



From Your Longarm Quilter

Prepare the layers according to these considerations to ensure the best possible results on your quilt. The quilting can “make or break” your quilt, so the better you prepare your special quilt, the happier you will be with the results.

FABRIC – Do NOT mix fabric types. It’s best to use good quality 100% cotton fabric. Be sure that your top and backing have been well pressed. Many longarm quilters charge extra for doing this.

BATTING – Longarm quilters often provide batting as a convenience for their customers. Ask which battings they like to use, and why. You can certainly provide your own, but make sure your quilter knows and approves of what you have. If your batting is still in its bag, write your name on the bag. Keep in mind that off-white batting might show through the light-colored areas of a quilt. Use a pure white batting that will not create a yellowish cast.

SIZE OF BATTING & BACKING – The back and batting must be at least 6” wider and longer than the quilt top; 3 inches on all sides. Please be sure that your backing is square. If it is pieced, the best quilting happens when the seam(s) run vertically instead of horizontally across the backing. A slightly wider (1/2”) backing seam is good. Press this/these seams **open**.

SEAM ALLOWANCE – You may use a seam allowance that is greater than ¼ inch, but DO NOT use a seam allowance smaller. If any of the seams fray while the longarm machine is in operation, the hopping foot could become trapped by the hole and rip the quilt top. Examine your completed top carefully from the back to check all seams. Trim **ALL** loose threads! If this isn’t done, there may be an extra charge to do so from your quilter.

BORDERS – Mark the center of each side of the quilt and of the backing with small safety pins. If your quilt top or backing is directional, label the top and bottom clearly.

STABILIZE EDGES – If the outer border is pieced, the edge might become distorted when the top is stretched on the rollers. Baste 1/8” from the raw edge, all the way around, to prevent problems. Make sure that any seams ending on the edge are thoroughly stitched.

REDUCE BULK – Where several seams intersect at one point, press seams open, if at all possible. Avoid creating raised areas. If you have to “whack” the intersection points with a fabric mallet or “Whacker”, do so now. Avoid thick layers or layers of stabilizer as they might quilt differently.

FLAT & SQUARE– The top and backing must be flat & square. Check by spreading them on a table or floor. Any areas that stick up or are puffy could result in pleats, puckers, or uglies. Do not pin or baste

any of the layers together. If your quilter has to square either the top or backing, there will probably be an extra charge.

MULTI-LAYER TOPS – If you use pockets, flanges, prairie points, loose flaps, etc., an allover quilt pattern (like a pantograph) will sew right through or over them and often cause “turn-overs”. You should request custom quilting if your design uses these elements. Ask if you do not know the difference between allover and custom quilting as there is a difference in the cost for longarm quilting.

PRESS & TRIM – Press the top & back carefully with the backing seam(s) open. If you have a scrappy back, you should use the same rules as for the top. If you use sizing or starch on your quilt, use it on the back-side of the fabric for sticky fabric impedes the needle’s action on the quilt top.

ORIENTATION – If the top and back are supposed to align in a particular direction, pin a note to the top explaining the relationship. Please be aware that it is not always possible to align the top and back perfectly, so allow for some “wobble room.”

EMBELLISHMENTS – Yoyos, beads, crystals, buttons, ribbons, etc., cause problems with the rollers and with the sewing head. Attach embellishments **AFTER** the quilted project comes back to you quilted.

DELIVERY – Fold the top & backing separately. The sandwich pieces will be pinned or placed one at a time onto the rollers, so DO NOT pin or baste the layers. Ask your quilter how she prefers the quilt delivered to her: on a fat hanger, in a labeled bag, etc. This is the time to discuss pricing and a completion date.

BE SPECIFIC – Some people let the longarm quilter choose the thread color and quilting pattern. If you let your quilter make those choices, please remember that he or she is not a mind reader. Try to be specific about thread colors and quilting patterns that you DO or DO NOT want. Ask to see her or his pattern portfolio or bring a picture sample of what you think you want. Discuss thread color as well.

BE SURE TO ASK – If you any have questions, your longarm quilter will be happy to answer them. Ask BEFORE you leave your project in her hands. Often a work order is prepared in your presence and an estimate given. If quilting costs are not brought up, make sure to ask about price and payment policies. Also ask about extra services your quilter might offer such as squaring the completed quilt, sewing on binding, etc. Good communication ensures good results!

*Remember that quilters & their quilts
touch the present & the past
in warm & loving ways.*