



## Slippery Needles Quilting and Threadworks

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### Prepping Your Quilt for the Longarm

There are a few steps that need to be taken to ensure a successful stitch out on the longarm:

- Ensure that your quilt top is as square as possible. A top that is a little out here and there can be mostly handled on the longarm. Test your  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch seam to ensure that it is correct. A good seam makes a great quilt.
- Press your seams flat. Ensure that your seams are intact. A  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch seam allowance and a shorter stitch length are essential for a secure seam. If not using a border around the circumference of the top, make sure to add a few extra back stitches to lock the end of the seams at the outer. An outer seam  $\frac{1}{8}$  in from the edge sewn all the way around will also lock in those rows. Once the top is loaded and the quilting is started there is very little that can be done about open seams. There is also a risk that the foot may catch an open seam and cause a tear in the top.
- Trim and remove all the dark threads from the back of your light coloured tops or light coloured areas. As the quilting compresses the top to the batting dark threads can show through the light background. If you are creating a dark top, don't worry about those threads!
- Prewash and fold your dried backing while it is still warm. Some backings like flannel, have a higher percentage shrink rate. Once the backings are washed and dried it can decrease the shrinkage affecting the whole quilt once it is laundered. Don't worry about small wrinkles in your folded tops or backings.
- Measure your batting and backing. There needs to be an additional 4-5 inches of backing fabric on all sides all the way around the quilt top to ensure that it is loaded properly in the frame. If there is not enough material to allow for the extra on all sides, just add leader strips of an alternative fabric so that everything may be loaded properly. If you know you are going to want custom quilting the backing is preferably 8 – 10 inches wider and longer to allow for turning the quilt on the frame and space to support the rulers on the sides.
- Batting also needs to be 3-4 inches wider and longer than the quilt top to adjust along the way.
- If there is a top side to the quilt top or backing, please mark it with some painters' tape, a pinned note, flag...whatever you need to do. Sometimes this is not obvious.
- Please ensure your top, batting and backings are clean and scent free. Pet marking and odours can not only foul up studio space, but will potentially ruin the leaders the top is attached to. Quilts that are heavily scented will be returned.
- Do not pin baste your quilt; they will all be removed for proper loading. Just fold your top, batting and backing separately. If sending multiple tops and backings, bag them together in a clean bag for each group
- Remove all buttons, beads, charms and decorations from the top. If the machine hits something along the way it can cause a tear, distort the top or throw the timing of my machine.
- All usable material and batting is returned if the top is to be trimmed up. Look up how to make a Frankenbatting with the returned batting sections.
- If you are unsure of how to do any of this, just let me know. Dropping your project off for the first time for longarming can sound overwhelming, however, I am here to guide you as best I can.
- Once your project is dropped off, we can discuss quilting ideas and thread colours. Otherwise, I will send you quilting ideas and thread choices as your project gets closer to being loaded on the frame.