

PREPARING YOUR QUILT FOR THE LONGARM QUILTING MACHINE

General Notes about quilting

- Ideally, square up your blocks before putting the quilt together. This will save a lot of problems later!
- The best way to make flat borders is to fold the quilt in half lengthwise and measure the center of the quilt and make the side borders the same length as the center measurement, *not* the end measurement. After you attach the side borders, fold the quilt in half the other way and measure the crosswise center (including the borders you just put on) and make the other borders the same length as that center measurement, not the edge measurement.
- The denser, more compact the quilting, the stiffer the quilt.
- Custom quilting, where the design varies over the surface of the quilt is more expensive than having the same design quilted everywhere.

How to prepare your quilt top

1. Press the quilt top so the seams are flat. Be sure the top lies flat.
2. Do not pin or baste the layers, as they are all loaded separately on the machine.
3. Clip loose threads off the back side of the quilt top that might show through to the front. (This is especially important with dark threads against a light background.)
4. Mark the top left of the quilt top and backing with a safety pin or masking tape to denote which end is up.

How to prepare your quilt back

1. Bed sheets for quilt backings aren't recommended! Although it's tempting to use a bed sheet because of its size, sheets don't make good quilt backs. The thread count is much higher in sheeting than in common quilting fabric. The tighter weave causes the needle to break the sheet's threads when it pierces through, rather than pushing between the threads as it does with quilting fabric. It leaves holes and diminishes the stability of the sheet.
2. Backing fabrics should have the same care requirements as the quilt top. It should be preshrunk if the quilt top fabrics were. Although muslin is an inexpensive option for a quilt back, keep in mind that it shows every quilting detail. Remember--you will see the back of the quilt when you're using it. A coordinated backing offers more eye appeal.
3. If you piece your backing, make sure to trim the selvages first. Otherwise they will shrink unevenly when you wash the quilt and create a puckered line. Use a ½" seam and press the seam open. This should reduce the bulk the quilt is rolled on the frame and minimize any "waves".
4. Square up the backing so it's as close to a perfect square or rectangle as possible. You can do this by folding it in quarters and using your rotary cutter and rulers to trim it even. Make sure it is at least 3"-4" larger than the quilt top **on all four sides**.
5. Press your backing. Using starch or sizing makes it easier to handle.

Batting

- I have Hobbs 80/20 natural batting in stock available for purchase.
- If you prefer another brand, I can purchase it for you for an additional trip charge.
- If you prefer to provide your own batting, please make sure it is also 3"-4" larger than the quilt top **on all four sides**, and is suitable for machine quilting.