

---

## Perfectly Pixelated Jelly Roll Quilt with Ashley Nickels

---

### Chapter 1 - Introduction

#### Overview

- Hi I'm Ashley Nickels. I'm a modern quilter and a sewing and quilting instructor. I'm gonna show you how to make a really simple and beautiful quilt top. This quilt top is perfect for precut fabrics, especially jelly rolls because jelly rolls come in two and half inch strips, and this quilt top features only two and a half squares. The other great thing about this project is that we're gonna use a design wall and I'm gonna show you how I use that to plan out my quilt top. Also, the piecing technique in this quilt top is really cool. I think you're really gonna like it because you don't have to use any pins, you don't have to trim any threads, and you don't even have to use your iron until the very end. This project is great for the beginning quilter and it's really fun and flexible because you get to design on the fly.

### Chapter 2 - Materials

#### Materials

- The size of this crib quilt is 32 by 53 inches which is your standard size for a crib quilt. And in order to make this size, you'll need 416 squares. I'm using this specific jelly roll which is the Michael Miller Top 40 Solid Jelly Roll. In order to get enough squares, you'll need to choose at least 25 of the colors from this jelly roll. You're gonna go ahead and cut your strips into 2 1/2 inch squares. To do that, you'll need your rotary cutter, your ruler, and your mat. Later on, you'll also need your iron and ironing surface. I always like to have a pair of snips on hand. You'll need your sewing machine with thread and I use a lighter thread and I also like to use 100% cotton. You'll need a 1/4 inch foot for your machine. Finally, you'll need a design wall. If you don't have a design wall, that's okay because I don't really have a fancy one either. Any sort of felted material will work. I actually like to go to the hardware store and get a table cloth because they have that really nice felted surface on the back and I just hang mine on the wall. That way you get that really nice sticky surface and you can take it down when you're done. It doesn't take up a lot of space.

### Chapter 3 - Design and Construct a Pixelated Quilt Top

#### Design wall

- Before I go to the design wall, I'm gonna show you what a jelly roll looks like. A jelly roll comes in this cool little package here and this is an example of a jelly roll. This one is a Kona Cotton jelly roll and how they work is they come in this nice packaging with the rubber band and I'm just going to take the rubber band off and it's a really cool process. You can kind of watch it unroll. These strips in the jelly roll, like let's look at this pink one here, this first one. The jelly roll strip is a selvage to selvage strip on your fabric which means that it's going to be anywhere between like 42 to 44 inches. And if you're cutting two and a half inch squares, that means you'll get 17 squares from each strip. And when I cut them out I like to obviously not do one at a time because it's going to save you a lot of time. So I cut about four strips at a time. So what I'll do is I'll take four strips and I'll start lining them up. Especially at one end first, I'll take a few more. And that way you are saving yourself time and when you have to cut out 416 squares this is actually going to be really helpful. So once you've got your stack of four, I start lining them up at one end and then as I work down I can straighten out the other end. But I'm going to use the lines of my cutting mat to line 'em up and I'm

