

THE QUILTY TRUTH ABOUT 1/4" Seams

Exact 1/4" Seams (including most 1/4" presser feet) do not allow for the thickness of the fabric and your sewing thread, and therefore will cause your **quilt block** to be smaller than it should be (no matter how accurately you cut, sew and press).

So, quilt seams actually need to be **Scant 1/4" Seams**, which are **NARROWER** than exact 1/4" seams ...but **HOW MUCH** narrower?

It depends on the fabric's thickness:

- Thin fabrics, like **batiks**, are so thin that exact 1/4" (8/32") seams actually might work
- Traditional **quilt-weight cottons** need to be 7/32" *
- "Thick" fabrics, like **flannel**, need to be a bit more scant, about 6/32"

Some say, "Just be consistent with your seam allowance." That will only work in some cases, such as if the quilt is made of all same-size squares (no small squares mixed with larger squares, or triangles mixed in) and all same-thickness fabric. The only way to know for sure, with the ever-increasing variety of quilt fabrics, is to make and measure a sample block, or a 3-strip sample, using your chosen fabric and thread—verify that the seam-to-seam measurement is 1/2" less than the strip's cut size, and/or that the unfinished block measures 1/2" larger than the intended 'finished size' of the block.

ACCURATE CUTTING and PRESSING are important, too! Pieces that are cut incorrectly won't work unless you adjust seams (do-able, but not fun) for the discrepancy in size. If a block has many seams, pressing the seams open (instead of to one side) will help the block lie flatter and also be more the correct size—experiment to find what works for your quilt. Steam-pressing seams can shrink fabric that has not already been pre-shrunk; try dry-pressing instead.

*Size of Scant 1/4" on Sew Easy Guides

available at SewTogether.net and at SewEasyGuide.com

Raw edge
of fabric

