

Free-motion **Feathers**

Borders, Blocks, Backgrounds



Free Quilting Diagrams & Tip Sheet

For more information about the challenge, visit QuiltingIsMyTherapy.com

Video 1: The Basics of Quilting Feathers

First, we'll learn the foundations of feather quilting and explore the essential techniques you need to create beautiful feather designs.

Refer to pages 3-5

Video 2: Feather Designs for Sashings

Quilting feather designs in thinner borders and sashings is the perfect way to add a curvy, feather-y look to your quilting. Not only are these designs fun and quick to quilt, you can easily change them up to create your own design variations.

Refer to pages 6-9

Video 3: Feather Designs for Quilt Blocks

We're turning our focus towards quilt blocks and learning how to quilt feather designs that are sure to be a perfect fit. Get ready to explore some beautiful designs that will elevate your quilting game!

Refer to pages 10-15

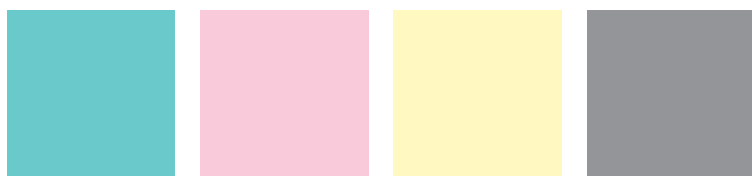
Videos 4 & 5: Feather Designs for Backgrounds

We'll explore how to quilt these delightful designs as all-over designs to fill in areas of all sizes. Then, we'll adapt each design to create beautiful quilt borders, giving your projects a polished and professional touch!

Refer to pages 16-19

Quilting Breakdown

If you're quilting along with me on the panel, the weekly quilting breakdown is shown below.

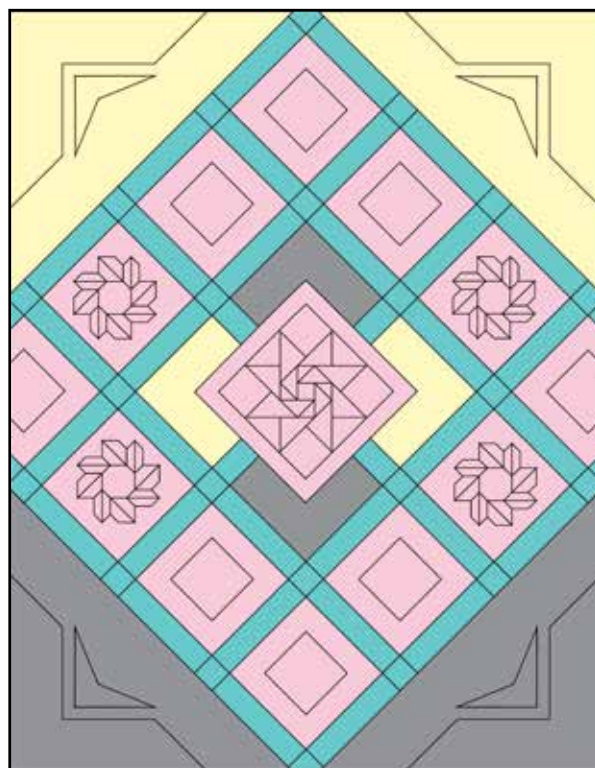


Week 2

Week 3

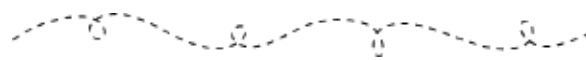
Week 4

Week 5





Feather Basics



There are so many different ways to quilt feather designs! Despite their diversity, most feather designs share the same basic components. Once you master the techniques for quilting them, you'll be able to experiment and create your own gorgeous feather designs!

In this class, I'll introduce you to two of my favorite feather designs. Both are beautiful and versatile, providing the foundation for our quilting journey. The techniques we'll be learning can be used with any feather style you love to quilt. So, if you already have some favorite feather designs, feel free to skip ahead to the next section.



The Classic Feather

First up, the Classic Feather. Not only does it look amazing, it tends to be the easiest to quilt as it requires no traveling or backtracking. While I prefer to quilt it as demonstrated below, feel free to adapt the technique to suit your preferences.

Quilting The Classic Feather

Quilt the Spine

Starting at the “bottom” of the feather, quilt a slightly curvy line that ends in a teardrop shape merging into the spine. This will serve as the top of the feather.

Quilt Petals Along One Side of the Spine

Quilt a line that curves out and back into the spine, creating a “half heart” shape. Travel along the spine a little bit and repeat.

Note:

Make sure that the petals “merge” into the spine. This helps ensure that there is room for the next petal.

Continue Quilting Petals

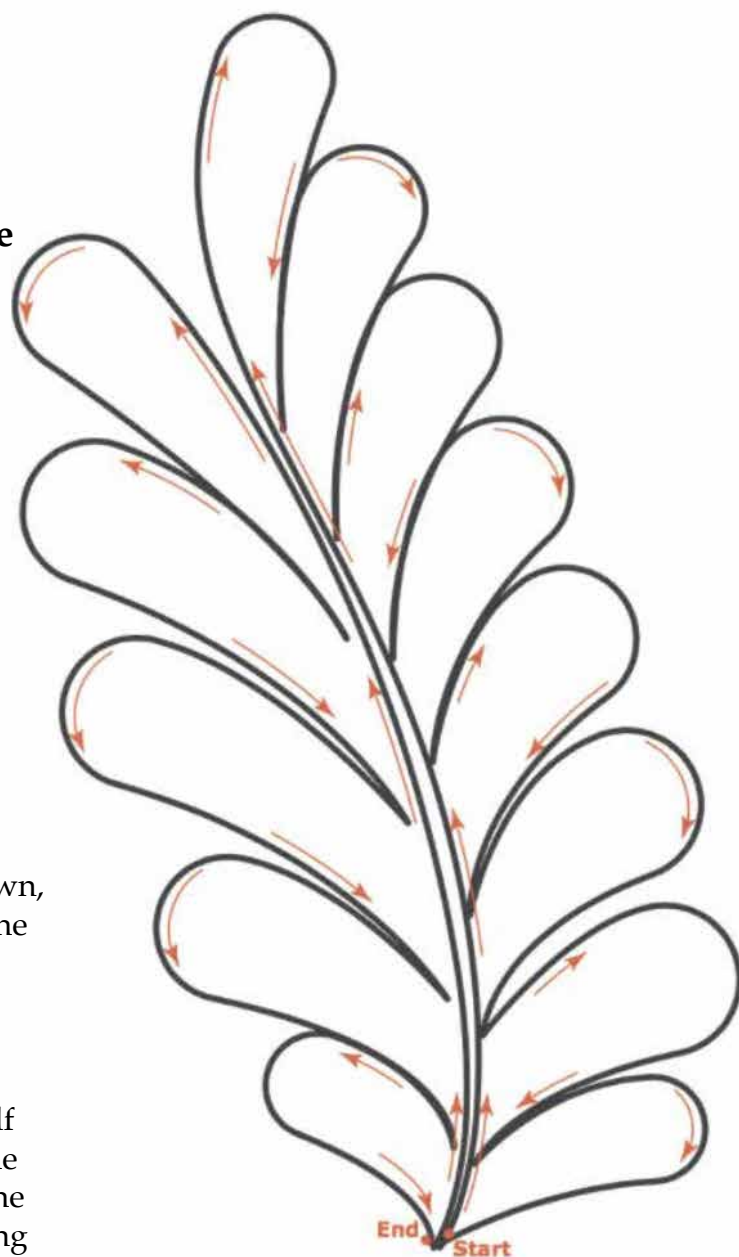
Continue quilting petals until you reach the bottom of the spine.

