

Wonky Baskets

There will be six basket blocks that will be 6 ½-inches square (finish to 6-inches square.) (If you choose to make all of them...)



The measurements below are VERY approximate and given in the spirit of “Darn! I should have cut it just a little bigger.”

ALSO, although the instructions are written for a ‘full-width’ basket, you can play with the overall size once you’re comfortable with the process.



1. For one block, you will need:

- A 5-inch square of contents. DO NOT cut it in half.
- For the basket bottom: 3 ½-inch x 6 ½-inch rectangle.,
- For the basket handle: a strip 1 ½-inches x about 14 inches. DO NOT sub-cut yet.
- From the background fabric: One rectangle 3 ½-inches x 10 inches and about three-ish pieces 3 inches x 7 inches. NOTE: What you actually need is determined by the shape you choose to make your handle. These instructions are to make a 3-sided handle on a pretty much full-width (of the block) basket. If you are going to

make a 2-sided handle, you will need 2 pieces, but they will need to be wider. If you make more sides to the handle, there will need more of them, but maybe they can be narrower. Make the first of your blocks as per the instructions, but feel free to alter the other 5 blocks. You’ll figure it out! Welcome to improv!



2. Lay the basket bottom piece on top of the large rectangle of background fabric. They should be the same height or close to it. Put the basket bottom in the middle of the background.



3. Now we are going to shape the basket bottom. Let's plan first, before we cut. I want to make this basket close to the full width of the block, so I am going to use the whole width of the 6 1/2-inch wide basket bottom fabric. I also want to shape the bottom asymmetrically, as you can see at left.

Once you know what you want to do, use a ruler (so it's straight) and cut through both layers (basket and background) together so that the basket bottom is shaped as you want it and the background piece to go around it are shaped perfectly to the basket.



4. As shown at the top of the photo at left, remove the two sides of the basket fabric that were on the top of the background fabric and the center section of the background fabric that was under the basket bottom shape. You're taking away the parts you don't need.

5. Sew together what's left and there's your basket bottom. Save it for later.



6. Now we are going to shape the handle section. Using a ruler, trim the 5-inch square of contents fabric down to the shape you want. I chose a slightly skewed 3-sided handle shape. NOTE: If you look at the photo, it's obvious that the shape I've just trimmed down to has 4 sides, but I'm not counting the bottom edge, which will attach to the basket bottom and will not have handle fabric attached to it.



Go all the way around.

7. Now we're going to get the long strip of handle fabric and cut a shorter strip the size of one of sides. (We didn't cut the long strip down earlier, because until we cut the contents shape in the last step, we didn't know what we would need.). Start adding the handle fabric, log cabin fashion around the sides and top of the contents.





8. When you added the handles, the strips of fabric were all the same width. Maybe you want to add some more wonk to the handles. If you want, take your ruler and trim them a little to give them a little more personality. Just be sure to leave them at **least** ½ inch wide so they aren't entirely eaten up by seam allowances.



9. Now you're going to add the background fabric pieces to the handle section, again log cabin style, just like you added the handle fabric above.

Go all the way around.



10. And now for the moment of truth. You have to make the handle section fit the bottom section. In the traditional block, we were cutting parts to exact measurements all the way along, so you have a reasonable chance of having them fit together at the end. But in the wonky version, we've kind of eyeballed it all the way along. So NOW we have to pay the piper.

In the photo on the left below, (...actually on the next page...) in preparation for sewing, I have placed the bottom section on top of the handle section to simulate how they will be sewn together. The photo below right is the top and bottom sewn together and trimmed to 6 ½-inch square.

It might be helpful to look back and forth between the two while I talk about the sizing issues.

You are going to want to audition the possible arrangements as we work through the list below.

Before you sew the top and bottom together, here are things you want to think about:

- You want to look at how the handles will join the bottom. The handles do not have to be dead-on at the corners of the bottom. So what's happening in the left photo is OK with me.
- The seam line between the handles and bottom is approximately horizontal. Since there is a lot of extra fabric here, you can play around with this and tilt the seam line to increase wonkification.
- This particular block a full-block-width basket. If you make a narrower basket and have enough background, the basket doesn't need to sit in the middle of the block. You can play with that. If the basket is not the full height of the block, you can add background under the bottom so the basket floats.

- And most importantly, everything is probably too big. And I don't mean there is just too much background. The bottom and handles sections are probably too big as well. The width will be pretty good, but the height will be off.
 - At this point you want to have your ruler out and be measuring the height and width of the basket proper as you shift things around and audition the positions.
 - There are 3 ways you can deal with too tall:
 - Cut off the top, but you can only go so far if you still want to have all your handle.
 - Shift where the horizontal seam is, thereby changing how much of the handles and contents you see. (This will probably change how your handles meet the bottom.)
 - Or...chop off some of the bottom of the basket. Personally, I kind of think the handles and the contents are more interesting than the bottom, unless you've done something really fun with fabric or fussy cutting or whatever on the bottom. So my usual solution is to sacrifice some of the bottom, which you can see is what I've done.
 - Oh, wait there is a 4th option! You can just decide that you don't want to make your baskets fit and that instead you are just going to make the whole row taller. Hey, it's your quilt!!

