Patchwork Improv with Sherri Lynn Wood with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Improv Quilting
(upbeat rock music) - Hey, everybody. Welcome to the Creativebug Live. We're in the studio with Sherri Lynn Wood, who's been here all week, filming these amazing improv quilting classes. Welcome to the studio, Sherri. - Thank you, it's great to be here, Courtney. - I love your philosophy of improv. For the people that maybe haven't experienced it or maybe are not familiar to quilting in general, can you give us, like, a little overview of what improv quilting is like? - Improv, you just start, and you listen and respond. And so, a basic part of improv, it's just like anything, theater improve or music improv. It's a process of listening and responding. Sometimes having limits will help, like a relationship to start with. So if we're like, in the theater, if you're doing theater improv, I might say, give me a location and a relationship of two people, and then the improv would start. - So that's sort of what you, you kind of apply that principle to your quilting practice. - Yeah, with patchwork, it's the same thing. - I love that. It's so freeing, and in watching Sherri work this week, it's been super inspiring, and you've been talking about your ruler-free method. You don't use templates. You referred to traditional patchwork as fixed pattern patchwork, and improv is not that. The difference is... - Improv is flexible patterns. So, that means you don't really know which direction the pattern'll go to, but it doesn't mean it's crazy or chaotic. It just means the pattern goes through a series of transformations, evolutions, variations, kind of the theme and variation type thing. - I love that, it's so cool. So, we're actually gonna do this really fun practice that Sherri does in her classes in person called a ruler-free improv mashup demo. (both laughing) So, I actually picked out some fabric so Sherri couldn't see what it is, and I'm hiding it in this bag. And should I just take out all the fabric? - That's how, do we wanna use all of the fabrics? - I don't know. Tell me, how do we start? - How many fabrics do we need to use today? That's one of the limits that we can say. Are we gonna use 10 fabrics? Are we gonna use two fabrics? Are we gonna use five fabrics? What do you think? - Okay, we start with three fabrics. - Okay, three fabrics. Are you gonna pick 'em up, or you wanna just pick 'em randomly? What do you think? - Okay, we'll use this bag. I'll just reach in. - Why don't you pick one random and two. - Two I pick? - Yeah. - Okay, I'm gonna like, they're really shoved in this bag, so let's see. - [Sherri] But you gotta do your choices first, and then pick the third one as a random. - [Courtney] Oh, pick my choices first? - [Sherri] Yeah. - [Courtney] Okay. Well, I just really love. - [Sherri] You're gonna pick two. - [Courtney] This kind of cocoa color. - [Sherri] Okay. - [Courtney] I'm really into that. I don't know how big these pieces are. - [Sherri] That's okay. - [Courtney] I'm really into this bright red color. - [Sherri] Okay, that'll be one of our limits, the size or the amounts of the piece, right? - [Courtney] Okay, okay. - [Sherri] We can actually make it a limit in this that we use all of this red in the piece. - [Courtney] Okay, I love that. All right, so this one is my random choice, just to dig in here? - Uh-huh, yeah, we don't know what it's gonna be. Uh-oh, keep our fingers crossed. (Courtney laughs) Oh, that's a good one, and it's a shirt, too, and I love those colors together. We got lucky there. - [Courtney] Okay, great, this is awesome. We might even use these buttons, right? - [Sherri] That's right. - [Courtney] I've seen what you done this week, which is so fun. Okay, cool. So now, what do we do? - [Sherri] Okay, so what's some other limits of patchwork or parameters that we use to decide on patchwork? - So like, shape or scale. - Scale, shape. - So like, big or small, or the like, squares or strips or triangles? - Right, so let's start with a shape. What shape should we work with? - I really like the strips. - Oh, strips. Okay, all right. Well,

