

# How to test for an accurate 1/4" seam allowance and why it's important

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It's always good to test your 1/4" seam allowance to be sure it's accurate. If you change machines or maybe you just never tested it, this is a super simple way to be sure your seam allowance is 1/4". And I have a myth buster or two to share below



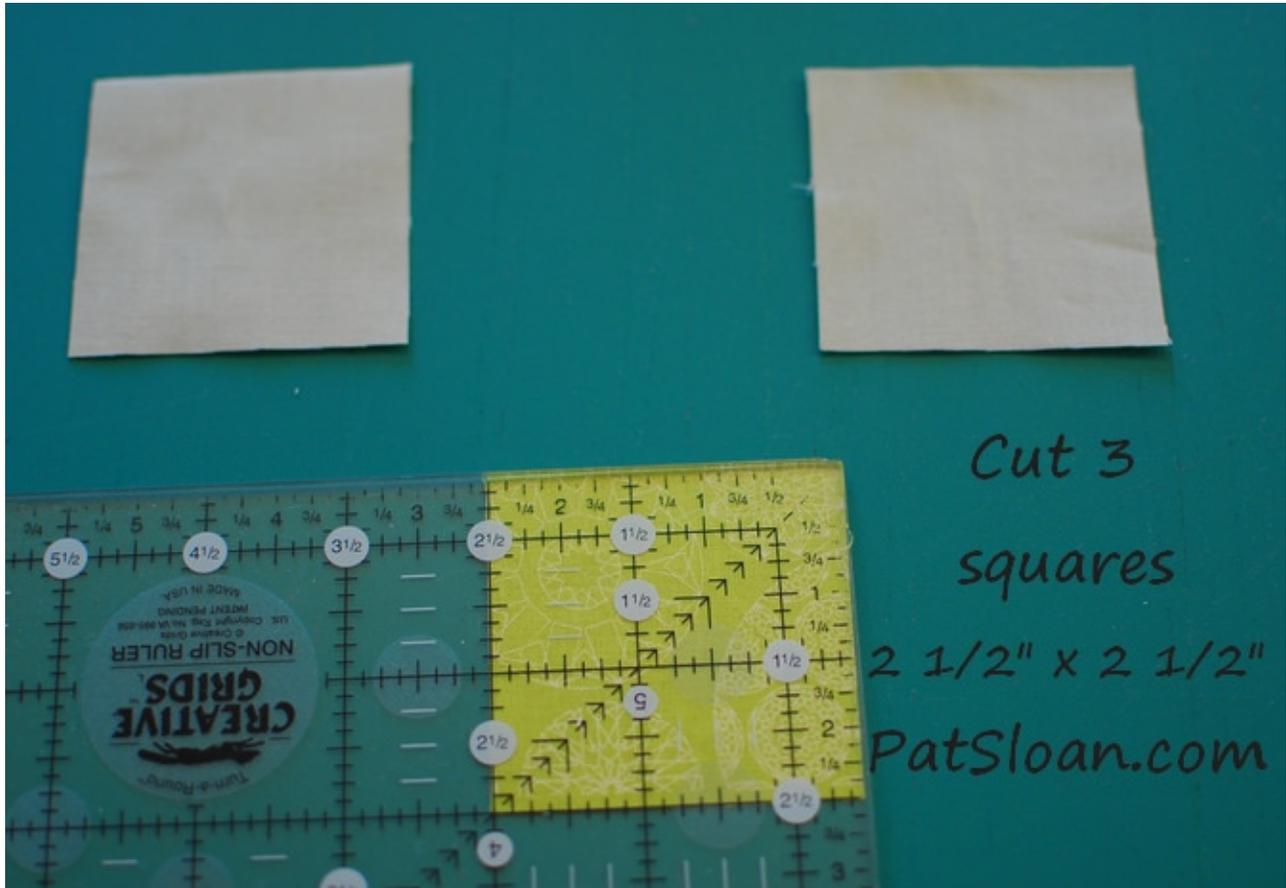
**MYTH:** I have a 1/4" foot on my machine so I don't need to test it

**MYTH BUSTED:** Even if you have a 1/4" foot for your machine it might need to be adjusted. You can't assume it is 100% accurate

If you check and it is NOT accurate, then shift your needle one position (which ever direction it needs) and test again.

