

Prairie Points
part 1

Table of Contents

Prairie Points

- individually made
 - Corner Fold 4
 - Center fold 4
- strip pieced 7
- continuous pieced
 - nested 1 color 10
 - Alternating 2 color 13

Alternative Finishes - Beyond Basic Binding

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Prairie Points (overview)

In my not-so-humble opinion, prairie points are a delightful, unusual way to finish a quilt edge. In my research, I have discovered a plethora of ways to make them. Who knew there were so many? :-)

Prairie points are an inserted edge finish, meaning that you need a seam so you can insert them between the top and the backing. The final result can be prairie points of different colors, all the prairie points the same color, they can be alternating colors, they can have a contrasting piping strip and they can be reversible. They can even be different heights. The techniques result in the same final appearance but construction details differ. Prairie points over 2-3/4" high tend to flop over. Pay attention to the scale of the prairie points with respect to the size of the quilt.

Finishing on the back side can also be done in at least 3 different ways: the traditional turned edge finish, envelope/pillowcase and the use single or double fold binding for a decorative border. If you're going to be using the turned edge finish, the quilt sandwich should be fully quilted, leaving at least 3/4" unquilted along the sides.

Here is a picture of four different prairie point effects. Instructions for all techniques are in the following 2 separate handouts.



4 different kinds of prairie points

Reverse side

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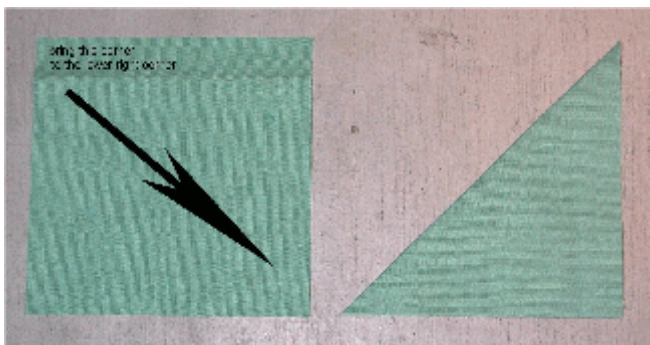
Prairie Points Individually Made, page 1

Individually made prairie points can be made to nest, to overlap or to butt up against each other. They offer the most flexibility as to choice of fabrics, heights and placement. They also offer the most flexibility in adjusting the number of prairie points to fit the side of the quilt.

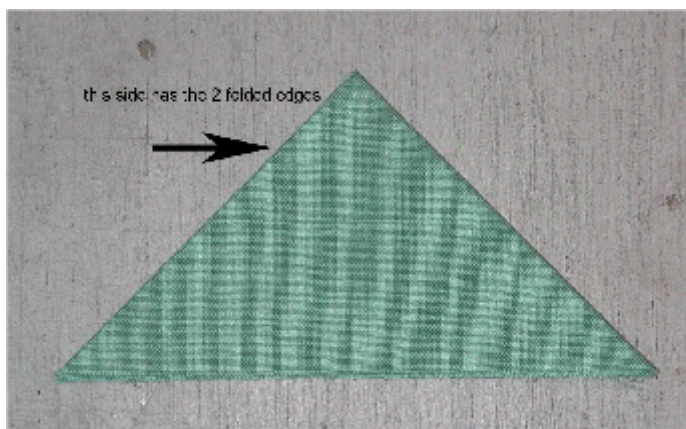
There are 2 different techniques for making individual prairie points, each starts with a square of fabric. To determine the size of the fabric square, decide how tall you want your prairie point to be, which is how far you want the point to extend beyond the edge of the quilt. Multiply that figure by 2. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

As an example, if you want your prairie point to be 2" tall, multiply $2 \times 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 4\frac{1}{2}$ ". So you will cut your squares of fabric $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". 1" high prairie points need a $2\frac{1}{2}$ " square.

Corner Fold for Nested or Butted prairie points. (You can overlap the corner fold prairie points but they will be bulky.)



1. Fold one corner to the opposite diagonal corner. It doesn't matter which corner you fold down, just be consistent.



2. Take the top point and fold it down to the opposite diagonal corner. The side of the prairie point that has the 2 folded edges is where you will be nesting the prairie points.

