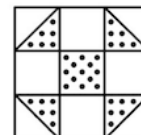


Are You Preparing Your Quilt To Send To The Longarm Quilter?

10 Easy Things to Remember for the Best Quilting Results

- 1. DON'T baste:** What? My job as a Longarmer is to give you more time to do what you love - piece! Whereas my job is to do what I love, and that is to quilt. My Longarm is designed to load your quilt in stages. Those stages (backing, top, batting) require me to have all your layers separate. So, save yourself some time and do not baste!



- 2. Edges coming apart?** The edges of your quilt can sometimes open up from handling or just from how your blocks have been pieced. Don't worry - after you piece your top, take a minute to look at those edges. If they look like they may "pop open," take a minute and do a "VICTORY LAP." Set your machine on a large stitch and sew around the outside edge of your top (about 1/8" from the edge). This secures your edges so they don't open while quilting and helps to keep your top square.

- 3. GIVE IT A GOOD PRESS!** The cost of quilting includes time spent with your top. So, if I must press your top, that time will be added to your costs. After you're done with your victory lap (see step 2 above), you should give your top a good press. No one wants wrinkles quilted into the top of their quilt so let's start off with a nice flat foundation.

- 4. Do you have a lot of loose threads?** Cut those pesky threads out, ESPECIALLY if they are dark and slide over to the light side. Those dark threads will leave shadows through your top after quilting.



- 5. ISN'T IT OBVIOUS WHICH SIDE IS UP?** Nope, sometimes when I am quilting, I won't "see" which edge you think is the top. It may be obvious to you, but to me, another side could be the top! Put a diaper pin or straight pin at the top of your quilt (your backing, too, if it is directional) with a note: TOP. You can also add your top's dimensions (e.g., 60" x 80"). Painter's tape works well as a marker (the green frog stuff that doesn't leave a residue).

- 6. What size should I cut my backing and batting?** Your batting and backing should be 4" - 8" wider than the top in all dimensions. So, if your top is 40" x 40", your backing and batting should be approximately 44" - 48" x 44" - 48". If you are unsure, go to my website (kimquilts.ca) and find the backing calculator. It will help you figure out sizing.

7. Pieced Backing? If you have a seam on your backing, please use a generous 1/2" seam and press that seam open. That open seam reduces the bulk in your quilt. Salvage edges are very stiff and can alter how the quilt back moves during the quilting process. Cut off the salvage edges that fall into your pieced backing. By contrast, the salvage edges left on the top and bottom of your backing help a Longarm quilter; they give us a nice edge for pinning the backing to our machine.



8. Are you using wide backs? I LOVE them. Sometimes the fabric in wide backs has been prepared in the factory with a ton of sizing and chemicals. This stuff is GREAT for keeping fabrics fresh for the store but really bad for getting the perfect tension in your quilting. When you buy your wide back, take a moment to feel it. Is it soft? Is it as stiff as a board? If it is stiff, wash, dry, and press it nice and flat again. This step seems like a waste of time, but it isn't. This soft back will allow my longarm needle to glide through the layers (an easy-moving needle = super nice tension). Again, if I save time by avoiding setting tension, then you save cost. Is this a "must" step? No! But if you want the best tension, then getting that sizing out of your fabric backing helps.

9. How do I deliver my top to the Longarmer? If you are local, you can hang it on a hanger with your backing and batting lying underneath - then place this in a suit bag. Alternatively, you can carefully fold all those lovely bits, put them in a carry bag, and drop all three (top, batting, and backing) at my house or Cotton Candy Quilts and Sewing. Remember to put your name, my name, and your phone number on the container. *Don't deliver quilts in garbage bags.* The name says it all: Bad things happen to stuff hidden in dark plastic garbage bags! **Are you shipping to me?** Make your package small. Small means less cost for your shipping. Roll or fold your quilt top and backing. Place this roll in a clear bag and into the shipping box. This bag will prevent damage if the box becomes wet or torn during shipping.

10. HAVE QUESTIONS? Just ask! I am happy to help. After all, we both have the same goal - a beautifully finished quilt! Educating quilters is always preferred to troubleshooting problems in the quilting studio. There are no stupid questions, and my studio is a no-judgment zone. We are all learning all the time!

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