Echo the Spine to the Top of the Feather

Since I prefer quilting the petals from the top down, echoing the spine allows me to reach the top of the feather.

Quilt Petals Along the Other Side of the Feather

Starting from the top of the feather, quilt the “half heart” shaped petals as you work your way to the bottom. Don’t worry about aligning them with the petals on the other side; instead, focus on ensuring they merge into the spine.





The Custom Feather

For a more elegant design, try the Custom Feather. Since it incorporates some traveling along a previously quilted line, it may take a little longer to quilt. However, the result is well worth the effort! This feather is quilted a bit differently from the Classic Feather. The petals are quilted in groups of two, starting at the bottom of the spine. Don't get discouraged if you find it a bit tricky at first. With a little practice, you'll soon get the hang of it!

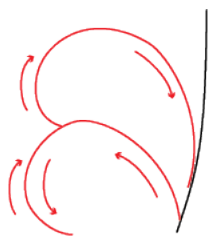
Quilting The Custom Feather

Quilt the Spine

Starting where you want the top of the feather, quilt a gently curvy line toward the bottom.

Quilt Petals Along One Side of the Spine

The petals of this feather are quilted in groups of two. Begin by quilting a line that extends from the spine, ending in a curve. Travel back along the curve about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Then, quilt another line that arcs outward before angling back toward the center, merging into the spine. Finish the second petal so that it returns to the spine. Continue quilting the petals in groups of two until you reach the top of the feather.

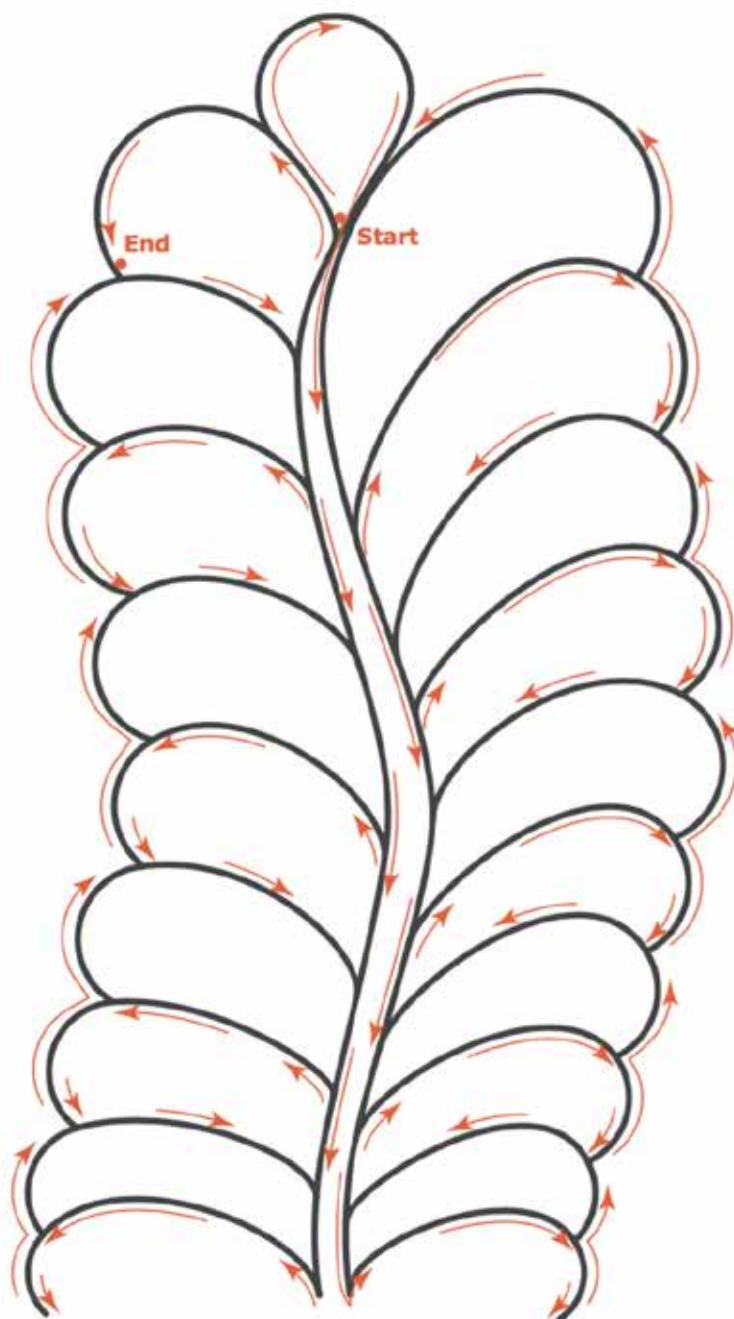


Echo the Spine

Quilt an echo line back to the bottom of the feather.

