Modern X – 56” x 70”

X marks the spot with this bold, graphic quilt. Choose high contrast fabrics with a strong accent color, or make it scrappy if you choose. The quilt is made entirely from one of my favorite units – the half-square triangle (HST). Make them bigger for a larger quilt, or scale them down for a smaller version.

Supply List – Based on 40” Useable Width of Fabric (WOF)

- 2 yards dark gray (I used Kona Cotton Solids Charcoal #1071)
- 2 yards off-white (I used Kona Cotton Solids Snow #1339)
- 1 fat quarter (18” x 22”) accent (I used Kona Cotton Solids Zucchini #354)
- ¼ yard dark gray for binding (I used Charcoal again)
- 3 ½ yards for backing (I used Zucchini again)
- approximately 60” x 80” piece of batting (I prefer cotton, wool, or a blend)
- cotton thread for piecing (I used Aurifil 50 wt. #2600 Dove)
- thread for quilting (I used Aurifil 50 wt. #4060 Silver Moon)
- walking foot or even feed for domestic quilting
- rotary cutting equipment, basic sewing supplies

Block Design and General Notes

Modern X is made from a total of 80 half-square triangle blocks that finish 7” square. There are 72 white/gray HST’s and 8 green/gray HST’s. It took me a total of 30 hours to make this quilt.

Step 1 – Prepare Your Fabrics (2 Hours)

Wash, starch, and press all fabrics used in the quilt.

I am a big advocate of prewashing my fabrics before beginning any quilt. I have had too many accidents even with premium quality cottons so I always, always make sure my fabrics are colorfast before I begin.

Separate the lights from the darks and wash them until the water runs clear. Then, combine fabrics for the entire quilt top and wash them together (with 2-3 dye magnet sheets) in the wash. If there are no bleeding problems, the quilt will be safe.

I use regular cheap starch from the grocery store and starch both sides of the fabric. Spray the front side of your fabric and let it rest for a few minutes. Then flip it over and press from the back. Spray a light mist of starch on the back and let it sit again. Then flip it back over to the front for a final press. This helps stabilize the bias edges of the triangles.
Step 2 – Cutting (1 Hour)

From Dark Gray
- cut (8) – 8” x WOF strips
- subcut into (40) – 8” x 8” squares

From Off-White
- cut (8) – 8” x WOF strips
- subcut into (36) – 8” x 8” squares

From Green Accent
- cut (1) – 8” x 20” strip
- subcut into (4) – 8” x 8” squares

From Binding Fabric
- cut (7) – 2 ¼” x WOF strips

From Backing Fabric
- cut (2) pieces, 1 ¾ yards by WOF

Step 3 – Marking and Sewing the Background Squares (1.25 Hours)

Use a non-smudging marking pen and a straight edge to draw a diagonal line down the center of the wrong side of each light square, from one corner to the other. You will be marking a total of 40 squares (36 white squares, 4 accent squares).

Pair up each marked light square with a dark gray square, right sides together.

You will have a total of 36 pairs of white/gray squares.
You will have a total of 4 pairs of accent/gray squares.

Sew with the light square on top so you can see your marks.

*I prefer to press my seams open for flatter blocks. Therefore, I use a slightly smaller stitch length to help secure the seams more tightly. It also helps prevent the thread from showing through the seams.*

Sew ¼” away from the marked line on either side. For quick assembly, chain piece your units by sewing all of the right hand seams on each fabric pair without clipping threads in between each pair. Then go back and sew all of the left hand seams.

Step 4 – Trimming and Pressing the HST’s (2.25 Hours)

Cut apart each of your sewn pairs on the marked line for a total of 80 HST’s. Press seams open, or to the side.

Use a square ruler with a 45 degree angle to trim your HST’s to 7.5”. Line up the 45 degree line on the center seam of the HST when you trim.

Trim off the extra “dog ears” (triangle tips), too. You may need to trim both sides; be sure to keep the 45 degree line on the center seam at all times.
Step 5 – Sewing the Rows (4 hours)

Lay out your HST’s and sew 2 blocks together at a time until you have a total of 8 rows that look like this:

Continue sewing HST pairs together for a total of 2 rows that look like this:

Step 6 – Complete the Top (2 hours)

Lay out all 10 rows according to the diagram below. The first three rows are the same. Row 4 includes the green accent and row 5 is the same as rows 1-3. Rows 6-10 are a mirror image of the top half.
Step 6 – Complete the Top (continued)

Join two rows together at a time, pinning liberally so the seams line up as nicely as possible. Continue sewing pairs of rows until you have joined all the rows together. Give your top a final press.

Because there are no borders on this quilt, stay-stitch 1/8” in from the edge around the perimeter to secure the seams as shown:

![Quilt Seams Stay-Stitched](image)

Step 7 – Prepare the Backing (0.5 Hours)

Remove the selvedges from your backing pieces. Join two lengths of fabric together parallel to the selvedge with a ½ inch seam. The piece should measure approximately 63” x 80”. Press seam allowances open and you are ready to baste!

Step 8 – Basting Your Quilt (1.25 Hours)

I use both pin basting and spray basting techniques and have had success with both. Here are my tips:

Place two long tables together side by side. Use painter’s tape to secure the backing along the edges with the wrong side up. Spread out the batting on top. Smooth the layers and add the top, right side up. Insert 2-3 safety pins into every triangle. If your quilt is bigger than your tables, pin the middle section first and shift the quilt until it is completely pinned.

![Basting Quilt](image)

If you choose to spray baste your quilt, spray the adhesive on the wrong side of the backing and the wrong side of the top rather than the batting. Spray basting works best with natural fiber battings. Once the quilt is smoothed out and stuck together, lightly iron both sides of the quilt to set the adhesive.
**Step 9 – Machine Quilting Stitch in the Ditch (2.25 Hours)**

All of the lines of quilting are quilted from one end of the quilt to the other, eliminating the need to tie off or secure your threads. Start quilting ahead of where the top layer begins, and continue stitching past where it ends on the other side. Refer to the quilting outline shown in the diagram below. The colored lines indicate major seams that are stitched in the ditch (SITD) first, anchoring the quilt.

Using a walking foot, SITD the lines shown in red first. Quilt the longest diagonal across the quilt on both sides, forming an “x.” Next, stitch the rows that form a “v” as indicated by the blue lines, working from the longest seam to the shortest seam. Stop with your needle down and pivot when needed.

Stitch one quadrant of the quilt at a time, including the two sides shown that are not marked with any lines. Your quilt is now fully secured and ready for more quilting if desired.
Step 10 – Additional Straight Line Quilting (7 ½ Hours)

Try adding additional lines of quilting in between each of the SITD sections. Vary the spacing in between each line of stitching to add interest. I did not mark any of these lines, nor did I worry about keeping them perfectly straight and even. I prefer a more natural, organic look when quilting modern quilts.

Step 9 – Binding (6 Hours if Finishing by Hand)

Join the binding strips into one continuous length, press wrong sides together, and attach to the front of the quilt with ¼” seams, mitering the corners and securing the ends. Bring the binding to the back of the quilt and finish stitching by hand or machine. Please visit my blog at ChristaQuiltsBlog.com for additional photos and step-by-step binding instructions.

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