

How to Make an Alzheimer Touch Quilt

To make an Alzheimer Touch Quilt, you will need 36, six-inch squares of assorted textured fabrics. Some fabrics that are suitable include seersucker, faux fur, velvet, fleece, satin, corduroy, wool and textured home decorator fabrics. Squares with pockets or zippers also make for good textures. The finished quilt, (approximately 32-inches square,) fits nicely on the lap of a person who may be seated in a wheelchair. The six-inch square fits just right on an outstretched hand. Fabrics should be washable, and durable enough to withstand the hot water washing typical of healthcare facilities. Bright coloured fabrics make the quilt lively, but remember that the textures are the most important factor. Fun furs are a favourite fabric, and may remind the person of a pet they once had, bringing them comfort.

Join the squares in six rows of six squares, or in four – nine patches, mixing a variety of texture and colour. Included in the kit is a four-inch square label that you will applique to one of the 36 fabric squares. Using the label, you may indicate who made the quilt, and when.



It is a good idea to use stronger fabrics around the perimeter of the quilt. This will help keep the quilt square. If using lace, silk or silk like fabrics, use a stabilizing fabric with them. In the case of see through fabric, such as lace, a contrasting colour fabric underneath works well.

Sew the rows, or nine patches together. Layer with a backing and batting, and baste the layers together. Using a wide zig zag or serpentine stitch, quilt the squares in-the-ditch. Trim off excess batting and backing to the size of the quilt top. Bind the edges to finish. For additional warmth and comfort, it is recommended that flannel or fleece be used for the backing. If a good quality fleece is used for backing, it is not necessary to use batting.

An alternative to binding the quilt is to layer the batting, the backing right side up, the quilt top right side down (*right sides together*). Sew the layers together around the perimeter with a $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch seam allowance, leaving approximately six to eight-inches unstitched. Trim off excess batting and backing to the size of the quilt top. Turn the quilt right side out through the opening and hand stitch the opening closed. Then quilt the squares in-the ditch using a wide zig zag or serpentine stitch.

Quilts can also be embellished with buttons, or ties that are securely sewn in place, preferably by machine.

When you have completed the quilt, cut any excess backing material into six-inch squares that can be used for a future Touch Quilt project.

There are many stories about how the Touch Quilts have given personal meaning to personal care home residents. A man who had been a tailor, was very attentive to the quality of fabrics in the quilt. He talked about which fabrics would be good for the work he had done. A woman likened the softness of long surface fibers of a square on the quilt to being like baby's hair. Another family was delighted that the quilt their Dad received had fabric depicting a John Deere tractor, the make with which their father had farmed.

Thank you for being part of the Touch Quilt project. Each quilt produced is a gift of care extended to older adults in our province. Your assistance with this project helps to make Manitoba a Dementia Friendly Community.

If you have questions or thoughts to share about the Touch Quilt project, please do not hesitate to be in touch. You may contact the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba at:

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