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

you wanna, okay, so strips. We'll just start cutting up some strips. So lemme show you how to do strip piecing. Strip piecing's a little bit different when you do improv. First of all, you wanna have, let's cut up some strips with these buttons. How about that? - [Courtney] I love that. - [Sherri] I think another nice thing is we got this great shape that's kind of a given shape. So, let's try to work with the shape that we have, because again, this is kind of a limit, right? I'm going to go ahead and cut this into a few strips. - [Courtney] Oh, so no ruler, just eyeballing. - [Sherri] Nope, and I'm doing some different. Now, I'm leaving a little bit of room so I don't sew into my buttons, right? - [Courtney] Kinda wide strips. - [Sherri] They're wide strips, right? We can put some narrow, with this part, we can do a little narrower. And also, you kind of want your strips to be the same width, I mean the same length, because once we start sewing 'em together, they're gonna be the same length, I mean, so that we don't have big gaps. So look, we've got some natural curves. What do you think about doing some curves? - [Courtney] Sure, yeah. - [Sherri] Okay. So let's fill in these areas with maybe some of the cocoa. - [Courtney] I love this color. It was really fun looking your your stash. You have like, a little bit of everything. - [Sherri] Ah, you should see my stash at home. Okay, so, you see how I'm layering? Now, this is the basic technique we use for sewing any kind of shape together, whether it's a curve or a square. I'm gonna give it a little bit of room here, and I'm going to sew, I'm gonna cut this to match. So I've layered right sides up, and I'm cutting this curve exactly to match, like a puzzle piece almost. And I'll just cut it off right here. I'll trim off this little selvage edge. Okay, so now I'm gonna take away what's under. Remember, it's right sides up, cut to match. - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] And I am going to, it matches. Well, it doesn't match that, actually. So lemme just recut it just a little bit. - [Courtney] But there's no mistakes, right? - [Sherri] There's no mistakes, but I want it to lie flat. So to make it lie flat, I gotta, so I just recut it a little bit. - [Courtney] Perfect. - [Sherri] Okay, when I do a curve, and this is a pretty simple curve. It's a little bit of an S curve. So I can put a couple marks in, just as registration. It just depends on your own skill level. You might not even need to do that part, if it's a gentle curve. But I'll, just for the sake of demonstration, I'll show you how, and you see these little registration marks? I'm gonna line those up and put just a couple pins to keep me on track here, and now I'm just going to do my quarter-inch seam. - [Courtney] Okay. And no backstitching or anything. - [Sherri] No backstitching. And again, you never need, you never need a ruler to make things lie flat. You just need rulers when you want points to match. - Yeah, just as a reminder for anybody watching on Creativebug, we're doing a great offer where you get 30 days free of Creativebug plus a 30% off coupon to Joann's. So you can pick up your fabric there. But you also use a lot of reusable fabric, right? - Yeah, and you can mix it up. You can have stuff from your stash. You can buy stuff that you like. You can use old clothes. Pretty much anything goes with improv, because, you know, if you run out of something, you just substitute something else. So you see how nicely that lays? I mean, really, as long as you cut things to match, it'll lie flat. You really only need rulers and templates when you're trying to make points meet. Yeah, that's when you need to measure. Rulers and stuff are for measuring, not for making it lie flat. I took a workshop with Nancy Crow like, years ago, and she said to me, the very first thing she said to us in the class was, you don't need a ruler to make things lie flat, and a big giant light bulb went off in my head, 'cause I had not been able to separate those two things. And that freed me up a lot. - [Courtney] Yeah, I love that. - [Sherri] Okay, so now we've got that curve. Just for time's sake, I think, should we do another curve? I think we'll just, maybe we'll do one more curve. Let's do one more. - [Courtney] Sure. - [Sherri] I'm gonna go ahead and do the cocoa again. - [Courtney] Okay. And so you're pressing these little sections after they come out of the sewing machine. - [Sherri] Yeah, and then we're gonna cut these into more strips. So we're doing basically

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

some strips and some curves, aren't we? - [Courtney] I love it. - [Sherri] All right, let's get those buttons up. Again, I'm gonna layer this, and I'm gonna cut that curve right in there. - [Courtney] Oh, I have a good idea, what to use your 30% off coupon on. If you have a fabric stash already, then you can use your coupon on Sherri's book, which is available at some Joann's stores, and if not, just online. I love this, the Improv Handbook for Modern Quilters. And it talks all about the flexible pattern and the improv, and I love that you mention in this book, I'll give you guys a little preview, Sherri mentions this specifically improv round robin, which is so cool, because people work on something and then their fabric and their so-far made quilt block travel, and so you have no control. It's just kind of like the spirit of improv. - [Sherri] Yeah, so each person, each person works on each other's quilt. So it's a conversation, like a yes, and conversation. And here's, lemme show you this technique with curving. You don't necessarily have to use pins and stuff. It's kind of just reverse close sewing. You kinda just ease it in. I'm pulling on the internal curve. I guess that's the cave curve? The outer curve, I don't stretch, and it should lie pretty flat. I mean, it was cut to match, too. You don't always have to pin, though. Let's press it open. Let's press it in this direction this time. All right. Okay, so I think that we also have a time limit, right? - Yeah, we're setting lots of restrictions for this procedure. - So if you told me you wanted me to make a twin-size quilt in a half an hour, we would be using giant squares, right, really large squares and really large scale and something very simple. So, that's part of our limits too, our time. Look how pretty that is. - [Courtney] That's really pretty. You think you'll put red in there? - [Sherri] Okay, so now we have some other strips. Yeah, I was thinking, do you wanna do strip piecing? I was thinking we would cut the strips up and just do strip piecing, right? - [Courtney] Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. - [Sherri] So let's go ahead, and I'm thinking, I'm gonna go ahead and cut this off, and let's cut this into some strips. - [Courtney] I love that you're just like, slashing through what you've sewn. - [Sherri] Right. We're gonna get some nice curves. Now, this one, because the curve's going this way, I was thinking maybe we would add some red onto this, and we wanna get it to be about the same length as this. So, let's make our strips, let's add this red here. - [Courtney] Okay. And it already kind of like, butts up together like a puzzle piece. - [Sherri] Yeah, that one, I didn't have to cut, 'cause it's pretty straight already. Or they match already. Okay. So, we got, we want these to be this long, right? - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] So I'm gonna go ahead and trim this, and I'm gonna go ahead and cut this. - [Courtney] Do you save these people for later? - [Sherri] Yeah, who knows where they might go in later. And we also have this little thin strip, too. So we can cut this into a few more strips. This is already cut length-wise, but we'll cut it, I mean width-wise. We'll cut it the same length as all of our strips. And the reason we do that is that when you start to sew these together, you don't want short strips sewn to long strips, because then you end up not being able to use all of them. - [Courtney] Yeah, maximize your fabric. - [Sherri] Right. Okay, so now we have some of these. Let's go ahead and lemme iron this very quickly. - I love watching you this week because you really get into a flow where you're like, sewing, cutting, responding, ironing. - Yeah, strip piecing's really fun, 'cause it always comes out good, I think. So, let's it this into some more strips. - Okay. - Do you wanna try it? - Sure! (Sherri laughs) - Okay, all right. - [Courtney] All right. Not gonna cut my fingers. - [Sherri] Nope, just a good, firm, feel the energy coming right through the floor. - [Courtney] One more? - [Sherri] Yep. All right, very good. (Courtney laughs) Okay, and I'll trim this one up a little bit. - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] All right, so we're getting more strips. We've got different widths. I don't know, what do you think about the colors? Do you think we could use one more color? - [Courtney] Let's add a new color, yeah, let's add a new color. - [Sherri] Yeah, okay. - [Courtney] A surprise color or picked color? - What is this? Anybody in the audience have anything to say about that? - Yeah, let's see. - Surprise,

