Claassens on April 4, 2018

You have solved the "value arranging" mystery for me. Thank you for this revealing tip.

—Elizabeth on April 4, 2018

Thanks for the tip. Choosing fabrics is difficult for me and this will make my piecing much more successful.

—Shirley Deyoe on April 4, 2018

I use my smart phone and it worked great I was surprised at the different values of my fabrics.

—Valerie on April 4, 2018

LOVE this trick. Better than totting those glasses everywhere and a lot faster!

—Judi Reiss on April 4, 2018

Don't laugh now...my flip phone won't do that trick! I can use my iPad though, great idea! I place the fabrics on the floor, together like your photo, then go upstairs and look at them from up there. That tells me every time. If they all blend together, I make changes. Getting stair climbing at the same time!

—JoAnne T. on April 4, 2018

I will definitely use my phone to discover the value of fabrics.

—beth d. on April 4, 2018

Thank you so much this is a very awesome tip for something that I really struggle with!

—Patricia Newhouse on April 4, 2018

I have taken a picture of the fabric and that sometimes helps me see the value better. Changing it to grayscale really makes a difference. Thanks for the tip!

—Patty on April 4, 2018

Ruby beholder.  
Or squinting with my glasses off.  
Or backwards thru a door peephole.

—JanG on April 4, 2018

What a fantastic idea!! Thanks for sharing us about it!!!

—Alma Croix on April 4, 2018

Genius!

—Debbie Johnson on April 5, 2018

I have used this trick. It is really helpful.

—Carol Melcher on April 5, 2018

I used a photocopier and an old digital camera. This method is much more convenient. Great idea!

—Cheri B on April 6, 2018

I usually just eyeballed the fabrics and took a guess at their place in the value line. Thanks for this tutorial. It'll help take the guesswork out of the process.

—Judith on April 6, 2018

I have used 3-D glasses or colored film to help differentiate between values. Will have to try this method.

—Linda Towers on April 7, 2018

I just guess...

—bookboxer on April 7, 2018

I can see this really helps with the same general base color, such as blue in the example. How well does it work with multiple colors; green, red, yellow for example?

—Barb Bernard on July 26, 2019

I'm thrilled to find this information. I never knew. Thank you

—Maxine Bullock on June 23, 2022

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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!