

Rule Your Quilt

By Angela Huffman | APQS Educator & Dealer

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Adding Spice with Scallop and Arc Machine Quilting Templates

Machine quilting with templates can add spice and variety to your quilt tops. The best news is that it isn't hard to do! So what is the difference between a machine quilting ruler and a machine quilting template? Typically rulers that have a specific shape to them are called templates and rulers that are a more fundamental geometric shape are simply called rulers in the machine quilting world. No matter what you call them, they are a great way to kick your skills up a notch and add some zing to your quilting!

First, you'll need to pop your ruler foot onto your domestic sewing machine or your longarm machine. These special feet have a high wall around the needle allowing you to nudge up a quilting ruler to its side safely. Be sure you are using a template made for quilting as it is thicker than a piecing ruler to allow the foot of the machine to bump up against it without hopping over it. For a domestic sewing machine you'll place the machine in free motion mode by dropping the feed dogs and you'll move the ruler with the fabric along the edge of the foot at an even pace to keep your stitches consistent.



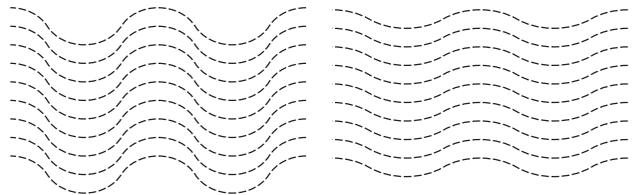
Photos by Kelsey Williams.
Quilts pieced by Melanie Peterson

If you have a longarm quilting machine you'll want to use a ruler base and when using a longer template like this be sure to move your hand down the ruler as you go to keep it stable and safe. Hold the template with even pressure with your non-dominant hand as you guide the machine with your dominant hand down the

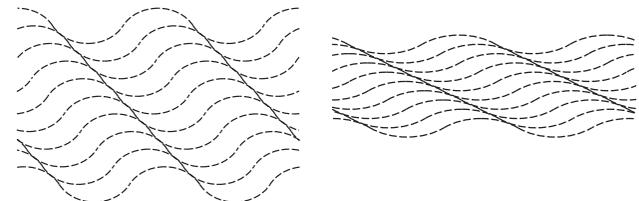
edge of the template. Do keep your stitch regulator on so your stitches remain even. That way all you need to do is focus on your design. Don't forget the outside edge of the ruler foot is $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the needle so you'll need to compensate for that when placing the template into position.

TIP: Stitch in the ditch first to stabilize the space before stitching your motifs in order to keep things stable and square.

Waving In The Wind: While you can use templates for blocks and border designs, you can also use them for all over, edge to edge designs as well. In this case I wanted to invoke a flag waving in the wind on my patriotic tumbler blocks so I used a scallop ruler to give me the undulating curves down the length of the quilt. I could have taken the time to line up my scallops and space them evenly which would have given me a design with parallel curves. The scallop ruler has a deeper arc side and a more shallow arc side which give completely different looks. For my quilt, I chose to be a bit more arbitrary and used a variety of spacings



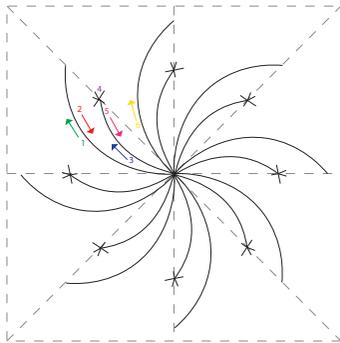
between the lines of stitching. Depending on which side of the ruler I used and how closely I spaced the lines, I could get one of these looks. Instead, I randomly placed the scallop template down in a slightly different



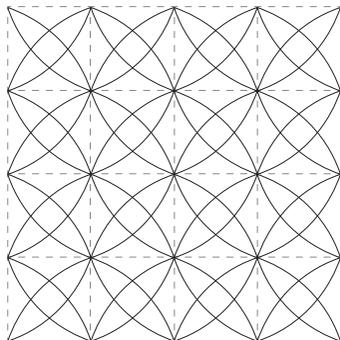
spot with each pass which adds more personality to the curves. Don't you love the random flow to the quilting?



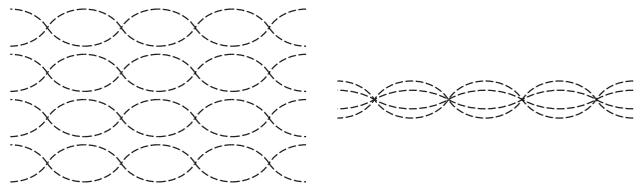
Firework Motif: Of course you can use machine quilting templates for specific block motifs, too. In this case I wanted to enhance the patriotic theme of my table runner with a spinning firework. I chalked out dividing lines on my fabric so I had targets for each branch of my curve from the center point. Using an arc template I stitched up the arc to the dividing line and then stitched back along that same line to return to the center. By rotating the template slightly I made a smaller arc under it and, for fun, I added little free motion spikes for some sparkle on my firework. Then, I headed back to the center to do the next branch.



Star Grid: The center of the table runner is a 16 patch. I used the arc to flow through the center of each patch twice which adds an easy star grid design. If you'd like to see the continuous path I took to stitch this whole 16 patch out in one pass be sure to take look at the downloadable student pack linked to below.



Scallop Border Echoed With Fill: One of the great advantages to using rulers and templates is that you can divide a space up and then fill it with a bit of free motion quilting to really make your designs sing. In this case you'll start with a scallop or arc ruler down the center of the border and make a second pass on the opposite side. If you are using a scallop template that has two different sizes you can stitch each side to



create a double scallop that is beautiful. To better fill out my smaller border I echoed both sides of the arc. I wanted to spice this up a bit by using a free motion filler inside the pointed elliptical shapes to really add



depth to my border. I filled the shapes with ribbon candy but you could use any small filler you like including a simple meander. Imagine this in a golden metallic thread on my firework themed table runner.

If you'd like to see how to accomplish other block designs along with worksheets so you can play with these designs yourself on paper, please download the free student bundle at <https://bit.ly/2TQJZg6>

Angela Huffman is an APQS educator and dealer who is located in Louisville, Kentucky where she operates the APQS Louisville Store and her Quilted Joy quilting studio and machine quilting training center. Contact Angela at angela@apqs.com.