

Pieced to Perfection

Q U I L T I N G

How to Prep Your Quilt Top for Longarm Quilting

INSPECT QUILT TOP



Give your quilt top a thorough inspection, If there are stains, let your quilter know that you are aware of them. Trim away loose threads, which can get caught in the quilting becoming more difficult to remove. Check that seams are well-pressed to prevent them from rolling unattractively during the basting or quilting process.

Are the edges of your quilt top straight? Trim all four sides of the quilt straight so that it can be loaded properly on the longarm sewing machine. Square is even better, but straight will usually do!

OVERSIZE BACKING

Longarm quilters require a backing that is 10" larger than the quilt top both in width and height. For example, a 60" quilt top requires a 70" square backing. This 5" of excess backing all the way around the quilt allows the longarm sewing machine to "hold onto" the quilt while it sews.

If you choose to piece backing, take time to sew those long seams carefully. Cut yardage straight and square before joining segments. Most importantly, use pins and/or a walking foot to help achieve an even feed.

Sewing a long seam without any pinning or walking foot assistance tends to result in a seam that looks fine, but actually has more fullness on one side of the seam than the other. When such a backing is loaded onto a longarm sewing machine, the full side sags down even while the other side is pulled tight. It's difficult for the quilter to compensate without stressing the already-tight fabric.

Consider a wide back. There is no piecing, and it is usually more economical.

Make a Victory Lap

After you are done with your quilt, stitch a basting line 1/8" from the edge of your quilt to keep the edges from stretching.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Just ask! Your quilter is happy to help. After all, you both have the same goal - a beautifully finished quilt! Educating quilters is always preferred to troubleshooting problems in the quilting studio. We're all learning all the time. Don't be shy about asking for help.