
Make a Modern Log Cabin Lap Quilt with Annabel Wrigley

Chapter 1 - Make a Modern Log Cabin Lap Quilt

Overview

(bright music) - I'm Annabel Wrigley, I'm an author, a textile designer, and a modern quilter from Richmond, Virginia. My most favorite type of quilt is a log cabin quilt. It's a really great way to use all your scraps and favorite little pieces of fabric to make something that's pretty simple to make but looks really incredible. Another thing I love about log cabin quilts is when you make a block, you're usually making it with one half light and one half dark. So when you put it all together, you're creating this incredible optical illusion. In this class, I'm gonna show you how to make a lap size version of my Picnic in the Park log cabin quilt. This is a perfect beginner-friendly quilting project, and I know you're absolutely gonna love it. I promise you, once you get started making these log cabin blocks, it's gonna be hard to stop. (bright music)

Materials

- The supplies you need for this project include our class PDF, some ironing spray or spray starch, a pair of scissors, a rotary cutter and a cutting mat, a seam ripper just in case you make a little mistake. I use a quarter inch quilting foot and it has a little guide on it. Some pins, sewing thread of your choice. I like a pale or neutral color. A bunch of fabric scraps. Rulers, I like to use a long one for cutting my strips and then a smaller one for trimming. An ironing surface and iron. And of course, we couldn't do anything without a sewing machine.

Plan design and cut fabric

- This lap quilt is made up of 16 blocks. And before we can cut any fabric, we need to really plan our layout. In the PDF that you'll be printing out I've included this coloring chart. I find it really, really helpful for planning your overall design. Remember, that one half of the block, and you'll see in this other fabric chart that I used for my quilt, you'll see that one-half is lighter and one-half is darker. So when you use your coloring chart, you wanna plan it that way as well. This is just gonna help you with your basic color layout. You don't have to put your fabrics on there or anything but just to get an idea a starting point of how you need to start cutting it. The great thing about a log cabin quilt is that you can create this incredible optical illusion, and you can just move the blocks around to create a different design. And I printed up three different varieties just to give you an idea of what I mean by that. You'll see these are all the same fabrics and they're all the same blocks, but they've been rotated differently to create a different look. This first one, you'll see that the center one is the lighter block, and then you've got these four darker blocks. And you really notice this more from a distance but I love the illusion it gives. This one, you are gonna have a dark with light stripes through it. I absolutely love that look. And then this one, I've just changed it a tiny bit to have four light block sections and then one central dark. It's amazing how just a little shift can make a huge difference. You're gonna be using different fabrics than mine, of course. So you might be thinking about how much fabric to get and how much to cut. What I like to do is cut a whole bunch of two inch strips of all my favorite colors. I want half of those strips to be lights and half of them to be darks. You can pull from your special scrap basket, or you can go and buy maybe just like a quarter of a yard of possibly a dozen fabrics. And don't worry about anything that's left over, you're definitely gonna use it for another project. You may wanna make your lap quilt into a much bigger

quilt or you may wanna make a whole bunch of pillows or other gifts for friends. So we're not using a ton of fabric for it since it's only two inch strips, but I think it's really nice to have a variety in front of you when you start cutting and sewing. I'm gonna cut a few strips of this fairy floss fabric for this pattern that I have in front of me. And if I look at it, I can see that I've used it two times in two blocks. So if I was going to be trying to work out how much I would wanna cut for two blocks using fairy floss, you would just need two strips that are the full width of your fabric by two inches wide. And that would be enough to do two complete blocks. You wanna make sure that when you start off cutting that your edge is even. Mine's pretty even right here, but if yours is not, I would start with a fresh cut and then go into cutting your strips because even the smallest amount off is gonna make a big difference in your finished log cabin. So I would just cut two of these strips for two blocks. You are probably gonna have a little bit left over if you were using these for two blocks, but that's okay you can set it aside and use it for something else. When you are ready to start cutting your first block, make sure that you take a really good look at your cutting guide and also pay attention to your coloring page. It's gonna help guide you along the way with what pieces need to be what size. I've laid out all the pieces, and pre-cut all the pieces for my first block. I'm gonna be making this one right here, and you'll see I have my cutting chart in front of me and I've turned it around in the way that I want the fabric to be orientated. So this two inch square in the center here is my center red square. And then this two inch square above it is my green. This is gonna help me when it comes to assembling. It just helps me to get an overall idea of what I need to do next, and it's gonna make your job a whole lot simpler. When I'm making a log cabin quilt like this one, I like to precut all my blocks and then put them in little piles and line them up all behind my sewing machine. It makes it easier for me to stay on top of everything. And honestly, I hate getting up and down and taking breaks when I'm really in the groove of sewing. So I think it's just a better way to do things but it's really up to you.

