Quilt Preparation for the Longarm

Blog: wequilttogether.blogspot.com / Web Page www.wequilt.org

**Quilt preparation is the first step for getting the best quilting possible.**

We operate a hand guided longarm using edge to edge patterns. We enjoy working closely with the quilter to optimize their desires regarding the finished product. Custom work is accepted after a one on one consultation.

Square Quilt and Backing: Your quilt needs to be square (same width top & bottom/same length left and right side) to load on the frame correctly, otherwise it will load at an angle on the frame or flare in the middle or flare at the top or bottom causing waviness. Note: Very often there is a slight difference…¼ to ¾” variance…this is no problem. So, please square your blocks in your top and measure your quilt at the top, bottom and middle – get an average measurement and cut your borders to fit your quilt based on that average. This helps in preventing wavy borders.

If you are piecing your backing, please square your blocks as you piece to keep the seams as straight as possible without puckers. If there are any squaring issues, we will contact you so they can be corrected. Backing seams should run horizontally (left to right) This eliminates puckering as the quilt is being advanced on the frame. A thick vertical seam can easily cause issues as the quilt is advanced in the longarming process. Remember…when it is all said and done…the back is 50% of the quilt you have spent hours making. Don’t short change your efforts by cutting corners on the backing. The” back” should have four evenly trimmed edges. We would never recommend ‘muslin’ for the back. If that is what you supply, we will complete your quilt as you request.

If you are ***not*** putting a border on your top, stitch the perimeter of the quilt as close to the edge as possible to eliminate seam separation when tension is applied when loaded on the longarm frame.

Extra Backing and Batting: To fit your quilt on the frame we need an extra 8” – 10” (10” preferred) of backing. This means 4” – 5” extra of backing all the way around the quilt. If you provide batting it should be 6” wider and at least 10” longer than the pieced top. Currently we charge $5.00 a yard for 80/20 Hobbs. We will use whatever you supply.

Pressing the Fabrics: Please press all the fabrics of the quilt top and backing. Press the quilt top so that all the seams lay as flat as possible and press the backing fabric so that there are no deep creases (especially in batik fabrics.) **Backing seams should be ½” and pressed open.** When pressing the borders, it is good to press the border’s seams open when possible. Before loading we press out creases due to hanging/folding at no charge.

Trim Threads: Cut loose threads on the pieced top, they can catch on the hopping foot of the longarm. Cut loose threads on the back of the top as well as threads can get lodged between your quilt sandwich and show through backing and/or the top.

Batting: There are many kinds of batting available. If you are doing a quilt with very dark fabrics you might want to consider black batting. Please use quality batting, craft batting will not hold up as well.

● If your backing or top is directional, please mark it clearly or mention it during the intake process. Let us know any specifics about your top and back.

● Any quilting issues such as puckering, weak seams/holes, wavy borders, pleats etc. will ***NOT*** go away with the quilting, they may be exaggerated. We will do our very best to work with the issues to minimize them in the end product.

● In most instances, we can say we have been able to determine difficulties that may be encountered during the longarming process before the first stitch is applied. In those case’s you will be contacted so we can determine how you want to handle the situation. On occasion the problems may be encountered during the process. Again, we will contact you to work out what would be the best outcome for your quilt.

***It is our goal, when finished, to compliment your quilt. We will do everything possible to attain that goal. The first step is working with you during the intake process to meet the needs and desires you envisioned.***