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

or? - Surprise, or should I select it from the bag intentionally? Anybody have any ideas? - [Callie] All right, well, while we're waiting for folks to answer that, Laurie has a question. - Okay. - Okay. - [Callie] She's wondering, how wide are your seam allowances? - I just try to do a quarter-inch seam allowance, although it doesn't have to be exact, because, you know, it doesn't matter if it's exact. You just want it wide enough so that it doesn't unravel, and quarter-inch is good, but if it's a little less than a quarter-inch or a little more than a quarter-inch, no big deal. - And you mentioned when we were filming that if people's seams start to come apart, then they should use like a shorter stitch length to keep everything nice and tight? - Yep, yep. Once we cross-cut our strips, we can, you know, if you're finding that your seams are loosening, you can always tighten your stitch width. - Cool. - Or stitch length. - Yeah. - [Callie] All right, so. - Did people say surprise color or select it? - [Callie] Okay, so a lot of people are saying, most people are saying surprise, but we've got a yellow. Laurie Crom wants yellow. (Sherri laughs) - I don't know if I have a yellow. - [Callie] And Holly wants orange. - Oh, okay. Well, let's do surprise, since we got most saying surprise, and see what we get. - All right, 'cause I'm not sure I have a yellow or an orange in this bag, to be honest. - Oh, another red. - [Courtney] Another red. - [Sherri] Okay, well, we'll just, that's what we'll go with. We'll see what we get. - [Courtney] I almost said like a turquoise. - [Sherri] Do we have a yellow or an orange? Let's see. Can we get a yellow? - [Courtney] I don't know if I have a yellow or an orange in here. This is the closest to orange. - [Sherri] Ew. - [Courtney] Not bad. I don't have a yellow. - [Sherri] This is boring. - [Courtney] Callie, can you pass us a yellow? There's one right by your left there. - [Callie] Yeah? - [Sherri] All right. - [Courtney] Audience, audience wins. You get a yellow. - [Sherri] You get a yellow and a surprise, and the reason I was thinking is that. - [Callie] Oh, there's also orange. - [Sherri] Oh, there's an orange. Okay, I was thinking maybe we would put a little bit of yellow onto this red, how about that? So you see how I'm going to build it. I want them all the same length, so I'm gonna build my length a little bit on this. - [Courtney] So you just fill. So any time you come up with an obstacle, like this is too short, you just add to make it fit. - [Sherri] Yep, and that just adds to the interest. - [Courtney] I love that. You've mentioned this like, yes, and. So you're always like, agreeing and confirming and then adding something. - [Sherri] Right, and that supports your flow. As soon as you start saying yes, but, it's just like improv theater. You lose the energy. It becomes awkward. You get lost. You wanna always affirm and build on whatever comes up. And that's how you keep your flow. If there's something you really don't like, I don't recommend cutting out. I just recommend focusing on what you do like rather than what you don't like, and then just keep moving forward. 'Cause chances are, the part you didn't like earlier on is gonna be the part that you love after the whole piece is finished. - [Courtney] And it could change, right, like depending on the orientation of your quilt. - [Sherri] Exactly. Your feeling about it change a lot. Okay, all right. So I think we've got all of our strips. I don't think we need any more strips. - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] So let's cut this into some strips. I'm gonna cut 'em into different lengths. I'll cut a couple skinny ones. Ooh, that's a really skinny one. Let's do one more really skinny, really skinny one. That's pretty skinny. I don't know if we can sew that or not. Okay, so, Courtney, what do you think? Should we do, one way we can do strips is we can, we can plan 'em, but I like to, or we can be spontaneous. Like I'm gonna do this one and this one. - [Courtney] I like spontaneous. - [Sherri] Do you? I like the random choice again. - [Courtney] Which one's that? - That's where you put it all in a bag, and you just pull it out and sew it any way it comes out. - All right, let's do it. We'll put it in the bag. - Okay, and we can take turns pulling out. - I love this. This is like crafting and a magic trick. - Okay, I'm gonna pull one out. You pull one out now. - Okay. - Ooh, see, now, that's not what I would normally choose, right, but that's what we got. - That's what we're gonna go with. - So let's do it. Okay, I will

