

Basic Rotary Cutting (TOO4-1)

Always use a Rotary Cutter and a Quilter's Square or Ruler when cutting fabric in straight lines or squares, e.g., for patchwork, to achieve a professional finish to your project. In the example below, I cut out a 5-inch patchwork square from a standard Fat Quarter of fabric.

What is a 'Fat Quarter'?

You may see 'Fat Quarters' of fabric for sale in the shops. These are rough squares of fabric, generally for patchwork use, produced by cutting a metre (or a yard) of length of a roll of fabric.

Rolls of fabric are typically 40 to 45 inches wide, depending on the manufacturer. The resultant strip of fabric (either 1 m or 1 yrd long by 40 to 45 inches wide) is then cut into four to create four Fat Quarters.

The minimum dimensions for a Fat Quarter should therefore be 18 x 20 inches), allowing you to get nine 6 x 6 inch squares for your patchwork. The edges are often not cut straight and will need 'squaring up' with a Rotary Cutter and Ruler.

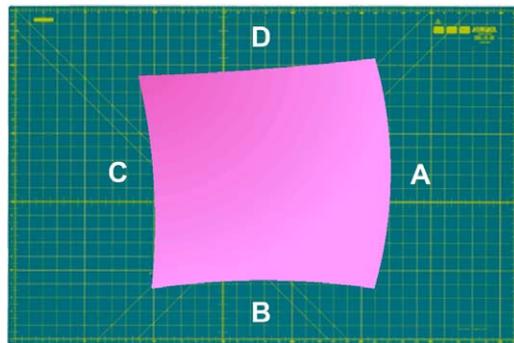
Similarly, 'Fat Eighths' are half this size (18 x 10 inches).

You Will Need:

- A large table or flat surface to rest on
- A large Cutting Mat*
- A Rotary Cutter*
- A large non-slip Quilter's Square (20.5 x 20.5 inches) or Ruler (24 x 6 inches)*

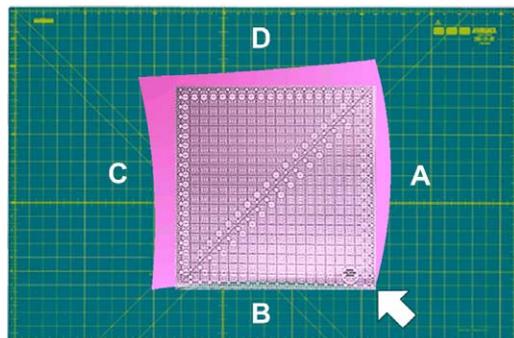
1. Prepare Your Fabric

First, iron your fabric so that it lies perfectly flat. Then lay your ironed fabric on the cutting board, ready for cutting.



2. Position Your Quilter's Square/Ruler

Place your Quilter's Square or Ruler in the bottom right-hand corner, lining up the edges as closely as you can with the fabric. Place your left hand flat on the ruler palm down to hold it in place (unless you are left-handed in which case you may wish to reverse these instructions).



3. Release the Blade Guard on the Rotary Cutter

Release the blade guard on your Rotary Cutter to expose the blade. Depending on the manufacturer and type of cutter you have, this may be done either by sliding the guard back or squeezing the guard release handle.



4. Make Your First Cut (A)

Place the Rotary Cutter blade on the fabric at the bottom right-hand corner of the square and stand immediately behind the line you are about to cut (away from your body). Roll the blade forward and smoothly along the side of the ruler, maintaining a slight pressure against it. Keep the cutter upright and maintaining sufficient downward pressure on the fabric at all times. Always cut away from your body.



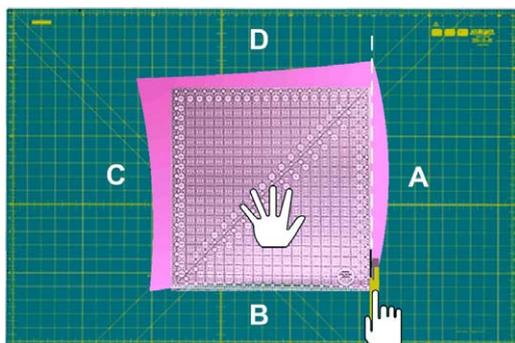
5. Ease the Fabric Away

When you have made your first cut DO NOT MOVE THE RULER but ease the raw edge of the cut fabric away from the cut. If the fabric

has not cut cleanly, you will need to repeat the cut.

