

Inset Seams

A.k.a. the dreaded "Y" seam

Inset Seam—a seam which joins 3 pieces to one another, and looks like some form of a Y shape.

Tools: Sharp marking pencil

Ruler, 1" x 6" works great and is a good size for marking pieces

Method: mark your ¼" seam line on all pieces which will be involved in the inset seam. Mark only the sides involved in the seam.

1. Lay out all the pieces of your block. Determine where your inset seams are located and which pieces will be sewn into the inset seam. Pick up the first piece, turn it over, and mark the ¼" seam line on the wrong side. You don't need to mark the entire length of the seam but you do need to mark enough for your lines to intersect at the corners. Mark the wrong side of the second piece involved in the inset seam. Return pieces to their places in the block layout.
Hint: Carefully position ruler just slightly short of ¼" to allow a couple thread widths to be taken by the pencil line. This should aid in an accurately sewn ¼".
Hint: You must be consistent and accurately mark the seam lines so that all pieces will line up.
2. Repeat the previous step for each piece of the block, as determined in step 1.
3. Pick up 2 adjacent pieces to be sewn together. Line up the edges of the pieces with right sides together. Feed pieces under presser foot with the drawn line facing up, starting at the outside edge of the block. Stitch along drawn seam line until you reach the point where the 2 lines meet. Stop at the intersection and do a couple back stitches to secure the seam. Remove the pieces from the machine and clip the threads, but don't press the seam just yet.
Hint: Whenever possible, avoid starting the seam at the point where the 2 drawn lines meet.
Hint: Don't stitch across the intersection of the drawn lines. If you do, you will be stitching in the seam allowance of the next piece. When you open up the 3 pieces and press them, they won't lay flat.
4. Pick up the next piece to be added. Line up the edges of the pieces with right sides together. Carefully hold the first added piece out of the way. Stitch these pieces together in exactly the same fashion as in step 4. Again, don't press this seam.
5. To make the final seam in the Y, match up the two pieces to be stitched together. Fold the third piece as needed to keep it up out of the way. Stitch this seam as above.
6. Now it is time to press the seams. Lay your block right side down on your pressing surface. Finger press the seams to see which way they lay flat. Don't be afraid to try different ways of pressing to get flat seams. Try pressing a seam open to distribute the bulk of the seam allowance.

Special Case: When sewing a true Bow Tie block, you will need to start at the intersection. Slowly lower your needle into the intersection and take a couple stitches, including a back stitch to secure the seam. Be very careful not to stitch in the seam allowance at any point along the drawn lines. Use a couple more back stitches at the end of the seam to secure.