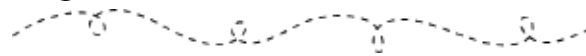
Quilt Petals Along the Other Side of the Feather

Repeat the steps above, quilting the petals in groups of two as you work your way to the top of the feather.





Feather Designs for Borders and Sashings



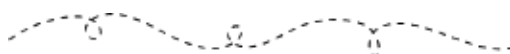
Quilting feather designs in thinner borders and sashings is not only fun, it's the perfect way to add a curvy, feather-y look to your quilting. Not only are these designs fun and quick to quilt, you can easily change them up to create your own design variations.

Featured Designs:

- Half Feathers
- Half-Heart Feathers
- Flipped Feathers
- Scooped Feathers
- Mini Feather

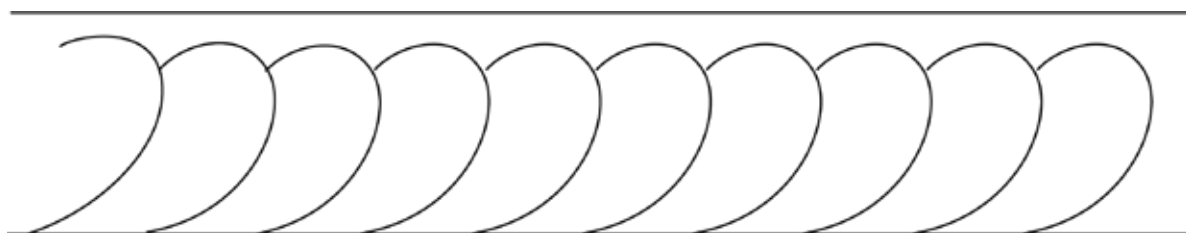


Half Feathers

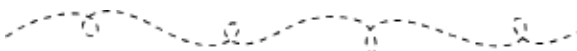


When a full feather won't fit the sashing, quilting half a feather is the ideal solution. It's perfect for 1"- 2" borders and sashings, adds a framing effect that highlights your blocks, and works beautifully with any feather style.

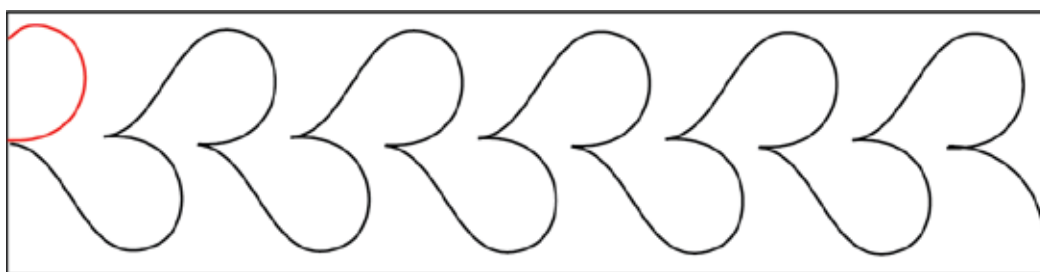
To do this, simply quilt the petals of a feather so that they extend from one side of the strip filling the area as much as possible. Or, for a slightly different look, leave a gap between the half feather and the edge of the area. Then, fill it in with a different design to really make the feathers pop.



Heart Feathers



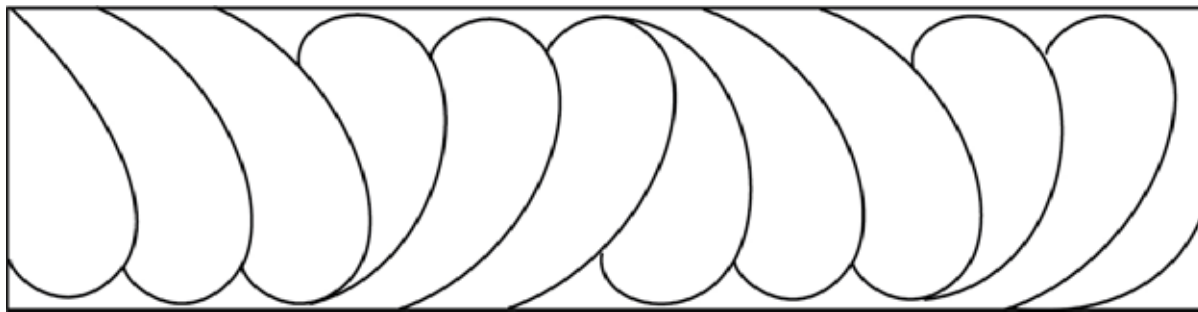
Using a heart shape to form a feather is a fast way to turn a familiar motif into a design perfect for thinner borders and sashings. Space the hearts out for a less dense look, or quilt them closer together for a more densely quilted design.





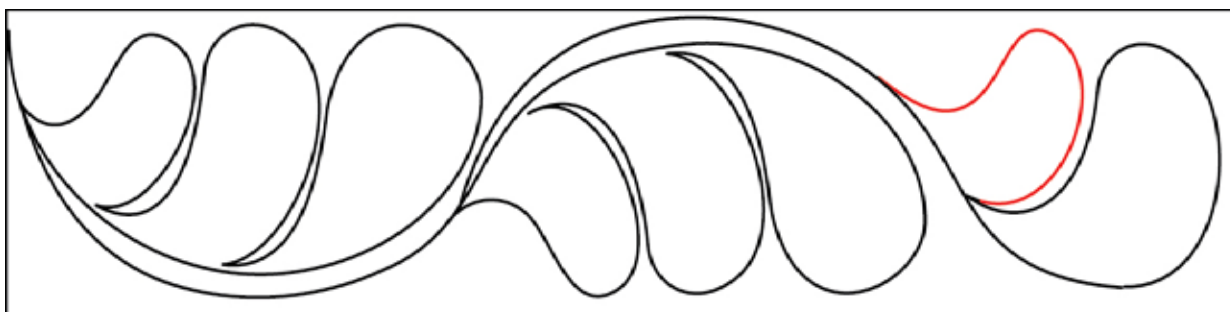
Flipped Feathers

The Flipped Feathers design not only looks great, it's fun to quilt! Alternating the directions of the petals creates a twisty, feathery design ideal for thinner borders and sashings.



