

# What Quilting Rulers Do You Need?



Remember back in the olden days when quilters only had a pair of scissors and a tape measure and they still managed to make amazing quilts?

I know some of you will.

Personally, I've only been quilting for about 5 years so I have had the luxury of using all of those wonderful modern tools and gadgets that make it all so much easier but I have much respect for those that didn't.

The quilting ruler is one of those amazing gadgets that I love using.

Now obviously rulers have been around for thousands of years but it wasn't until the rotary cutter was invented that the quilting ruler really came into its own. It meant that we no longer needed to use scissors to cut fabric for quilting which

also meant that we had more accurate cuts. Plus, it sped up the process no end.

So our only real issue these days is deciding which quilting rulers we actually need. There are thousands of different shapes and sizes to choose from and this can be really overwhelming for someone who is just starting out.

So let's get on and show you what we actually use and recommend.

## So which quilting rulers do you really need?

We have a multitude of rulers between the two of us but most are only used for specific tasks. This leaves those that we use consistently and there are only four of them. I will go into them in more detail further on but in a nutshell, we use the following:

- Long Ruler
- Medium Ruler
- Short Ruler
- Square Ruler

And here are our recommendations in a nice easy table but if you scroll down you will see more detailed information on each of these which will better help in your decision making.

Type	Size	Where to Buy
Long Ruler	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	<a href="#">View on Amazon</a>
Medium Ruler	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	<a href="#">View on Amazon</a>
Short Ruler	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	<a href="#">View on Amazon</a>
Square Ruler	Various	See notes below

# #1 Long Ruler

This is a must-have in my opinion and it is the one ruler we use about 90% of the time. If you only get one ruler, this will be it.

And when I say 'long ruler' I mean one that is 24" long.

The main purpose of a long ruler is for cutting strips and trimming fabric.

It also provides more accurate cutting. Why? Because if you have a small ruler you would either have to:

- fold your fabric in order to fit it all in to cut (and the more times you fold the fabric the more inaccuracy you will get), or
- slide the ruler up as you cut in order to take in the entire width of the fabric which can cause the ruler to move or slip

You can see in the image below how the long 24" ruler takes in the entire width of the fabric as it comes off the bolt so I don't need to fold it over to cut nor do I need to slide the ruler up in order to cut the entire width of the fabric.



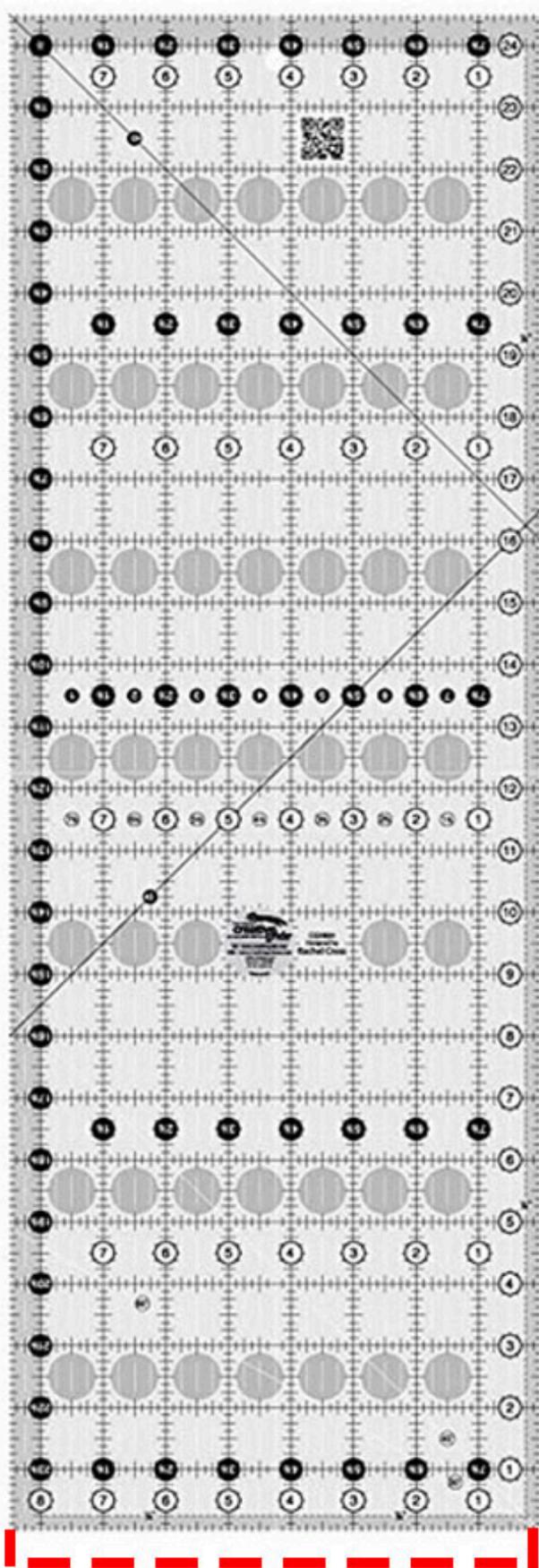
Of course, if you don't have a lot of space and you have a small cutting mat that won't fit a 24  $\frac{1}{2}$ " ruler then go with a medium-sized ruler. You'll see more on that in the next section.

