

HALF RECTANGLE TRIANGLES

HOW TO SEW AND TRIM HALF RECTANGLE
TRIANGLES WITHOUT A SPECIAL RULER



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Learn to Sew a Half Rectangle Triangle (HRT)

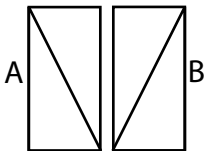
Please read this section carefully!

I have made a short video tutorial for how to make your HRT blocks. It is available on my blog at this link: <https://hopefulhomemaker.com/2023/02/20/half-rectangle-triangle-tutorial/>

Just like any HST, the half rectangle triangle pairs two fabrics the same size, and is made by sewing them together on the diagonal. However, to minimize fabric waste, we will be cutting our rectangles in half diagonally before sewing them together.

Because of its shape, the rectangle block can't be rotated to work facing any direction (this is where it differs from HST blocks which can rotate in any direction). For our project, we will be making both kinds of HRT blocks, meaning blocks with a seam running from top left to bottom right corners, and blocks with the seam running from top right to bottom left corners.

For our purposes in the Serve Quilt, we will treat our HRT blocks as standing on their short side, portrait style. The blocks that have seams running off to the left will be **called A**, and the blocks with seams running off to the right will be **called B**.



When cutting Half Rectangle Triangle blocks, your fabrics must always be right side up. If they are cut wrong sides together, then the fabric on the bottom will be the mirror image of what you need, and will be a waste. So ALWAYS make sure your printed fabric is face up when cutting on the diagonal.

****Note:** If you have not made a HRT block before, I HIGHLY recommend making a test block of each, both A and B, from scrap fabrics before sewing with your quilt pieces. To do this, cut (4) 4.5" x 8" rectangles and pair them into two sets of two. We will make one HRT block A, and one HRT block B.

To make a HRT block A:

1. Place the two fabrics you will use on your cutting mat. With right sides facing up, stack one on top of the other.
2. Orient the fabrics so the short side is on the bottom, portrait style.
3. Place your ruler so it is going from the top left corner of the rectangle to the bottom right corner. With your rotary cutter, carefully cut along the diagonal line.

4. Now separate the triangles and pair like fabrics together. You will see if you rotate them, they are the same.



5. The fabric you place in the bottom left of the block will be your foreground fabric, which in this quilt is the main star color. The fabric on the top right side of the block will be the background fabric. In the large star, this is color 2, or the background fabric. For your test blocks, it doesn't matter which you place where.

6. Take 1 foreground triangle and 1 background triangle. Flip the background triangle over so it is on top of the foreground triangle and line up the diagonal edge. You will see the long tails on top and bottom overhanging one another. Try to align them so you have $\frac{1}{4}$ " on both ends, but don't stress too much because we will be trimming. See photo below.



7. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " along the diagonal line, being careful not to stretch the fabric as you do. If you are nervous about sewing on the bias, you can pin this seam before sewing.

8. Press seam closed. Be careful not to move the iron around and stretch the fabric.

9. Open seam carefully and press again. I press my seams toward the darker fabric, but you can also press them open if you wish.

Your HRT **block A** is sewn!

To make a HRT **block B**, every step is the same except for step 3. For block B, you will place your ruler running from the bottom left corner of the rectangle to the top right corner. Cut along that line. Then follow the steps again to complete block B.



Trimming your HRT blocks:

Trimming HRT blocks is probably the trickiest part of sewing with the half rectangle triangle. The reason for this is all about seam allowances. Because the angle of your diagonal seam is not approaching the corner at a 45 degree angle like a half square triangle, you can't just trim these blocks with your seam going from corner to corner. It's all about the point $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from each corner, and having THAT point be correct. This requires trimming differently than most other blocks.

