

## Antique Braid Sewing Instructions

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The antique braid is a continuous block of interlocking small rectangles, forming a braid-like appearance. It can be made to any size you wish and is a common design in Japanese quilts which are hand pieced. These are the instructions I've prepared to explain how to machine piece an antique braid.

### Big Picture:

You will first cut all the small rectangles you expect to need; I used 2" x 4" rectangles in the sample pictured, but slightly smaller would be more delicate and more appropriate for some uses. Then you will build *regular two-sided braids from the bottom up*, as is usual... as many of these as you wish to ultimately have linked together. If one side of a braid will be linked in to another braid, then you will leave the last 1 1/2" of each seam unsewn on that side. Once all the two-sided braids are sewn, you will *sew together the two-sided braids from the top down*.

### Detailed Instructions:

1. Cut all the small rectangles you wish. I think at least 5 different fabrics need to be used to give enough variety in the braid.

2. Starting at the bottom, sew the tip of one rectangle onto the end of the side of another. Press the seam. Then, sew a third rectangle onto the pair of rectangles... attaching one side of the third rectangle to the piece created in sewing the first two rectangles together. Sew the braid as long as you will ultimately want, plus a few more for squaring off which will occur at the end. Note that on the side of the braid that will be linked to another braid, you will leave the last 1 1/2" (approx.) unsewn for the time being. If your antique braid will be only 4 "columns" across, you will have two

braids with the outside seams sewn completely and the inside seams only partially sewn. If you want six or more columns, the middle two-sided braids will have the seams on both sides only partially sewn.

3. When all your two-sided braids are sewn, you are ready to start joining them together. If you lay them out, side by side, you will see how they will interconnect.

4. At this point you will start at the top and sew the tip of the top rectangle (of the right braid as shown here) onto the end of the side of the top rectangle of the left and interlocking braid. Once these two have been sewn together, you move down, sewing that pair to the side of the next rectangle on the right. The resulting seam will then be sewn onto the side of the next rectangle on the left. You proceed in this way, working down the braids, sewing first onto a rectangle on one braid, then onto a rectangle on the other braid.

5. Carry on, until all the two-sided braids are combined into one continuous braid. Then square off the outer edges and you are ready to use the piece in your quilt.

