

Simple tricks for stitching accurate patches

Getting patches square and the same size seems to be an ongoing challenge of quilters.

Here are a few things you can do to check and improve the accuracy of your stitching:

- Watch the cut edges of your patches as you are sewing on the machine - instead of watching the needle. By focusing on the edge of the fabric, and making sure that it lines up with your mark of a 1/4 inch seam allowance (whether that is tape on your throat plate or a presser foot), you will be more likely to see when your sewing is accurate.
- If a seam is longer than 2 to 3 inches, pin along the seam before you sew - not just at the beginning or the end. That will stabilize the fabrics, and you will be more likely to sew both fabrics an even 1/4 inch away from the edge.
- When sewing angled, pointed pieces (such as diamonds or triangles), start with the wide end first. That way, the skinny tip is less likely to get eaten by the feed dogs (after all, they are pretty hungry).
- When beginning chain sewing, start with a scrap of fabric, and then add your first pair of patches after you sew through the scrap. Continue sewing the patches in the chain, and then add the scrap as the last piece in your chain. That way, you always have a scrap ready to begin a new chain.