

Quilt Hanging Sleeve Tutorial

A quilting technique tutorial by Audrey Esarey

Cheers!   



Your quilt is finished - hooray! Follow this tutorial to add a hanging sleeve to the back of the quilt and display your quilt as a wall hanging. Many quilt shows require at least a 4 inch hanging sleeve to be attached to the back of the quilt for exhibition. This is the process I use to create a hanging sleeve for the back of my quilts for exhibitions. This process can be used for quilts with a faced edge or a traditional binding. Use this tutorial to learn how to make and attach a hanging sleeve, and refer back if you need a refresher!

Materials:

- Iron
- Ironing Board
- Glass Head Pins
- Rotary Cutter, Ruler, and Mat
- Sewing Machine with a Quarter Inch Foot
- Quilt Hanging Sleeve Fabric
- Thread - Coordinating Color with the Quilt Hanging Sleeve Fabric
- Hand stitching needle (I prefer the Bohin Size 9 Milliners needle)
- Polyester Thread (Hand stitching the Sleeve)
- Optional: Clover Jumbo Wonder Clips

Fabric and Thread Choice: I suggest matching the quilt hanging sleeve to the quilt back, and using the same fabric for the [quilt facing strips](#). The quilt back, quilt facing, and hanging sleeve will match. The thread color can coordinate with the hanging sleeve and quilt back. I prefer polyester thread for the hand stitching because it is generally stronger than cotton thread and will break less easily.



Quilt Hanging Sleeve Tutorial

Quilt Hanging Sleeve Instructions:

1. Start with a rectangle of hanging sleeve fabric cut 9 inches x width of your quilt. (Figure 1)
For example, if the quilt is 40 inches wide, cut a rectangle - 9 x 40 inches. This can be cut as one strip (selvedge to selvedge) from the yardage. Multiple 9 inch strips can be cut and pieced together for wider quilts. I've also cut longer hanging sleeves from one piece of fabric, cutting the 9 inch strip parallel to the selvedge.
2. Fold the short edges of the rectangle edge over approximately 1/4 inch and press a crisp fold. Fold over another 1/4 inch and press a crisp fold. The measurement does not have to be exact. By folding twice, there won't be any exposed raw edge of the fabric on the hanging sleeve. To achieve a nice crisp pressed edge - use steam and a touch of spray starch. This tutorial uses Kona Snow for the hanging sleeve, which does not have a right or wrong side. If you are using a fabric that has right and wrong sides, fold the hanging sleeve short edges wrong sides together.
3. Check the placement and size of the hanging sleeve by placing it on the top back top edge of the quilt. It should be ~1/2 inch smaller on each side. If the size is right, move to the next step. If not, adjust the folded edges for the appropriate size sleeve. (Figure 2)



Figure 1: Trimming 9 inch wide hanging sleeve fabric.



Figure 2: Hanging sleeve placement, ends double folded, on the back top edge of the quilt, checking the size and placement of the sleeve.

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Quilt Hanging Sleeve Instructions (continued):

4. Stitch the folded edges down, stitching close to the edge as pictured in Figures 4 & 5. Use a thread color that coordinates with the sleeve fabric. Backstitch at the start and end of the seam.
Note: (Figures 3-5 show the sleeve pictured on top of the quilt. To confirm, in these steps you are only sewing (i.e. hemming) the sleeve; you are NOT sewing through the entire quilt. I often place the sleeve on the quilt after folding and sewing to confirm the sleeve is the correct size before proceeding.)



Figure 3: Edge of the rectangle double folded and pressed.



Figure 4: Edge of the rectangle stitched, wrong side up



Figure 5: Edge of the rectangle stitched, right side of the fabric is visible on the corner flap that is folded.

5. Fold the sleeve in half lengthwise, wrong sides together. Press a crisp center fold. Unfold and press the edge of the sleeve to meet the center. Press a crisp fold. These creases are visible in Figure 6.



Figure 6: View from the end of the sleeve, pressed.

