

T-Shirt Memory Quilt

By Beth Persinger, APQS Retailer

Finished Size: 115" x 115"

- Please read ALL of pattern before starting your project. Look for information on resources for supplies, additional hints and tricks at the end of the pattern.
- This quilt was made from 15-inch finished blocks. I used "All Squared Up Tees Templates" by Trish Bowman to help cut finished blocks to size.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Rotary Cutter
Self-healing Cutting Mat
Tricot Fusible Knit Stabilizer*
Thread (I used 40-weight polyester Isacord)
Soft Fuse Premium Fusible Web (if appliquéing T-shirt logos in addition to pieced blocks)
Batting of your choice (I like Hobbs 80/20)
Pressing Cloth



NOTE: If you make very many T-shirt quilts, it is worth investing in a heat press to save a lot of time when adding stabilizer to each shirt.

FABRIC REQUIREMENTS: (ADD A FEW MORE INCHES FOR INSURANCE)

T-Shirts: 37 adult T-shirts were used for this quilt.

Bottom Blue Sashing: 1¼ yard

Black Side Sashing: 1½ yards

Burgundy 1½" Sashing: 1-3/4 yards

Piano Key Border: * Made from extra T-shirt fabric approximately 2 yards.

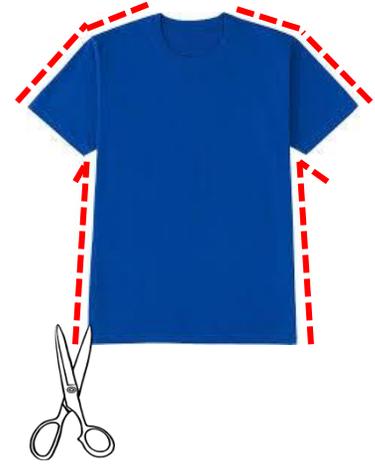
Binding: 1 yard

Backing: Approximately 10 ⅛ yards

Instructions:

Step 1: Separate the T-Shirt Front and Back

- Wash and dry T-shirts to remove dirt and stains.
- DO NOT USE FABRIC SOFTENER. This makes the T-shirts too soft to work with, and can prevent the stabilizer and fusible web from adhering to the fabric.
- Lay out T-shirt on a flat surface and smooth it out to create crease lines on the sides of the shirt.
- Separate the front from the back to have the useable part of the shirt that you want to include in your t-shirt quilt. Cut right along each side seam or crease line, then along the underarm seam. Also cut across the shoulder seams. You need two separate pieces, front and back.



NOTE: Leave enough space to square T-shirts up— at least an inch bigger than what you will be cutting off after stabilizing. The edges will be curling up. I also leave extra on the length of the T-shirt if making a piano key border (it is easier to stabilize the entire shirt section at once and cut the piano key strips later).

Step 2: Stabilize the T-shirt Sections

Hint: Stabilize all your shirts at once; it makes the assembly process faster. You can usually get about two shirts completely stabilized per yard of stabilizer. With smaller shirts, you can get about three.

- Cut the Tricot stabilizer slightly smaller than the T-shirt piece to which you are adding it. The stabilizer will gum up your iron, so don't get it on your iron or heat press.
- The stabilizer has a smooth and bumpy (adhesive) side. The bumpy side sticks to the T-shirt. Lay the stabilizer smooth side down on a table. Lay the T-shirt right side up on top of the stabilizer's bumpy side. Make sure Tricot stabilizer's grain runs the length of T-shirt, otherwise will it stretch out. (Top of T-shirt to bottom of T-shirt)
- Place a pressing cloth or another T-shirt backing on top of the T-shirt and heat set, following the manufacturer's directions.
- Take your time ironing on the stabilizer. Use a pressing motion and not a sliding motion. Hold your iron still and let it press for a few seconds in every spot, lifting and repositioning it until the whole thing is completely adhered. Check it from time to time

and see that it's attaching. You don't want it to separate when you are quilting and cause puckers.

Step 3: Cut the T-shirt Squares

I used a 15-½" template to cut the shirts for my king-size quilt. However, you can make your blocks any size you choose. If you change the size of the T-shirt block you will also need to adjust the sizes of your sashing and border strips accordingly.

- Use the template size of your choice and center it on your T-shirt, centering any image you are trying to preserve. Make sure that the bottom of your template is lined up straight with the bottom of your T-shirt. Trim the T-shirt along the edges of your template.
- When you're done trimming up all of your T-shirt blocks, you have a block that you can use like any other quilting fabric. It's square, it's stable, it's not going to stretch, and then you can do whatever you want with them! You can border each one, you can sash all your blocks, you can do a nine patch next to it, an hour glass or whatever you like to create your T-shirt quilt. If you choose quilter's cotton as a sashing fabric it helps stabilize the quilt and can make it easier to quilt.

