

*This has got to be one of the all-time happiest quilts I have ever made. I mean look at these amazing colors, right? This, we are calling the Tutti Fruitti quilt and that's just because of the movement and the colors involved. And I'm going to teach you today how to make these awesome applique circles with no raw edge. Let's get started.*

*I bet your happy meter is going off the charts just like mine when you check out this quilt here behind me. Isn't this fun? Now check it out. We're using solid fabrics from Michael Miller. This is the Cotton Couture. And here's the color names as we go down the list. Up at the top we've got lime, turquoise, apricot, magenta and purple down there at the bottom. And one of the fun things I really enjoy doing was the free motion machine quilting in the background in between all the circles as well and that was just done with a fun variegated thread. Now I want to break today's tutorial into two different processes. We're going to start with our background. And I've already given you the names of the Cotton Couture colors. I purchased half yards of each of the five. And then I just trimmed them down into 15 inches. No reason behind that. I was truing them up. You could of course use the 18 inches as well. And once you have them to the size you would like, you're just going to simply assemble them in a color gradient order starting with your lime and going down to your purple. Or of course you could do this in any color ways you like. Just a real simple solid strip background like that. And this, when I'm working, this is all done now so I put on my table a nice big piece of the batting as I know a lot of you know I like to do. I like to design flat. And then I just laid my quilt top like this across the table while I began creating my circles so that I could come in and audition my circles right on top of the quilt. And because it was on the batting, once the circles were made it was easy for me to press them right in location. Let me show you how we're going to make those circles. We're going to focus on that for the rest of the tutorial.*

*Now you know I love my Cotton Couture but it was Debra Edwards Modsquad for Northcott Fabrics that was the absolute inspiration for this quilt. Look at this fabric. Is it not just fantastic? And it basically designed the whole quilt as I was playing with it. Now if you look really closely on this you can see that there's a white line right here. Now this was actually sold as a two-third yard's panel so for the quilt behind me I used two of those panels. I'm just going to show you how to cut up one. And I also am using Heat N Bond fusible feather light interfacing. So it actually has a bump on one side that is going to be used as our ironing process. We're going to have this interfacing behind our circles. Now I used about three different size circles in creating the quilt behind me. First of all I used my largest in my circle cutter here which is about an eight inch. I used a seven inch and a six inch as well. And what happens is I want to make sure I'm cutting my circle of my print fabric the same exact size as I'm cutting the circle of my interfacing.*

*So what we're going to do, we're going to prepare to put these together right sides. So right now the interfacing is on my cutting mat. And it is facing up meaning that those sticky bumps that's the glue we can feel. And I want that sticky glue against the right side of my print. Ok, and I used about six yards total for the creating of all my circles in the background. And a lot of this we're going to be able to cut through piece by piece but remember we're only looking at one of the two panels you're going to need to make a quilt that size. So you can also, I should also point out, I get so excited. I want to cut I want cut, I want to cut. I'm going to point out the reason we need some of that extra interfacing is we're not going to be able to get all the circles out of this side from this piece of interfacing. We're going to have to bring another piece back in. That's why you need a little bit. But it's very affordable.*

*Now with my circle I've got my tip exposed for my center point there. Let me bring this in so you can see it a little bit better. Now what I'm doing at the moment is I'm kind of centering it right in part of the print. And I'm making sure that if I cut right now I'm cutting all of my circle complete. You can see that I can actually come down here a little further. So I'm going to now center myself between that square. And let's go right here in the center of that one. That's going to be cool. So it gives me the ability to think what my circle is going to look like. Now I'm going to pull that blade back and begin my cut. It comes all the way around here. I got a little bit of a ripple that I probably should have tried to control. It's going to leave me a little bit of a bump. So I'm just going to shave that off in the back. I don't even know if you caught that or not. We're going to push that closed. And then I have my right sides already together so I'm going to set these on the machine. We're going to stitch these in a second. Now I will just work my way through. And I cut all of my big circles first. And then after I get my big circles cut is when I come back in and I use my smaller circles in the area that will be left behind. So get ourselves, oop, open my blade cover there. We've got ourselves another circle like this. And on and on it will go as we cut all the way through. So again if I was making smaller circles. The smaller circles are going to come out of the area in between where the big circles came from, right? And of course variety is the key in quilting I believe. Let's set this out of the way so I can teach you how to stitch the circles.*

