

# Scrap Fun

Scrap quilts from the past were often made from fabrics cut from worn-out clothing. Every piece of available fabric was recycled into quilts. If you examine an old quilt, you will often find that even the smallest patch was pieced together from several smaller pieces of the same fabric to create a patch large enough to fit what was needed.

Today scrap quilts are often made from new fabrics. Sometimes the fabric is purchased as quarter-yard or fat-quarter pieces, and sometimes the scraps are left over from previous sewing or quilting projects. Sure, we still cut up worn-out clothing, but it is not our main source of scraps anymore.

A successful scrap quilt uses hundreds of fabrics. These can be in one color family or a mixture of colors. The design is determined by the placement of lights and darks. The key to success is in the mixing of different color values.

Before you choose a pattern, get your scrap collection in order. The collection process is fun. Sort your scraps by color, size, strips, stitched units, etc. You will soon see what your favorite colors are as that particular scrap pile will be bigger than all the rest.

If you have not been saving scraps for a long time, purchase fat-quarter pieces in your chosen color scheme. Look for these in bundles at regional quilt shows where vendors have done the work for you in putting matching colors together.

Visit secondhand clothing stores; look for cotton shirts and dresses which might yield a good assortment of fabric. Check out yard sales where it is possible you'll find a box of fabric—a real treasure.

If you still need a wider variety of scraps than your collection provides, swap with fellow quilters. Trade fabric in squares or strips, one for one. If you are a member of a group of 20 people and each one shares 20 squares of different fabrics, your collection will grow by 400 squares in one swap. If you are short on Christmas prints, for example, ask your friends to bring twenty 3" squares of Christmas prints to your next meeting. After swapping, you might have enough squares to complete a whole quilt.

Scrap quilts can be made in units or blocks. They can be tied together with a common background fabric or sashing and border strips. They can grow larger as you stitch, and running out of one fabric is nearly impossible, since no one fabric is important.

Whether you choose to make a small wall quilt or a bed-size quilt, if you have never made a scrap quilt before, you are in for a real treat. Set aside all of your preconceived notions about matching fabrics and color coordination and experiment. Enjoy the process—have some fun!

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