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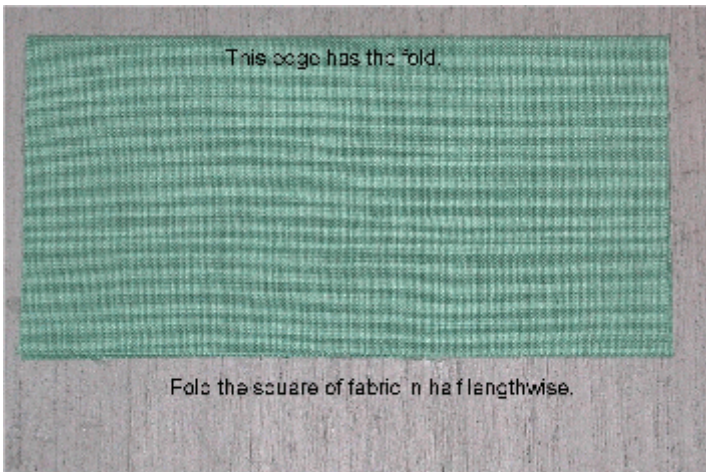
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Prairie Points

Individually Made, page 2

Center fold for Overlapped or Butted prairie points. (You can not nest the center fold prairie points.)

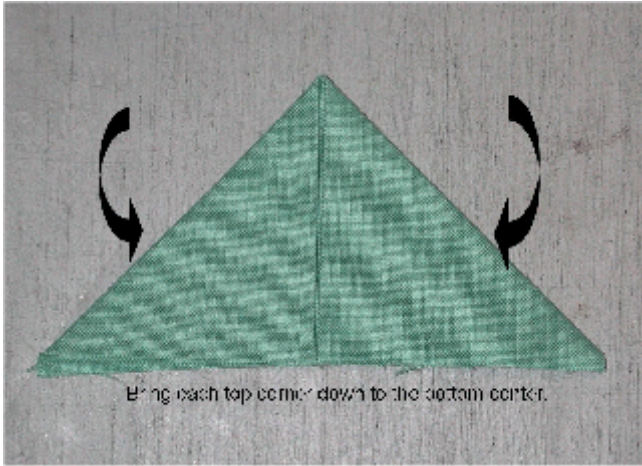


1. Starting with the fabric square, fold it in half lengthwise, creating a rectangle.

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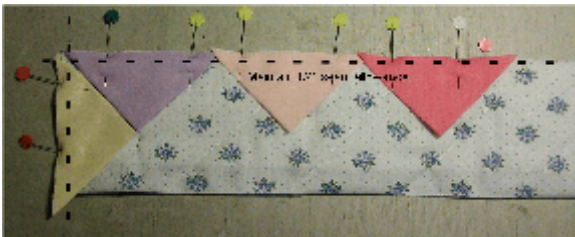
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1. Take each of the top corners and fold them down to the bottom edge so that they meet at the center bottom.

Prairie Points Individually Made, page 3

Butted prairie points. To figure out how many prairie points you can evenly fit on a side, use the easy, non-math method as described on the Scalloped Finish page. Or for the math version: divide the finished measurement of the side of the quilt by the finished base-length of the triangle. The base-length is the finished height times 2. If a quilt side is 60" and the height of the prairie point is 2", then twice the height is 4 ... $60" / 4" = 15$ prairie points per side. Round up to the next whole number if necessary and overlap/nest.


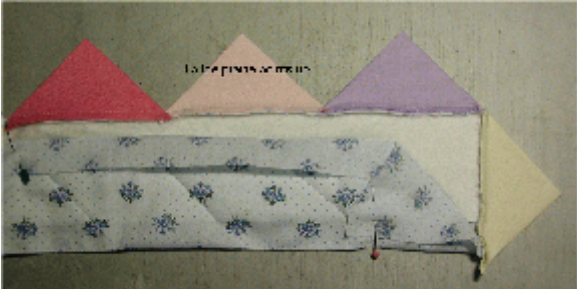
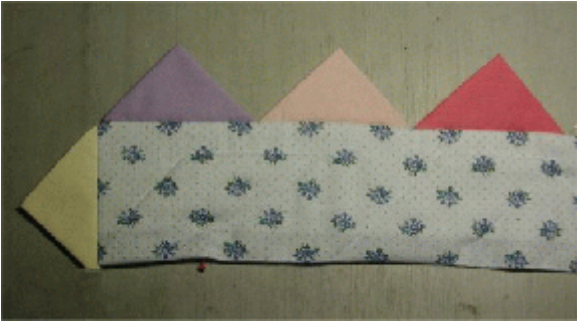


1. Place the right sides of the prairie points on the quilt top, overlapping ONLY the seam allowance points so that the "V" where they intersect is 1/4" from the quilt edge.

