

Buckeye Beauty block

This block is also known as *Double Four Patch*, *Gay Scrap Quilt*, *Going to Chicago*, *Hour Glass*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *New Four Patch*, *Railroad*, *Railroad Crossing*, and *World's Fair*.



This block requires a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam throughout. If you are not sure about that, cut pieces slightly larger than the instructions and trim to the right size at each stage.

Test your $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam

With your machine set up for a piecing a standard patchwork block, but the machine *unthreaded*, place a piece of paper as if it were fabric and "stitch" a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Remove the paper from the machine and use a ruler to measure the distance from the edge of the paper to the stitching line. Write the measurement on the piece of paper.

If necessary, adjust your machine to achieve a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam and write on the paper what you had to do to get the $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. If your machine allows, moving the needle one place to the left or right may be sufficient. If you cannot adjust the needle position, draw a fine line $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge of a piece of and place your needle on the line. Use several lengths of painter's tape to create a "lip" to build a guide against which you will put your fabric.

Scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam

A scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam is very slightly less than $\frac{1}{4}$ ". A relatively easy way to achieve this is to move your needle position one position to the right of the standard $\frac{1}{4}$ ". This will give you just a little bit of leeway to trim and ensure that the block will measure the correct size when pressed.

If you are unable to move the needle position, make an "edge" using painter's tape to use as a guide.

Pressing

All seams in this block will be pressed **open**.

Fabric requirements – medium to dark blues and white or white-on-white

Press all fabrics before cutting.

For each block you will need:

- Four $2\frac{1}{2}$ " blue squares. These can be a variety of blues, and patterned is fine so long as the predominant colour is a medium to dark blue
- Four $2\frac{1}{2}$ " white or white-on-white squares. They do not all need to be of the same fabric
- One 5" blue square. Patterned is fine, providing the predominant colour is a medium to dark blue
- One 5" white or white-on-white square

Stitching the block

We shall be stitching with scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams, so a stitch length of a minimum of 2.1 is recommended.

1. Half square triangles

Using a fine pencil, draw a diagonal line, corner to corner, on the back of the white or white-on-white square. Place this square on top of the blue 5" square, right sides facing, and pin to hold in place. If you pin away from the line, you'll be able to leave the pins in as you stitch. Stitch a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " either side of the drawn line.



Cut along the drawn line to give two half-square triangles. Press to set the seam, then carefully place the block between your thumbnail and finger and run your nail along the seamline to open it out. Press the seam open. Press from both the top and the underneath of the block.

Trim each block to $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". Place the half-square triangle on your cutting mat and place the 45° line of your ruler along the seam line. Press down firmly on the ruler and trim two sides. Rotate the block and line up the trimmed edges against the $4\frac{1}{2}$ " line on the ruler and trim the remaining two edges.



Repeat for the other half-square triangle and you should now have two perfect $4\frac{1}{2}$ " HSTs.

2. Four patches

Take two $2\frac{1}{2}$ " blue squares and two $2\frac{1}{2}$ " white squares and make a four-patch block. Repeat to make two four-patch blocks.

Press all seams open. This is time-consuming, but it is easiest in the long run to press after stitching each seam; you will get beautifully flat blocks if you do.

Trim; you will be removing just a sliver of fabric from each side. Each finished four-patch block should measure $4\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Assembling the Buckeye Beauty block

Place the half-square triangle blocks diagonally opposite each other with the blue pointing towards the centre, and then place the four-patch blocks so that the coloured squares are in the top left and bottom right corners – the blue squares touch the blue triangles.

Stitch each four-patch block to a half-square triangle block. Press the seams open.

Check that your block is correctly oriented; if not, reach for your seam ripper!

Join the two units together and press the seam open.



You now have a lovely *Buckeye Beauty* block that measures 8½”.

Swapping fabrics

Before stitching another block, consider swapping fabrics with another quilter. Just swapping one fabric in each block will create a completely different look.