Scooped Feathers

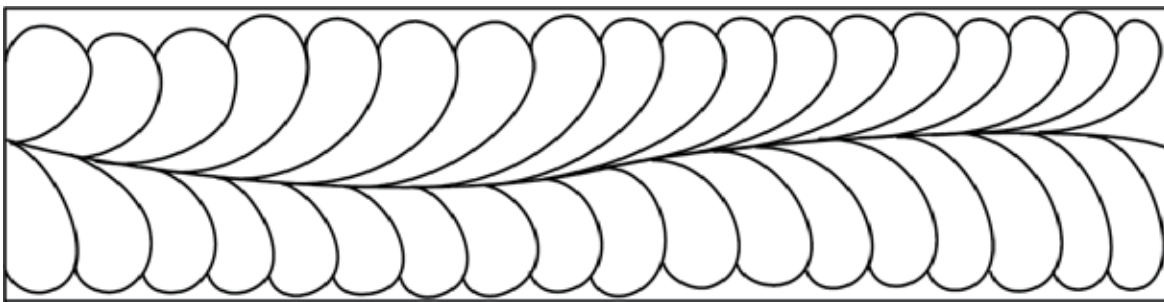
Pair curved lines with feathers to create a flowing design that brings movement to your quilting. As with Flipped Feathers, practicing the pattern in multiple directions may take time, but the finished effect is well worth it.





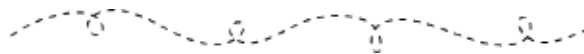
Mini Feathers

Next up: we go small. For borders and sashings that are 3"- 4" wide, the mini feather reduces the size so a complete feather can be quilted in those narrower spaces. This scaled-down approach lets you maintain the graceful, flowing look of a full feather while fitting neatly into tighter areas. Experiment with different feather variations to add a gorgeous look to your quilting.





Feather Designs for Quilt Blocks



Feathers and quilt blocks are a perfect match. Whether you quilt feathers in individual parts of the block or quilt larger motifs across the entire block, you'll find several designs here you'll love.





Quilted Examples



Feathered Sections

In this block, I quilted a classic feather in each of the different sections. After quilting one, I traveled along the seam to the next section and did the same. This allowed me to work around the block without having to start a new line of quilting.

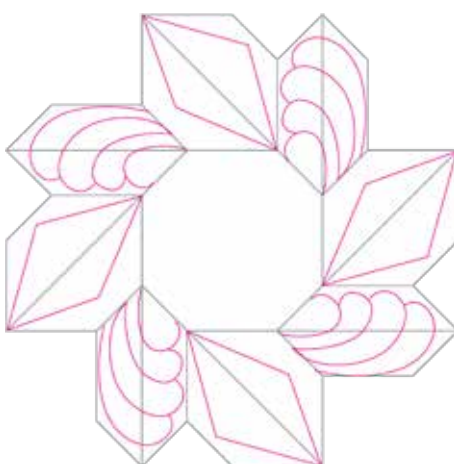


Swirly Feathers

Try quilting a half feather that extends from one side of each section. It creates a “swirly” effect while still highlighting the piecing. Start at the inner corner of a section and quilt the petals toward the outer corner. Then travel to the next section and repeat the process, working around the block.

Combining Designs

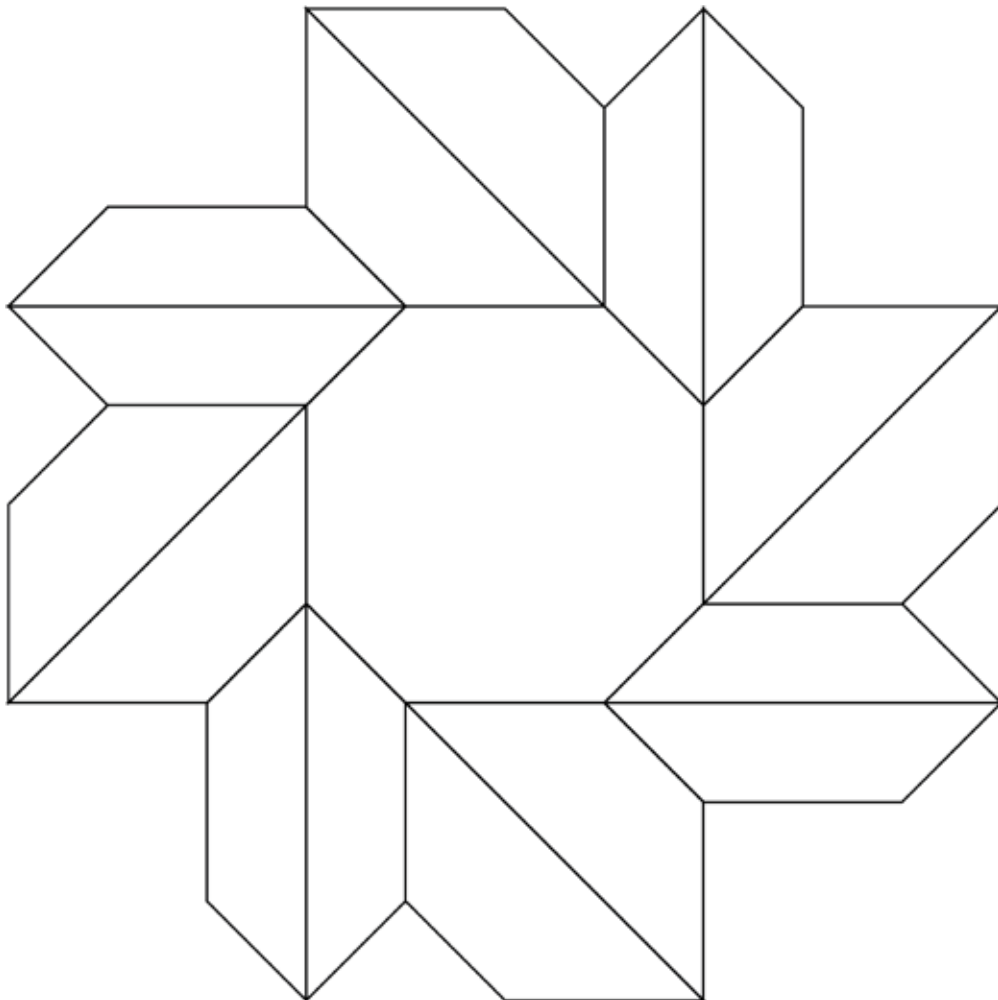
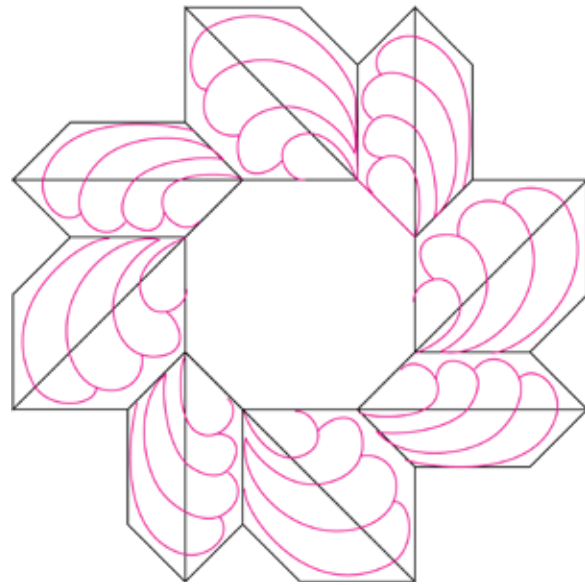
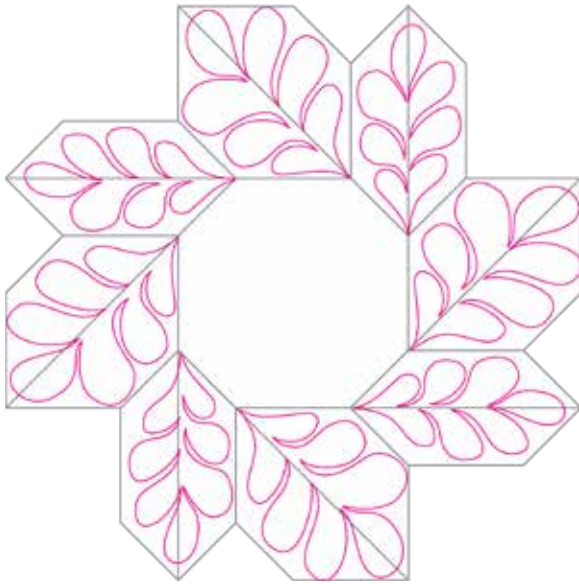
You don’t have to just stick with feathers when quilting blocks. Try throwing in other designs as well. Not only does it add interest, you might enjoy switching it up!





