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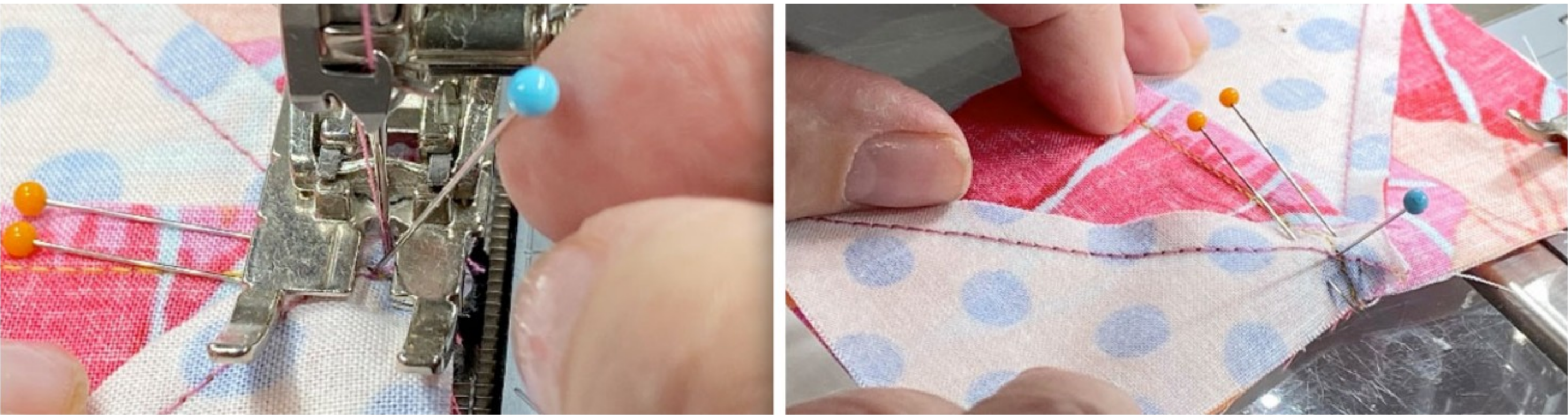
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Good Pinnmanship with Alex Anderson

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Good Pinnmanship

By Alex Anderson

Precise pinning is a building block that is often overlooked. Perfect intersections and accurate triangle tips are possible only if fabric is sewn together accurately, and that requires the exacting placement of pieces that *stay put* as they glide under the sewing machine foot. Loose fabric can easily shift at the last instant, rendering useless all your prior meticulous attention to detail.





Tools:

- Quilters Select® Pin Tin
- Quilters Select® Fabric Glue Stick
- Quilters Select® Para-Cotton Poly Thread (80wt)
- Quilters Select® Perfect Cotton-Plus thread (60wt)

I adore 80-weight thread for my bobbin, and 60-weight on top. The 80-weight is so fine and strong, and the slimmer the thread, the better the results.

Here are my tips for skillful pinning, which are what I have found work best for me:

- Start with really good pins. I prefer extra-fine glass head silk pins, not too long. The less the pin insertion disturbs the fabric, the better (rough or old pins can catch and drag on fibers and shift their position). A longer pin could cause the fabric to wobble, especially with the three-pin technique (below).
- Place pins where they are needed – especially at intersections. Fewer pins are needed for simpler areas, and some quilters prefer no pins at all, but I think they are vital.

For the best accuracy, pin 1/8" on each side of the intersection, and only remove the pins as the sewing needle is coming down on top of them. *Slow down* as you approach each pin, and give yourself time to remove the pin at the last possible moment. Speed is not the goal!



- When you place a pin, think about where the needle is going to land, and make sure this is the point where the pin lies under the fabric, not on top of it. In case you don't pull out the pin in time, damage to the needle or the machine is less if you have a buffer of fabric to help shift the needle to either side of the pin.
- If you are pressing seams to one side, and you are pinning a seam to a single piece of fabric, place the seam allowances on top, so they face toward the oncoming presser foot, rather than away from it. For two intersections that are being pinned together, the top seam allowances face the presser foot; the bottom seam allowances face away. The foot then gently nestles the two intersections into each other, rather than pushing them slightly apart.



- Three-pin technique: To pin a triangle tip intersection accurately, start by placing one pin perpendicular (straight down) through all layers of the intersection.



