

Insetting a Shape into a Quilt Top

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Insetting a piece of fabric, of arbitrary shape, into another piece of fabric is a useful skill in quilt making. It allows us to create quilt tops with fewer seamlines or with apparently overlapping shapes. Here are step by step instructions, with photos to help your understanding!

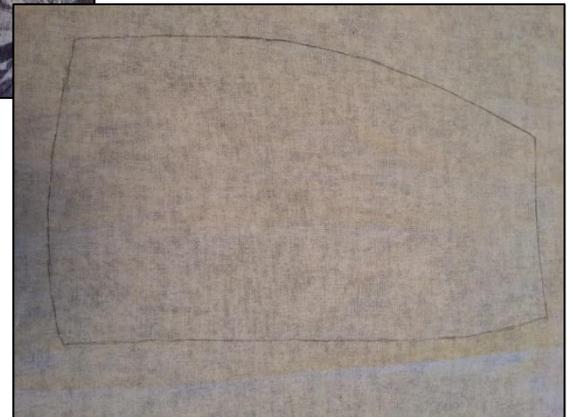
1. Start with your two fabrics...
2. Cut your shape from the fabric you are inserting. Shown here is the piece to be inserted, lying on the background piece into which I will insert it.



3. Turn your background piece right side down, and place the inset piece, also face down, on the background where you want it inserted. Prepare to draw a line around the perimeter of the inset piece.



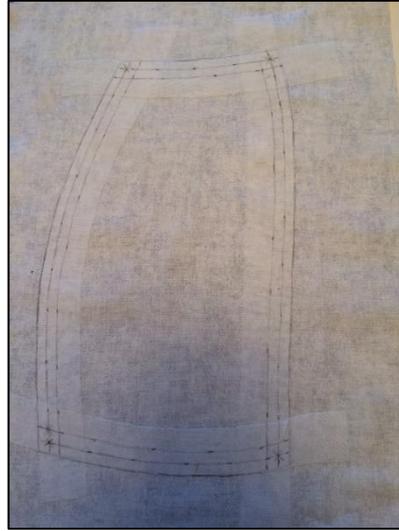
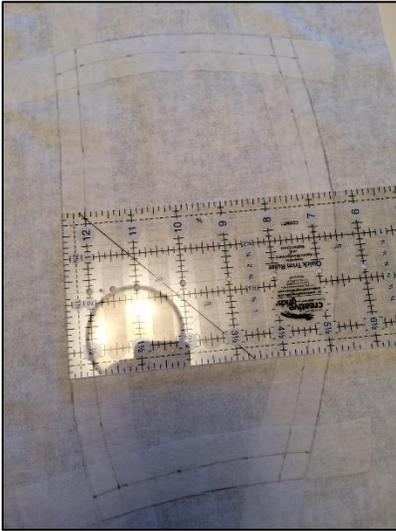
4. Using a marking pencil, lightly trace the shape of the inset piece onto the back of the background fabric in the location where you want the piece inset.



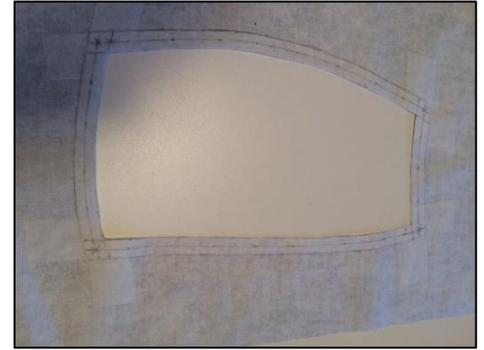
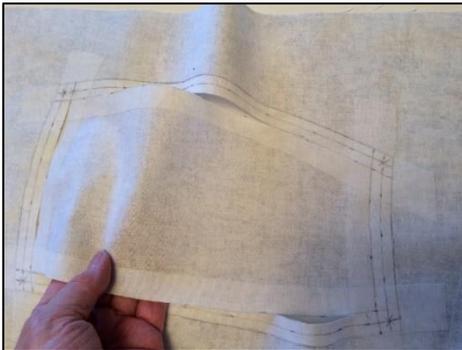
5. Using 1" strips of a lightweight fusible woven interfacing, such as Presto Sheer, apply the strips to the background fabric, lining them up with the tracing line as shown below:



6. Now trace two lines inside the perimeter of the inset piece drawn on the background fabric. The first line is $\frac{1}{4}$ " inside the perimeter. The second line is $\frac{1}{2}$ " inside the perimeter. **The first line will become your sewing line, the second line will be where you cut the hole in the background piece.** Mark the intersections of the $\frac{1}{4}$ " lines with an X as these are the corners of your stitch lines.



7. Cut out the hole in the background fabric along the lines that are $\frac{1}{2}$ " inside the perimeter line of the inset piece. First cut most of the line with a rotary cutter, then cut corners with scissors.



8. **Stabilize the sewing line corners of the background piece with a stay-stitch** and then clip the corners in to the sewing line. This completes the preparation of the background piece.



9. To prepare the inset piece for sewing, mark the four corners at a point $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from side and end. Make these marks on the right side of the fabric with a marking device that is not permanent. You are now ready to sew!



10. Align the inset piece with the background hole, right sides together, along one long side of the inset piece. Pin the two corners, aligning the X marks on the corner of the inset fabric with the X mark on the corner of the background fabric.



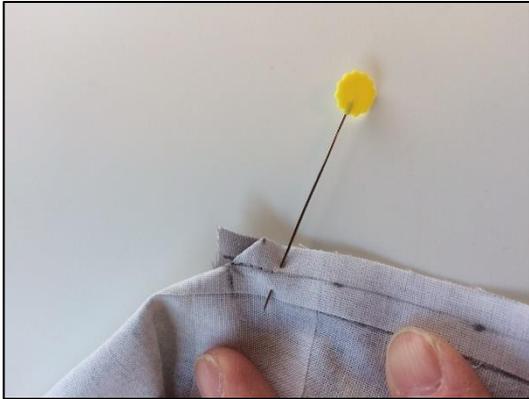
11. Keeping the edges of the inset piece and the background hole aligned, sew the seam along one side of the inset piece from X to X along the line marked on the fusible interfacing. You are sewing with the background piece on the top. Sew with a short stitch length, starting and stopping about 1 stitch short of the X at each end of the seam. Then position the opposite long side for pinning and sewing.



12. Pin the two corners of the second long side and once again sew along the $\frac{1}{4}$ " line marked on the fusible interfacing. You will then have two sides sewn together and will be prepared to sew the two short ends together.



13. Working first on one end and then on the other, align the X's, pin and sew the seams just as you did on the two sides.



14. When both ends have been sewn, press the completed piece. Press from the wrong side first, pressing so that the inset piece is flat. Then press from the right side. And you are done!