Quilt Hanging Sleeve Instructions (continued):

6. Using a coordinating thread, edge stitch both long creased edges of the hanging sleeve. (Figure 7) This is beneficial for two reasons. First, this locks in the two creased edges of the sleeve. Second, it creates a perfect channel to place your hand stitches when attaching the sleeve. It is much easier to hand stitch the sleeve on the back of the quilt (in Step 10) with this edge stitching.

7. Align the two raw edges with wrong sides together. Stitch the final center seam, press open. (Figure 8) After doing this, the back of the sleeve with the seam will measure 4". The top of the seam will have more fabric, creating a D shape. This provides space inside the sleeve for a hanging rod. Without this extra fabric, the rod would push against the front of the quilt, making a visible hump at the top of the quilt. When pressing this flat, it creates a fold in the top of the sleeve. (Figure 9) There's no real advantage to the fold on the top of the sleeve from a hanging perspective. This fold helps me with the alignment on the back of the quilt during pinning and hand stitching the sleeve.



Figure 7: View from the end of the sleeve. There is edge stitching on the creases of the sleeve, locking in this fold.



Figures 8-9: View from the end of the sleeve. The opening of the sleeve is visible. There is edge stitching on each side of the sleeve, locking in these folds.

Quilt Hanging Sleeve Instructions (continued):

- Using the Clover Jumbo Wonder Clips, position the sleeve 3/4 inch from the top edge on the back of the quilt. (Figure 10) In Figure 11, I'm using the clips in two ways. The clear side of the clip is being used to measure from the top of the quilt to the top edge of the hanging sleeve. By using the clips, it is an easy way to double check that the sleeve is applied evenly across the top of the quilt. Flipping the clip to the other side, the green side is being used to secure the hanging sleeve to the top of the quilt. (Figure 11)



Figure 10: Clear side of the Wonder Clip is visible with 1/4 inch measuring increments.



Figure 11: Both the clear and green side of the Wonder Clip is visible. The green side is moved down to secure the sleeve.

- Apply the clips to the top of the quilt as shown in Figure 12. The bottom of the sleeve will be secured in a future step.

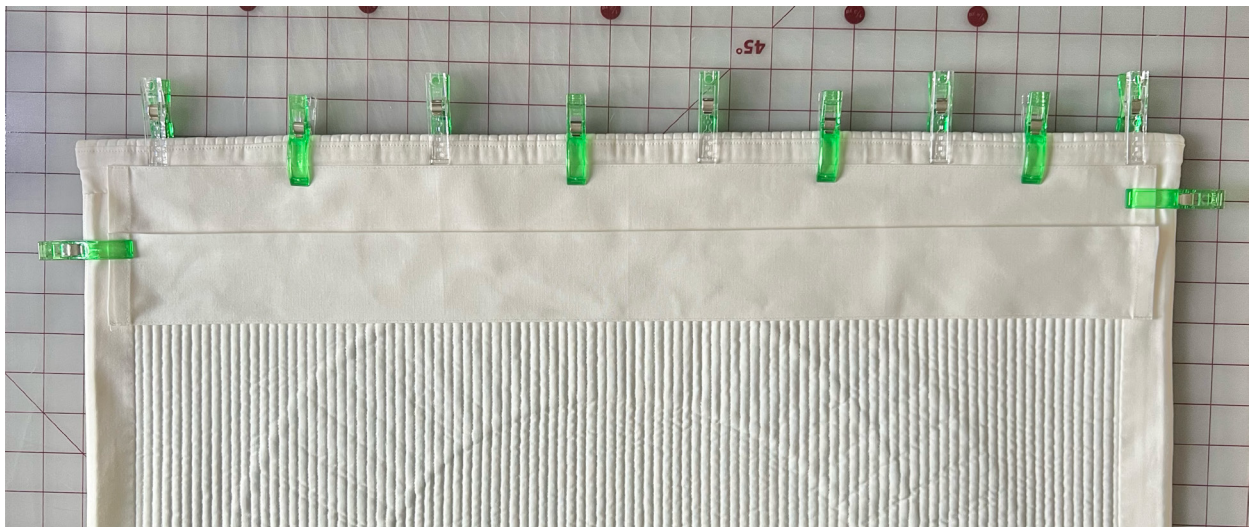


Figure 12: Finished hanging sleeve placement on the back top edge of the quilt, preparing for hand stitching.

