

Preparing CIRCLES for Wall Hangings

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These instructions were initially inspired from the free video: http://www.thequiltshow.com/os/bernina_videos.php (the one entitled “Going in Circles”) and may be used for preparing separate circular shapes that can be attached to wall hangings—either flat or for a free-standing (3-D) effect. The identified thread colors below match the “Keep on the Sunny Side” sample wall hanging. *Note: This wall hanging was made with a Bernina sewing machine and its circular attachment #83. If you do not use a Bernina, check to see the circular attachments offered by your machine.*

For EACH 3-D CIRCLE, cut FOUR different fabrics into oversized circles about 11” in diameter. ONE of these fabrics will be the BACKING. TWO will be stabilizers, and ONE will be the TOP layer. Set aside the BACKING.

Layer/position the three remaining fabric pieces according to the following:

- ❑ TWO CIRCLES OF STABILIZER (medium tear-away). *See note below for a FLAT, non 3-D effect.*
- ❑ TOP FABRIC (on the TOP of the two layers of stabilizer—right side UP)

Steps for preparing the above three layers:

- ❑ Determine the approximate CENTER of the fabric stack and mark lightly with an erasable pen/pencil.
- ❑ Put the #83 attachment on the sewing machine, and put on Foot 34C. Slip on the three layers at the approximate center, and put the rubber stopper back on the circular attachment. Position the attachment in the WIDEST position (I call that #1 position). Manually swirl the fabric completely around to make sure it is properly positioned so the stitching will always appear on the fabric.
- ❑ *Note: At THIS POINT, you can do practically ANYTHING creative that you wish! The following steps match the sample “Sunny Side” wall hanging.* Now move the attachment to POSITION 3 (two “slides” to the right). Stitch #639 (regular settings) [with thread # 3544] completely around the circle. Watch closely as it nears the connecting point, and carefully stop it at the right time.
- ❑ Move the attachment into POSITION 5 (two more slides to the right) and stitch YOUR CHOICE of words/decorative stitching, etc. [I stitched the letters for “KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE.”] Again, watch carefully as it nears the end—it won’t “end” perfectly, but you can stop it at a point where it “looks” OK.
- ❑ Keep the fabric ON the attachment—**don’t** remove it.

Steps for adding the BACKING (This is for a 3-D effect—skip this step for a final flat, incorporated circle):

- ❑ Make about a 4” slit in the CENTER of the backing fabric (for later TURNING).
- ❑ Remove the attachment’s RUBBER STOPPER ONLY, and **DON’T remove the first three layers from the attachment.** Turn the backing fabric so the RIGHT SIDE is UPSIDE DOWN (thus, right sides for the front and back of the circle are facing each other), and position it atop the three layers that have already been stitched. Replace the rubber stopper onto the attachment.
- ❑ Move the attachment to POSITION 1 (as WIDE as it allows—all the way to the extreme left). Change the STITCH LENGTH TO 1.5, and do a STRAIGHT STITCH [with thread # 0608] all the way around the circle—overlapping several stitches for security.

Completing the circles:

- ❑ REMOVE everything from the circular attachment.
- ❑ GENTLY tear away the OUTSIDES of the two layers of tear-away stabilizer without upsetting the stitching.
- ❑ CLOSELY AND CAREFULLY trim the two remaining fabrics with PINKING SHEARS, **making darn sure that you do NOT clip the thread seams at any point.** *Careful trimming with pinking shears allows a very SMOOTH turn (without overlapping fabric clumps).*
- ❑ TURN the circle inside out by pushing the first three layers through the slit made in the backing fabric. Carefully press into a perfect circle!

Note 1: If you have no need for a free-standing or 3-D circle, use only **one** circle of initial stabilizer, and substitute Aqua mesh (or water soluble poly mesh) instead of the final “fabric backing.” Slit the Aqua mesh AFTER you have removed it from the attachment. Then gently press (low heat—only on the FABRIC side). This gentle pressing causes the fabric circle to shrink slightly after it is turned, and the circle can then “stick” to the next step in the project. When this “sandwich” is joined to other backing for a quilt block, use a foot with a groove to allow the extra thicknesses of fabric to flow smoothly as they are being stitched together.

Note 2: After you finish the above, stitch on an embroidery design, an appliquéd letter (with photo), etc. [See separate explanation page for such appliquéd letters.] Have FUN!