Audition Designs

Use the diagram below to audition different quilting designs.



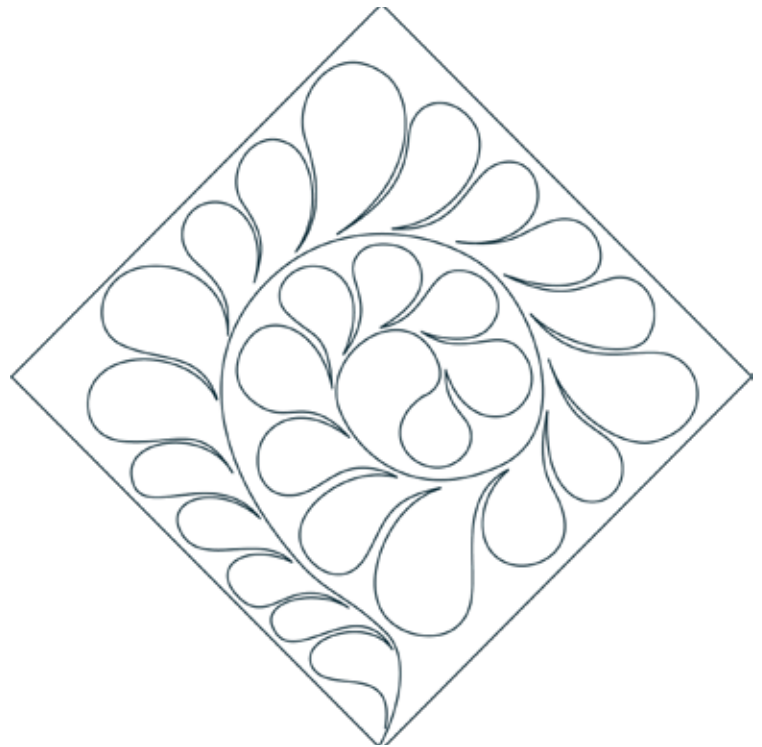
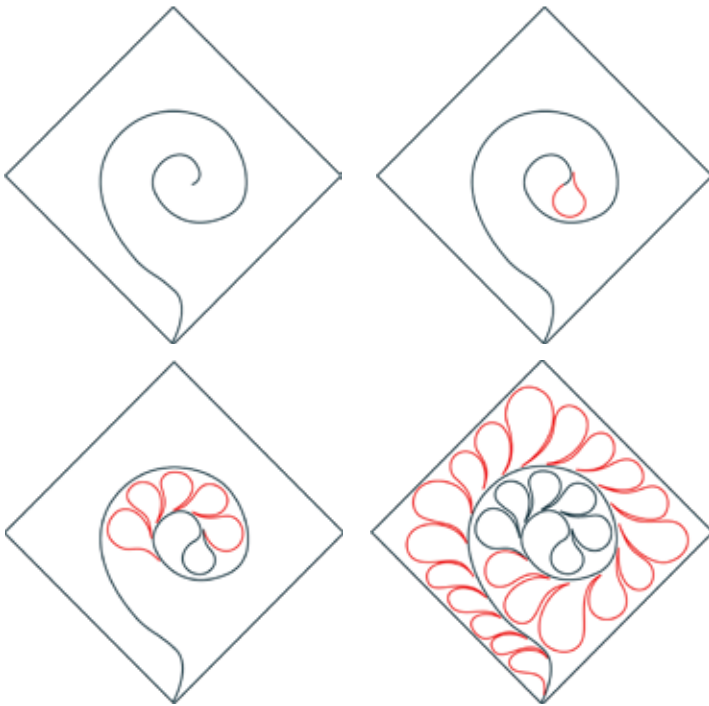


Designs for Larger Blocks

Feathered Swirl

One of my favorite designs for medium sized blocks is the feathered swirl. It looks similar to a feather wreath, but is easier to quilt. It starts and ends at the same spot, making it perfect for working through a quilt quickly and efficiently.