*Now when you're sewing your circles you're going to want to use a quarter inch seam allowance. And we're going to want to go all the way around the circle. I found for myself. It was easiest if my feed dogs were touching my fabric. So my print is now down. And my interfacing is up. And watch this. I'm going to go ahead and begin my stitch. I don't need to backstitch. We're going to come back over that thread. Now most of us want to feed our fabric. And we don't need to do that when we're doing circles. As a matter of fact if I put pressure right here and begin sewing, the fabric and the interfacing is naturally curving. You can see how little effort I'm*

actually putting into staying right on the outer edge. So I'm looking right here on my presser foot. Now if you want to do these in a hurry, well make sure you do them accurately. But I learned, this is what's called a Hera Marker. It's a marking tool that we often use in applique. But what I've found is it's nice and smooth. And what I can do is I can place this Hera Marker right here . And what that does is it acts like a finger but it keeps my hands safe. And that smooths the interfacing and the fabric as I go. And now I've got pressure out here on this middle of the circle with my left hand. And we're just going to feed this right through. And as I said we're sewing all the way around the circle. Using that Hera marker to just keep my interfacing going. Look at that. No effort. No feeding. Right through the machine. Nice medium pace. And I've got about 30 circles in the quilt behind me. And I was able to sew them very rapidly. I'm coming into the finish here. And I'm just going to backstitch now to lock that in. And I'm going to take a moment to brag because, check this out. It's all but perfect. It lined up fantastically. How easy is that, right?

Now the next trick is we want to open this interfacing up but we're using the feather light interfacing so it has a real ability to kind of tear. Like I said, it's featherlight. So I actually still have the Hera Marker in my hand. I can actually just kind of drag that across there to make a little bit of a slit inside of the interfacing. And now my interfacing is going to open up. And I'm going to see maybe an inch and a half, two inches worth. Try not to open it too much because this is what's going to pull the raw edge in. So I'm gently, I even have that in my notes: gently turning this out using my thumbs to push the meat of the fabric back through that little slit I made. And then the next thing we're going to do is we're going to use that same Hera Marker to smooth out the edges. We do not get the opportunity to press this to tidy up the edges because we are going to press it onto the quilt top. So right now it's a little slubby. So I'm going to take my Hera Marker in here and I'm not going to push real hard because if I do I'll rip the seam out. Ask me how I know that one. I think that's one of the benefits. I love making these tutorials but you should hear me talking to myself at home in my studio like I'm talking to all you folks right now. And I'm practicing and practicing this stuff and I'm thinking about what should I be saying and what's important here and I ripped right through the interfacing when I was talking about being gentle in my mind so you can laugh along at home with that one. But you can see I'm just using that marker. And you can kind of see how I'm using my fingers. And I'm overdoing this right now of course as I do with most of my fun tutorials there. But we have a nice clean circle and you don't see a bunch of that interfacing hanging out under the edges. And now the next thing we're going to do is we're going to get ready to put this thing on our quilt. And I'm going to show you the next trick. I just reached over to heat up my iron. I want my iron really nice and hot and the steam feature is going to be key for this, ok?

