

Hey everybody! It's Rob from Man Sewing. And this is April and we have a very special project for you today. That's right April is National Autism Awareness Month and we have built this really fun, cuddly quilt for your autistic friends. And we're going to walk you through how to do this. Now one of the things I want to point out, we've been informed that the folks out there that do have autism, they like texture and they like the weight when they're sleeping under something. So we've actually filled these quilts you see behind me with the poly pellets. Now, I'm just going to point this out as we're getting started, I'm going to make some fairly small samples so that you can follow along at a relatively fast format. You're going to make your quilt for that special person in your life, right? So you might make it much larger. And there is a 10% weight to body mass ratio. What does that mean? Let's talk about it. If your autistic friend is a hundred pounds, you would like your quilt to weigh roughly ten pounds or a little bit less. And I'm going to walk you through that when we're filling in a little bit. But so anyways, we want to get started. And the other thing we've been informed is that most autistic folks are males. About 85% of them as a matter of fact. So we've found this really fun fabric for Benertex. This is called Green Farms. And it's the cutest little print. And there's lots of fabrics to choose from and they're nice and bright in here, right? So we're going to have lots of fun with these.

Now we built the quilt two different ways. The first way is we've used a 10 inch by 5 inch rectangle, right? Cut from our 10 inch by 10 inch squares. The other way we've done it is here where we've done five by fives. And I'll tell you the five by five, because we're going to need to topstitch and channel these out for our filling. We're going to kind of fill and quilt as we go. The five by five made it a little easier for me to follow my stitch line. So I'm going to actually walk you through the five by five layout today. I hope you're ready to get started. I certainly am. Let me go ahead and move these cute prints out of the way here.

So if you were doing the rectangular format, you would just take some of these fabrics that you love. And we're going to cut them like this down into your ten inch by five inch rectangles, right? If you want to make the squares like I do, let's go ahead and stack up, I don't know, four or five of these. I don't usually cut through much more than about six layers or so at a time just for accuracy. I'm going to measure over from one side five inches. And I'm going to give a little bit of pressure and a wonderful cut, just like that. Ok? No problem there.

So now I've got my five inch squares and then what I'm going to do is just choose different squares and start to lay them out the way I like the way they look. About like yay. So for this smaller project we have here, right, we basically. Or the one I'm going to walk you through is a basically about five rows. So you're going to do with your quarter inch seam allowance is you're

just going to sew your squares together and make a row. And let me show you what that looks like. Ok, so here we have this. And here is this row that I have just made basically. And this row we're going to sew on here with a quarter inch seam allowance. And I'm going to show you a trick. Now a lot of you would like to pin to match up your seams. And that's never a bad idea but what I've learned to do is as I start to sew, I actually just pinch my next place where my seam allowances would be great if they matched up. And I hang on to that as I feed this thing through with a quarter inch seam allowance. Let's get that done for us. First stitch of the morning. I just woke the machine up. She growled at me. Did you hear that? That's her way of saying Good Morning. Ok, now once I've gotten through that seam I'm actually pinching the next series of seams, right? And I'm just going to go ahead and flow through those. And then let me finish off this whole row for us. So that's so easy I can hardly stand it. Now I do want to press my seams open. And somehow, just like in my studio at home, I've always got myself all over the place. Let's just take a moment, get those. Let's see here. Bring this around. And this around. This is one of my favorite ways to press is I actually start with my seams still folded together like this. Oop, I don't want to iron the bag. One of these opened up. I can't move it. If I move the open bag, we're going to be vacuuming for weeks. Now I'm sliding my iron up against that seam and just folding it out nice like that. And that's setting the seam really nice and crisp for us. I do not want to melt that bag. So we've got that just as we need. Ok? Isn't that great?

Ok, so now that I have this all ironed out it's time to get the backing ready. So I'm using this wonderful cuddly fabric from Shannon. It's called Cuddle Cloth. Right, a nice boyish color again. And we're going to sandwich these together, right sides together. And actually I've already pre-cut my cuddle cloth down to be the same width here, right? But we also want to leave a kind of a, a, an extra flap or a fold over for the top portion of our quilt. And you want to leave an extra two inches at least for that. So what we're going to do is we're going to sew the sides around. We're going to leave this open until the very end. So we're also not going to sew this together like we would a standard flip and turn. Meaning that I'm going to go ahead and now I've got my right sides together here. And I double checked. I actually put these together so the direction of the little creatures in the farm print doesn't matter. They're all going in different directions. But if you had a directional print and you kept them all directional, of course you want to leave the top open, right? The top of the quilt open. So now I'm going to actually sew across the bottom first. This is to help keep things from shifting. And I'm going to sew up to the top and I'm stopping at the corners. I am not coming around the corners to leave a very narrow opening like I normally would do to turn the right sides back out. Remember we need the whole top open like you see here so that we can fill each of our channels. And then we can fold the whole top over at once.

