



Slippery Needles Quilting and Threadworks

659 Lorne St W Pembroke ON

613-635-2178

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 square. An hourglass top will get an hourglass result. There are many tricks that I have to get a quilt as squared up as possible while quilting, but sadly not all piecing errors can be “quilted out”. If a top is very out of shape, I will return it to you. Of course, a little out here and there can be mostly handled on the longarm.
- Press your seams. I don't care which way; whatever way makes you happy. Generally pressing light to darks is better with lighter fabrics. Ensure that your seams are intact. A ¼ inch seam allowance and a shorter stitch length are a good tip. Also, if you are 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 edges so they don't come apart during the quilting process. A seam 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 and throw the machine off completely.
- Trim and remove all the dark threads from the back of your top, especially if you have a light background. As the quilting compresses the top to the batting dark threads can show through the light background. I am always on the look-out for these threads and have some tricks to remove them if they get caught underneath. I however, cannot guarantee that I can retrieve them 100% of the time.
- Prewash and press your backing. 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.
- Measure and square your backing. There needs to be an additional 4 inches of fabric on all sides all the way around the quilt top to ensure that I can attach the top and bottom as well as clamp the sides. If there is not enough material to do this, I will need to attach extra material. If you know that your backing is too short or not wide enough, you may add leader strips of an alternative fabric so that everything may be loaded properly. These additional strips of fabric will not be quilted into your top. If you know you are going to want custom quilting with rulers etc., a few extra inches are really helpful as well. This would have the backing 8 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 my studio space, but will potentially ruin the leaders that I attach them to. The canvas leaders are reused for future projects and if they are fouled, I cannot use them with other projects. Quilts that are fouled will be returned.
- Do not pin baste your quilt; they will all be removed for proper loading. Just fold your top and fold your 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.
- 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.
- Please complete the quilt intake form off the website, or I will happily email one to you if your quilt is being mailed in.