In other words, just make sure the ruler isn't longer than your mat as it will just be hanging over the edge.

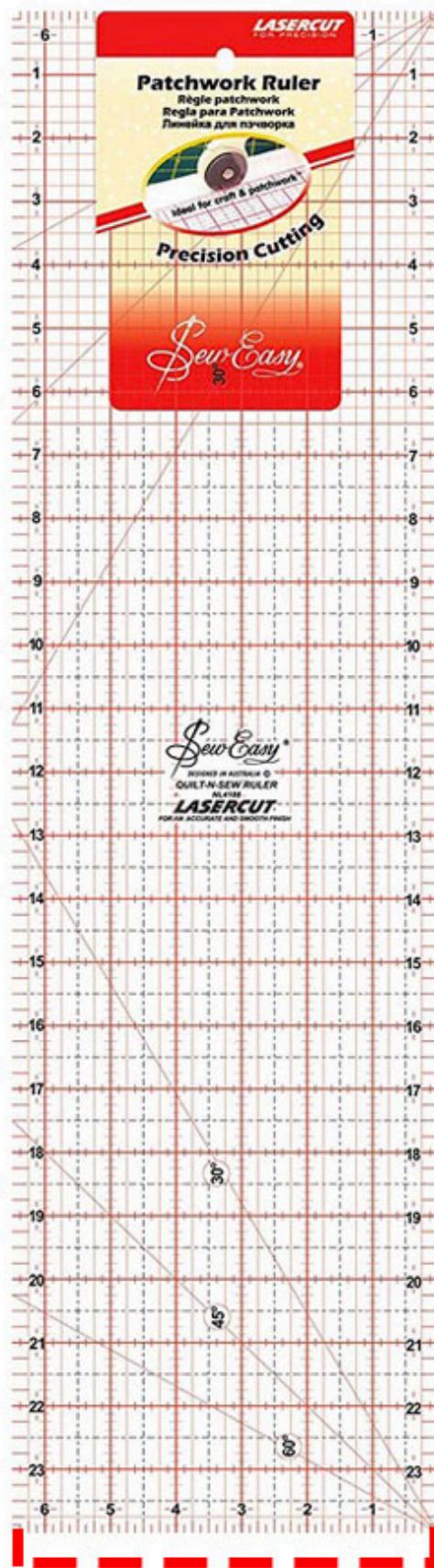
An important thing to note is that the width of these rulers can vary. We have 24  $\frac{1}{2}$ " rulers with two different widths – one measures 6  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The other measures 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

These are the two quilting rulers we use:

- Creative Grids 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
- Sew Easy 24" x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "



Creative Grids  
8 1/2" wide



Sew Easy  
6 1/2" wide

I can tell you now that we both prefer to use the wider 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ " ruler. With the wider width, we can essentially cut strips of fabric up to 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ " without having to use the mat to make the measurements.

So ideally our recommended size for a long ruler would be 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 24", but like I already mentioned, if you have limited space then a medium-sized ruler (see next section below) might be preferable.

## #2 Medium Ruler

The main purpose of a medium ruler is for cutting shorter strips and smaller pieces of fabric as well as trimming quilt blocks. It can also be used for cutting excess fabric from binding strips or any other small cut that is needed.