So now that I've said that with way too many words, double-checking, I'm right sides together. I'm going to sew across the bottom first. And here we go. When I'm sewing with the cuddle cloth, if possible, I try to keep my standard print or my standard quilting cottons against the feed dogs and my cuddle on the upper portion. Because the cuddle is going to want to shift around a little bit on you. Ok?

Now I'm going to do this side. And to do this side correctly I'm going to have to have that cuddle down on the feed dogs. So let's take it a little bit slower. Ok, and then I'm going to go ahead and do the other side. Once I have that other side done, I'm going to roll it out and I'm going to topstitch it from there.

Ok, as I said, I've gotten all three seam allowances made and I forgot to mention, we should really cut that two inches before we go ahead and trim, er excuse me, before we go ahead and turn this thing back to the right sides out. So what I'm going to do is I'm just looking at this top seam, make sure it's completely on my board. That's the best way to dull your blade is to run off your board. And I'm just going to come up here two inches. That looks good. And make my cut, ok? So now there's that and that. And now I'm going to reach down in, pull this back out like yay. And now we're going to go ahead and topstitch. But just like we did the first three seams, we're not going to topstitch the top at all.

So again, back to the bottom. Ok, coming to the top. And stopping again. Ok, so really easy that was, right? The next step we're going to do is we're going to go ahead and sew from the bottom up these seam allowances. And what those become or they become columns. And then we're going to dump our poly pellets in. And then we're going to sew across these rows, like the quilt as we go like we were talking about. And that's what locks just the right amount of poly pellets in each individual little pocket. So next step is, and when I do these kinds of channel quilts, I'm going to start on the middle seam. And then the next middle seam and then the two outside seams. Here we go for that.

Alright, now here we are. We've got all of our channels sewn. So these are open all the way through. I was going to stick my yardstick in there but I can't find it. So anyways, these are open all the way through. Now we're ready to start filling this with our poly pellets. Now the poly pellets, oh and the reason we're using the poly pellets. They are made of, oh they're basically synthetics. They're plastic so they are not going to suffer in the wash. This needs to be a very washable finished project. So that's why you're not using rice or beans or something because they'll be growing later on in your quilt. So we're plastic poly pellets. And what we've found is

most of these come in a two pound bag. I sat and scooped with my little quarter inch scoop and found that basically one quarter cup scoop weighs about an ounce and a quarter. So if your person that you want to go ahead and figure out the weight of the person this is going to be for. The fabric itself is going to weigh a bit. Maybe a pound and a half or two. And then you want to do the math and figure out how many pounds are you going to add to your quilt. How many squares are in your quilt. Divide that evenly and then if you can use the little formula I came up with that basically one quarter cup scoop weighs about an ounce and a quarter, that will hopefully help you. So now here's how we're going to do this. I'm going to just use one scoop per channel. So I'm starting in the middle. And these will probably end up everywhere. And due to gravity, I can just pour. Now as I start to pour though, you notice I'm coming down and I'm pouring in after I'm down below that first set of squares. I let my seam get a little tight on this side. It's alright. Over here. Oop, a little gravity. If you didn't think that was going to happen, you have way too much confidence in Mr. Man Sewing here. Ok? So now that I've got all of that in there, we're going to let gravity do the work. And I'm kind of giving it a shaking motion. I really want all of that to end up down there. Ok? Let's move this out of the way, gently. We don't want to have to vacuum up any more than necessary. Ok? So the gravity is in there.

Now that I've got that, I'm going to go ahead and bring this to the machine. Keep this end up. You know what, I bet you I've got a better to do that. When I was doing it with the bigger one, it was a little bit easier. So let's just do this, ok? And that's going to help everything stay a little more organized and not come slipping out. This one is a little, little petite. Ok. Here we go. Backstitch in. Now the weight of that quilt already is requiring me to give a little push through. Now while I'm sewing through these columns, I'm kind of trying to use my thumbs to make sure there's no beans in the way. You may want to put on a pair of safety goggles just in case we get any needle breaks. So like this one, I felt it shift. So a little more gravity. A little more wiggling. I'm just moving those beans out of the way. Backstitch at the end. And we have our whole first set of pockets done. Ok? We're going to add these poly pellets to the vacuum bag. See now we have all of these weighted in here. I think you can start to see the channels going across there. I have a little thread issue I'll take care of later on. No big deal, right?

So we're just going to do this each row as we go. So back to my bag. Ok, so I've got a little pause here for you. And I just want you to know I've actually, in this process, hit a couple of pellets in big groups and I've actually broken a couple of needles in making all of these projects. And so I just don't want you to think there's anything wrong with your machine or you're crazier than people think you are anyways because you're breaking needles. But what I am going to recommend is let's use something a little bit heavier like a jeans/denim needle. At least an 80 if

not a 90. If you have one of those handy, the, the 90 is larger than the 80, ok? So while I'm going through here, like I said, I just stopped because I had a needle break. So I'm going to a little heavier needle. And when that happens, I'm just backing up a few stitches so that I'm locking in the stitches that were not tied off because the needle snapped. And no matter how smart a smart-machine is, it doesn't seem to know, right before it breaks a needle, so it doesn't tie off its thread. Ok? And I'm taking this nice and slow, like I said, trying not to push or pull too much. I can use my thread cutter on my machine, I believe. Oh hi. I pressed the wrong button, needle down. Check this out.

