

USING PANELS IN QUILTS

Panels or pre-printed fabric have been around for years. Many of us have used nursery rhyme panels as baby gifts. Today, however, due to the influence of modern art, panels have resurfaced and often come with coordinating fabrics by the same collection and even pattern designs are offered to complete the panel as a quilt.

Panels can be used in a variety of ways. The most common way is to make a quilt: just add batting & backing or just fleece then add a binding and viola instant quilt. Smaller panels can be designs for totes/bags. Some panels are framed as pictures. Most of the time, panels are trimmed and borders are added. Regardless of how you approach the panel the most important concept is to "**USE THE DESIGN**". Stay with colors and designs that **COMPLIMENT** or enhances the panel.



PROS & CONS FOR USING PANELS

PROS:

1. Panels are a fast and fun way to make a quilt, Depending on the size of panel, just add a backing and binding can make a quick baby or crib quilt top. For slightly larger lap or twin size quilts add additional borders. Therefore, panels are a **QUICK** project to do.
2. The **DESIGN** of the panel gives the focus for the quilt. The design provides ideas for fabric colors, even hints on what type of quilt blocks to use (i.e. if a bear might use bear paw, if oriental might use Chinese lanterns, if baby quilt, use tumbling blocks)
3. Panels can be **FLEXIBLE**. The same panel can be used several times by just varying the type of border designs or finishing designs
4. Panels can also be **COST EFFICIENT**. Since most panels average 24" x 42", less fabric is needed to complete the design. This also prevents your stash from growing out of control since there will be very little remaining fabric left over.
5. Panels also allow you to practice your **QUILTING** technique. You can use the pattern on the panel to practice free motion quilting. Also use in **THREAD PAINTING**.

BIGGEST CON OR NEGATIVE: IS THE MATHEMATICS INVOLVED.
There are books and patterns out there to make this an easier decision.

HOW TO GET STARTED

STEP 1: Press and starch panel.

When working with panels remember, panels are **NOT STRAIGHT**. The first step is to "reblock" or square up panel design. The panel also runs very close to the selvage edge. So you might need to "cut into" the panel design in order to get it straight. If you do not do this step, then every border/quilt design added will make the panel skewed so that at the end, the quilt top measurements will be off. Caution: when trimming panel, be sure to leave 1/4" outside design if possible for adding next border.

MEASURE

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STEP 2: Always add an **INNER BORDER**. This further accents the design of the panel. NOTE: Make border bigger than desired so can cut down later to further square up panel or to accommodate the length of quilt block design..

STEP 3: Choose or Design a quilt block to add to either sides or bottom of panel. You need to make a sample or just one block so you can determine how many blocks are needed to fit around panel. Sometimes I do this step before adding inner borders to make adjustment so quilt blocks fit the width and length of the panel

STEP 4: Add any additional borders to complete size of quilt.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME PANEL IDEAS

1. Using **BORDERS**. Most panels use 1 to 3 borders to enlarge the size of the panel. Using different colors will enhance the colors in the panel. Instead of straight borders, you can add variety by integrating a stylish design to frame the panel.
2. Using **SASHING** and **CORNER SQUARES** around pre-printed squares is a common method.
3. Using **PATTERN** designs that may be purchased or free patterns offered by fabric designers such as Northcott or Hoffman.
4. Using **QUILT BLOCK designs**:
 1. Most common design is the **HALF SQUARE TRIANGLE**.
TIP: Using stripe fabric can make design look difficult.
 2. Another simple border design is used a **CHECKERBOARD** or **PIANO KEYS**.
 3. **DESIGN** your own block or use **TRADITIONAL BLOCK** designs. Some examples are:
 - a) Delectable Mountains
 - b) Shadow Box
 - c) Migrating Geese
 - d) or incorporate leftover blocks from previous quilts (i.e. X Block)

5. Using **CHARM PACKS**: turning 5 inch squares into a block
 1. Make into an HOUR GLASS block
 2. RACE STRIPS: Cut into 3 strips use 2 of same color on outside & another color in middle
6. Using **PRAIRIE POINTS** to finish off panel gives a different look. Doesn't have to be all over, just on end.
7. Using **JELLY ROLLS** make easy piano keys borders.
 1. But spice it up "varying" length of strips brings focus back to the panel (i.e. Brush Strokes).
 2. Jelly roll race along top & sides of panel (Halloween)
8. **DECONSTRUCT** the panel by slicing it into sections is a simple way to give the panel a different look.

WHERE DO I GET MY IDEAS???

FREE PANEL PATTERNS CAN BE FOUND ON

HOFFMAN WEBSITE. <https://hoffmanfabrics.com>

NORTHCOTT WEBSITE: www.northcott.com

KEEPSAKE QUILTING: [www.keepsake quilting.com](http://www.keepsakequilting.com)

JORDAN FABRICS HAS GREAT IDEAS! Free patterns & tutorials <http://jordanfabrics.com>

I KEEP A NOTEBOOK OF PATTERNS AND PICTURES TO GIVE ME IDEAS JUST FOR PANELS.

If you love SEEING these ideas from Cindy, go to the October Guild Photos to see her presentation.