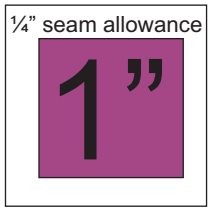
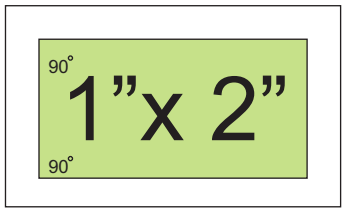
Suzie's Quick Tip: Seam Allowances

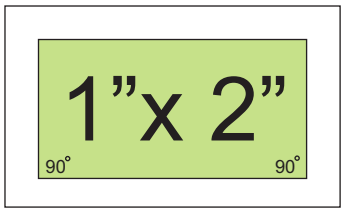
As I'm sure you all know, quilt blocks are sewn with a ¼" seam allowance.

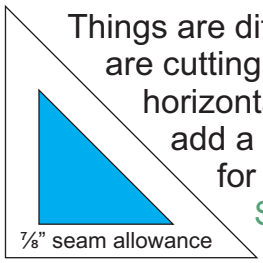


So, if you want the finished size of a square to be 1", you must cut out a 1 ½" square. If you want a finished square to be 6 ½", you will need to cut a 7" square.

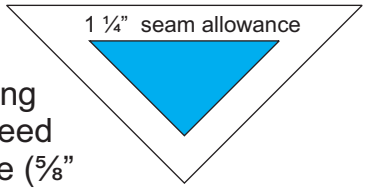


Think of it this way: you need to allow a ¼" for each 90 degree angle. A rectangle, has two 90 degree angles width-wise. You will need to add ½" to the finished width measurement: ¼" + ¼" = ½". Lengthwise it's the same situation: ½" is added to the finished length. This will give you the cutting size.

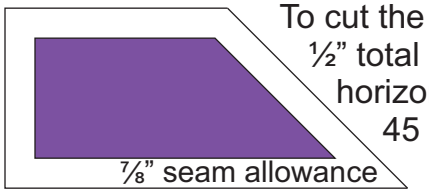




Things are different when you are cutting out a triangle. If you are cutting a triangle where the straight of grain is vertical (or horizontal) on the two shorter sides, you will need to add a ⅞" total seam allowance: ¼" for the right angle, and ⅝" for the 45 degree angle. By the way, this is called a Half Square Triangle because it's made by cutting a square in half diagonally. So, if you have a half square triangle with a finished size of 2", you will need to cut a 2 ⅞" square in half diagonally.



If you need the striaght of grain to fall on the longest edge of a triangle, you will need a quarter square triangle. It is made by cutting a square into quarters diagonally. You will need to add 1 ¼" to the finished size of the triangle (⅝" for each 45 degree angle). So, if you need the finished size of the triangle's longest edge to be 3", you will need to cut a 4 ¼" square into triangles diagonally.



To cut the Trapezoid on the left you will need to add ½" total vertically, and a ⅞" total seam allowance horizontally: ¼" for the right angle, and ⅝" for the 45 degree angle.

The Trapezoid on the right uses a ½" vertical seam allowance and a 1 ¼" horizontal seam allowance: ⅝" for each 45 degree angle.