So we're going to bring our quilt top back into place. And of course while the iron is getting itself perfectly warm, let's talk about two things. I'm changing the fabric around right now because my eye saw this and I said, Green. That one is the green circle. And I was about ready to put it on the green and I said, no, no. If you look at the quilt behind me here you'll see that I've really tried to work it. Of course I like having my bright colors up at top. But then when I'm working through here too you'll notice I tried to put my purples and my oranges here on the greens, right? And then as you come down you'll see the greens down here on the purples and oranges. One of these circles that caught my eye, oh here it is. Isn't this fun? Look you can actually see the blues almost match and part of that circle almost looks like it was chopped away. So when you're laying out your circles and auditioning them, this is the point I want you to really hear. Please do not iron one of them until all of them are right where you want, ok? I'm going to iron one now so I can show you how to sew it onto your quilt top before you baste your quilt. But I want you to design your entire quilt before you press any of them down, ok? The other thing, back to the quilt we go, if you'll look closely, I tried to do my best to keep kind of an equal distance between the circles. So none of them are too crowded. Or none of them are all that far apart, right? So we had kind of a nice equal distance. And then when I quilted that I just quilted it with a really cool variegated thread that had all those purple and pink colors in it.

Now my iron should be hot. I think I stalled just long enough. I enjoy having my circles go over the seam allowances. So when I'm laying this down we can do all kinds of little quick design tricks, right? As you're looking maybe you can see there's a line right here that follows this line through. You can do all kinds of fun stuff. What I wouldn't necessarily do is line this up so that the seam here. I'm not even sure if you can see that but how that seams goes. Because that seems too ordinary. And I like extraordinary instead. So here's that for us. Now the key is as I said, in order to get this to bond down so that it holds us in place we are going to go ahead and hit it and now I'm hitting the steam feature on this. And I'm really taking some time. And I'm also looking at the edges as I go around. We don't want much of that white or any of that white to show through. And look how long I'm taking to actually press this one down. And if you already have one of these awesome Panasonic irons at home. I was able to get about four circles completely pressed down before I had to go back to my charging base. It's a little side note there. Ok, but it was the heat of that steam that's going to really hold it down. As I said earlier you put all of your circles down before you head to the sewing machine but what I like to do is I keep my little lapel stick handy. It's one of these, it's a little glue stick for fabric, right? Because every now and again after I've sewn, let say, ten of the 30 circles down. I've been manipulating the quilt. I've been manipulating the quilt so some of the edges may start to lift. So you can

*always hit your edge with a little lapel stick and you can then sew right through it. If you're finding that things are slipping around a little bit. We are going to put these down with our standard sewing system meaning a quarter inch foot and our feed dogs are up. You could certainly free motion these down if you wanted to. But what I wanted is as much accuracy as possible.*

*Now I want to be right on the edge with my topstitching so I'm actually not at the quarter inch seam allowance, my opening of my foot is right over the junction of the edge of that circle. And now as I begin sewing I'm going to take nice and slow because the stitching is really going to count. And I'm going to go around the edge and as a reminder we are only on the quilt top. We do not have any batting or backing yet. So this makes it all bonded, totally washable. Keeps it nice and soft by using that feather light interfacing. And then when we're all done we go back in and we do our machine quilting and have a blast with that. Let's finish this circle off for you. Ok now as we're coming out of caffeinated mode here I want to point out a few things you probably picked up even though I was sewing extra fast there. One is look at my hands. They're set up almost like I'm free motion quilting. And I'm actually pulling the fiber of the backing of the quilt away and keeping the circle nice and flat. And then the second thing I do is about every, let's call it maybe 20 or 30 stitches, I stop, I rotate the quilt and I'm pushing the body of the quilt through the whole machine keeping it nice and flat. But that's where you could see all those other circles around that were appliqued on there may have started to shift around or do something like that. And as I come into the very end I'm going to remind you the reason I chose to do this with my feed system is because it is topstitching. It definitely is going to show up and that keeps my stitch length nice and consistent and makes it look really, really professional. You can see that this isn't going to move at all. And when I did all of my machine quilting like I pointed out we did it in the body of the quilt. But I actually didn't quilt any of these circles so it's really fun and really pliable and a very easy quilt to snuggle up with. And totally washable so a great project for those kids out there. Like I said, I am in happy quilting mode. My happy meter is off the charts because of these colors and the success of this project. And I just love Deb Edwards. This fabric is fantastic so thank you for inspiring me here. Now what I want to know is have you ever tried an applique project that didn't go so well. Because guess what I'm doing. I'm thinking of new projects to show you here at Man Sewing*