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	<p>2. Trim the batting only so it is close to the stitching line. In this photo, the backing has been pinned out of the way.</p>
	<p>3. Flip the prairie points up so the seam allowance is turned to the inside of the quilt. Press the seam allowance so it lays flat ... or at least flatter. Traditionally, the backing is now smoothed over the seam allowance and the raw edge is turned under so the fold just covers the stitching line. Hand stitch closed. An alternative finish would be to use a single or double fold binding.</p>
	<p>4. Finished view from the "quilt" front.</p>

Prairie Points

Individually Made, page 4

Nested prairie points

1. Since the prairie points are nested, you can adjust how much they nest inside each other to accommodate length of the quilt side. Stitch the prairie points to the quilt top with a 1/4" seam allowance. Then follow Butted prairie points, steps 2 and 3.






2. Finished view from the "quilt" front.

Overlapped/layered prairie points

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	<p>1. Since the prairie points are overlapped, you can adjust how much they cover each other to accommodate length of the quilt side. This technique is actually 2 layers of butted prairie points. Position each layer the same as Butted prairie points, step 1. Then continue with Butted prairie points, steps 2 and 3.</p>
	<p>2. Finished view from one side of the "quilt" top.</p>
	<p>3. Finished view from the other side of the "quilt" top.</p>

Prairie Points Strip Pieced, page 1

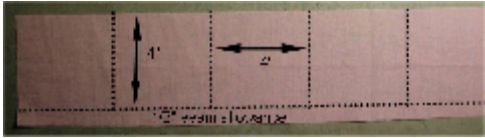
Strip pieced prairie points are a very easy way to make nested 1 color or alternating 2 color prairie points without the hassle and tediousness of making individual prairie points. For this example, we are going to be making nested prairie points that alternate in 2 colors.

To calculate the width of the fabric strip to cut, decide on the finished height of your prairie point. Multiply by 2. Add 1/2" to that measurement. For example, assume you want a 2" high prairie point. Here's the math: $2" \times 2 = 4"$, add 1/2" yields 4-1/2". Cut the fabric strip 4-1/2" wide by WOF. 1" prairie points need 2-1/2" strips.

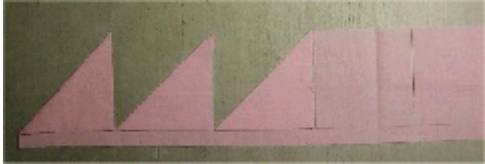
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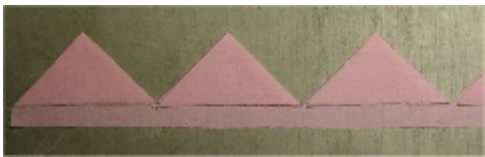
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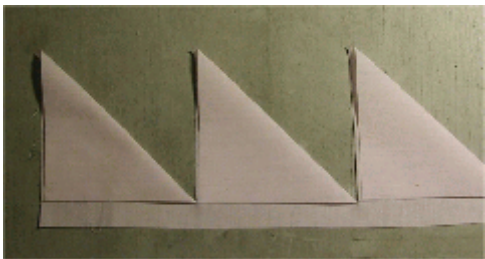
1. Using the example above, cut 2 strips of fabric from each color, each one 4-1/2" x WOF. On the wrong side of the fabric, mark a line 1/2" from one long edge. Mark (or if you're brave cut) vertical lines every twice the finished height. Cut along the vertical lines but stop at the 1/2" line.



2. Using one fabric strip, with the wrong side facing up, fold down each upper LEFT corner to the opposite diagonal corner.



3. Fold each upper right point to the opposite diagonal corner. Press. This side with the "flap" will be considered the "wrong" side.






