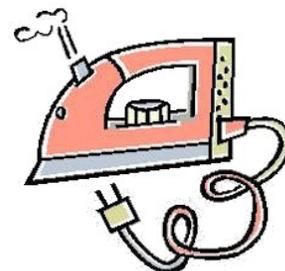


Ironing & Pressing

Ironing and pressing are often used interchangeably, but are actually two separate techniques.

Ironing is the back and forth sliding motion most of us are familiar with and do regularly at home.

Pressing is the placing of the iron on the fabric, holding it there, and then removing.



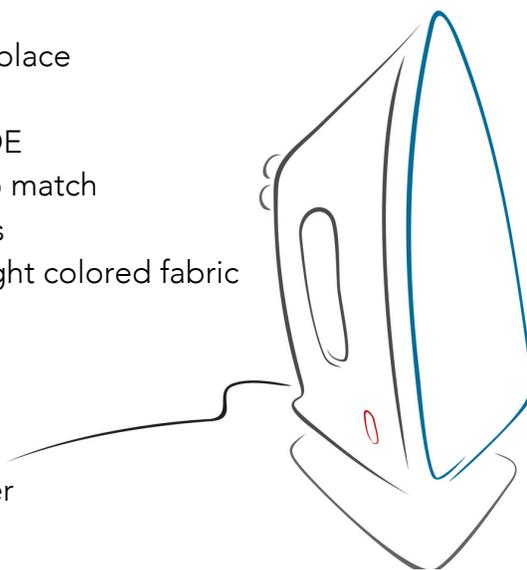
To steam or not to steam?

A dry iron is best used during the construction of blocks.

To help set the seams, blocks, sashings and borders, steam the quilt top at the very end, letting the quilt completely dry and cool before moving. Some quilters will spray a light coating of spray starch during the final pressing using a dry iron.

Pressing Quilt Seams

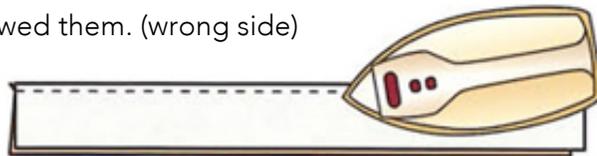
1. Setting the stitches
Pressing seam closed first sets stitches in place
Makes seam nice & flat
2. Pressing seam allowance to the DARK SIDE
Creates nested seams, which are easier to match
Stronger, hold up better than open seams
Seam allowance does not show though light colored fabric
Allows for quilting in the ditch
3. Pressing seam allowance OPEN
Block sits flatter
Sharper half-square triangle points
Machine quilting easier because it is flatter
4. Pressing seam intersections open
Reduces bulk at intersections
Minimizes layers of fabric



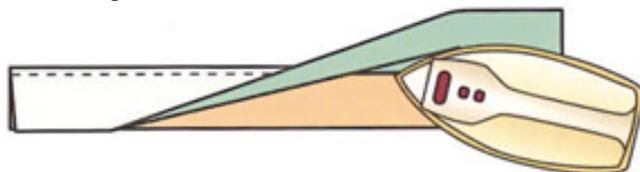
How to Press Quilt Seams

Excerpted from [The Quilter's Quick Reference Guide](#) by Candace Eisner Strick

Set the Seam: pressing the joined pieces just as you sewed them. (wrong side)

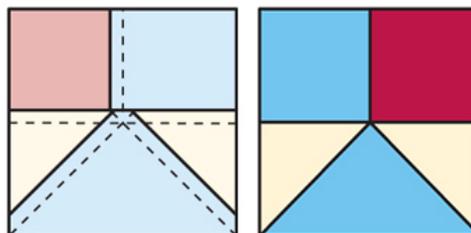


Press to Dark Side: press darker fabric over seam allowance. (right side)



Some seams gravitate toward a certain side.

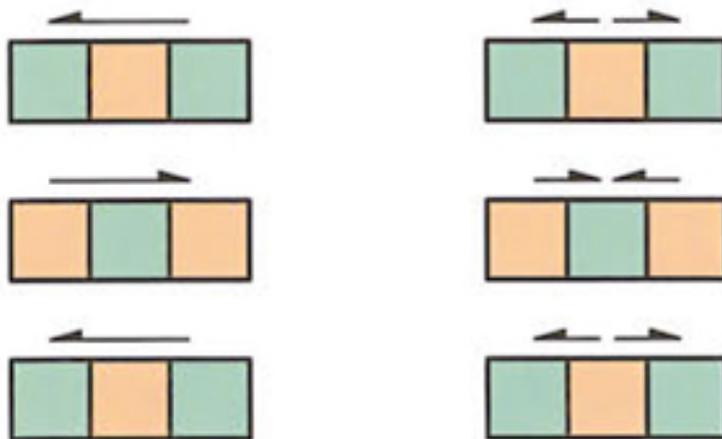
- blue square to pink square,
- blue triangle to yellow triangles,
- yellow & blue triangle to pink & blue squares



Plan for Pressing

Having a pressing plan before you begin sewing will be helpful in making sure your seams butt neatly at intersections, thus allowing the finished quilt top to lie flat and smooth.

One option is to press all the seams in the first row to the left, all the seams in the second row to the right, and all the seams in the third row to the left. Notice that this does not follow the rule of pressing toward the dark, which we said isn't always possible. However, in this situation, it is possible to press all seams toward the darker fabric, and it's a good second option.



Left: pressing alternate rows in opposite directions. Right: pressing toward the dark fabric.