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

change the buttons so they're in different directions, how about that? - Okay. - So, that's kind of like, did you notice when you pulled that out, I was kind of like, aw, man. I really wouldn't wanna sew these two wide ones together. I wanted a color in between 'em. But this is what's so great about random, is that it makes you hear your preferences really well. And knowing your preference is a big part of improv, because it's all about choice. Even when we're doing this random thing, I mean, the nice thing about the random thing it makes you hear your choices better. Like, it makes you hear your preferences, so you'll be better at choosing. Okay, I'm gonna pull one. Oh! (Sherri laughs) Another one, okay. You gonna pull one? - I'm afraid now. (Courtney laughs) - Oh, that's funny. - This fabric must feel really good, right? We keep pulling it. - Yeah, I know. I know, in an unconscious way, we can feel the difference of the texture probably. - [Courtney] But look, it has this little. - [Sherri] Oh, okay, well at least we've got that, right? - [Courtney] It's better than nothing. - [Sherri] We're reconstructing this. - [Courtney] So you just never say no. You just keep going with this. - [Sherri] Yeah. Well, you know what, you can say no if you want, but recognize that you're cheating the system. If you wanna cheat, that's okay. I mean, if you commit to being random, then if you decide you're not gonna be random, then that's okay, 'cause you can do anything you want with improv. But recognize, like, ah, this is my limit. I can't sew any more of these together in a row. I just can't do it. Because improv is also about self-discovery, you know, and knowing where your limits are and what you can take and what not, but I don't think it's so bad. Okay, it's my turn? - [Courtney] Yes. - [Sherri] Oh my gosh. I'm trying to feel around so I don't get one of those. That's a bit of cheating, but that's okay. All right, so let's keep going here. We got one finally that's different. Okay, you just pull 'em, and I'll sew 'em. - [Courtney] Okay, so just pull 'em out now. - [Sherri] Well, let's do, let's don't do 'em too quickly. - [Courtney] Okay, I pulled out one. - [Sherri] I've got a little bit of a, there we go. Okay, I'm gonna line 'em up from the top, and so it's okay if some are a little bit longer. But I'm trying to line 'em up on one edge, at least. - [Courtney] Gotcha. - [Sherri] Okay. And I also have the option of maybe flipping 'em around. I like it this way, though. - [Courtney] And you don't worry about these seams now that you're sewing over a pieced strip? - [Sherri] No, I just try to let 'em go in one direction, as much as I can. - [Courtney] Should I pull out another one? - Sure. Yep, let's just keep feeding 'em to me. - [Callie] All right, we have a question from Melissa. - Okay. - [Callie] Melissa is just joining us, and she wants to know, what are you making? - Hi, Melissa, welcome. I'm here with Sherri Lynn Wood, and Sherri Lynn Wood is a master improv quilter. She is also the author of The Improv Handbook for Modern Quilters. And we're doing this crazy, mystery, random strip piece patchwork demo. - [Sherri] Right, and so this patchwork, this strip piece thing can be put into a quilt at some point, made bigger, more. We only have a certain amount of time, so we don't know how far we'll get. But if you do this strip piecing at home, you could make bigger sheets. You could then re-cut it up to make like, the outside of a purse, or, you know, make the border on a pillowcase, or you know, you could use it for home sewing, decorative things. Basically, you're creating a piece of striped fabric. Okay, so, you know, I can see how I can orient this in different ways in terms of the, see, I like the other direction better, don't you? - [Courtney] But are we gonna cut this off eventually, or are we gonna fill? - [Sherri] Yeah, no, these were a lot shorter. So I don't know what we'll do. - [Courtney] You're gonna miss the brown. - [Sherri] I know. But we might still use it, and I actually like the way these two relate better, don't you? - [Courtney] That's cool, yeah. - [Sherri] So let's not worry about that right now. - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] And now we're not getting any of those brown ones, are we, or the off-white ones? - [Courtney] Yeah, I know. - [Sherri] It's funny. Well, that's what random is. You never know what you're gonna get. I kinda like, though, when you get things. You know, it makes me do things that I wouldn't normally do. - [Courtney] That's the

