

Sewing Exact 1/4 Seams

By Delores Simpson

Let's set up the sewing machine to sew an exact 1/4" seam, the standard seam allowance used for quilts. Some patterns recommend that you sew using a "scant 1/4" seam. That means to make the seam allowance about a pencil line's width narrower than 1/4". One quick way to check if your machine's needle is set at exactly 1/4" or scant 1/4" is to use a lined index card.

The lines on an index card are printed exactly 1/4" apart. Line up the outside edge of your sewing foot on one of the lines. With the needle unthreaded (why waste thread?) sew a line of stitches parallel to that printed line. You will easily see if you need to adjust your needle position one way or another. Keep testing on a new line until it is perfectly aligned. Once you've mastered the 1/4" seam, your blocks will have units with sharp points, and they will fit together perfectly when it's time to assemble the block or quilt.