

## A Fidget, Fiddle, or Busy Quilt Tutorial

A "Fidget, Fiddle, or Busy" Quilt or Activity Blanket is a small lap quilt, mat or blanket that provides sensory and tactile stimulation for the restless or "fidgety" hands of someone with Alzheimer's or related Dementias.

If you are not a quilter, these quilts/blankets can easily be made with a variety of scrap fabrics simply sewn together in any random pattern and simply quilted with tied crochet cotton, or machine sewn straight line stitching around the blocks. But they can also be made as lap-sized blankets using fleece or other fabrics not needing to be quilted down with tactile elements attached on top.

Fidget Quilts or Blankets provide sensory or tactile stimulation through the use of fabric choices, colors, or value of colors, next to one another; textures; and the use of accents or simple accessories such as pockets, laces, trims, appliques, buttons, secured beads, ribbons, braids etc.

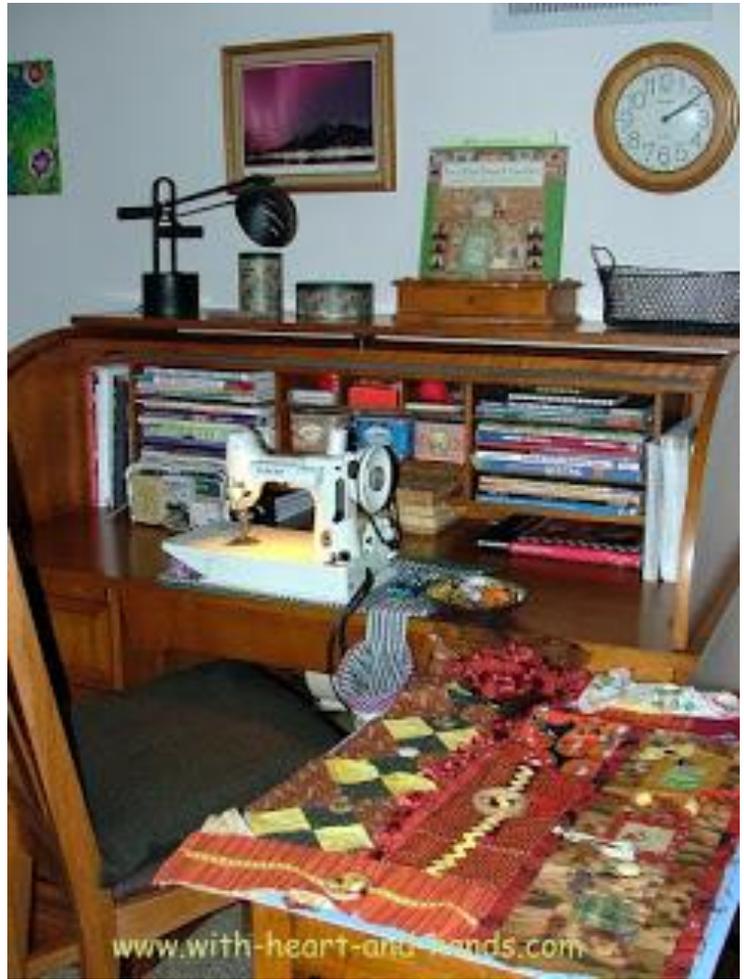
### **Fidget Quilt Supplies Needed:**

1. A selection of fabrics, especially those with a variety of textures for sensory/tactile appeal.



2. Trims such as bobbles, braid, rick rack, lace, buttons, large beads, pockets, belt rings, zippers (patients wear zippered clothing and I've never known any of them to get hurt by their zippers, contrary to some quilters strange fear of them!), pompoms, ribbons, etc.

3. Sewing machine, thread, scissors and other basic sewing supplies.



4. Fidget, Tactile, Sensory or Busy Quilts are utilitarian as well as attractive to look at and use and seams need to be secure.



5. Hand quilting is lovely for Fidget Art Quilts as long as it is well knotted for repeated laundering. The same for the added touch of hand embroidery.



6. Many of our patients today sewed, quilted or did handiwork when they were younger, so they love seeing these elements. Use hand worked linens for a lovely touch, or hankies, or even pockets saved from used blue jeans as additional fun elements!



7. No pattern is required to create a fidget quilt or blanket, but for those wanting a simple layout and ideas, small quilt patterns are the closest to ideas that will easily transpose since they are by nature smaller. Sizes you would use as small format art quilts, lap quilts or even placemats!

## How to Make a Fidget Quilt



1. Start by getting out all of your scraps, embellishments and trims. Collect them into categories – things that go with an orphan red and blue block for example, things that go with an applique, etc.



2. Put each category that could easily turn into a simple 18" x 24" fidget lap mat/quilt into an extra-large zip lock bag. The colors show through as do the trims you want to show up front! No need to even label as then your bags can be reused!



3. Put all of your bags into a large fabric bag, a box, a bin...whatever works for you. Then, anytime you want to 'fidget' it's all right there!! See my Michele's Scrap Bag, way in the back right....there they are!

4. These are my supplies for a Fidget Quilt Workshop day ... ready to go at any time! Machine in the rolling duffle, vision board on flannel covered cardboard, a couple of examples, a print out of this blog post for me or others, my big bag of Ziploc's, what I want to work on, and my own home made vinyl 'Bird Bag' for my extra supplies or trims!





5. Time to make a fidget lap or table mat or fidget quilt!
6. First lay your design elements out and just start experimenting with a layout!



7. Experiment, experiment, experiment! When you're happy with it, begin by laying it out, pinning bits and pieces down and deciding which elements will need to be sewn together first ... just like making a quilt and piecing it! Sometimes, you'll goof and things on top should have gone into a seam ... make a tiny opening, fit it through, resew that section of the seam. Liberated quilting making at its best!!!



8. Bit by bit, sew each and every 'blocked' area together, strips of this to strips of that! Now, attach even more fiddly bits on top if you want ... zippers with covered up ends ... wrap them in a piece of fabric or a ribbon and stitch them to the ends ... bows, strings of ribbons, yarn etc. ... buttons tied firmly on with crochet cotton, or sewn down firmly with strong thread ... even string! I'm a dyslexic quilter and one of mine ended up reversed side to side from what I originally intended! It didn't matter to me, and it won't to the person who loves it. Let it go and have more fun!!!!



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