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

point, right, of this improv process, is like, hearing what your preferences are, making choices in the moment, embracing the unexpected, and then working with it to move forward. - [Sherri] Right, exactly. And discovering new territory. All right, let's keep going. - [Courtney] I love to see how it changes. I love the skinny one right here. - [Sherri] Yeah, me too. Okay, I'm gonna go ahead and just keep flipping these. Oh, we got a button in there. - [Courtney] Oops, I pulled out two. - [Sherri] All right. Okay, let's do a couple more, and I don't know. Do you wanna keep just doing strips, or do you wanna create something with the strips? - [Courtney] I don't know. - [Sherri] We could, ooh, I like that. I like kind of flipping these in opposite directions when we get them. - [Courtney] That's cool. So do you do this practice always with a finished piece in mind? - [Sherri] No, not at all. In fact, sometimes, I'll just do the strip piecing just as a meditative way to warm up for more intense creative process, like, you know, if I'm working on a composition, I may just do a few strip piecing, a little bit of strip piecing, just to get my energy flowing again. - [Courtney] I love that. - [Sherri] I mean, get my energy going in the mornings or when I'm first starting. It can be very meditative. And then these pieced scraps can be used in compositions. - [Courtney] So they can become blocks that then can be used in other ways. - [Sherri] Yeah, they can be cut up. In fact, I was thinking maybe we should throw in some other elements to this. - [Courtney] Yeah, yes. What do you wanna do? - [Sherri] What do you think? - [Courtney] I need blue. - [Sherri] Should we do some squares? Should we add this to some squares? - [Courtney] Yeah, I think that's a great idea. - [Sherri] Okay, all right, you wanna use a blue? Which blue do you want? - [Courtney] Oh, boy. I like that one. - [Sherri] You like the dark blue. Okay, all right. So, should we do a large square or a small square? - [Courtney] Hmm, me, or the audience? - [Sherri] I don't know. Does the audience have any direction? - [Callie] All right, large or small, guys? - [Courtney] Let us know, large or small square. - [Sherri] Big scale or little scale? - [Courtney] I say little. - [Sherri] Little? - [Courtney] I don't know, Tim is also, the peanut gallery is not here. - [Sherri] Let's do one of both. - [Courtney] Okay, one of both. - [Sherri] Okay. Let's cut a big square. - [Courtney] So we're just freehand cutting squares. - [Sherri] Yeah. Let's do a big square. - [Callie] Yep, people are writing in now, large. - [Courtney] People want a big square. - [Callie] People want small too; it's tied now. - [Sherri] Okay, we'll do both. We'll do a large square with a small square. How about that? So did you see how I made that square? - [Courtney] Mmhmm. - [Sherri] Let's make a small one now. See how you can just fold the corner over? - [Courtney] And just cut. - [Sherri] How much time do we have? - [Courtney] We have time. We have some time. - [Courtney] I wanna make sure we get something finished before the end of the thing. All right, so now I'm gonna cut my strips. - [Courtney] Ooh. - So well, let's iron our strips first. One thing, when I have strips like this, I don't wanna iron until I at least have six to eight inches sewn. - Okay. - So we have that. Isn't that funny, how we, well, let's see what it looks like after we iron it. Now, sometimes, if my strips are pretty crisp, I'll sew in one direction. Sometimes, I sew light to dark, I mean iron light to dark. Sometimes I iron in one direction. But actually, a lot of times, I just go from the center out and mash 'em and let my seams go any way I want. With this shirt fabric, it shows up a little bit, but I'm not really concerned about perfection or the way things look. I'm more about the expression that I get, and when I allow my curves, when I allow my seams to go in any direction, sometimes I get curvier or more lyrical lines, especially if my lines that I've cut to begin with are a little bit curvy. So I just did that, and you see my seams are going all over the place. - It looks nice and flat, so we're good, right? - Yeah, it's pretty flat. Now, if you don't like that, though, you can iron all your seams in one direction. There's no one way of ironing. Okay, and we know that this part is a little bit, we'll go ahead and cut that off as a strip, okay. So we're gonna add these strips to our blocks, right? - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Sherri] So I say, let's start with our, let's start with

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

our small strip, small block, and let's just add some strips to it. I'm going to, well, we could, you know, do the thing where we do kind of like a log cabin thing. Let's do that on one side with these small strips. - [Courtney] Okay, so you're starting with the piece we cut off to the small block. - [Sherri] Yeah, I'm gonna add that to the small square. - [Courtney] So the idea of flexible pattern making, we added the squares and the new color because we were getting bored with what we had, right? - [Sherri] Yeah. - [Courtney] So it expands our parameters. - [Sherri] Right. We wanna kind of get some new colors going in there, right? - [Courtney] Cool, yeah. - [Sherri] And so now we can decide where we wanna add the rest of our squares. Let's, you know, it's just a matter of choice and preference. - [Courtney] Mmhmm, and commitment, you said, right? - [Sherri] And commitment, right? I mean, I could just go around in a circle. You know, I can put this. I mean, when you put it there, it just looks like, you know, that's kind of a solid fabric there. So, I'm thinking, just to do something different, I'm thinking I'm gonna do this this way. - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] I don't know why. - [Courtney] It's the intuition. - [Sherri] I'm just starting somewhere, right. And I think we'll end up cutting that, but we'll just go ahead and sew it onto here. Okay, now let's see how this lines up with our big square. We can add our big square like this, right? - [Courtney] Ooh, I like this. This is a bleed? - [Sherri] Yeah, it bleeds into the big square, and we get the stripes. I'm gonna go ahead and cut this right here. - [Courtney] Ooh, that's exciting. This is the most exciting thing we've done. - [Sherri] Okay, so this is kinda nice, because we don't want to have, you know, I can cut this off here and sew it, or I can decide, do I wanna put some more strips here before I sew this? - [Courtney] Mmhmm. - [Sherri] What do you think, folks? So, my two choices are, and improv's all about choices. - [Courtney] I love this 'cause now there's just a little bit of yellow. I love that. - [Sherri] Right, there's a little bit of yellow here. Now we could just sew these two, cut this off, and then go from there. - [Courtney] Yes. - [Sherri] Okay, the other option, though, instead of cutting off, you never wanna, or I never want to just sew this on here, because then I have a partial seam, and that's a big pain to deal with. So, another thing I could do is if I wanna keep my block as long as this, I can add some strips to this and then sew this seam. - [Courtney] Mmhmm, mmhmm. - [Sherri] And I could do it in either direction. I could do it, this kind of looks cool. - [Courtney] That's cool too, yeah. - Or we could just sew it and then cut it. So, I'll let the audience decide. Or Courtney. - What's the fearless answer? For me, I feel like, okay, I like just this, 'cause that feels interesting but kind of safe. Am I being too safe, is that why? - [Sherri] Well, I mean, I mean, I guess to me, it's kind of fun to see, I kind of like. - [Courtney] This is interesting, how this changes. - [Sherri] Yeah, yeah. And the thing that I kind of like about this is we're gonna get another strip out here, and I kinda like how this kinda bleeds into this. - [Courtney] Oh, yeah. - [Sherri] Kind of like a. - [Courtney] It's like little steps coming down. Cool. - [Sherri] Yeah, you know, if you cut here, then you've gotta do, then you start getting into more of a typical log cabin situation. - [Courtney] So then, do we need to fill this space? - [Sherri] We could, but I think, you know, we could. We could take another square and fill that space and then we could have an order of sewing. Yeah, you wanna try that? We can actually fill in. We could fill in with another blue. Ooh, what do you think about this pink? That's pretty intense, I don't know. - [Courtney] Oh, my gosh. - [Sherri] That's maybe too much. - [Callie] Holly says she likes all of the pieces together as one big piece. She's liking the look of it. - [Sherri] Yeah, so keeping it as a whole thing. - [Courtney] Holly's loving it all. - [Courtney] What about the gray? - [Sherri] The gray, I think the gray feels a little bit. - [Courtney] Too dark? - [Sherri] Let's look at the rest of the blue again. What about the blue? I kind of like keeping with the blue. - [Courtney] It's feeling very nautical. It's like a flag. - [Sherri] So we wanna mix that up, huh? - [Courtney] Yeah, I like that. - [Sherri] You like the light blue? - [Courtney] Yeah. Do you like that? - [Sherri] Yeah, I like the light