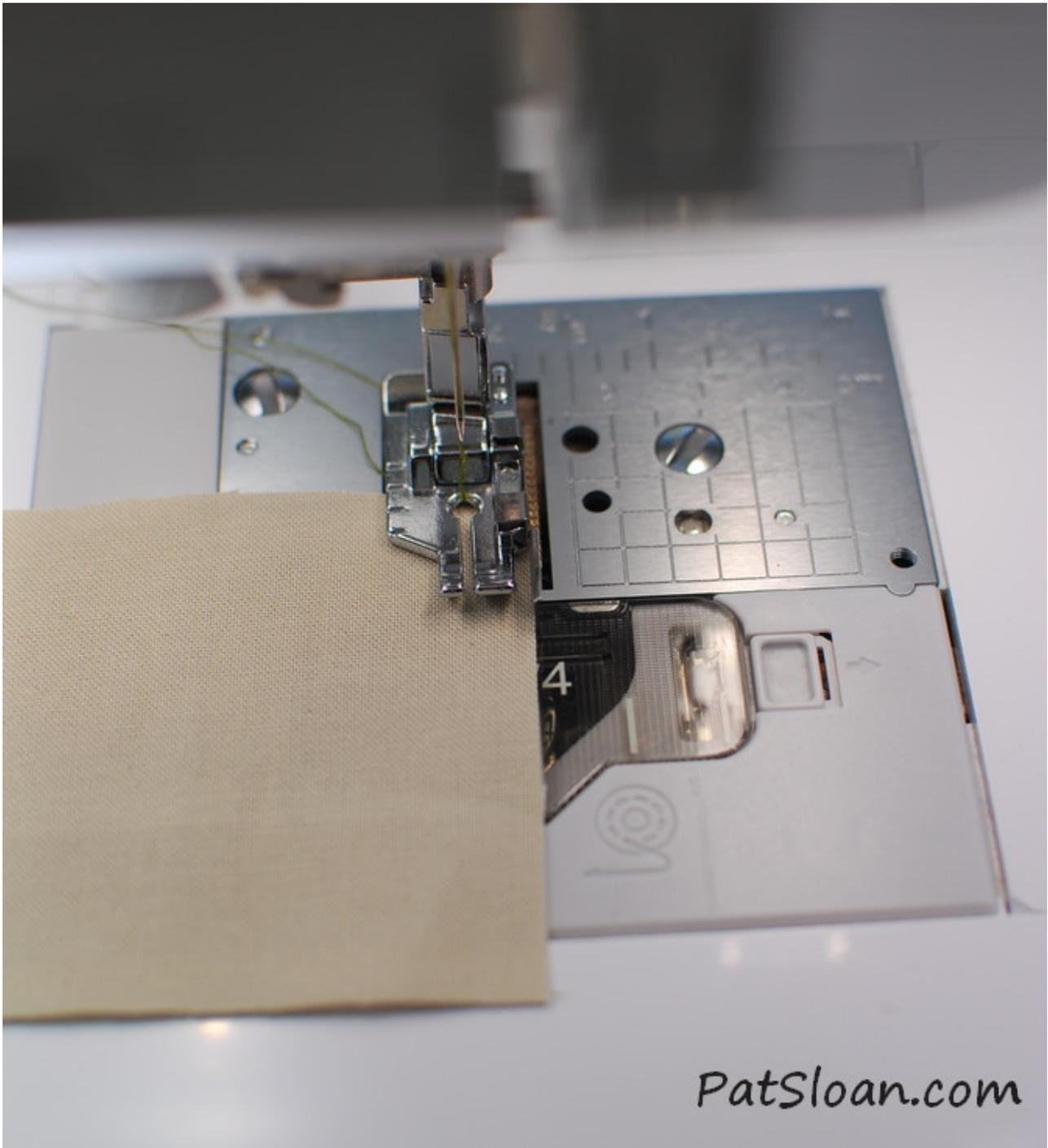
On one machine I used a different foot edge with the needle shifted for the most accurate 1/4" seam on that machine.

**At the END ARE TWO VIDEOS to help you out**



Here is my super simple test

- Cut 3 squares 2 1/2" x 2 1/2".
- Use 2 different color fabrics so you can tell what you are doing



This is the 1/4" foot for my Babylock Crescendo.

I love the guide edge on this one. Your machine may have a different foot, or no 1/4" foot.



- Sew the 3 squares in a row.

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- My Babylock's Crescendo 1/4" seam foot sews a 'scant' 1/4" seam. Do you see how the seam is to the RIGHT of the line. When you fold over fabric it takes up a little space, so sewing with a seam just 'shy' of 1/4" is what works for most people.
- You need to go through this whole test to see how it ends up .. don't stop here!

- I have this little 1/2" wide ruler that i keep by my machine to check things.



