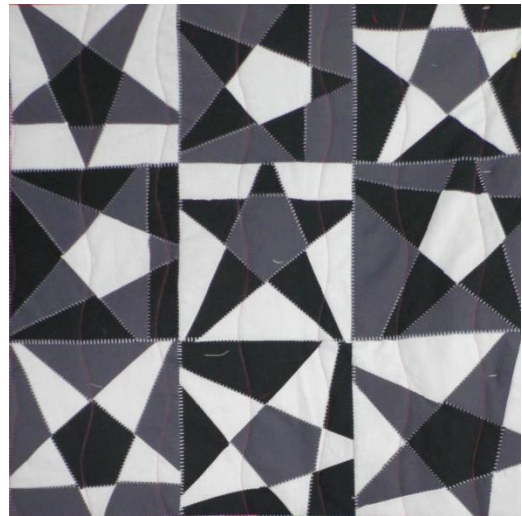


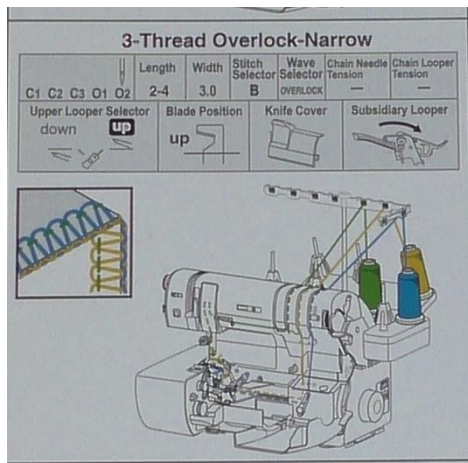
- Baby Lock Serger, such as the Triumph or Ovation
- UltraT Serger foot for Baby Lock 8 thread sergers
- Overlock Table for Triumph or Ovation
- 12 wt. Decorative Thread such as Decora
- 40 wt. Embroidery Thread
- Serger Cone thread (color will not show)
- Serger Needles EL705CF in size 75 and 90
- For the Crazy Star blocks: at least two (2) 8" squares of different Cotton Quilting Fabrics
- Rotary Cutter, 12 ½" Square Ruler and Mat



### *The Flatlock Stitch*

“Flatlock” is a special stitch created by a serger. The seam has an uneven tension and is formed with two threads. After stitching, pull the seam open. The fabric lies flat and overlaps in the middle of the seam. It is the preferred stitch for active wear to avoid any chaffing from a bulky traditional seam. It has two very different looking sides. One side is similar to a traditional overlock stitch and on the opposite side are straight horizontal stitches that look like ladder rungs. For quilt piecing, the “ladder” side adds interest to the seam with the exposed threads. Many complex quilt patterns rely on a precise ¼” machine sewn seam and achieving that precise seam is challenging using a flatlock. Choose a quilt pattern that does not rely on a ¼” seam for the pieces to match, but rather fits together with a consistent seam of any size. This handout has instructions for a Baby Lock serger of 4 to 8 threads, such as the Triumph, Accolade or Imagine. Modify the set-up instructions for your serger that is capable of creating a flatlock stitch.

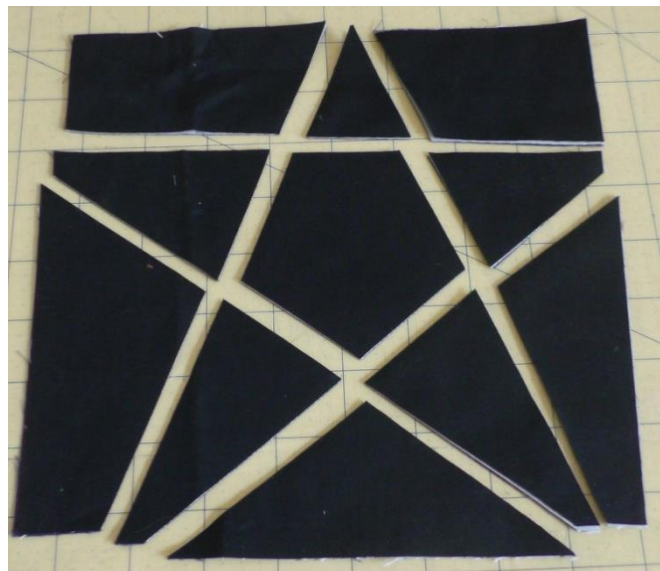
## The Narrow Flatlock Stitch for Improvisational Piecing



