

## TRACKING YOUR UFOs

No matter what your theory is about life on other planets, Earth is filled with UFOs—that's right, quilter's Un-Finished Objects. We all know these projects exist in the depths of our sewing rooms, packed away so we can forget them, ignore them, pretend we never started them. While we'd like to think that we can finish all of the projects we start, it just isn't possible. Either we don't like the colors we chose, or we realize too late that we can't master a concept (um, did I really think I could do curved piecing?!) Regardless of how many UFOs you have hiding in your sewing room read this article, then promise to dig out the projects and make use of them. Here are some ideas on how to get the best mileage out of these unfinished projects:

- First, pull out every project that is unfinished and take a good look at what you've got. Separate the projects into two piles: KEEP and DONATE. Only keep those projects that you feel you are capable of finishing, and will want to hang/display when they are done. If you aren't going to show them off when they are finished, put them in the DONATE pile.
- If you belong to a bee or guild organize a Trading UFOs night. Spend an evening sharing and trading unfinished projects, and you'll go home with some fun projects that you'll look forward to finishing. And better yet, your unwanted UFOs will find a good home! Don't belong to a group? Have a UFO garage sale with your quilting friends. Remember, your trash may be someone else's treasure!
- Many charitable quilt groups would love your UFOs. They can take half-finished quilt tops and complete them, and then donate the finished quilt. Check your area for Project Linus groups or other charitable organizations. Your local quilt store can help you find some leads.
- Do you have a UFO that was started so that you could learn a technique? If so, realize that learning a technique could be the end product itself. If you got the hang of that technique toss your project or give it to a friend. We give you permission to throw it away and move on!
- Depending on how many UFOs you have in your KEEP pile, sort them into finishing levels, from quick to lengthy. Then, plan to finish these projects like you'd finish a block of the month quilt—step-by-step. Place each project's components into a project pouch, then label with the anticipated finish date. Starting with the easiest-to-finish project, go shopping for any supplies you'll need to finish your project, and then get started! Don't move onto your next UFO until the first one is complete.
- If you like the fabrics in a UFO but don't think you'd like the finished project spend a little bit of time taking out the stitches and salvaging the fabric. You can always incorporate the cut pieces into a scrap quilt, or design a fun pieced backing for a quilt with similar colors.
- If you don't feel like taking out all the stitching in your blocks use unfinished projects to practice your template-based or free motion machine quilting. This gives meaning to your project, and you still have permission to toss it when you're done.

When all is said and done remember that it's just fabric and it doesn't have feelings (some of you may not agree with us on this point!). Instead of letting fabric and projects sit around and collect dust start finishing them, donating them, and putting them to good use. You'll feel a sense of accomplishment once you conquer two or three UFOs, and when you do, you'll be ready to start shopping once again for new projects. The best part is that you'll be able to do your shopping *quilt free!*

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