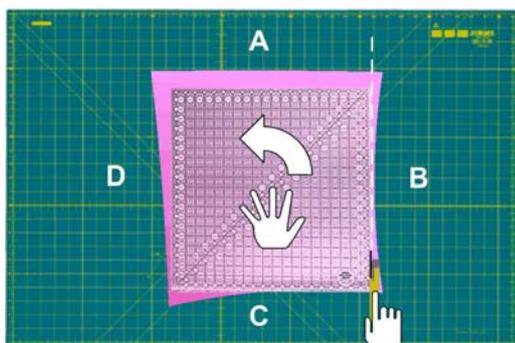
Note:

Some fabrics such as raw silk or satin rarely cut cleanly the first time and may need several attempts.



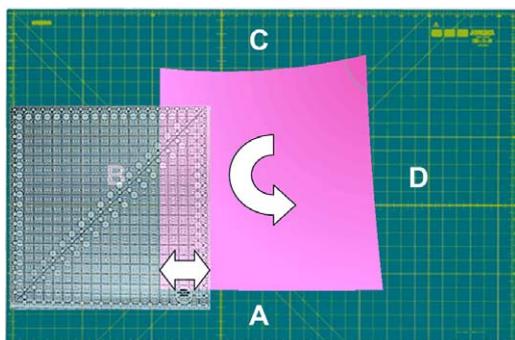
6. Rotate the Fabric and Make Your Second Cut (B)

Continue to hold the Square/Ruler on the fabric and turn both 90° anti-clockwise so the edge you have just cut becomes the top edge. Then cut your second edge. All of your other cuts can now be measured accurately from these straight edges.



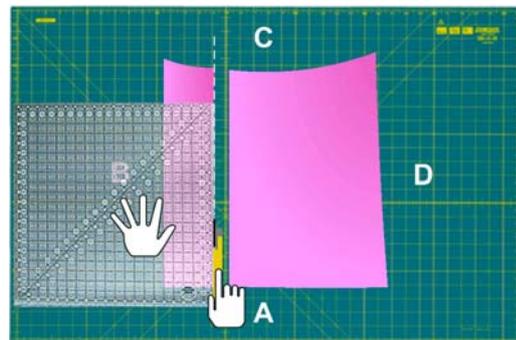
7. Measure Your Patchwork Strip

Turn your fabric 180° clockwise and position the 5-inch mark on your Ruler/Square over the straight edges. The right-hand edge of your Square/Ruler is the edge you are going to cut.



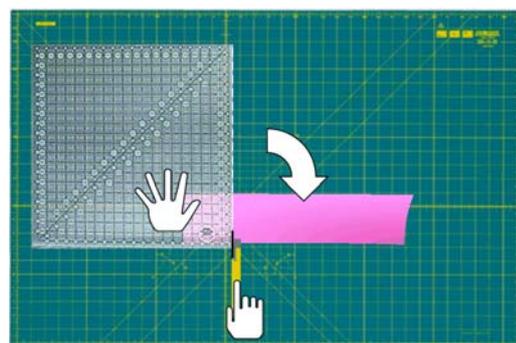
8. Cut Your Patchwork Strip

Again, place the Rotary Cutter blade on the fabric at the bottom right-hand corner of the square and roll the blade forward smoothly along the side of the ruler, and cut a 5-inch strip of fabric.



9. Cut Your Patchwork Square

Set aside the remainder of the fabric and turn the strip of fabric 90° clockwise. Place the 5-inch mark on your Square/Ruler over the previously cut edge and cut to length.



10. Repeat for More Squares

Repeat until you have the required number of patchwork squares. You should be able to get three 5 x 5 inch squares easily from each strip, and get nine, or even sixteen, 5 x 5 inch squares from the entire Fat Quarter.