Starting from a corner of the block, quilt a line that swirls towards the center of the block. Be sure to leave about 1" in between the lines. From the center, begin quilting half heart shaped petals working along the swirl filling in the space as much as possible. Continue quilting petals until returning to the starting point. If necessary, use echoing to fill in any gaps between the design and the edge of the block.

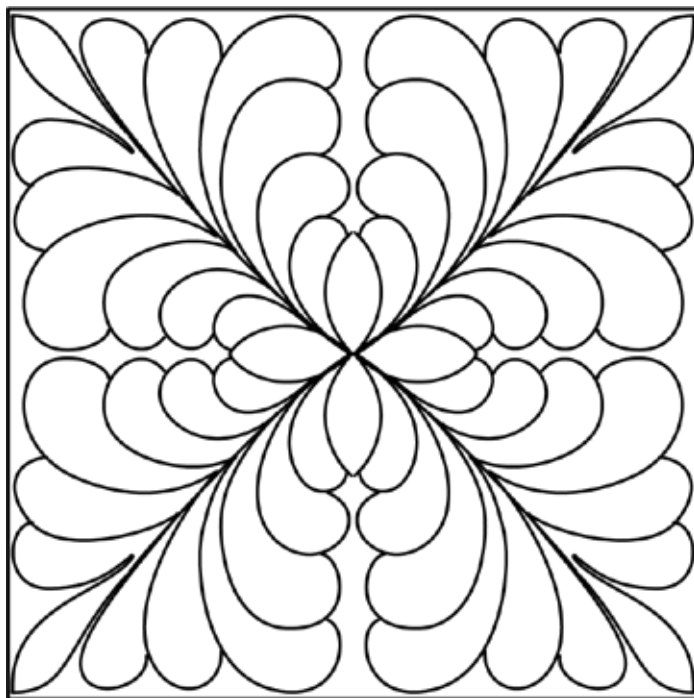




Four Feather Motif

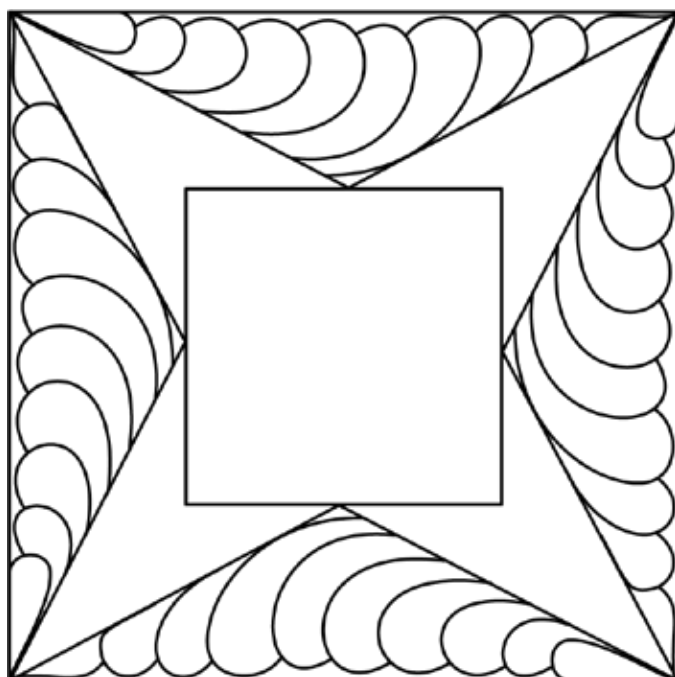
To fill in larger blocks with feathers, try breaking them into smaller sections. This not only makes it easier to manage, it can also result in some beautiful designs.

First, divide the block, or the area, into smaller sections. Starting in the center of the block, fill in a section with the feather design of your choice returning to the center of the block. Then repeat in each of the sections.



Star Feather

Using quilted lines to break up larger blocks is yet another way to use feathers in larger quilt blocks. They create complex looking designs while acting as the spine of the feather. This technique is oh-so-versatile and can be used in so many different ways. Try it in pieced blocks or in larger blocks where you want to draw attention to the center.





Designs for Framing Blocks

Next, let's think beyond the block! Feathers are not only stunning within the blocks themselves; they can also enhance the surrounding areas. This approach provides a wonderful opportunity to create a framing effect with the quilting while showcasing your blocks. There are several ways to achieve this! In this section, we will explore a variety of options.

Filling around Blocks

Whether you quilt a single feather that wraps around the block or quilt an all-over feather meander, which we'll learn in a later video, it's a great way to add a feathery look and gorgeous texture around a block. To really help separate the block from the feather quilting, echo around the outside of the block first.



Extending From the Block

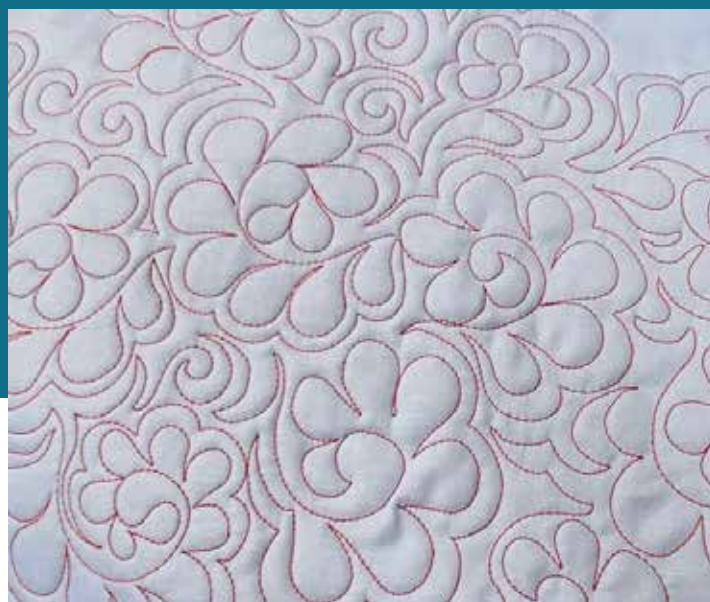
One method to achieve a framed effect is to quilt the petals of a feather so that they extend outward from the block. This helps separate the block from the background quilting really making them shine. For irregularly shaped blocks, consider first using the quilting to soften the edges. Then quilt the petals, extending them from the block and filling in the area as completely as possible.