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

blue. Let's see, what other options? We're auditioning things. - [Callie] You have a couple of votes for yellow. - [Courtney] Oh, yellow, we haven't tried the yellow. - [Sherri] Oh, yeah, we got the yellow here. - [Courtney] What about the brown? I love this brown color. - [Sherri] Oh, right, we got the brown too. - [Courtney] So this is, okay, so how do you not feel overwhelmed when you have so many choices? - [Sherri] I know. - Do you just commit and move forward? - At some point, you gotta commit and move forward. - Okay, let's do brown. - Okay. You wanna do brown? - Do you wanna do yellow? - Well. (Courtney laughs) - [Callie] We have two, Marsha and Holly, who wanna see yellow block in the corner. - Two people who are voting yellow. - Okay. I think the yellow's a good choice, and lemme tell you why, because again, you're making the best relationships you can in the moment. One reason I like the yellow is that, I mean, I like the blue a lot, too. But one reason I like the yellow is see what the yellow picks up here? - Mmhmm. - [Sherri] It almost picks up the block again. - [Courtney] Oh, interesting. - [Sherri] So you've got another relationship there, where it's not exactly on the line. It's not like right there. You could move that there and put something there, if you wanted. - [Courtney] That's cool, too. - [Sherri] But let's keep it, I'm saying keep it a little simpler. But our eye kinda goes up, and that's kind of an interesting move. - [Courtney] Yeah, let's do it. - [Sherri] Improv is just about, you know, interesting moves, really. What's the next thing? - [Courtney] It's like quilting chess. - [Sherri] Yeah, to make this a little bit more manageable, I'm going to just cut some of this fabric off, 'cause it's such a big strip. And I would never worry about wasting fabric, because there's all kinds of fabric out in the world. - [Courtney] Yeah, so you did a residency at the San Francisco Recology Center, right, which is essentially the dump? - [Sherri] Exactly. - [Courtney] Where you made quilts using only materials that you found. - [Sherri] Yep, including. - [Courtney] Including, tell me more, tell me more. - [Sherri] Including the batting, the backing, the thread. Everything came from the dump. The sewing machines came from the dump. Everything came from the dump. - [Courtney] That's so awesome. - [Sherri] And they, you know, I don't know. I think it's like 60% of our landfill now is material waste. - [Courtney] Did you hear that? 60% of our landfill is material waste. - [Sherri] It's a huge problem. - [Courtney] So maybe look at your Goodwill and donation bags a second time and use them to make your quilts. - [Sherri] Right. So let's look at the order of sewing. I've cut this strip, right? And we're gonna, we're gonna need to sew these two together before we sew this together. And so, the question is, are we gonna fill this in with something? - [Courtney] Yes. 'Cause then we'll be close to having a full square. - [Sherri] Then we'll have a full square. - [Courtney] Or rectangle. - [Sherri] I wish we had, let's make a few more, oh, where are strips? - [Courtney] The original strips? - [Sherri] Here they are. - [Courtney] Oh, yeah. - [Sherri] Let's do a couple more strips, okay? And I was thinking, maybe we could just fill in with some strips here. - [Courtney] Oh, I love that, I love that. - [Sherri] What do you guys think? - [Callie] Holly wants to know where can I see the quilt you made from the dump stash? - [Sherri] Sherrilynnwood.com. - The question was where are the images for Sherri Lynn Wood's, all the quilts made from the Recology residency. So you can check 'em out on sherrilynnwood.com. - Yep, and the first, the actual body of work is called Afterlife. - Okay. - 'Cause it's like, life after the dump, right? - Yeah, I love it. - And also, if you're on Instagram, you can do #makingdorecology, and you can see the whole documentation of my residency, all the cool things I found and the things that I made and my whole process. It was a four-month residency, so I hashtagged. It's #makingdorecology. - That's so cool. - So let's go ahead. We've pulled these out, and I'm looking for natural, well, it doesn't matter with strips whether they're cut to match, because you can iron them, and they will. - [Courtney] They'll behave? - [Sherri] They'll behave, yep. We gotta sew 'em first before we iron 'em, though. - [Courtney] Yes. - [Sherri] The other thing about improv, when you're

