

**UVQG**  
**President Elect Quilt Challenge 2023**  
**Improv Quilting Tutorial #1 – Improv Log Cabin Blocks**

Improv quilting is a great way to use up your scraps. For this exercise, it might be easiest to start with solids, or prints that read like solids, but don't be afraid to play around with a variety of options. If you use prints, pay attention to value- how light, medium, or dark it is- to get the most contrast in your block. I stuck to analogous colors- colors next to each other on the color wheel- in the same hue to give myself a starting point.

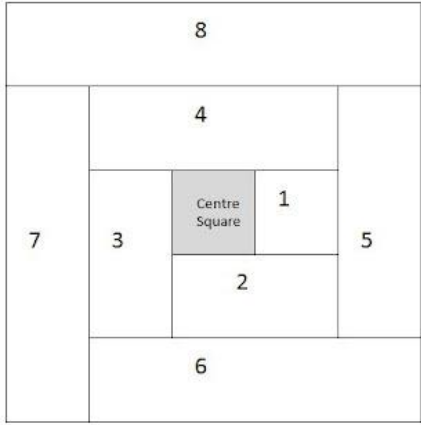
Seams – I used quarter inch seams out of habit, but you don't need to be precise for this technique.

**Cutting the fabric:**

You can use scraps or cut your fabric into strips. Vary the width of your strips from 1" to 3" or more. I wouldn't suggest going any smaller than 1" in width because strips that are smaller than 1" wide will result in seam allowances that overlap, which may create bulk in your block. The strips do not need to be even in width.

**Making the blocks:**

1. Sew together two pieces of fabric to start your log cabin. Try not to obsess about which two to start with. Focus on making a contrast. I chose to consistently start with a piece of one color like a traditional log cabin block, but that is not necessary in improv. It is also not necessary to start with the traditional square. Start with any shape that has four sides- or three if you choose.
2. After you sew the pieces together, trim. I like to use a ruler to get a nice straight edge to sew the next log on. I also use the ruler so that I trim off as little as possible so I don't waste too much fabric. Trim on an angle. This gives the block its wonky look and adds visual interest.
3. Add another log and trim. It doesn't really matter which side of the block you add the next log to. I tend to add the next log to the side that I just trimmed, but it's up to you which side you choose.
4. Repeat step 3 until your block is big enough to trim it into a square (or any other shape that you want) at the size you want.
5. Just for fun, I decided to slice through one or two blocks before I had finished it. I added a narrow strip to one side and reattached the other side and continued building the block until it was roughly 1" bigger than the finished size.
6. Another option is to make a quarter improv log cabin block by only going around 3 sides.
6. Using a clear acrylic ruler, place the ruler over the block and check to see that the block is a bit larger than the unfinished cut size you want. Keep in mind that you'll want to keep an extra 1/2" for the seam allowance for when you get ready to sew your blocks together. For example, I wanted my block to be 6.5" finished square so I kept adding logs until the block was about 7.5". I then trimmed the block down to 7" unfinished square. Since it's improv, you can cut your block into any shape you want. Try rectangles or even triangles! I hope you have fun with this technique. Let loose, play, and see what you can create.



Improv Log Cabin Quilt #1- Made by Kim McCloskey

