

# *Quilt Preparation*



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## *What to do & how to do it!*

The better the quilt top is prepared, the better the finished result will be. In order to guarantee the highest quality and satisfaction in the finished product, please consider the following as you prepare your quilt for quilting.

Do not baste or pin the quilt layers together. This is not necessary for longarm machine quilting, as they are loaded separately onto the rollers.

## *Backing*

Select backing fabric with the quilting thread color in mind. I have found the best choice for backing fabric is a printed 100% cotton that matches or coordinates with the front.

Cut the backing fabric a minimum of 8" larger than the quilt top. For example if the quilt top is 70" x 50" the backing should be 78" x 58" Please have backing squared with seams pressed flat and selvages removed.

## *Batting*

I have a quality selection of Hobbs and Warm and Natural batting available for purchase. Purchasing rolled batting is very cost efficient for you and it is much easier to work with. The batting that you purchase in the package is full of wrinkles and sometimes has thin patches in it that you cannot see until you unroll the package.

The batting needs to be at least 8" larger than the quilt top.

Batting choices will greatly affect the appearance of your quilt. Cotton batting gives a smoother, flatter look and polyester batting has more texture or "poof".

Select a quality batting that can be quilted 2" - 3" or more apart.

If you do not want the old puckered quilt look after washing your quilt, pre-shrink your cotton batting or use one that is pre-shrunk.

If you use polyester, allow an extra 10 inches in length and choose a bonded batting. Unbonded, traditional polyester battings are too delicate for handling on the Longarm machine.

For darker fabrics (black, dark blue, etc.) a black or a "non-bearding" batting is suggested so the batting doesn't migrate through.

## *The Secret to Perfect Borders*

You have gone to all the expense and hard work of making your beautiful quilt top. Now is not the time to sacrifice the look of the frame of your quilt by having ill fitted borders. I am all for shortcuts and it may be easier to cut a long strip of fabric, sew it on and then cut the excess off but please don't do that. This will often create flared borders.

OK, here's the secret to make sure your borders are attached perfectly. Measure the length of your quilt top side to side in three places (top, middle and bottom). Add them together and divide by 3. Now you have the actual length of the quilt. Cut that length of fabric, then fold the border in half to find the center, mark, then fold in half again to find quarters and mark again. Do the same with the quilt top. Pin border to the sides of the quilt top matching these marks.

Now measure the width of your quilt top side to side in three places (top, middle and bottom) including the borders you just added. Add them together and divide by 3. Now you have the actual width of the quilt. If you do not do this to your borders, your quilt may not be square and you will have dog ears - corners are wider than center. This does take some extra work but I know you will be pleased with the results.

Note: Borders with cornerstones should be cut to the length and width of quilt top using these measurements, and then the corners added with the third and fourth border strips.

## *Fullness & Puckers*

If there are rippled borders on your quilt I will use utmost care as I quilt, with your understanding that pleats or puckers may be impossible to avoid. The quilting process can hide some of those errors but probably will not make them look perfect.

## *Quilt Top Preparations*

Check for any seams that are not properly caught in the 1/4" seam allowance. These could come apart when the top is on the rollers.

Have seams well pressed (spray sizing helps but do not iron the fabric out of shape) and clip threads that would cause "varicose veins" under light fabric areas.

Be sure that all the seams that come to the edge of the quilt are backstitched. When placed on the longarm machine rollers and rolled taught, edge seams can come loose if not well reinforced.

Indicate the top and bottom of the quilt clearly if there is a difference.

## *Thoughts about Mailing Your Quilt Top*

For added protection it is a good idea for you to photograph and insure your quilt top. If it's not photographed and insured, you will have a difficult time recovering any of the money on it should it get lost. Before mailing, place your quilt top in a plastic bag.

When labeling your box to ship, **DO NOT** list the word quilt on the outside. Mail to this address:

Patchwork Pals Quilt Shop  
1469 S.W. 800 Road  
Holden, Missouri 64040-9272