

# Sewing a Baseball Quilt



**W**hat's a baseball quilt you ask? Well it's something my husband has been begging me for ever since we got married, 25 years ago. So finally, for his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, I made it for him.

He had explained what he wanted several times over the years and I guess it just took me some time to figure out how I was going to accomplish what he wanted.

His idea was to have an all white background and just the red stitches sewn on in the appropriate places so your eyes and mind could "see" the ball even though it really wasn't there. I thought it sounded like a wonderful idea, but I just couldn't figure out how to do it. Although, now that I have this one finished, I think if I just zeroed in on one baseball, I might be able to create what he was really after.

**H**owever, that's another article!! If you have interest in putting together a baseball quilt for the baseball enthusiast in your home, here's how I did it.

**1** I started with soft white cotton for my baseballs. I washed the fabric first and did some light ironing so it would at least lay flat.



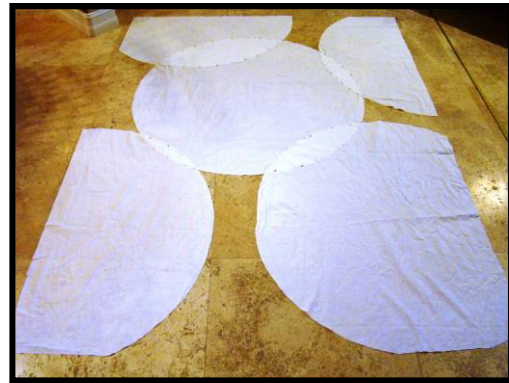


2 I folded the white fabric in half the long way it comes off the bolt and then I turned one end up as far as I needed to draw  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a baseball. I kept my fabric tape measure at the corner of the four layers and made marks at 22" following the curve of the ball.



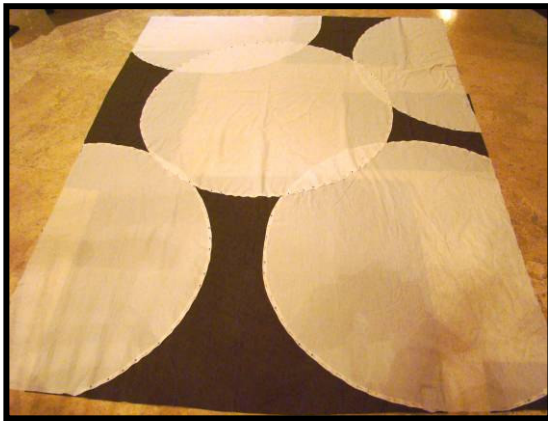
Once the marks were in place, I followed them with my scissors and cut out the only complete baseball in the quilt.

3 I then cut out portions of baseballs, though all from the same 44" circumference so they looked like they were all the same size ball, just fragments of each one. I pinned them together to see how they would look and where they would overlap.

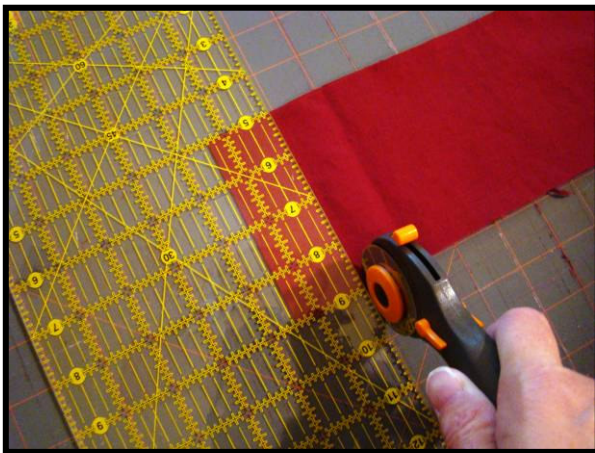


4 The edges were then ironed to the back at about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

5 If you look closely you can see that I then cut pieces of the brown background fabric to fit and fill up the spaces between the baseballs.



I pinned everything in place and then machine stitched the baseballs to the background. (I had help, as you can see, that actually made the job go much slower!!) I then trimmed off the excess background fabric close to the seams.



6 Now, the hard part...the stitching! I did use 5 different reds to make the stitching, one color for each baseball. I varied the finished length of the stitches from 3" at the longest to about 1" at the shortest to make the balls look dimensional, but they were all  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. So, their cut size was 4" by 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". I ironed all the raw edges to the

back, and then when I wanted the stitches to be shorter, I cut the length and simply folded the ends over.

I pinned all the stitches for one baseball in place before I machine stitched them on so I could be sure the ball looked like it was three dimensional. To make it dimensional, the stitches were long on one side of the stitch line and short on the other side. Notice too that I had to angle the edges that went along the stitch line.



### Tip:

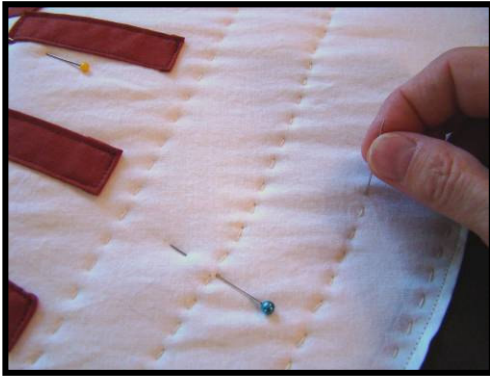


To get the curves of the stitching, I held a real baseball in my hand and closed one eye so I saw it in two dimensions only. From this I sketched the curves of the stitching onto the white baseballs in light pencil.

As each baseball was finished, the quilt got more and more interesting and three dimensional. I kept placing on the floor to look at it and marvel at the fact that I had really done it!

Of course I could only look at it when my husband was out of town because as you recall, this was a surprise for his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday!





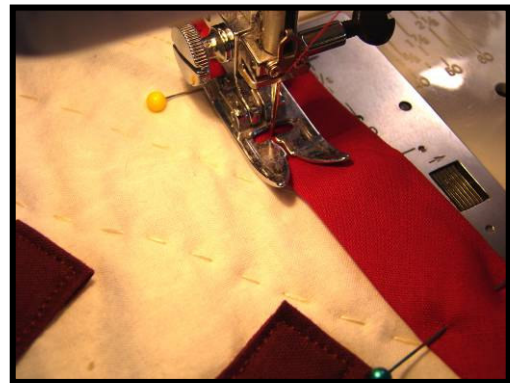
7 Once all the stitching was in place, I layered a brown backing fabric with the quilt batting and the top. I pinned the three layers together and started the quilting process. I decided to follow the curves of the stitching on all the baseballs.



8 To make the background look different, I used brown yard and simply punched through from the front to the back to the front again and tied the yarns.

9 The final step was using purchased binding tape to finish off the edges!

This is one of those projects you create in your lifetime that is never forgotten. It was hard work, it took a lot of time, and it was made with love for someone special. What could be better?



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