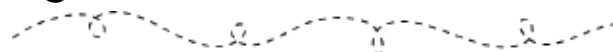
Other Block Designs

This is just the beginning of the many different ways you can use feathers in quilt blocks. Try experimenting with different feathers and arrangements to create your own quilted masterpieces!





Feather Designs for Borders & Backgrounds

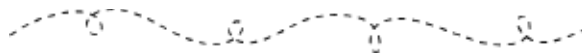


So far we have limited our feathers to confined areas, such as blocks and sashings. Now it's time to let them go free in the background areas of our quilts. We'll explore how to quilt these delightful designs as all-over designs to fill in areas of all sizes. Then, we'll adapt each design to create beautiful quilt borders, giving your projects a polished and professional touch!





Meandering Paisley

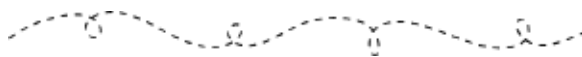


To create a simplified variation of the feather design, we can use the paisley petal shape as a filler design. It's perfect for smaller areas or for newer quilters since it's a way to "tip-toe" into bigger feathers.

Start by quilting a meandering line. Then randomly quilt a paisley shape before returning to the meandering line. Continue quilting, filling in the area as consistently as possible. To change up the look of the design, try quilting more paisleys or other shapes (such as swirls).



Scooped Feather Borders



Just because a design works well in one area of a quilt, doesn't mean we can't use it in other areas as well! The scooped feather design not only works great in thinner strips, it's also great in background areas and larger borders.

Quilt the scooped feathers in a line from one edge of the area (or border) to the other. Travel along the edge a couple of inches and repeat. Try to quilt the rows of scooped feathers so that they are somewhat close to each other trying to avoid large gaps between them. If necessary, use echoing or a different filler design to fill in any gaps.

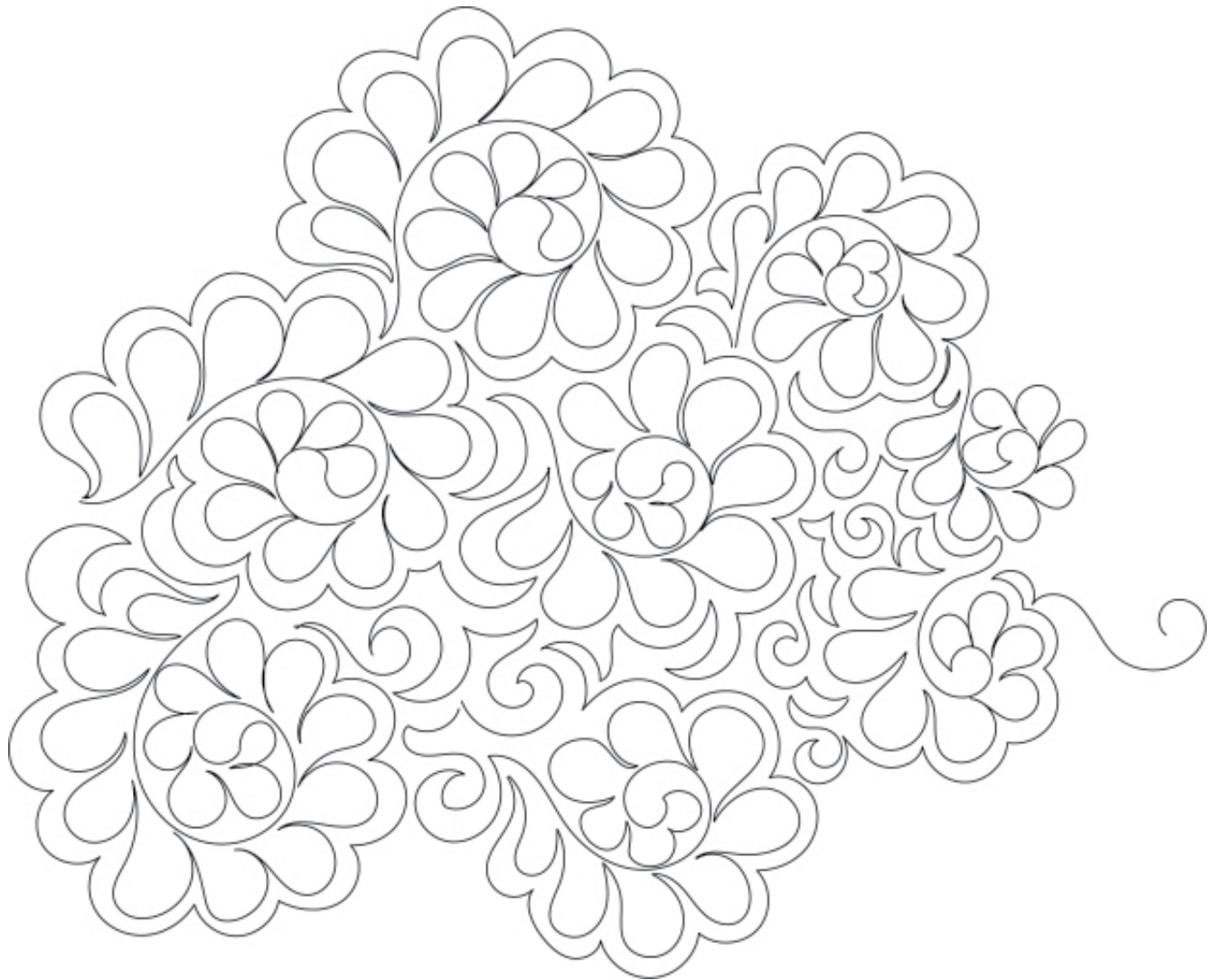
In the example below, I quilted the scooped feathers diagonally across the area, but you can also quilt them horizontally or vertically.