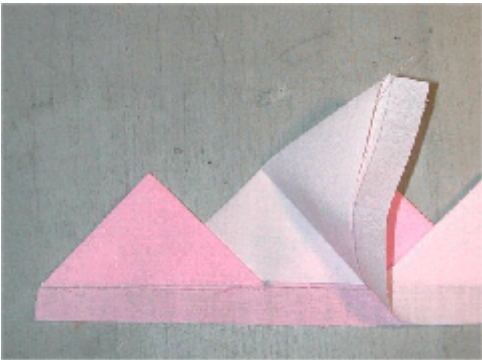

4. Using the other fabric strip, with the wrong side facing up, fold down each upper RIGHT corner to the opposite diagonal corner.

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Prairie Points Strip Pieced, page 2

	<p>5. Fold each upper left corner to the opposite diagonal corner. Press. (Note that for the 2nd fabric, you have done exactly the opposite from what you did with the 1st fabric strip. The prairie points will be folded in the opposite direction from each other.)</p>
	<p>6. With "wrong" sides facing, lay one strip directly on top of the each, off-setting the prairie points so that the points of the upper layer are in the center of the space created by the lower layer.</p>
	<p>7. See the prairie points in the under layer? Lift the free flap of lower prairie point and pull it up on top of the upper layer prairie points. The end prairie point is somewhat different and is explained below.</p>
	<p>8. The end prairie point is slightly different. Take the free flap of the end prairie points on the upper layer and put it behind the end prairie point of the lower layer. Baste close to the raw edge of the prairie points.</p>
	<p>9. The end result. Trim the lower band to (maximum) 1/4" or just barely below the basted line.</p> <p>Now you're ready to put this strip of prairie points onto the quilt.</p>

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Prairie Points Strip Pieced, page 3



10. Stitch the prairie point band to the edge of the quilt top/batting with the points towards the center of the quilt.

Trim the batting only close to the stitching line. Flip the prairie points up.



11. **Knife edge finish.** Use a turned edge or envelope/pillowcase finish, just like what was done for the individually made prairie points.



12. **Binding finish.** An alternative is the use of single or double fold binding. The binding can be either straight of grain or bias. After step 10, sew the binding on top of the prairie points. You can either sew through just the top/batting or thru all sandwich layers. Be sure to stitch beyond the basting stitches so they don't show on the finished quilt.



13. Flip the prairie points and binding up. This photo shows that the binding was sewn thru the top/batting only and the backing has been laid on top of the seam allowance.



14. The binding is then flipped down on top of the backing and stitching in place. If the binding was sewn thru all sandwiched layers, it seems to me the backing would be more securely held.

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Prairie Points

Continuous Pieced, page 1

Continuous pieced prairie points is another construction technique to make nested 1 color or alternating 2 color prairie points without the hassle and tediousness of making individual prairie points. It is somewhat more involved than strip pieced prairie points, but with this method you're working with only 1 strip of fabric to create the nested prairie points. For this example, we are going to be making nested prairie points in 1 color, as well as a sample of alternating 2 colors.

To calculate the width of the fabric strip to cut, decide on the finished height of your prairie point. Add $1/4"$ to that measurement. Multiply by 4. For example, assume you want a 2" high prairie point. Here's the math: $2" + 1/4" = 2-1/4"$. Multiply: $2-1/4" \times 4 = 9$. Cut the fabric strip 9" wide by WOF. 1" high prairie points need a 5" wide strip by WOF.



1. Cut the strip of fabric 9" x WOF. Fold in half lengthwise, wrong sides together; press. This lengthwise crease is indicated by the solid line down the center of the strip. With the wrong side of the fabric facing you, mark vertical lines from the raw edge to the crease line.

From the right side selvage edge, mark a vertical line half the strip width (in this case, 4-1/2"), ending at the crease line. Continue marking vertical lines at those intervals until the other selvage edge is reached. This marked line is indicated by the dotted lines.

Return to the right side selvage edge. Mark a vertical line from the crease line to the raw edge at every half segment.

Cut on all the vertical lines. Really. Be brave!



2. Cut out the half segments on both ends. (Only one side shown here).

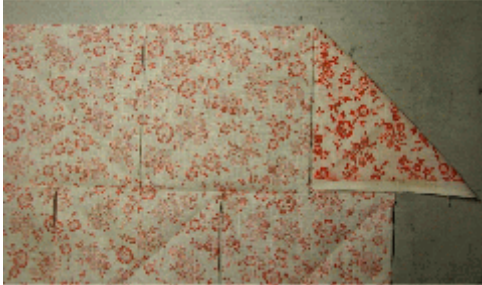
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Prairie Points

Continuous Pieced, page 2



3. Starting at the right side, fold the top segment diagonally from the top right corner to the lower left corner. Press.