gonna come over to this end because obviously you'll see that I have the selvage edge here so we have to cut that off. And I'm gonna take my ruler and rotary cutter, and you know keep lining them up. Try to be as accurate as possible. And then I'm just gonna use the lines of my mat. Once you've cut your selvage off, you're ready to make your first cut and I'm using the lines, but the lines of my cutting mat and the lines of my ruler. So I'm lining it up perfectly with a line over here and then I'm going to go two and a half inches and I tend to use the lines of my ruler to find the halfway. These rulers are really nice because they have a lot of grid lines so make sure it's nice and straight and you can make your cut. And so now you've got four squares cut out. Here I am at my design wall and the cool part about a design wall is that you don't have to use any pins or anything to stick your fabric up. The material itself holds the fabric for you and I have made a crib quilt size which is going to be 32 by 53 inches and in order to get there I needed 416 squares and I've arranged them in columns and I have 16 columns and I have 26 rows. To design my quilt top, I've taken my 25 colors and I've started to kind of place them almost at random on my design wall. I like to use a more random sort of pixelated design but because you're using squares, it's really up to you how you design your quilt top. And also, in terms of color, I have tried to create sort of a progression from light and then to dark and then mix in some other colors. So this is the process and this is the part I think that is the most fun with the design wall. Now that I have my initial layout on the wall, I want to mention too that this process can take a little while. You don't actually have a sketch, like I don't work with a sketch beforehand, I actually do all of my designing on the design wall. So this could take you a few hours to get all of these squares up on the wall and kind of see how you like them. So far I think what I like about my design is, I like that I have these lighter colors in the corners. And it kind of creates this progression from light to the more darker tones in the center and I'm really liking that. I'm kind of noticing over here, there's a section that I'm not a huge fan of so I'm gonna maybe do some work on that and see what I can change. You can kind of tell the overall design here. I've kind of created this like pink, maybe this pink sort of zig. It's not even really a zig zag. It's more of a zig but I kind of like how that happened and that kind of just came out naturally in the design process so it's really fun to watch that unfold on your design wall. So I think what I don't like over here is these sort of browns and grays. So let's see what I can do to break that up. Because it's towards the edge, I don't want it to be, I don't want to bring any of the really dark colors out so what I'll do is I'll look for a place where I see some more lighter colors and maybe swap those. So for example maybe I'll put that one there. And again, you can play around with this as much as you want because I kind of really didn't do much there. So what about if I did that. And then I don't really like those two stacked together so maybe I'll do that, that's more of a lighter gray. And then, let's take a step back and see. Yeah I like that. I kind of broke up the browns a little bit. And then, I think I don't necessarily like this sort of like really yellow patch. So let's again figure out a way to bust that up. For example, even just those two, for starters. See how we did. That's a little bit better. And even just switching a few like that might help. But see now I have three of the same in a row, oops. So you can see how fun this process can be. So I think I kind of like that and again this process is really interactive and you don't have to worry about messing anything up because this is literally your design and you haven't sewed anything together yet so it's really, you can play around. And I also want to show that, for example, even though I don't have a pattern here. I don't have a design and I didn't have a design when I started. You can see how I'm kind of isolating certain color tones together and that's kind of helping me to stick to my design, if we can call it that. So for example I have a lot of my aqua turquoise colors here. You can see sort of my lime green, chartreuse, yellow isolated here, and this is clearly where the pink and the magenta is. And then again we have another

like light blue area here. And another sort of lime green, chartreuse area here. And that's really helpful for me when I take a step back and I look and I can decide if I need to change something around to make sure that that pattern sort of stays true. At this point, I'm really happy with my design and it's time to start sewing my squares together. You're going to sew this quilt top together in two halves. So what you'll do is sew the entire top half from row one to row 13 together and then you'll sew the bottom half from row 13 to row 26 together. And in order to do that, we're going to use a really cool chain piecing technique and you're not going to actually use any pins, and you're not going to clip any threads during this process. You're gonna pull off the squares from each row and you're gonna pull them off in order like this and stack them up. But before you do that we are going to align our fabric according to the grain of the fabrics. So on each square, you'll notice that the fabric has two grains to it, and what I mean by that is that if we pull this fabric in both directions we'll notice that in one direction, which is this one, there is absolutely no give and that's called the true straight or the straight of grain. And this direction has some pull, you can see it kind of pull a little, it's elasticity and that's called the cross grain and because this has a little bit more pull we're gonna orient all of our squares this way. And I'll explain when we're piecing why I want you to do this but for now you're just gonna check each square. So that one's good and then my next one, I'm gonna just double check. So that's the really tough one and I want it this way, and we're gonna stack them in order checking each one to make sure that we've got the cross grain. You're gonna go ahead and take down that second column in the same way making sure that you check each square to orient the cross grain and then we're ready to take them over to the machine.

