

Fidget Quilts: Supplement to Pattern

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia often cause agitation and anxiety. A fidget quilt gives the hands something to do and the variety of textures and tactile elements is both soothing to the nerves and stimulating to the mind. **Fringe is the most popular, followed by pockets, velcro, and zippers.**

Also consider:

beads, thread spools, hardware nuts, or curtain rings on a cord to slide back and forth

prairie points, pleats, ruffles	key ring with keys or other dangling items
3-D birds, bugs, flowers	shoe laces with eyelets for lacing
pony tail hair loops	ribbon bow or loops with beads
tulle/netting	buttons/beads under tulle or in a pouch
fake fur	soft toys on a tether (attach to quilt)
buttons and snaps	belt buckle or old jewelry
handkerchiefs, scarves, neck ties	Texture Magic (shrinks fabric to texturize)

Notes:

- Textured fabrics such as minkee and upholstery fabrics can be hard to work with. Some fray easily and need the edges sealed with fray check. Cut blocks oversized, sew and trim to size for best results. Minkee behaves best as the bottom layer when stitching.
- Textured fabrics may require a lower heat on your iron. Test a scrap before pressing blocks. Ribbons also can be sensitive to high heat.
- Backstitch seams where elements are inserted into seam allowances and on outside edges.

Tactile Elements:

- Velcro: Stitch the rough side of the velcro to the block. It can be side-to-side or at an angle, but the ends should be in the seam allowance. For the soft side, fold one end under and stitch across to make a tab. Place the two sides of the velcro together – one end of the soft side should be in the seam allowance. Quilt beside the velcro through all layers.
- Belt buckle: Recycled parts of a belt can be stitched into the seam allowances, leaving the functional parts loose to buckle and unbuckle. Or use a sliding buckle on a strip of fabric: loop the fabric through the slider and include the fabric ends in the seam allowances.
- Zippers can be simply topstitched onto the quilt; they don't have to open up into a pocket. Add a fun zipper pull, a tassel or a key ring with a key. Quilt around the zipper through all layers to support the activity of pulling it open repeatedly.

- Fringe and loops of ribbon or shoestring can be attached in any seam, or topstitched directly onto the quilt during the quilting process. Try stitching pony tail hair loops onto an empty space: they are stretchy and fun to pull on and feel.
- Themed quilts: incorporate novelty prints into four-patch blocks. They can serve as memory-joggers and conversation-starters.
- Tulle and lace: Tulle can be gathered for a ruffle, tied into a bow, or used to trap a collection of beads or other items to feel and move around under the tulle. Flat lace can be used the same way. Or make a pouch with beads or buttons inside to tuck into a pocket.
- Embroidered handkerchiefs, the ends of a scarf or a tie can be sewn into the seam allowances and allowed to hang free over the surface of the quilt.
- Flannel backing is very comforting and can help the quilt stay on the patient's lap.

Pockets for Fidget Quilts

Pockets are comforting for most people with dementia. Finding a treasure inside is exciting! For all pocket variations below, plan to include something to play with inside the pocket. The item should be attached by a ribbon, cord or fabric tether.

Tether: For a 6 ½” block, cut fabric 2” x 9”, fold RST and stitch down the long side. Turn RSO and loop through the item. Secure tether, cording or ribbon ends in the seam allowances.

For the Slant and Zippered Pockets, the foundation square forms the inside of the pocket; consider a soft fabric such as flannel or minkee.

Patch Pocket:

Take a pocket from a shirt or pants and sew it onto a foundation square, right sides up. A buttoned flap adds interest.

Slant Pocket (see photo on pattern):

Requires three layers of fabric. Place two layers RST. For a 6 ½” block, mark 1” from edge on top and 3” from the bottom on one side. Draw a diagonal line between the two marks. Stitch on the line. Trim ¼” from stitching, turn RSO and press. Top-stitch along the diagonal. Layer this unit with a foundation square, with right sides up, to form the pocket.

Zippered Pocket (see photo on pattern):

Requires 3 layers of fabric and a zipper. Decide zipper placement and cut two

layers of fabric where the zipper will go. For the lower part of the pocket, place the two layers RST and sandwich one side of the zipper between them. Stitch using a zipper foot. Turn RSO so that zipper is exposed and press. Repeat with the upper part of the pocket and the other side of the zipper, taking care to align the two sides of the zipper. Place the zippered unit onto a foundation square with right sides up. Add a zipper pull of ribbon, a tassel, or a key ring with luggage keys or other dangling item.