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GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING YOUR QUILT FOR LONGARM QUILTING

Backing Information:

Your backing should be bigger all the way around than the quilt top to allow for quilting shrinkage and the quilters clamps. Remember, backing is pulled up into the batting to the top so your backing must be bigger than your top. Check with your quilter to find out how much larger than the quilt top she wishes to have it. Square it up – trim/square if pieced back. (I ask that the backing be 4” bigger on all 4 sides.)

Most quilters prefer to not have sheets for a quilt backing. Frequently, sheets are too dense in thread count (quality ones anyway) and that makes it more difficult for the needle to stitch thru. This usually causes thread breakage and skipped stitches. Cotton fabrics are readily available in 108-120 wide backings for those who do not like a seam in the backing.

Batting Information:

Batting may be available from your quilter but if you have to provide the batting or wish to purchase it yourself, be sure and provide a batting that is bigger than the overall quilt top. This will provide for batting to completely fill the binding edge. This is very important, especially if you are going to enter your quilt in a quilt competition. Judges use a full binding as one of the judging points! If you use bagged cotton batting, it will help to throw it in a dryer on air fluff to get the wrinkles out.

*Remember that the quality of the backing and batting are just as important as the quilt top fabrics for the longevity of the quilt.

Quilt Top:

It is recommended that all fabrics in the quilt top and backing are pre-washed. To much sizing in the fabric can cause skipped stitches. (Even if the fabric is white, it should be pre-washed.)

Be sure and “MEASURE” when putting on borders. Middle of quilt measurement should match the top and bottom measurement as close as possible. This helps insure a square quilt!

Your quilt top and back should be pressed, seeing to it that all seams are pressed in the correct direction. Backing seams should be pressed flat and piecing seams should be pressed in one direction, preferably towards the darkest fabric. All salvages should be removed from fabric.

All “stray” threads should be trimmed on the quilt top and also on the back of the top. Stray threads that are dark in color overlapping/laying on a lighter fabric will show thru when quilted. Be sure and trim all the “stray” threads from the back of the quilt top. Also, be sure dark fabric and light fabric seams that have been sewn together are trimmed so that the dark side does NOT extend beyond the light seam allowance.

Make sure your top is as square as possible. Inaccurate seam sewing allows a quilt to get out of square. Quilters can deal with some unevenness but try to be as accurate in your sewing as possible.

If your quilt top and or backing are directional, be sure and indicate on the fabric with a pinned note which is the top and which the bottom. Your quilter will usually check this also but it is safer to have a piece of paper indicating which you want for the top.

In the event that your outside edge of the quilt is a bias edge, be sure and stitch a seam within the ¼” seam allowance to prevent stretching.

Quilt tops and backings should always be presented to the quilter in a “clean state”, i.e. no dirt, food, pet hair, etc on them. Also, check for open seams and make corrections.

If a binding is to be done by the quilter, have fabric washed and pressed and indicate what size binding you want done. A “standard” binding is 2 ¾” wide. I will normally cut my bindings 3” as that is the size my binder likes working with. (And believe me, I like to keep her happy as I don’t want to do those bindings!!!!)

Bringing your quilt in a “ready to go” state will improve your chances of getting the quilt done as soon as possible and avoid extra charges by your quilter.