#### Chain piecing columns

- We're ready to piece our squares together, and it's really important whenever you're piecing a quilt top together that you pay close attention to your seam allowance. I'm gonna use a quarter-inch foot as my guide, and you really want to make sure you keep your seam allowance really consistent throughout this whole process because that's gonna ensure that all of your corners line up perfectly. This is my stack of squares from column one, and this is my stack from column two, and I've got them arranged with my cross grains all going the same direction, and what I'll do is I'll take my first two squares and place them right sides together. Now, keep in mind that this fabric doesn't have a right or a wrong side, but if you were using a fabric that did, you'd need to pay attention, and I'm gonna line up this edge perfectly, and I'm ready to start sewing. Like I said, I use my presser foot as my guide, and sometimes it's hard to start this row out at the beginning, so I like to make sure that I'm helping my fabric through. It looked like it went fine, so remember that you're gonna sew all the way down, being very consistent with your 1/4-inch seam allowance, and when we get to the end here, we're just gonna stop. We're not going to do anything else, and we're gonna grab our next two squares. So I'll take my next two, and again, same order, I'm gonna put column two on top of column one, make sure they're lined up, and I'll just lift my presser foot up and fit this in right there, again, very consistent 1/4-inch seam allowance, and then just continue to sew, (sewing machine running) and I get to the end, and I stop. (sewing machine running) So here we have our first two columns sewed together, and here you go, and again, we aren't gonna use our iron yet, so don't worry about pressing these. So now you've seen how I sew the first two columns together, and now, what I've done is I've grabbed my stack of squares from column three, and I'm gonna show you how I then attach that to what I've already sewn. So here I have my first row, so this was column one and column two, and now I'm going to take my square from column three, same thing where I turn it right sides together, and I line it up nicely, and keep in mind that the more

columns you add the more fabric you're gonna have, and just keep that in mind as you're sewing. You shouldn't have too much trouble. I actually really enjoy when it grows to be really big, and it's not too hard to keep track of, but just make sure that you know where your top and your bottom is at all times so that you don't sew anything together. (sewing machine running) What I'm doing here is a technique called finger pinning because, as you notice, we're not using pins to keep this fabric together, but you'll notice I've been using my fingers to hold the two squares together. (sewing machine running) I'm gonna go ahead and so one more column, and you'll continue until you've hit column 16, and then, I'm gonna show you how to sew the rows together.

### Chain piecing rows

- My little sample here is four columns by five rows, and yours is gonna look even cooler because you'll have so much more fabric. And this actually might be a nice time if you wanted to snip these end threads. It's not necessary, but you can if you want. Okay, but that's the only snipping you need to do. And now, I'm gonna show you how to sew these rows together. And I'm gonna take, this is row one and row two, and I'm gonna flip row one on top of row two. And the first one, the first seam here, I'm going to start. And I'm gonna decide okay, it looks like naturally, this seam is falling this way. So, I'm gonna take the opposite seam and push it the other way. And this is called nestling, and that ensures that you divide up the bulk of all of these seams. And you're gonna have to get kinda close, and you'll be able to see right where those two seams nestle. And with my finger, I'm just gonna hold it there and bring it to my machine. I'm gonna bring it here and I'm gonna make sure my finger kind of stays holding that first seam. And same thing, really nice, consistent quarter inch seam allowance. And I'll start sewing. (sewing machine whirs) And as I get closer, I can kinda peek to see how my nestle is doing. Okay, and that one I had already lined up. The first one is pretty easy. (sewing machine whirs) And now about halfway through, I'm gonna set up my next one. And you're gonna keep all of the seams in each row going the same direction. So, these are all going this way, so that means the ones on the underside have to be going to opposite direction. And the reason why we chose to align our fabric with the cross grain going that way is that if you run into a seam that is not quite lined up, you can actually pull on whichever side you need to to make those seams nestle. Okay? But ideally, you don't do any pulling unless necessary, because then you'll create puckering that's unnecessary. Okay, so that seam looks great. And I'm just gonna keep going. (sewing machine whirs) And same thing. Each time I'm gonna stop about halfway through, or even before, and set up that next seam. Again, these seams are going this way, so that means that my under seam needs to be pulled this way. And this one, it looks maybe like I need to pull slightly on my top row. Okay. And using my finger to hold it, I just continue down until I get to the end. (sewing machine whirs) So, here we go. They're all sewed together and look at that. Because we paid such nice attention to those nestles, all of our corners here are perfectly lined up. You'll continue to sew the rest of the rows together in the same way and when you're sewing row three to row two, I want you to take special attention to the way that your seams are falling. And what I mean by that is you'll notice when we sewed row one to row two, this seam is falling in this direction. So, we wanna keep that consistent. So, that means that in row three, my row three seams need to go up to make sure that these row two seams stay in that direction. Okay, so make sure you pay close attention to that for this seam and for the rest of them as you go. And you'll start to notice that each row, your seams will start to go in opposite directions. So, these are going this way, these are going this way, et cetera, et cetera. I'll sew this row together, and it's nice because I can see my first seam here so I can see which way my seams need to go. And again, really consistent, quarter inch seam. And then