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

doing the order of sewing, you gotta be a little conscious that every time you sew a seam, things shrink about a half an inch. - [Courtney] So when you're doing your layouts, things are gonna look a little different once sewn up because of all of the seaming. - [Sherri] Yes, exactly. So, again, we've gotta make some decisions about where we want. I think that looks, I don't know. I like, I'd kinda like to have the brown in there. What do you think? - [Courtney] I like the brown, yep. - [Sherri] Like that? - [Courtney] Yep, I like the brown. - [Sherri] Do you like that? - [Courtney] Yes, I do. - [Sherri] Okay, so let's go ahead and sew this to this, and these are all pretty straight edges, so I'm not having to cut 'em to match. - [Courtney] But if you're working with other shapes, you would do that. - [Sherri] Yeah, or as the lines get longer and longer, we might have a situation where things don't lie flat, and then you can take a dart to get the flatness, get it flat again. So we'll see. If that happens, we'll take a dart. - Yeah, and that's something that we talk about in Sherri's classes. She's filming three improv classes with us now that we'll be releasing later in 2018 and 2019. - Okay. So you can see this now doesn't really. - [Courtney] So there's a little bit of a gap. - [Sherri] There's a gap, right? - [Courtney] So what do you do for that? - [Sherri] So we're gonna go ahead and cut this. Well, the way I would do it, I mean, you can always add something in the gap, or you can just layer this over. We could also turn it and see if we get a better result. I don't like it like that, though. I like this originally, what we picked. You always can change course in improv. - [Courtney] I love this. - [Sherri] I do, too. Okay, so I'm gonna layer this over, these two pieces over each other, and then I'm gonna go back over with my rotary cutter, and I'm gonna cut 'em to match. All right, and now, take away the extra. Now, right sides together to sew. - [Courtney] We're getting there, you guys. Look at this improv quilt, it's coming together. - [Sherri] We're gonna have a little finished panel. I really like working with strips and squares together. So much you can do with just those two very simple basic shapes. Okay, I'm gonna iron it. - [Courtney] Okay. - [Sherri] Okay, I'm gonna iron in this direction, I think. It's looking good. I always like the way things look after they've been ironed. - [Courtney] Yeah, it's like the official, it's like when you take a photograph of something. It kind of flattens it out. - [Sherri] Yeah, exactly. All right, so now we've got to do this seam. - [Courtney] Oh my God, so close. - [Sherri] The final scene here. And it's pretty close. I'm going to, do I need to, yeah, I'm gonna trim it a little bit. So I'm gonna cut this. I'm gonna go ahead. I always like to cut a little bit over, and then I can trim later. - [Courtney] Mmhmm. And again, never scoring up with rulers, just all by eyeball or cut to fit. - [Sherri] Right. See how I'm gonna run right along this edge here, cut to match. We're gonna get, you know, this is gonna be a little bulky 'cause of all the seams, but it doesn't matter. It'll work out. - [Courtney] I love that. - [Sherri] Yeah. You know, you could almost take that out. - [Courtney] 'Cause it's such a thin strip? - [Sherri] Yeah, but you, what we don't have is much time to do that right now. So we'll just go with the flow of being in the moment and have a time restriction. We've got very primary colors here, which holds together nicely. - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Sherri] Oh, this is interesting. It ended up, as I sewed it, it ended up that I'm getting a little bit less of this than I had expected. - [Courtney] Oh, interesting. - [Sherri] But whoopee, that's what happens with improv. - [Courtney] So you just basically like, take on those whoopee moments and then just learn from them and keep moving forward? - [Sherri] Yeah. I mean, it just happens the way it happens, and there's no right or wrong. I mean, there's no external thing that we're trying to work towards. So, sometimes, you know, our best laid plans shift, and you just have to go with the shift. Okay, so now I'm gonna just trim this up. So I'm gonna cut that a little bit. - [Courtney] Ooh, but I love that. I love how little it is. It's so sweet. - [Sherri] It's pretty cute, isn't it? - [Courtney] It looks like a little stack of Legos. - [Sherri] Yeah. And so that might even inspire you to do more of that, right? - [Courtney] Yeah, I love it. So this is about like a discovery