Sew log cabin block

- Now that we've cut all of our pieces for our log cabin block, I'm gonna show you how to sew them together. And we're gonna use this chart right here to make the whole thing a little bit easier. Let me show you how. I'm gonna be working with this printout right here, but you might be working with your coloring chart that you made. And I've got this little PDF here that you will have printed out. And I use this as a guide to help me work out where I'm attaching the pieces for each different block. So for example, this center, I'm gonna start with this center red block, and that's a two by two inch block. And I'm looking at my diagram here as well. The red square is here, and I'm attaching another little green square above it. So I've lined this up in the exact same way. So I have my red two inch square, and I'm going to be attaching my green two inch square. So I'm just going to line them up along that seam where I wanna join them, put a little pin in there, and then we're gonna be sewing that with a quarter inch seam allowance. Make sure to backstitch at beginning and end. (sewing machine beeping and whirring) When I'm making this log cabin block, I really like to press my seams open. I find that everything lays a lot flatter that way. Now, if you lay this in front of you and have a look at your little chart, it's gonna show you what we need to add next. So this is our green. We're going to be attaching greens on this side, and then after we've attached this green L, we're gonna be attaching the orange L on the other side. I'll show you what I mean. Have this little green piece here. We're gonna be pinning along this edge. And then take that to the machine. (sewing machine beeping and whirring) I love how ironing the seams open makes every join super flat. So if we look back at this again, you'll see that next we want to attach the orange rows. So I am

gonna start off with this smaller piece. And it is in, according to this, it is opposite the last one we just sewed. So I'm going to attach this. I'm just gonna take a look and see for a second that it's a little bit uneven. So I might wanna straighten that up before I add this piece. That's why I have a bit of a smaller ruler than my other one. And I like to go ahead and just trim things and make things square as I go along. It's gonna help with a more square finished product. Okay. So let's attach this orange piece, right sides together. (sewing machine beeping and whirring) Next, we're gonna be attaching our orange piece across this edge. If you get confused about what to do next, you can also look at your fabric strips, and they're cut to the exact size. So it will tell you where to attach by looking at those. (sewing machine beeping and whirring) So we'll look at our chart again and see what's coming next. We're gonna be attaching the butterfly fabric here. We're gonna be starting off, I'm just gonna trim that little top bit. When you trim, try not to take too much off, only where it's uneven. You don't wanna take the width down at all. (sewing machine whirring) Sometimes when you sew, you might accidentally push this open seam closed. I wanna show you what I do in that case. Just take my scissors, and I just do a little tiny snip right there, and that's gonna open that seam right up. So we'll be attaching our next green piece, be attaching on this side. So now we're gonna be adding the pink to this side. So you'll see, we add one full color, one full color, one full color at a time. Now, you could do it really scrappy and not have a continuous color there. It's entirely up to you. We're gonna be adding the pink on this side now. Now, you see it's hanging over a little bit here, so I'm gonna give that a little trim before we continue. It's nothing major. It's just this tiny little bit. We're going to attach a pink piece to this side. (sewing machine whirring) It's really fun to see this square start out just with this and start growing. Let's shift this around and see what's next. So we'll be moving on to our third row of green, and that will be this row right here. So we're gonna be using the minty, this minty solid color. And according to this chart, we'll be attaching it right here. (sewing machine whirring) I always like to look underneath, especially if feels a bit lumpy, just to make sure that that seam is really flat and open. (sewing machine whirring) I love looking at the back of this as we put it together. It's super satisfying to see all these seams laying so flat. (sewing machine whirring) So we are now up to our third on the pink and orange side, so we'll be attaching this orange color. You should really be getting the hang of this now. (sewing machine whirring) We're gonna move on to our last green side. If we're looking at it like this and like this, it'll be this one right here. But I can see that I need to do a little bit of trimming. We have just a little bit of orange overhanging here and a little bit here and a tiny bit of green here. And it's just great to keep everything square all the time. And you might've cut everything really precisely, but fabric can stretch a little bit when you sew it. So quite often, you might find it's just a smidge too long, and it's totally fine to just trim it off. (sewing machine whirring) I'm just gonna trim this edge right here because we're going to be attaching our very last two rows, and they're the pink. (sewing machine whirring) Just gonna add our final strip. Give everything a bit of a spray and a really good press. I really love to use a ironing spray or a spray starch on blocks that I'm putting together before I join all the blocks together, because it gives a real stiffness to the fabric that I personally really like. I just find it easier to work with the fabric that way. And I love to spray it before I trim everything to size. And I'm just using a regular ironing spray. You can use a spray starch, whatever you choose. And I've just decanted it into this continuous spray bottle. Now that you've finished your first log cabin block, you wanna trim everything and make sure that it measures about 13 1/2 inches by 13 1/2 inches. So you can go ahead and prepare all of your blocks, or for me personally, I like to do mine in groups of four because when I sew them together, I sew this grouping of four together in one go, then I do another group of four, another, and another, and then join them all together. But it's totally

