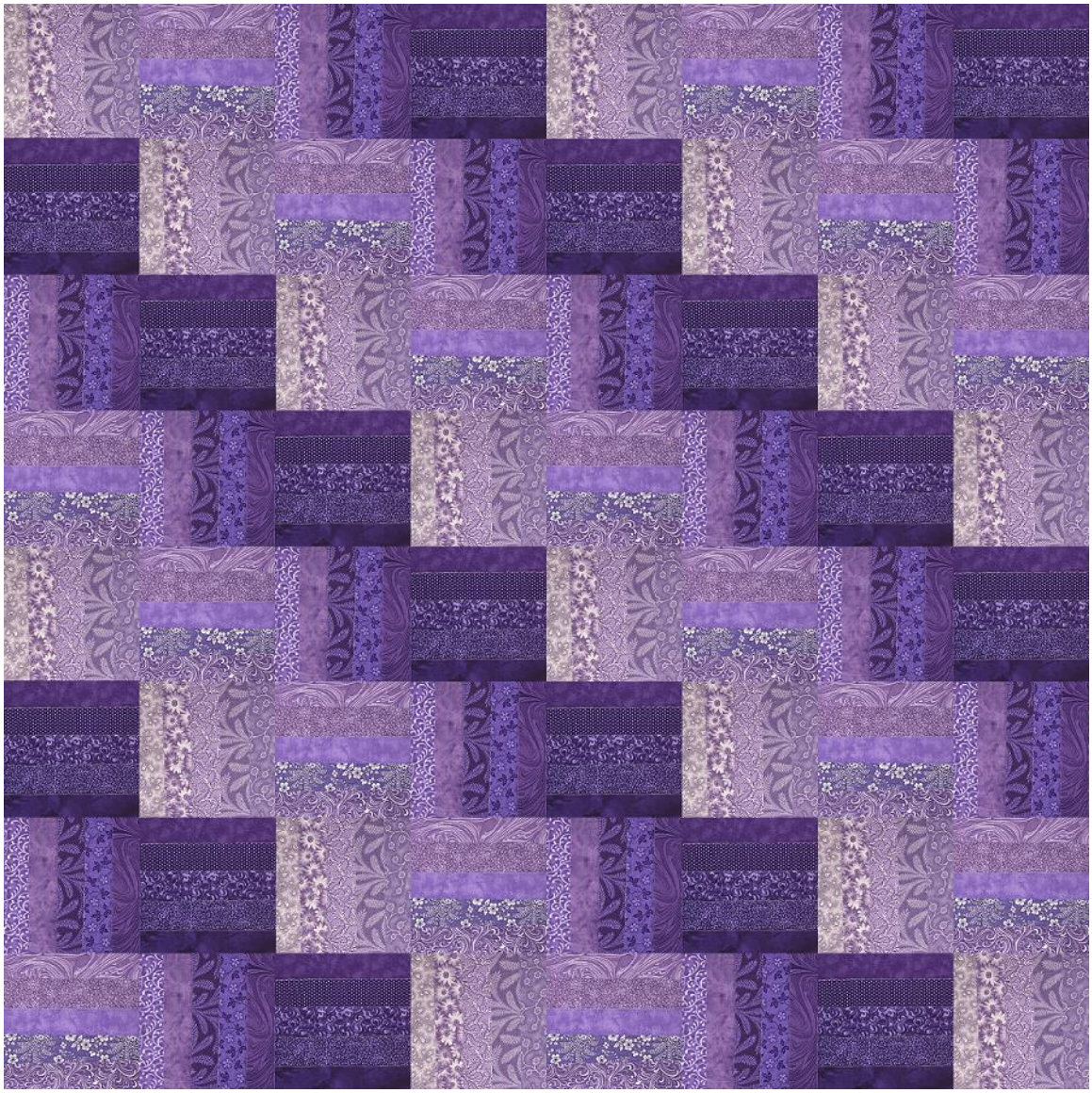
Easy Rail Fence Tutorial Using 5 Strips

By Liz Katsuro



Rail fence is a very easy block and is suitable for a brand new beginner! This photo uses fabrics from the **Purple Perfection Gradation Roll**. Quilt top above comes out approx 80” x 80”.

Rail fence is a great block – the possibilities are endless when it comes to arrangement and placement of colors and hues within the block, and you can modify it to use as many different strips as you like. This one uses 5 strips, since you'll get exactly 4 blocks from each set of 5 strips.

DIRECTIONS

1. Choose 5 strips that alternate dark-light-dark-light-dark. (Or light-dark-light-dark-light, if you prefer.) If you're using a gradient/gradation roll, sew the sets in the order they come in your roll from lightest to darkest.