We only just recently purchased a medium ruler and can't quite figure out why we didn't do it sooner. The size we bought was 6  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". You can view the one we purchased on Amazon [here](#).



like The Three Bears, but seriously this one is just right. Plus it seemed like everyone was recommending it as their go-to ruler.

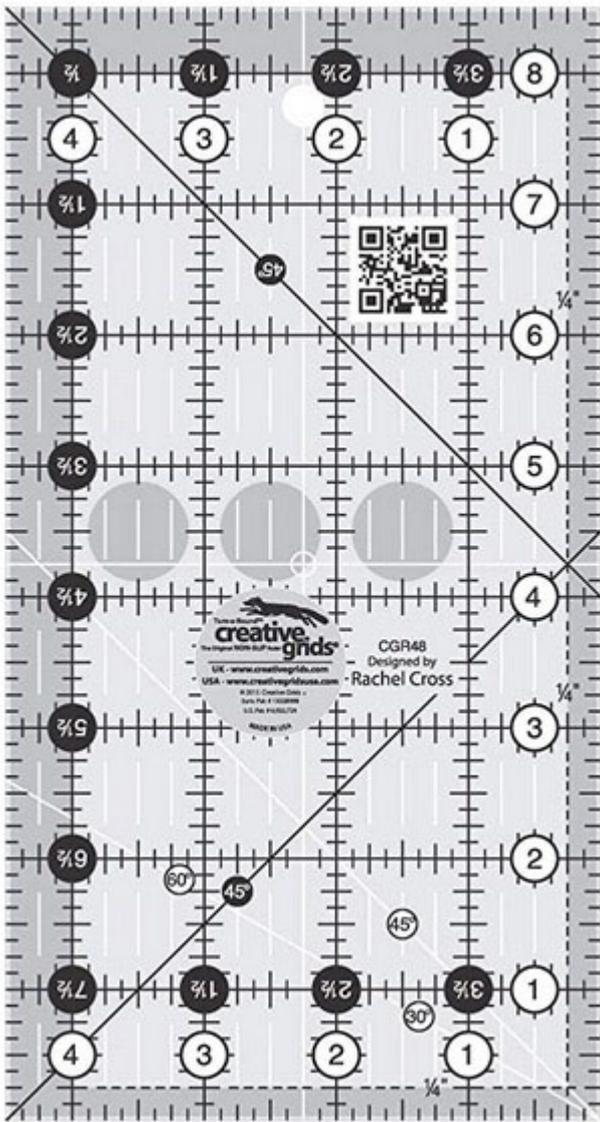
## #3 Short Ruler

This ruler does pretty much what the medium size ruler does only it's shorter. This would be one of our most used rulers in the sewing room.

We use a Sullivans Edge Ruler that measures  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " and it is the perfect size for a quick simple trim or cut. The  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " ruler is a relatively small ruler but I find myself grabbing it whenever I need to quickly trim a small piece of fabric. You can view the Sullivans ruler that we use here on Amazon.

The only problem with the Sullivans ruler is that it has no grips so the ruler can slip and the quarter-inch line is not so easy to see. We will most likely buy a Creative Grids version of this size at some point since we love the Creative Grids brand of rulers. They have grips on the bottom so the rulers don't slip (or at least not as much).

You can view this ruler on Amazon here.



## #4 Square Ruler

The main purpose of a square ruler is to square up quilt blocks but you can use it like any ruler for cutting fabric squares and short strips.

Technically you only need one square ruler for squaring up quilt blocks as it will cover all sizes below it. What I mean by that is, if for example, you were to buy a  $12 \frac{1}{2}$ " x  $12 \frac{1}{2}$ " square ruler, it would allow you to trim all quilt blocks smaller than that size.

However, if you find yourself creating the same size blocks over and over, then it is worth getting yourself a square

ruler that fits the size of the block you want to trim.

For example, if you find that you make a lot of 5 1/2" unfinished squares then get yourself a 5 1/2" x 5 1/2" square ruler.

We currently have 3 square rulers:

- Olfa 12 1/2" x 12 1/2"
- Olfa 6 1/2" x 6 1/2"
- Sew Easy 4 1/2" x 4 1/2"