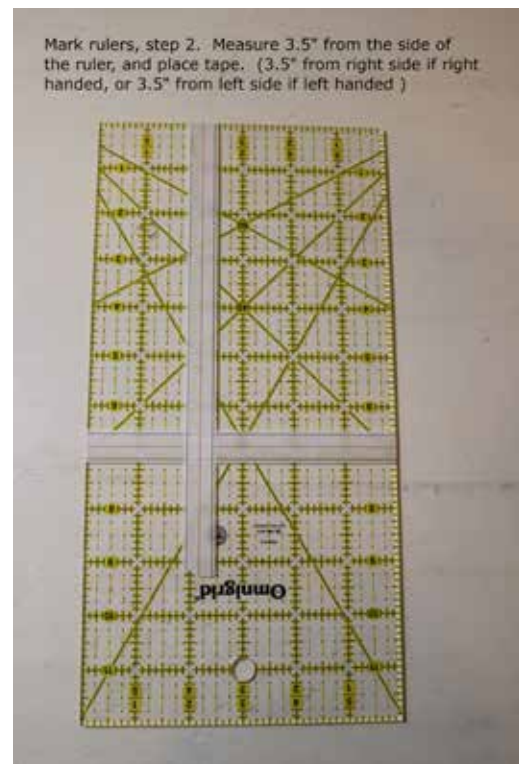
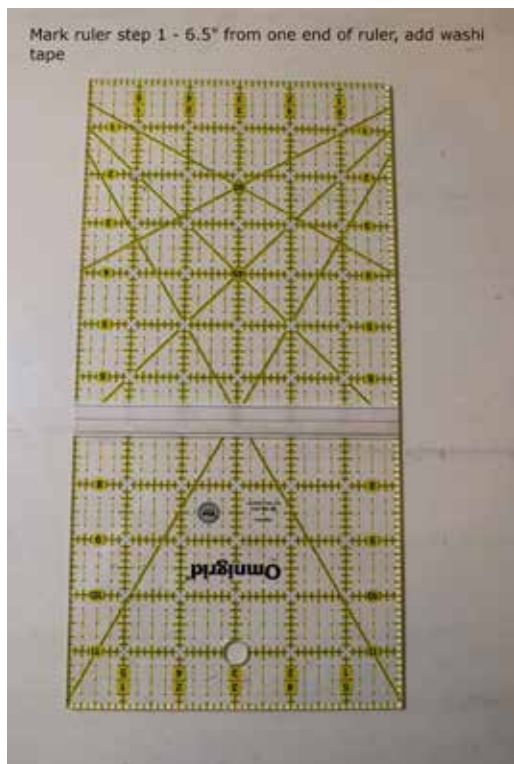
We are going to mark an acrylic ruler to create a "custom" trimming ruler for the HRT block.

You will need an acrylic cutting ruler that is at least 4" x 8". It will be easier to use if it is 12" or less long.

If you are right handed, you will want to work on the top right end of your ruler when it is standing on its short side, portrait style.