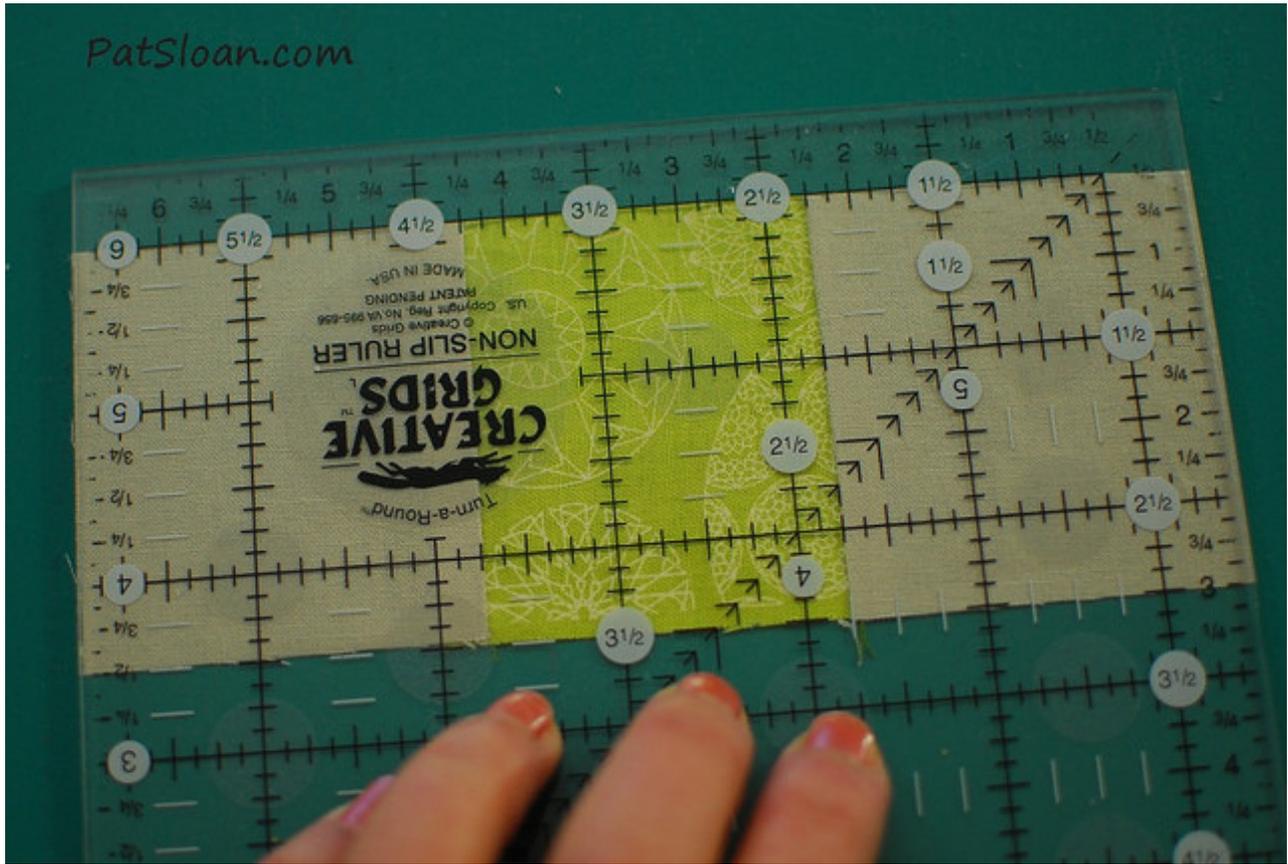
- Press the unit so the right sides are up for all 3 squares. Do you see how the seam allowance creates a ridge?
- This is before i pressed it. when you press you need to have it flat. That way as you sew the units together they all are at the correct size.
- now let's test it!



**MYTH:** I'm done now I don't need to test

**MYTH BUSTED:** no you REALLY DO need to test!

First I measure JUST the center block. It should be 2" wide.



Now i measure the entire unit.

**It should be 6 1/2" wide. Why?**

- 2.5" sewn to 2.5" sewn to 2.5" = 6.5"
- Another way to know what the unit size is will be to add the FINISHED sizes of all 3.. that is 2+2+2 = 6... then add 1/2" for the seam allowance on both sides (1/4" + 1/4") to make the number to nail 6.5"

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**TIP:** To test I like to shift that ruler down and have a straight line across the top and bottom of the patchwork.

Watch my video on this of mine on shifting the ruler down for measuring that I did for Martingale

### **So your block is Not accurate**

#### **What to do**

- You can shift your needle to the right or left then recheck
- Try a different foot & shift the needle position until it's where it will give you a consistent accurate 1/4" seam

### **ANOTHER THING it might be**

It might not BE the foot.

As we sew sometimes we don't stay true and on the line.

I show you this in the video above.

**MYTH:** It won't matter if my block is the wrong Size, if they are all too small or too large it's ok they are the same size.

**MYTH BUSTED:** That ONLY works if you have drafted your own setting, or are putting the blocks side by side. If you are using a setting that has sashings, other blocks, units to piece, having incorrect blocks will not create a very sad face for you when you try and sew them together.

It's worth the time to check your units AS you work

A **6.5" Quilting Ruler is pretty much mandatory work tool, get a good one**

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