



<https://frommarti.com/cuttip.shtml>

The Rotary Cutter and How to Use It

The assumption has been that everyone knows what a rotary cutter is. In case you don't, it is a cutting device, introduced to sewers in the mid-1970s that looks like an advanced pizza cutter. It must be used in conjunction with a special protective mat under the fabric. The popularity of the rotary cutter skyrocketed when it was coupled with thick acrylic rulers for long smooth cuts.

At the time [Volume 4 was] printed, there are three sizes of rotary cutters available. Most often, I use the medium cutter (which was until recently the large cutter). However, with some of the smaller template shapes, it is sometimes easier to use the small rotary cutter. With many fabric layers, I use the large cutter.

- Rotary cutter blades are very sharp. A fresh blade will easily cut six to 12 layers of fabric with very little pressure. Bearing down hard is not necessary and can do irreparable damage to the protective mat. I generally cut only four to eight layers of fabric because it is easier to measure and cut more times than it is to fold and stack layers accurately.
- Every rotary cutter with which I am familiar has a blade guard. My recommendation would be not to buy any rotary cutter that does not have a blade guard. Make sure the guard is in place when the cutter is not in use. This protects both you and the blade. If you drop the cutter or accidentally cut across a pin, the blade often becomes nicked. Then it perforates more than cuts the fabric, an annoying process. The blades are replaceable, but the need can be minimized by keeping the guard in place.
- When cutting, the blade side, not the guard side, goes immediately next to the template or acrylic ruler.
- Cut away from you, not toward your body. Watch those fingertips! Do not let them extend over the template or the cutting side of the ruler!

Scissor Cutting Tips

If you prefer to trace around templates and cut shapes with scissors, you can still take advantage of the precision of Perfect Patchwork Templates. A good pair of bent-handle shears can cut multiple layers of fabric without disturbing the layers. You may still want to begin with strips, just to save time. Some quilters like to press the stack of fabrics first, believing it helps prevent shifting during cutting. Others pin layers together.

Tracing and scissor cutting may be easier on odd-shaped scraps and when you want to position printed fabric motifs in a certain part of the shape.