

Educational Tidbit for March 2025

FINISHED OR UNFINISHED? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Wow, March 2025 is here already. This month we have Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, Daylight Savings Time, Saint Patrick's Day, and the beginning of Spring. Lots of things to look forward to. Of course, everyone pretends to be Irish on March 17th, the time for wearing of the green for St. Patrick's Day. There are some folks who go all out for Saint Patrick's Day and dye the beer green, but for me, that really has no appeal. Personally, I am looking forward to eating some delicious corned beef and cabbage. Yes, I know, with me it is always about the food!

This month's tidbit is a discussion of block sizes in terms of the **finished** and the **unfinished** size.

Also, make sure to stick with me until the end of this tidbit, I have another freebie to share with you.

The reason I chose this tidbit topic is because I recently came close to trimming 42 blocks to 8 ½ inches square, after I mistook the **finished** size as the **unfinished** block size in the pattern. Just before beginning to trim, I realized the size did not seem right to me. I went back to the pattern to double check and sure enough, the size referenced in the pattern was the **finished** size of 8 ½ inches, which means the **unfinished** size would be 9 inches.

I am so glad I double checked. I go back to the idiom "measure twice, cut once". In this case: check the pattern twice to determine the **unfinished** size **before** trimming and squaring all 42 blocks to the wrong size.

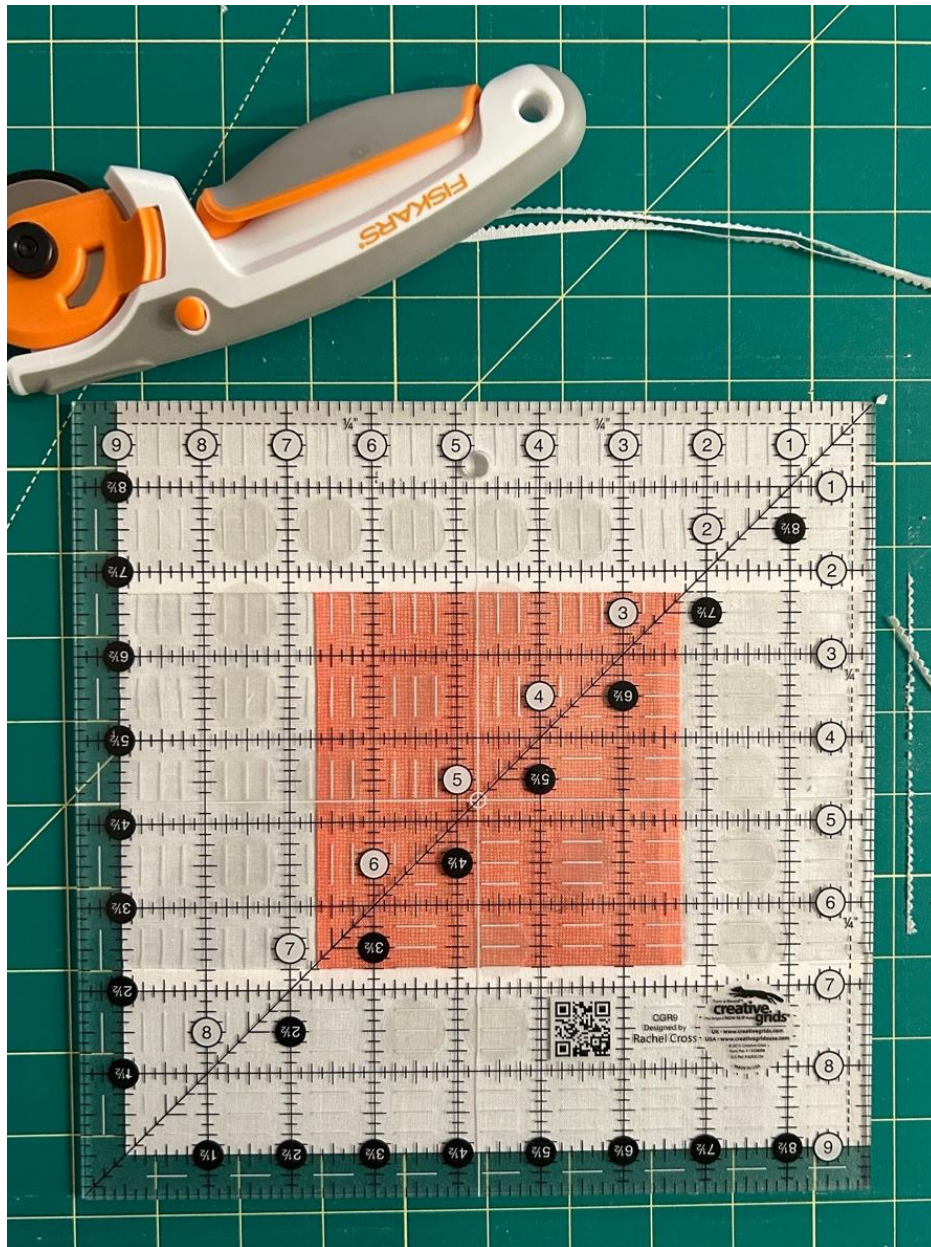
I chose to begin this project because it is one of those supposed simple projects I do in between more complicated projects. I like to change it up periodically to get a quilt top finished in a shorter time than those more complex projects. I enjoy complicated quilts, but I still need a periodic brain reset by sewing simple stuff.

To create the blocks for this current project you sew sashing around precut charm squares, using precut fabric strips for the sashing. Easy peasy, right? Of course, we must remember that precuts are not always cut to precise measurements. To get the blocks to an accurate measurement, they must be trimmed to the block's **unfinished** measurement.

As shown in the picture, this block as sewn is not square and not ready to join its companions in a properly sewn quilt top.



Since this pattern uses the **finished** size of 8 ½ inches, to accurately trim the blocks, I needed to trim to 9 inches, the **unfinished** size. Voila! After trimming and squaring, a 9-inch **unfinished** block.



Let's review terms.

An **unfinished** block is the size of a block after you have sewn together all the fabric pieces required to form the block, prior to sewing the block into the quilt top.

The **finished** block is the size of the block once it is sewn into the quilt top, with other pieces of the quilt top, such as blocks and sashing.

The difference between the **unfinished** and **finished** measurement is the seam allowance. Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance on all four sides of the block, the **unfinished** block is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wider and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch longer than the **finished** block.

I really prefer the use of the **unfinished** block size in a pattern. **If** I do not read a pattern carefully, I can end up trimming blocks to the **finished** size and my quilt gets into a great big mess.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION:

To avoid future mistakes and to make sure I get the proper block measurement to use for trimming and squaring, I plan to go through my patterns as I read them and change all the **finished** measurements to the **unfinished** measurements.

OH, BY THE WAY!

I have a new freebie to share. I was watching the latest Corey Yoder (Coriander Quilts) YouTube video, and she shared a quilt backing calculator that she prefers. I went to the web site and found it to be extremely easy to use. You enter the width and length of your quilt top, the width of the backing fabric, the unit of measure, and the extra fabric allowance for quilting. Click on the **calculate** button and it quickly tells you how much fabric you need for backing your quilt, and it goes on to provide guidance for cutting the backing fabric and piecing the backing fabric to create the backing. The guidance includes a piecing diagram.

The site is: <https://www.mywebquilter.com/Calculator>

That is it for this tidbit. I hope you have a great March. If you think of a topic you would like discussed in a future educational tidbit, let me know.

I'm all set for April. We're going to talk trash!

Blessings to you and your family.