2. Sew them together, down the long sides of the strips, in that order. Press open.

3. Trim your selvege edge, and cut (4) 10.5” blocks.

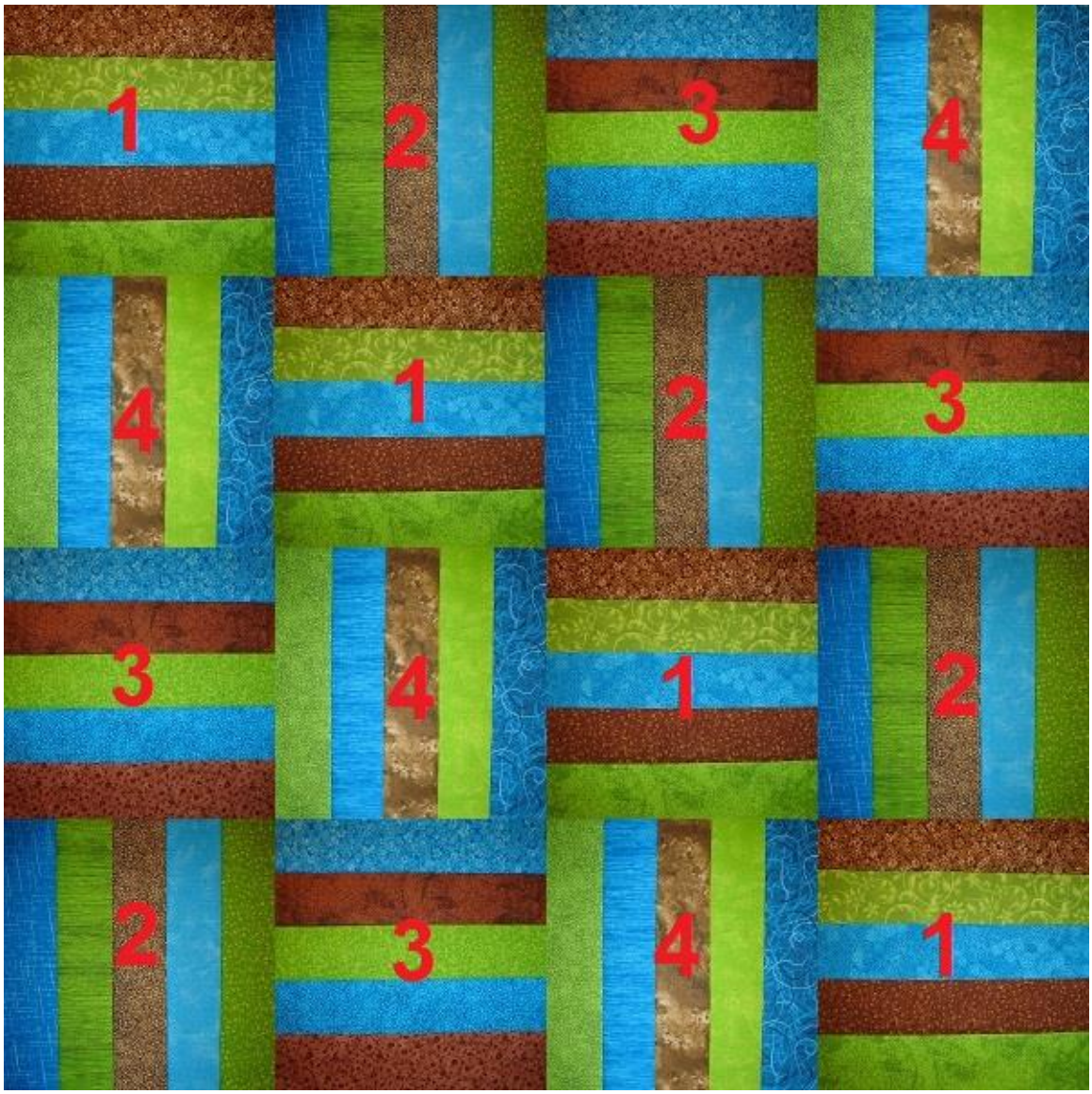
That’s it! 5 strips = (4) 10.5” blocks. You’ll end up with 4 different sets of 4 blocks from each roll, if you’re using a 20-strip roll with 20 different fabrics.

When you arrange your blocks, you will alternate the placement of consecutive blocks to create the rail fence pattern. Block 1 will have its strips facing horizontally, and Block 2 will have its strips facing vertically, and so on.