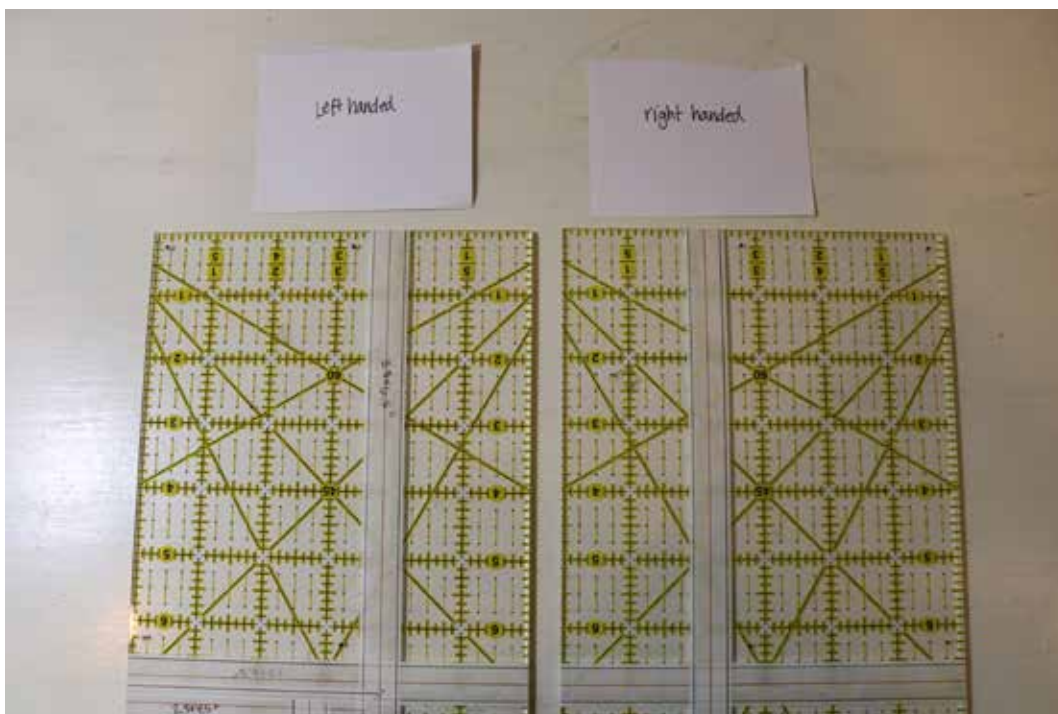
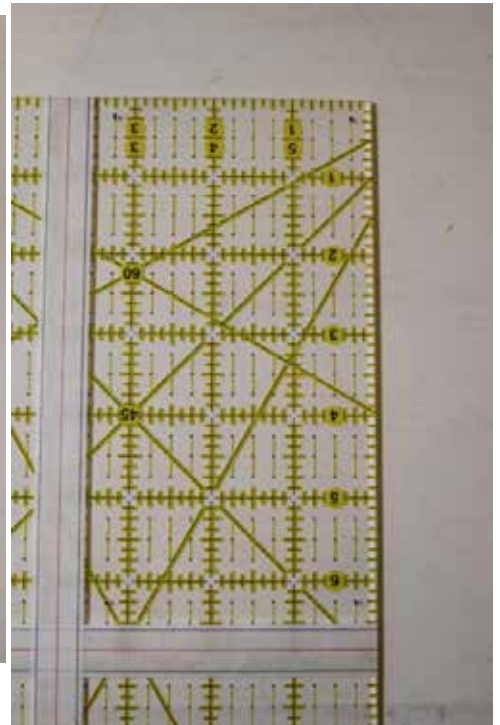
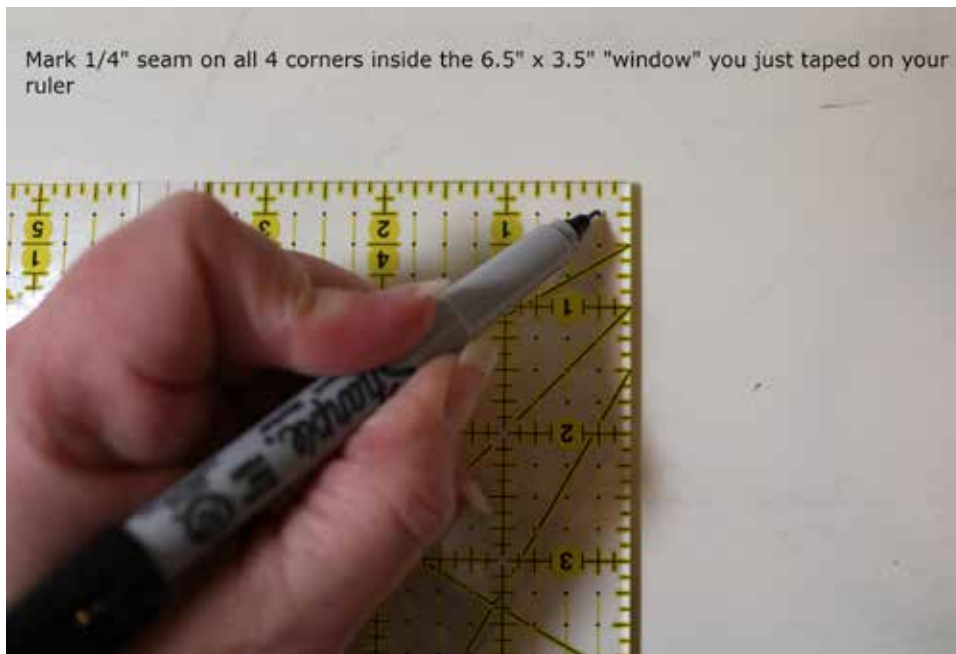
If you are left handed, you will want to work on the top left end of your ruler when it is standing on its short side, portrait style.