Step 4: Add the Attic Window Sashing

The attic window sashing frames out each T-shirt nicely and separates each one, making each memory stand out. I add sashing to each block as I go; that way you don't have to deal with long strips of sashing. You just sew your blocks together and sashing magically forms!

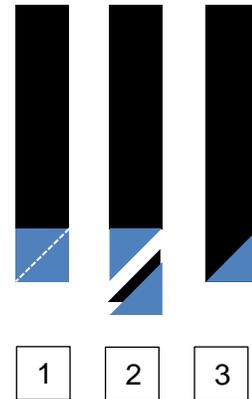
- Lay out your rows of T-shirt blocks as desired. Take a picture of your block layout in case you get blocks mixed up. As added insurance, pin labels (Post-its® work well) on the rows to keep them in order: *Example: R1 B1 (Row 1 Block 1)*
- You will need 3 fabric colors for your sashing, including a side and bottom sashing plus a small 1½" wide sashing. Light and dark colors work well to get the 3-D effect. (I used burgundy for the 1½" wide sashing, black for the 2½" wide side strips and blue for the 2½" wide bottom sashing strips.)
- To avoid wavy borders: when adding sashing to a block, the sashing should ALWAYS be on the top. Feed dogs take in more fabric, helping keep the looser-weave T-shirt aligned with the sashing strip. Cut sashing to desired length then pin the ends and middle of the sashing strip to the block. Make the block fit the sashing strip.

Bottom Sashing (Blue):

- Cut bottom fabric strip from 2½" wide strips by the width of your T-shirt block. Sew bottom strip of fabric to bottom of each block. Press seam to sashing.

Side Sashing (Black):

- Cut an additional 2½” square from BOTTOM (blue fabric) sashing fabric to use to create the attic window effect. Cut enough squares to equal the number of T-shirt blocks you are using.
- Measure the block WITH the bottom sashing sewn on. Cut 2½” wide side strips by the length of the block with the bottom sashing included.
- Before adding the side sashing you will add the 2½” square to the side sashing strip to create the attic window angle. This technique avoids having to use a “Y” seam. For efficiency, prepare all the sashing strips at the same time.
 - Place the 2½” square of bottom (black) sashing fabric on the side sashing fabric strip at the bottom. Fold the square in a diagonal as shown by the dotted line in Fig. 1 at right and finger press to create a stitching line.
 - Stitch along the creased line.
 - Trim off the lower right corner as shown in Fig. 2 at right.
 - Press as shown in Fig. 3 at right.



Step 5: Add Framing 1½” Sashing (Burgundy):

- Cut 1½” strips to be added to left side of each block using the same length you used to cut the side sashing strips. Sew these strips on to the left side of your block. Press seams toward the sashing to make the quilt top lay flatter.
- Measure the bottom of your T-shirt block, including the newly added 1½” side sashing. Cut additional 1½” strips for the bottom of each block and sew these to the bottom of your block
- When your blocks are sewn together, you will also need to cut one long strip 1½” wide that will go across the top of the very top row.
- In addition, you will need to cut an additional long 1½” wide strip to add to the right side of the far right side of the blocks when they are sewn together.

Step 6: Cut Piano Key Border

- After they are stabilized, cut 3” strips across the width of the bottom of the T-shirt remaining pieces. Sub-cut these strips into individual “keys” for the border. (I used 3½” wide “keys” since my quilt is so large.) Sew the keys together to create four strips—one for each side of your quilt.
- Stay stitch 1/8” along sewn edges to keep the seams from popping apart.

Step 7: Sew Blocks Together and Add Borders

- Use the map or photo you created to sew your T-shirt blocks together.
- Add the 1½” long border strips to the top of the assembled blocks as well as the right side of the assembled blocks.
- To add the piano key border, measure across the middle of your quilt to determine the correct length for each border. Sew strips end to end to desired length. Match ends and middle and pin in place. Whichever side is a little wavy, put that side next to feed dogs to take in the fullness. When the side borders are on, add top and bottom borders in same manner, measuring down the center of quilt turned sideways WITH side borders included.

Hints, tricks and tips:

Stabilizer

- Bosal Tricot works best (doesn't bubble back up) or
- Joann's knit Tricot EK130 Easy-Knit® is a fusible knit interfacing that also works. However, you might need to reheat it as sometimes it might bubble up.

All-Squared Up Tees Templates

- Trish Bowman's templates go from 4½” to 16½” and are available at www.trishbowman.com.
- As an alternative, you can get a piece of Plexiglas® cut to the size you need at your hardware store. Use a permanent marker to mark the center points on each side of the template for centering your design. Drill a hole in the top for hanging on the wall to store template.

“Webbing the Blocks”

- When I put the top together, I “web” the blocks to keep in order. This special chain-piecing process keeps all the columns and rows together by leaving the connecting threads intact. For more information about this technique visit [Bonnie Hunter's blog](#).