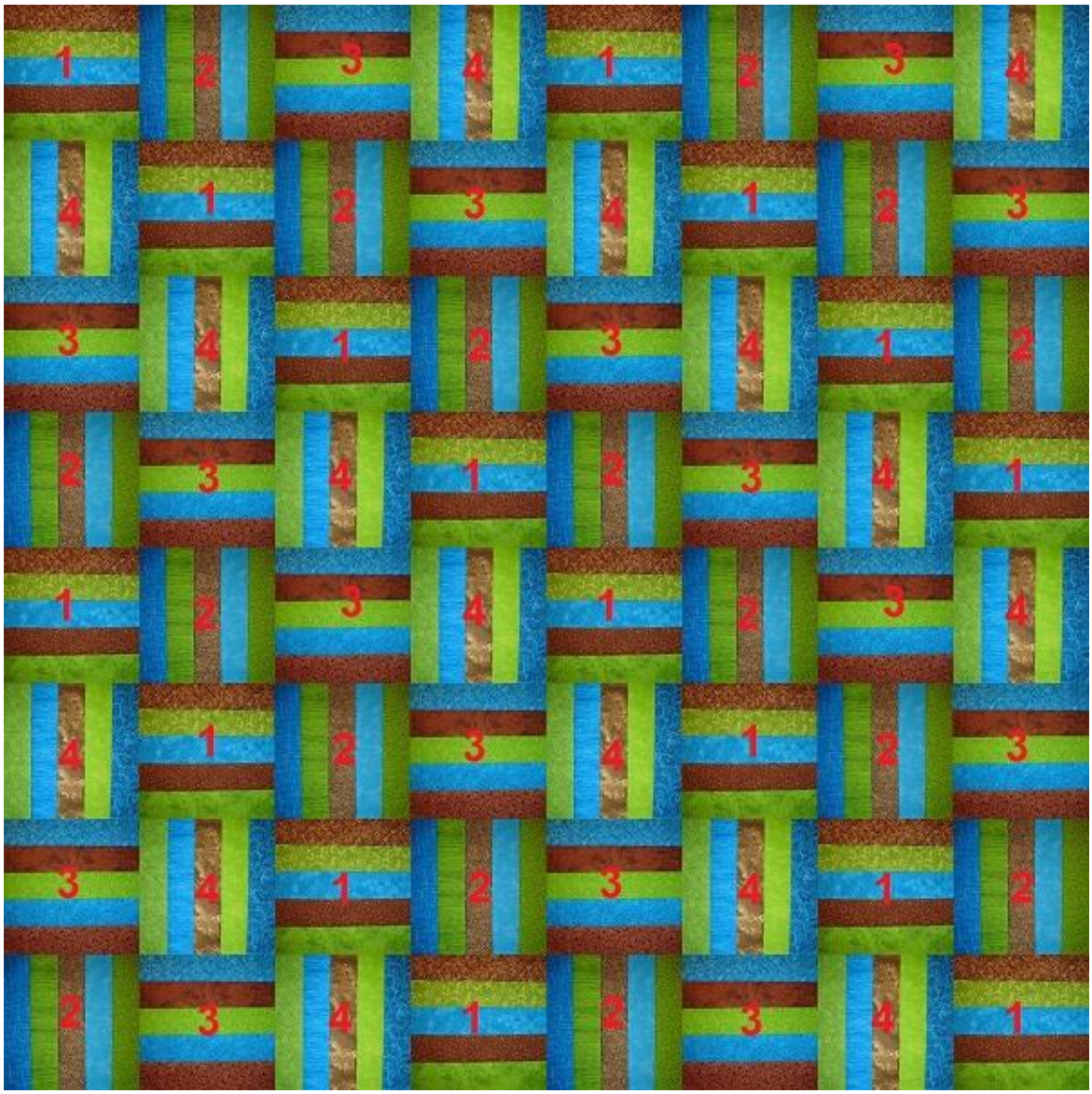
If you are making a baby quilt with only 16 blocks, laying these out into the perfect placement for your top is easy. They're laid out

1-2-3-4
4-1-2-3
3-4-1-2
2-3-4-1

And your 1's and 3's will always be laid out the same direction (horizontally, in my picture), and 2's and 4's, same thing (vertically, in my picture).



Very easy!! Same thing if you are going to use 64 blocks to make a larger bed-sized quilt (which will end up about 80”x 80” before adding any borders).



If you are planning to make a quilt of a different size, you'll need to lay your blocks out in a more haphazard fashion, since you won't have the exact correct number of each different block to make perfect diagonal rows of the same block. This is not a problem! Just take all your blocks, and lay them out on the floor to decide their placement, and make sure they are alternating vertical and horizontal placement both left-right and up-down.

I'd recommend using color complements or gradation rolls with 20 different fabrics for this, as well as choosing a roll that has several different colors!

Sizes & Quantities Needed (Dimensions are approximate and before adding borders)

Baby – 40” x 40” – 16 blocks laid out 4 x 4 – 20 strips (1 20-strip jelly roll)

Lap – 60” x 60” – 36 blocks laid out 6 x 6 – 45 strips (3 20-strip jelly rolls)

Twin – 60” x 90” – 54 blocks laid out 6 x 9 – 70 strips (4 20-strip jelly rolls)

X-Lg Twin/Full – 70” x 90” – 63 blocks laid out 7 x 9 – 80 strips (4 20-strip rolls)

Queen (matching diagonal rows) – 80” x 80” -- 64 blocks laid out 8 x 8 – 80 strips (4 20-strip rolls) **This layout will require borders to enlarge your quilt to standard queen size.**

Standard Queen – 90” x 110” – 99 blocks laid out 9 x 11 – 125 strips (7 20-strip rolls)

King – 110” x 110” – 121 blocks laid out 11 x 11 – 155 strips (8 20-strip rolls)