Beginning at the top end of the ruler, measure 6.5" down from the end of the ruler. With a permanent marker or washi tape, mark this line so you are creating a "window" on your ruler that is 6.5" long. (Note, washi tape can be removed when you are done with this project without leaving any residue on your ruler, and the permanent marker can also be washed off.)



Next, if you are right handed, measure 3.5” from the right side of the ruler and mark again, completing the rectangle. If you are left handed, mark 3.5” from the left side of the ruler. You should now have a “window” which measures 3.5” x 6.5”.

Now, take your permanent marker, and make a visible dot $\frac{1}{4}$ ” in from every corner of the window you just made. You have just marked your seam allowance point for both A and B blocks. (see photos below.)



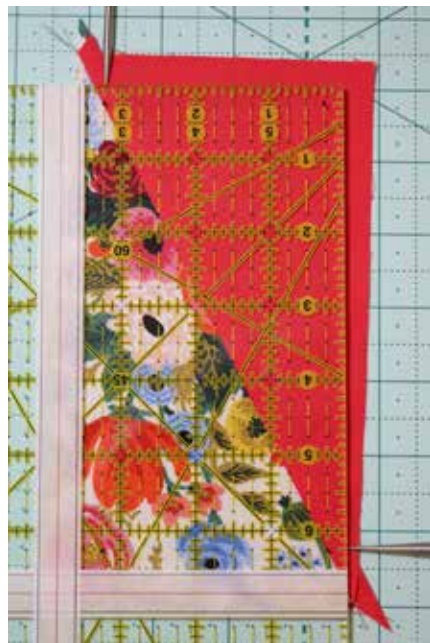
Now to trim!

Place your **HRT block A** on your cutting mat, portrait style, with short end on the bottom. Place your ruler on top, with the “window” over the block.

There are 4 things to check at this point:

1. Look at the top left dot you made for the seam allowance and make sure it is directly over the diagonal seam.
2. Look at the bottom right dot on your ruler and align it over the diagonal seam as well. You should see that your ruler now sits at an angle that isn't “square” with the block. This is exactly how it should be! The main thing to watch is keeping those dots lined up on your diagonal seam.
3. Make sure the window leaves fabric on both left and right sides of the block for trimming.
4. Make sure the window leaves fabric on both top and bottom of the block for trimming. These last 2 steps will mean sliding the ruler up or down slightly on that diagonal line, always watching the seam allowance dots in top left and bottom right corners.

When your ruler is in place, trim carefully along the two sides.



Flip your block, and line up again following the same guidelines. This time, the two sides of the block covered by your ruler should line up with the edges of the “window” you marked. When aligned properly, trim on the two remaining sides.



Your HRT block A should now measure 3.5” x 6.5”. You will see that on the top and bottom (short ends of the block), the seam allowance isn’t going right into the corner, but is 1/8” in from the corner. This is the proper seam allowance for a HRT and will allow your points to meet in the corners when the blocks are sewn together.



Now, repeat the steps for **HRT block B**.

Place your **HRT block B** on your cutting mat, portrait style, with short end on the bottom. Place your ruler on top, with the “window” over the block.

There are 4 things to check at this point:

1. Look at the top right dot you made for the seam allowance and make sure it is directly over the diagonal seam.
2. Look at the bottom left dot on your ruler and align it over the diagonal seam as well. You should see that your ruler now sits at an angle that isn't “square” with the block. This is exactly how it should be! The main thing to watch is keeping those dots lined up on your diagonal seam.
3. Make sure the window leaves fabric on both left and right sides of the block for trimming.
4. Make sure the window leaves fabric on both top and bottom of the block for trimming. These last 2 steps will mean sliding the ruler up or down slightly on that diagonal line, always watching the seam allowance dots in top left and bottom right corners.

When your ruler is in place, trim carefully along the two sides.



Flip your block, and line up again following the same guidelines. This time, the two sides of the block covered by your ruler should line up with the edges of the “window” you marked. When aligned properly, trim on the two remaining sides.

Your HRT block B should now measure 3.5" x 6.5". You will see that on the top and bottom (short ends of the block), the seam allowance isn't going right into the corner, but is 1/8" in from the corner. This is the proper seam allowance for a HRT and will allow your points to meet in the corners when the blocks are sewn together.



You should now have two different HRT blocks, each with the diagonal line going the opposite direction. You can see that these angles are mirrors of each other.