Ok so now I've done a couple of these and I'm fairly confident and yes I will have a few of these pellets on the floor. The other way you could go ahead and do this is you could technically just fill one pocket at a time. If you have a giant quilt, even though it needs more starts and stops for your threads, you certainly don't have to fill the entire row. And it might give you, personally, a little bit more success if you feel like you're kind of struggling. So watch this. I'm just going to fill one row. Then I'm going to come back in and roll it up. Slide just that one row in, ok? Holding it kind of from my backstitch. And I'm going to sew just a little over that seam allowance and stop and hold it. So that basically did my backstitch. So we're going to just have a little bit more thread to trim later on.

Ok, now I'm on row number or column number two. So you come in here. There we go. Ok, then again, as I'm restarting I'm locking in those stitches by holding them in place. And that locks in those last stitches as well. Now I'm going to feed this through and do the same thing. I'm just going to stop at that next seam allowance. Stop, stop, stop. Thread cut. And so on and so forth.

Alright, welcome back here. We're coming into the very last row. Now this row, I guarantee, will make a mess all over the floor. So I definitely want you to do this one, one pocket at a time, ok? So here we go. We're going to basically pour in our beans or poly pellets. These are not food, right? And now what I'm going to do is I'm actually going to run a seam allowance across there but then I'm going to also fold that over later on, ok? So we've got all of those in there. And I probably should have started from that corner because now I want to do it this way. But I've got my beans in there so just, it's no problem. You can do it either direction. And here we go. Lock in that stitch. And finishing. Right, you come to the next one. Fill. Shake, and sew. Now at this point, your blanket has gotten quite weighted. So just make sure you're being kind to your machine, helping it along if necessary. Watch out for those beans. I had one just jump out of the top. Lock that stitch in, ok? And, now let's quickly take a moment and trim these loose threads on the top. And now we're going to want to topstitch this bad boy down like this. Now the cuddle

fabric does not really unravel so if you were struggling with your cuddle fabric and you don't have to trim that second edge under. But I like to. So at this point maybe I grab some of my little clamps, just to act as a second pair of hands here. I've got these fun little quilty clip things that I just kind of lock those in. And that's just going to help me get over to the machine. Remember the beans, the poly pellets, they're not magic beans, Rob. The poly pellets are going to not slip out. We already have them secured. This just keeps my cuddle fabric in a nice format here. Ok, and the last step is I'm going to try and take poke this little edge underneath, just a freckle if I can. There we go. I'm pulling the clip before I stitch it. Now you do have the poly pellets possibly underneath your needle again, so you're still being cautious. You need a little encouragement sometimes you can give a little tug. But you know what, it's so funny, a lot of folks start tugging, especially like when they're working with jeans and denim fabric. And it's the pulling on your fabric that will cause your needle to break too. Of course your jeans, hopefully don't weigh ten pounds like my little quilt does right now. I'm also putting the weight of the entire quilt on the entire table.

Alright, there we go. We've got our last few stitches done on our fantastic weighted blanket here. And as you know at Man Sewing we definitely have your back. So let me give you a couple of things that I did really experience while creating this. Now the top construction, piecing together your five inch squares, that's a snap. And it's a great place for you to practice your quilting techniques, right? But once we started adding the weight of the poly pellets into the project, it got a little heavy. And now, we also, of course we used the cuddle fabric on the back on purpose. You don't feel the poly pellets through it as much and we love the texture it provides. However, some sewing machines, some of the older ones are a little tired and they don't necessarily feed fabric that has a lot of give or pile to it real well. So if you were struggling feeding the fabric through, maybe a flannel would have been a better choice for you. Or a standard cotton, just because it will, will drive off the four-wheel drive of our feed dogs a little bit better, right? And then, the other thing is too, while you're working through some of this stuff, using a denim needle. Boy, that sure made a difference for me. I love those sharps needles but they're a little bit petite and having that strong denim needle really helped as I was hitting some of those poly pellets. As you will too as you're sewing through there. So the denim needle and just taking it nice and slow and being careful as you're sewing through. You will be able to do this. You will be successful, but just take it down a notch. And we know how much you care for those autistic friends and family out there you have in your life. And we just want to take a moment and say thank you for all the care that you provide. All that extra special attention that you give out. And we thank you for making them a fantastic weighted blanket as well. And so while you're enjoying that, we're going to come up with some other fantastic, creative projects for you here at Man Sewing.