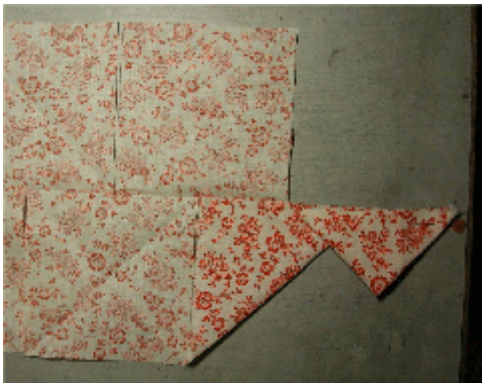
Note: you might find working on your ironing board to be a real convenience.



4. Fold the upper left point diagonally to the lower right point. Press. I also pinned it at this stage.



5. With the lower segment, fold diagonally from the right lower corner to the left upper corner. Press.



6. Real important!! Flip the folded segment from the top to the bottom. (Flip it vertically 180°)

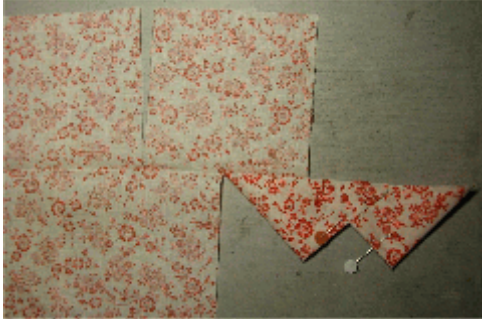
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Continuous Pieced, page 3



7. Now fold the lower left point diagonally to the upper right corner, overlapping the first prairie point and causing the first prairie point to be nested inside the second one.



8. Repeat step 3.



9. Flip the completed prairie points vertically 180°, on top of the partially folded prairie point.



10. Repeat step 6 & 7. Now you have 3 nested prairie points.



11. Continue folding, flipping, folding the rest of the segments (steps 8-10) until you have folded all the segments. When finished, stitch just above the raw edges to hold them down.

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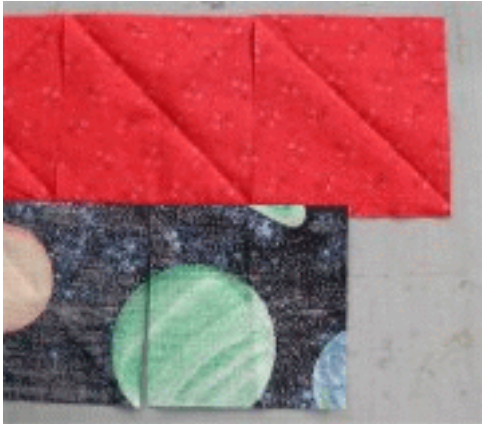
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Prairie Points

Continuous Pieced, page 4

Alternating 2 color, continuous pieced



Step 1



Step 2 and step 3



1. To create alternating 2 color continuous pieced prairie points, there is one additional step to be done. Instead of cutting 1 fabric strip, you will cut 2 strips of fabric (different colors). To determine the width of these 2 strips, decide on the height of your prairie point. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Multiply by 2.

For example, assume you want prairie points 2" high. Add $2" + \frac{3}{4}" = 2\text{-}\frac{3}{4}"$. Multiply by 2 yields $5\text{-}\frac{1}{2}"$. Cut 2 strips $5\text{-}\frac{1}{2}" \times \text{WOF}$. 1" prairie points need a $3\text{-}\frac{1}{2}"$ wide strip.

Sew the 2 strips together, wrong sides facing, with a $\frac{1}{4}"$ seam. Yes, that's right, the wrong sides together. Press the seam to one side (it doesn't matter which side), then proceed as for 1 color continuous pieced prairie points, steps 1 - 11, paying attention to the special notes for step 1 and step 2.

Special notes for 2 color prairie points:

Step 1: when cutting on the marked lines, cut up to but NOT into the seam allowance.

Step 2: you'll need to rip out the stitching to remove the end half segments

For folding: bring the raw edge up to the seam line.

When finished, stitch just above the raw edges to hold them down. Trim the seam allowance to $\frac{1}{4}"$ from this new stitched line (not the original seam allowance stitching).