A three-thread narrow overlock seam is very close to a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam used in quilting. The two-thread narrow flatlock stitch on the Baby Lock serger does not result in a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam because the fabric is pulled open after stitching. Quilt pieces cut to precise measurements will not match when sewn together with this seam. Choose a quilt pattern when using this technique that does not require precision piecing. One thread passes through the O2 needle and the other thread through the lower looper. The upper looper

has no thread and is converted with the "Subsidiary Looper" engaged to push the looper thread. For quilt piecing with the "ladder" on the right side of the fabric, thread the machine with serger thread in the lower looper and a decorative 40 wt. embroidery thread through a EL705CF size 75 needle in the O2 position. Choose the "B" setting on the stitch selector. The UltraT serger foot reduces friction and allows the fabrics to lie flat. Choose a stitch length of 3-4 and a width (cutting blade position) of 3.5. The blade is in the Up (cutting) position. See the diagram for settings and thread path.

Improvisational piecing is a technique using fabric cut in odd, random shapes cut from at least two fabrics simultaneously. (Crazy quilt piecing is an example of a different type of



improvisational piecing.) Because of the random shapes, the pieces fit together at odd angles and when sewn with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam do not match well. The mis-matched sides are trimmed to create a straight seam line to add additional pieces. The narrow flatlock stitch is ideal for this type of piecing. The seam is smaller than the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " machine sewn stitch and yet strong. Because the seam is smaller, the pieces match better. When the seams require trimming, the serger trims the seam during

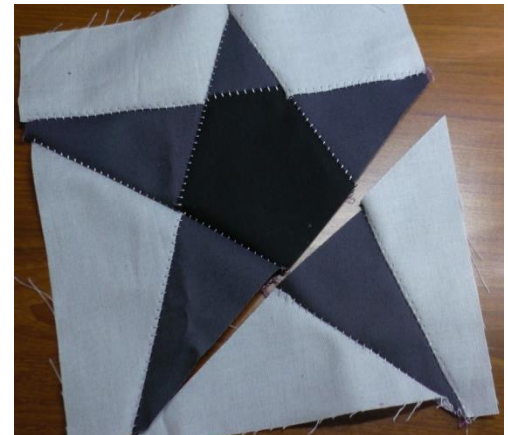
stitching. Try this technique by making crazy star blocks.

## *Crazy Star Blocks*



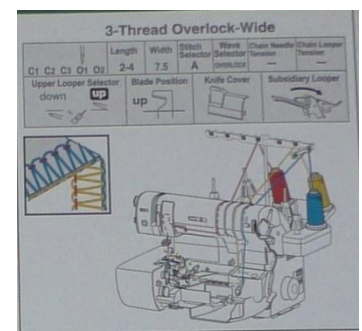
Cut two (or more) 8" squares of contrasting cotton quilting material. (The squares can be any size, but smaller squares are more challenging to use with this technique.) Stack the squares with right sides up and edges even. Slice the squares through all layers using the rotary cutter. Do not move the cut squares and make additional cuts through all the layers. The star pattern in the video has five cuts in a star shape. To keep the pieces as identical as possible, it is very important to keep the stacked layers together while cutting. After cutting, sort the pieces into different blocks. When cutting multiple layers at the same time, the fabric combinations are more interesting. Be aware that the points of the star will most likely be lost in the seams.

Sew each block together one at a time using the narrow flatlock seam. When matching adjacent angled pieces, align the ends of the pieces exactly at the edges. (Angled pieces **are not** matched this way for  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams on a sewing machine.) Sew the narrow flatlock seam on the serger and use the blade less for cutting and more as a seam guide. Trim the excess fabric as necessary when additional pieces are added. Open each the seams after sewing before adding the next piece. The edges of the blocks will be uneven. Press the blocks well and square up all the blocks to a measurement that works with all the different blocks. Squares that start as 8" will most likely end up as 7" to  $7\frac{1}{4}$ " unfinished blocks.



## *The Wide Flatlock Stitch*

The wide flatlock stitch can create a seam that is very close to a



traditional  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam with careful stitching. This stitch has the look of "hand stitching" when a thicker decorative thread is used in the C1 needle. Use a bigger needle (EL705CF size 90) to accommodate the thicker thread. The set up for this stitch is very similar to the narrow flatlock stitch with the following changes, the stitch selector is set to "A" and the width is set to 7.5. To create a seam allowance that is close to a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, trim a scant  $\frac{1}{16}$ " inch while stitching. Visually guide the fabric with the raw edges aligned with the right side of the cutting blade.



Use this stitch with patterns that require a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam to match or with improvisational piecing patterns that do not have sharp angles as in the quilt blocks below. Cut the difficult to match pieces (such as triangles) and sew them together before cutting the additional pieces to a measurement that matches. For example, the flying geese pieces were slightly larger than expected. The center and corner squares were then cut to measurements that fit the previously stitched pieces.