I'm setting up my nestle before I get to my seam. (sewing machine whirs) I'm gonna stop, set up my next nestle. And this one looks like it needs some pull. You can see that these aren't quite lined up, so that means that I'm gonna pull a little bit on my bottom row, use my finger to hold that in place. (sewing machine whirs) Stop and set up my next one. This one looks pretty good. (sewing machine whirs) So, you can see what I mean about how the seams are starting to fall in opposite directions. So, this one goes this way, this one's coming down, now this one is going in the opposite direction. Your next step is to piece together your bottom half of your quilt top, and you're gonna do this in the exact same way that you piece together the top half. And you'll notice that it did take a little while to piece the top half, and so, the whole process of piecing this together takes a little time, but just be patient. I like this process. I actually quite enjoy chain piecing, I find it to be pretty meditative. So, I hope that you just have fun with it and it just takes a little patience. It's really important before you start to sew your second half together, you're gonna set this top half aside, but when it comes to sewing in the bottom half, when it comes to sewing your rows together, you're gonna make sure, it's very important before you do that, you're gonna check which way the seams in the bottom row of your top half are facing. So, they're all going this direction. So, when I go to sew, it's gonna be this seam right here. When I go to sew that seam together, I need to double check to make sure that I sew these seams in this direction so that when I sew these two together, those seams are nestled. So, don't overlook that step. And we're gonna sew this seam together, and this is exactly like any of the other rows that you sew together, except of course that those pieces aren't connected. So, just keep that in mind, but you're gonna make sure that these seams are nestled nicely. Take it to your machine. And you'll have quite a bit of fabric, you know, you'll have two halves of a whole quilt top here, so just be patient. Try not to get it too bunched. And just try to use your fingers to keep that seam nestled. And I like to take a little peek, make sure it's nestled. Keep my finger on it. (sewing machine whirs) And then stop and set up my next one. This one looks pretty good, too. And use my finger. (sewing machine whirs) Set up the next one. And if you were consistent with your quarter inch seam allowance, it'll really pay off because your corners will line up really nicely. (sewing machine whirs) And now we've got our entire quilt top pieced together. And our final step is going to be to press the entire thing. And before I do that, I'm gonna trim the little end threads all around. And this is just to clean it up a little bit. Okay, looks good. And now, for pressing, it's actually a really fun thing because we don't have to worry too much about it. We just have to press all of our seams in one direction, and I'm gonna choose to do them all this way. So, I'm actually holding on to the whole thing from one end, and just kind of going this way. And of course, you'll keep in mind that these other seams are already in opposite directions, so see how I'm just kind of guiding my iron to keep that in mind. You can see how it's already really flat. It's a really, really simple technique. And then, once I've ironed it down from the back, oops, let me just get this last one over here, it's a little bit off. I'm gonna flip it over and just give it a press from the front. And look at that. It looks so cool. And we're done. So, now that I've shown you how to make the quilt top, I wanna show you what a finished quilt would look like. I have here a very similar quilt top that I made with the same Jelly Roll and you'll notice that it's a finished quilt, which means that it is fully backed and has batting in the middle and you'll notice that I chose two different colors. And I actually, if we look at this side too, I have a third fabric on my backing. And I always like to play around with my backing fabrics, and these particular ones I just had in my stash. And so, you can also do that, and I liked how they were kind of complimentary colors to my front. I like to use multiple fabrics and colors in my binding. I just think it creates a really cool asymmetrical look. And then, you'll also notice that this quilt has a lot of machine quilting. I do a lot of straight lines with the

walking foot and I also use free motion to add more details. And on this quilt top, I've added these sort of scalloped parts using free motion. ^If you're interested in finding out more ^about finishing your quilt top, ^have a look in the Creativebug library. ^There are a lot of really great classes ^that can help you out. ^I really hope that you enjoy this project. ^It's a wonderful first quilt project ^and it's also a great way to use a Jelly Roll.