Feather Meander

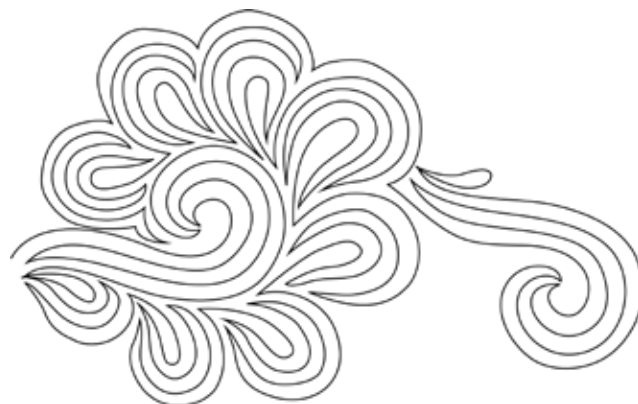
For a feathery allover design, give the feather meander a try. This design takes the feather and wraps it around a swirl to create a fast, fun design for backgrounds of all sizes. As you quilt the design, don't worry about the size or shape of your feathers. Instead, focus on keeping the petals somewhat consistent in size. To fill in the gaps





Paisley Feather

Get ready to echo, echo, echo! The Paisley Feather uses echoing to create a big, beautiful design that's one of my all time favorites. Quilt them in all different directions as a filler for larger background areas or as an overall design. For a different look, quilt them in a row to create a design perfect for larger borders. It needs room to develop so I wouldn't necessarily use it in smaller areas.



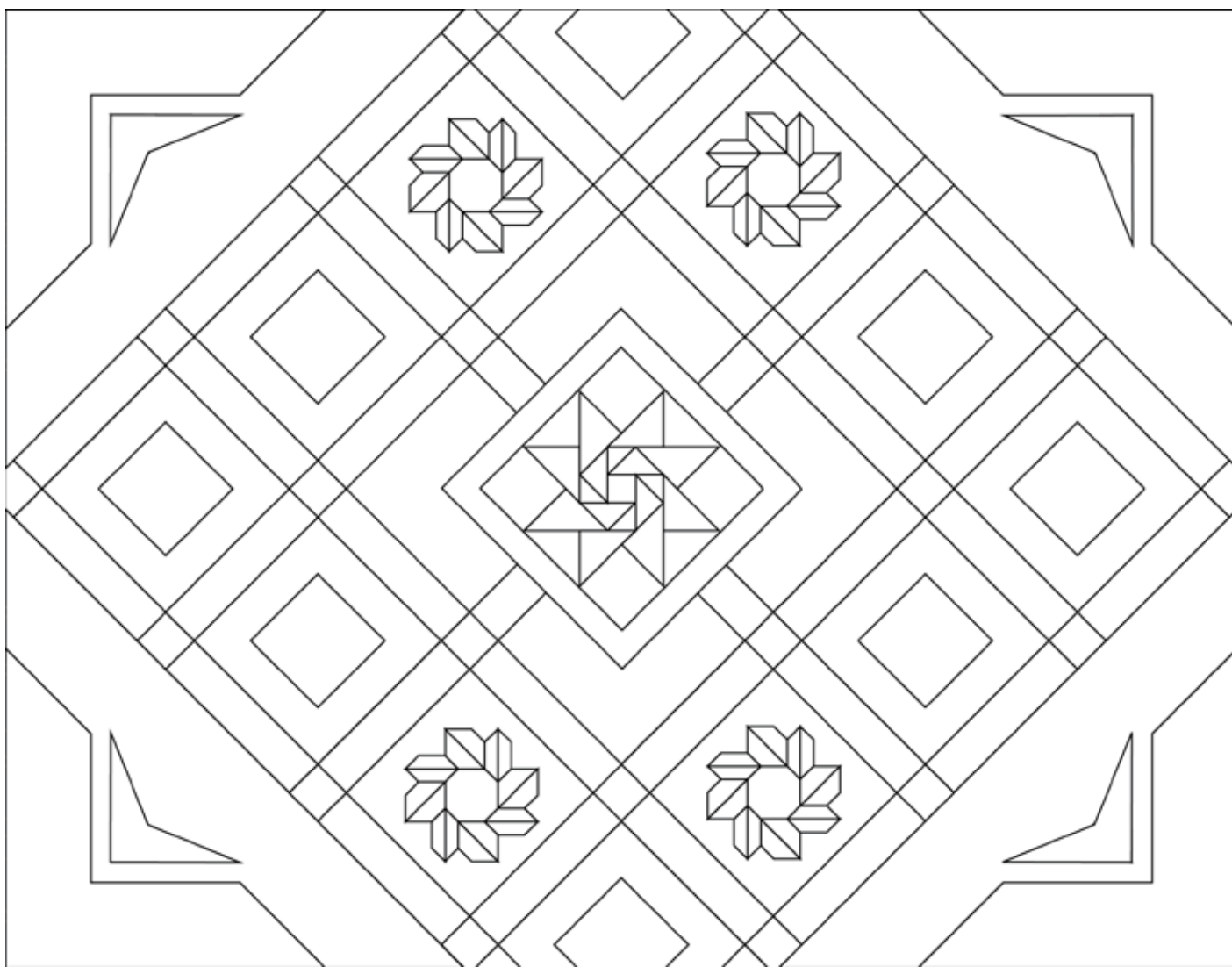
Divided Feathers

What's better than one feather? A whole bunch of feathers! The Divided Feathers design lets you fill in backgrounds and borders with tons of curvy, gorgeous feathers. It's perfect for narrower background areas such as in between blocks or larger borders. And since the design evolves as it's quilted, you never know exactly what it'll look like until it's finished. Try not to overthink it too much, the most important thing with this design is that the whole area is filled in as consistently as possible.





Use the diagram below to audition different designs for your FMQ Challenge Panel:



Congratulations!

Throughout this video series, we have learned so many different feather designs that can be used in all areas of our quilts. I hope that you are excited to try them on your quilts! I can't thank you enough for quilting along with me. I hope you'll share pictures of your finished quilt, either on the Free-motion Challenge Quilting Along Facebook group or on social media.....I love a quilty show & tell!

Even though this video series is finished, I'll be back soon with another Free-motion Challenge Quilting Along. In the meantime, you can check out my previous challenges on my website, QuiltingIsMyTherapy.com. Happy Quilting!



Angela Walters