

PREPARING YOUR QUILT TOP FOR THE LONGARM QUILTER



Take the time to properly prepare your quilt top for the longarm quilter. You have just spent hours upon hours painstakingly selecting fabrics, cutting and piecing. Now is not the time to "get in a hurry!" These final steps can make all the difference in the final quality and appearance of your quilt. You'll be glad you went the extra mile!

#1 FINISHING QUILT TOP - SQUARE & MEASURE

Make sure that your quilt top is square. Please refer to "Applying Borders" on our website to make and apply all borders. If you measure, cut and apply the borders per these guidelines, your quilt top has the best chance of coming out square with straight, flat borders. Now measure the width and length of your quilt top. W _____ / L _____

If the last border you apply consists of blocks, rails, etc. where you have many 1/4" seams extending to the outer edge, it is best to finish your quilt top by adding a row of "stay-stitching" around the perimeter of the top. Be careful not to stretch the fabric or seams as you do this. Use a walking foot and sew about 1/8" from the edge. If you sew relatively slowly, you'll achieve the best results.

#2 FINAL PRESSING OF QUILT TOP

My preference is to press the quilt top from the back side. A queen sized quilt top may take me 2 hours to press! Take your time at this juncture because it will pay off in the appearance of the final product.

Press each seam carefully. Use a water bottle and spritz as you go. Lately, I prefer to spritz with a starch-like alternative product called *@Mary Ellen's Best Press* instead of water. It does a beautiful job of releasing wrinkles and maintaining the press without being stiff or leaving a residue. While you are pressing, snip any loose threads. Have a garbage receptacle handy for the threads or they will likely end up statically attached to your quilt top somewhere!

Once the pressing and de-threading is done, gently fold the quilt top lengthwise and place it over a hanger.

#3 PREPARING QUILT BACKING

Add 8" to your quilt top width and length. Backing Measurement W _____ / L _____

This is the measurement needed for backing. Wide backing is generally 108" wide. We also carry muslin in various widths, 90", 108" and 122". If you purchase 42"-44" wide fabric and have to seam it for backing, trim away the selvage before seaming and press the seam allowance open. Once you have seamed and pressed the backing, make sure both the top and bottom are squared off with a rotary cutter and long acrylic ruler. Press out any obvious folds or wrinkles. Gently fold lengthwise and place over a hanger.

#4 BATTING

I prefer to use Hobb's Heirloom 80/20, Quilter's Dream, Dream Green or Warm & Natural. Each has ideal uses.

- Hobb's Heirloom 80/20 is 80% cotton and 20% poly. It is a lightweight batting especially suited for wall hangings and table toppers because it hangs and drapes well. It can generally be used for any size quilt as well. It has a light-weight feeling.
- Quilter's Dream batting is 100% cotton and gives a flatter, more antique look when quilted.
- Dream Green is a man-made fiber made from recycled green plastic bottles. It works well especially in baby quilts and wall hangings. It does not hold a permanent fold and washes well.
- Warm & Natural is a heavier 100% cotton batting. I like to use this in winter quilts where warmth is the first priority.

I will gladly use your batting but want to pre-warn you that with batting "you get what you pay for" as they say. Cheap batting is very thin and does not give much substance to your quilt.

Batting should be at least the same size as backing.