up to you.

Sew blocks together

- It's time to assemble our first four-block section. And these are the four blocks right here that we're gonna put together. We've just finished this one and we're gonna start off attaching this one, which is this one on the chart right here. So I have them side by side, and I'm just going to pin them right sides together. And everything should line up really well because we've trimmed everything to 13 1/2 by 13 1/2. So, pin along this edge. And then sew it with 1/4-inch seam allowance. (machine whirring) Don't forget to backstitch at beginning and end. (machine whirring) You'll be ironing these seams open as well. Then let's join these two squares together, these two blocks. That looks right. And we're gonna pin them as we did with the last blocks. Pin them right sides together. (machine whirring) The next step will be attaching this top row, oops, turn that around this way. We're gonna be attaching these two, this top row, to these two, the bottom row, to make our four-block piece right here. I like to pin, I'm gonna pin these right sides together again, but I like to line up this center seam first. So I have the seam right here and this seam right here and I'm gonna just put them on top of each other and pin that. So we want that to be lined up as best as possible. And then, go ahead and pin the rest. (machine whirring) Sew all the rest of your blocks into four-block sections, then we'll be joining the top two sections, the bottom two sections, and then we'll be joining the whole thing together. I really like to join them in sections instead of in rows because I feel like it's a little less cumbersome for me, but it's totally up to you how you choose to sew it. I have my first two sections here, this one and this one, and I'm gonna be joining it down the center. So, you'll lay them right sides together. We wanna line up that center seam first. So pin that one. And then, you'll see we have these two seams that we wanna line up to join these center strips. We pin that one and then this one. And then you can go ahead and pin the rest. (machine whirring) And that's our first two sections sewn together. Now sew your bottom two sections together in the same way. The top two sections are sewn together and the bottom two sections are sewn together, and we're gonna join them down the middle. Just like all the other pieces that we've sewn together, we're doing this with right sides together. But we're gonna have a few more little seams that we need to pin really carefully so that everything is joined up. We'll start from this end. And I'm gonna be joining this center seam first and pinning that. And then, this seam. We're gonna move across to this seam now. And we only need to join this center one. And then pin your in between. I'm gonna move along to this last one. We'll start by doing that center, then this side seam. Let's take it to the machine. (machine whirring) Here's our quilt. It was definitely a lotta work, but I think you'll agree it was totally worth it. I wanna show you my finished lap quilt. I'll just move this one and bring this one in to show you. This is the same lap quilt, but I have added batting. I've also added a backing and traditional quilt binding around the edges. I quilted this one just with straight lines that are about an inch or so apart. I love the look of that. You can quilt yours however you choose. And you know what, you can even make it bigger and add more squares if you want to. But this size, I think is perfect for a picnic, perfect for a kid's bed, or for just curling up and watching your favorite movie.