

AMERICAN PIE DESIGNS BY MELANIE PINNEY

... where imagination waits to meet you!

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Eliminate Shrunken or Distorted Blocks

Since I do not usually pre-wash my fabrics, one of the problems I encountered when I first began quilting was my blocks usually came out small or a bit distorted. This happened no matter how careful I was with my seam allowances (I always use a scant 1/4" seam, never a true 1/4" seam). Because of this, it was a hard job to square up my quilt blocks before joining them together, and I was always mystified as to why the problem occurred. Whether or not you pre-wash your fabrics, this tip will ensure your blocks are square and perfect every time!

Hey Girl, What's Happening? The reason for shrunken or distorted blocks is surprisingly simple: As you assemble the block, each individual section shrinks a tiny bit due to the heat and/or steam from your iron, and by the time the block is finished it can be off by as much as 1/4" to 1/2" inch!

How Do you Fix This? Fabric sizing (not fabric starch) will make a huge difference in your quilting! Before cutting your fabric, spray the back with a generous amount of sizing spray and iron it dry. This simple trick will pre-shrink and stabilize the fabric so you can cut and piece it easily (the edges will not fray as much either). Even if it is your custom to pre-wash fabric, the use of sizing will make a big difference in the finished quality of your quilt top. Be sure to use sizing and not starch, as starch is too stiff and can leave a white residue on your fabric.

Happy Quilting!