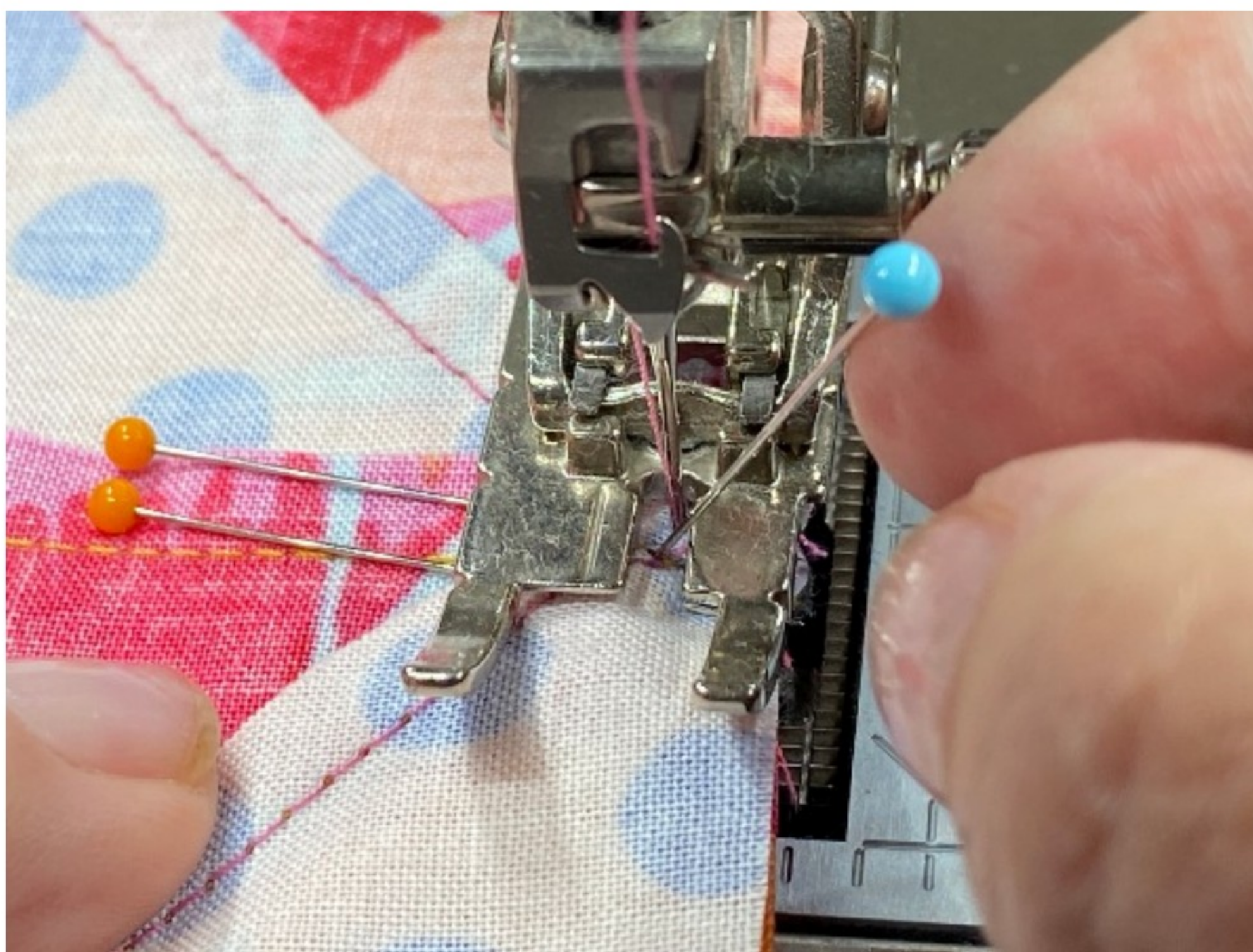
- Once it is in place, gently sneak a peek by pulling apart the fabrics, leaving the pin inserted, to see if they are all correctly aligned.



- You can then insert pins flat along the fabric, 1/8" on either side of the intersection.



- It doesn't matter if the glass heads point toward the fabric side or the raw edge side, as long as they are at right angles to the fabric edge.



Pins are 1/8" or less from seam line and dip under the fabric where the needle will sew over them.

- I like to leave the first pin in until the last minute, when the sewing machine needle penetrates the intersection. I appreciate that my 1/4" presser foot is fairly wide open so I can see this.



Accuracy at each end of the pieces being sewn is also important – don't let your first or last few stitches stray off the path! If you have trouble keeping the raw edges lined up at each end, use a dab of fabric glue stick to hold them together. You can sew through this without gumming up your needle.



Taking the extra time to pin accurately, and using the best tools, will yield impressive results in all your sewing projects. They can help you reach the “pinnacle” of success with your quilts!



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