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

process. So you told me that, or we talk about in the classes, that once you finish something, you do an evaluation. Would you mind just walking us through a little evaluation to finish up this piece? - [Sherri] Yeah, let's evaluate this. It's great. - [Courtney] Really cool. - [Sherri] It's kind of a nice little, it'd make a cute little pillow, maybe. - [Courtney] Yeah, I love it. - Okay, so, what I like to do to evaluate is I like to ask myself these three questions. What surprised me? What happened that I didn't expect? What did I discover or learn that I didn't know before? What was satisfying about the process or the outcome, and what was dissatisfying? I hold myself carefully on that last one. I try to answer the first three, 'cause I never wanna yes, but. But if there was something I was dissatisfied about, I can ask myself, what can I do differently to learn, differently next time to be more satisfied. - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Sherri] So, let's look at this, and we both can do this. I mean, one thing that surprised mean is this whole block of, I mean, we actually have a whole 'nother square there, right? - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Sherri] Of this plain fabric, which is kind of interesting, that it's pieced like that. - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Sherri] And what did I discover, or did you have any discoveries? - [Courtney] You know, I really like this shape that appeared, this cross shape that's happening. - [Sherri] Ah, right. - [Courtney] I don't know how I would replicate that, but I think that's super cool. - [Sherri] Mmhmm. I like that, too. And so you could look at something like that and say, you know, you can see how that's kind of pieced in with two different colors. You could start to play with just that shape again. - [Courtney] That motif, yeah. - [Sherri] And start, right, that motif, and start improvising with that. - [Courtney] I really like the bits of yellow. At first, when I was like, yellow and red, I was like, oh, no, no, I don't like that together. (Sherri laughs) But now that it's all trimmed up, I like how it moves the eye around the piece. I love this tiny little spot of it, and I like that up here, too. So that's fun. I like this, and I think this like, giant chunk of blue is, it's cool, because it actually kind of helps this exist. - [Sherri] Yeah. - [Courtney] I don't know. - [Sherri] Yeah, it's okay. You know, you could keep building on it. Actually, you can also look at what orientation. I do like this orientation better. I almost would want to, I don't know, do we have any more white strips? - [Courtney] Do we? - [Sherri] Do we have enough time? I almost want to just add a strip around it maybe. - [Courtney] Ooh, I like that. - [Sherri] And just kind of. - [Courtney] Oh no, I can see this is a slippery slope. - [Sherri] Yeah, you just keep going on and on, right? - [Courtney] I do really like how that bleed happens. - [Sherri] Yeah, or, yeah. And you get that curve in there, right? - [Courtney] Yeah, that's cool. - [Callie] All right, so I wanna share some comments. Deb says, this is so strangely compelling. (both laughing) - Deb says this is so strangely compelling. Tell me about it. I've been watching it all week on the monitors, and I just like, never know what choice you're gonna make next. (Sherri laughs) And then I'm always surprised by the choices she makes, and lemme tell you, it always looks amazing. - Yeah, you can't go wrong with improv, you know? - It's so cool. - I mean, you can go a lot of different directions, and some directions you might like better than others. But there's always, you know, you can't really do anything wrong. I mean, even that looks kind of nice with that strip there. - [Courtney] Ooh, interesting. - [Sherri] So, I kind of would, I don't know. I'd like a thinner strip on it, just to balance it open. - [Courtney] Just to kind of border it out? - [Sherri] Yeah, I don't know. What do you think? - [Courtney] Sure. - [Sherri] What does the audience think? - [Callie] Holly thinks that you should add another medium like embroidery to the open white space. - Oh, that's interesting. So Holly's saying like, change the medium and put embroidery in this spot, not that we'll do that on a live shoot. - Oh, in the blank spot. - Yeah. - Yeah, yeah, yeah, you could do that. - That's a cool idea. You can watch like Rebecca Rehnquist's class and learned some cool embroidery techniques to add there. - That's right. - That's one. - And the other thing you can do, you know, you can remember, however you're gonna quilt it, right? - Yeah, absolutely. - You can

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026

create designs in the open spaces. - You could do like a, contrasting thread choice with chunkier stitches, hand-quilted and then create something. That's a cool idea. - [Callie] And Laurie says, this is the essence of Creativebug. She says, it makes me feel like I could do it. - [Sherri] Oh, good. - [Courtney] Laurie says it makes me feel like I could do it. - Anyone can do this. It's so easy. So if you've ever been intimidated by more traditional fixed-pattern quilting and the perfection of that, this is like, that's like apples to oranges. This is like, a wonderful quilt making process, but it's very different, and if you're intimidated by that other thing or you feel like you can't do that perfection thing, or the planning of it, try improv, because, you know, it's a completely different experience of quilt making. - Yeah, you were saying that it's like apples and oranges. They're both delicious, but they're very different. - Yeah, they're both delicious and very different. - I love that. - I'm just kind of having a moment with, I think we should just let it stand, actually. - Yeah, let's give it some breathing room, and we'll come back to it, and we'll see. - Yeah, I like the way it looks. It looks very modern and contemporary, actually. - [Courtney] I love it. - [Sherri] With the light and the dark. - [Courtney] It's really cool. Thanks you guys for all of your input in making this really cool improv quilt. Sherri's classes will be out later in this year and the beginning of next year. Check out the 30 Days of Creativebug for free with your 30% coupon to Joann. You can pick up Sherri's awesome book. - Yes. - The improv. - All of this, the techniques, the whole process of improv, are all here in the Improv Handbook for Modern Quilters. - That's awesome. Thanks so much for being here this week. - Yeah, thank you for having me. (upbeat rock music)

© CBTV Live and Creativebug Inc., 2026