Quilt Hanging Sleeve Instructions (continued):

10. Using polyester thread and the hand stitching needle, thread the needle with 18-20 inches of thread and tie the end with a quilter's knot. Hand stitch the sleeve to the quilt back, being careful to not stitch through to the front of the quilt. Every 5 inches or so, create a small knot as you're securing the sleeve to the quilt. This will be invisible but helps secure the sleeve to the quilt. (This way, if a thread snaps, the sleeve won't as easily separate from the quilt.)

Tip! I am right handed, so it is most comfortable to start at the pink dot. (Figure 13) Stitch from the middle of the short right side (Figure 14) to the top right corner, and stitch the top edge from right to left with a new stitch approximately every 1/4 inch. The bulk of the quilt will sit in my lap, while I support the top edge of the quilt with my left hand. As I round the corners and move to the bottom edge, I pause stitching, lay the quilt on a flat surface, and insert a few pins to secure the bottom edge of the sleeve to the quilt. Since I'm stitching the bottom edge, I rotate the quilt so that the bulk of the quilt is away from my body. I can fold the top edge so that it fits in the palm of my hand, which makes the bottom edge easily accessible for hand stitching.

Your quilt hanging sleeve is complete! If you enjoyed this free tutorial, I hope you'll check out one of the [quilt patterns](#) or [quilting extras](#) found at www.CottonandBourbon.com - Cheers! 📧

Bonus Tip! While the quilt sleeve is required for any quilt show or exhibition, I also display my quilts on the wall at home! Use an adjustable width wide pocket curtain rod inside the sleeve to hang the quilt on the wall. Notice the orientation of the rod inside the sleeve - it curves toward the wall. (Figure 15) Once the rod is inside the sleeve, this curved edge will easily slip over the top of screw heads [anchored](#) to the wall. With this hanging method, the anchors don't have to be placed at the very ends of the sleeve, instead, you can support the quilt with one centered anchor (for small quilts) or two level anchors (positioned 6-8 inches from the edge of the quilt) from behind the quilt. (In my home, I have two anchors that stay in the same position on the wall, and I can easily switch out similar sized quilts for display without moving the anchors. I just move the rod from one quilt to another!) I often wrap painters tape around the ends of the rod to prevent any sharp edges from being near the quilt. (Figure 15) The rods linked below both pull apart in two pieces. Depending on the width of the quilt, the two pieces of each rod can be used individually for two quilts, or together (as sold) for one quilt.
28 - 48 Inch Adjustable Rod: [Link](#)
48 - 84 Inch Adjustable Rod: [Link](#)

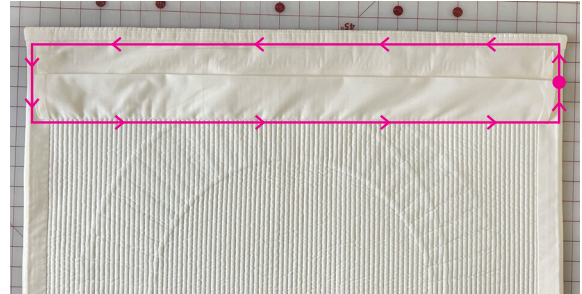


Figure 13: Finished hanging sleeve placement on the back top edge of the quilt, preparing for hand stitching.



Figure 14: Side view of the finished quilt sleeve. It can be tempting to only stitch the top and bottom, leaving the sides of the sleeve open. Resist this temptation, and sew around the entire sleeve!



Figure 15: Example of Hanging a quilt with wide pocket curtain rod.

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