

Rotary cutting is one of the most popular technique classes we teach so we thought we'd bring you a few hints, tips, photos and general 'thoughts'. First things first - you will need a rotary cutter, a ruler and a mat.



The mat is vital to protect your furniture (or carpet) and your cutter. Don't be tempted to buy a small mat – it's almost impossible to cut a full width-of-fabric strip on a small mat; buy one that is at least 24 inches x 18 inches. This size is still small enough to take to class but large enough to be useful.

The most useful ruler size you can buy is probably 6 x 24 inches (although Barbara prefers a slightly smaller one). 6 x 12 is also useful, as is a 12 inch square. With these three you can cut pretty much anything and everything you are going to need to. There are plenty of other rulers for all sorts of 'time-saving,' or super-accuracy, or 'trimming to fit'; rulers for triangles, for diamonds, for wavy lines. Buy these only once you can see a need for them.

Cutters too come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. We suggest you buy one with a 45mm blade, no smaller except for cutting curves. The larger size (60mm) is great if you do a lot of cutting through multiple layers. Try out the various sorts of cutter to see which one suits you - especially if you have wrist problems. Quilt shows are the ideal place to do this as there will be plenty to choose from. You

can sometimes find very cheap cutters in discount shops - two of the cutters in the photo were only £1 - these work very well if you put a good quality blade in them but the blade will probably cost five times what the cutter did!

Look after these tools - keep the mat flat and away from heat (including the sun) or it will warp. Change the blade on your cutter regularly; once you find yourself having to press hard to cut through two layers then the blade needs changing. You can send blades away to be sharpened or you can buy a sharpener to do it yourself at home (there are several sorts). Our experience is that the blades are never quite as sharp as they were from the factory - but they will do for a while, just don't expect to cut through eight layers of fabric. You can find a photo step-by-step tutorial on changing the blade on a cutter [here](#). Remember these cutter blades are very sharp - even when too blunt to cut fabric - so treat them with respect, handle with care, and **always** keep the guard over the cutter blade except when you are actually making the cut.

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