

# How to prepare your quilt for a Longarm Quilting

Please read the following information **PRIOR** to bringing in your quilt in order to get the best results from Longarm quilting -

It is **VERY** important that the quilt top, backing, and wadding are separate. Please **DO NOT** baste these together beforehand. This is because the quilt goes onto the longarm frame in three **SEPARATE** layers, so there is **NO** need to baste beforehand. If you have basted it, and are able to separate the layers, it can be quilted. However, if you have used spray basting glue (505 spray) to baste the layers together we will be unable to do the longarm quilting as the layers will be sticky and could cause damage to the machine. If you require us to separate the layers if the quilt has been basted, we can do this for an additional fee, as long as 505 spray has **NOT** been used.

## Quilt Top

Please ensure that **ALL** seams in the quilt top are secure and that **ALL** loose threads have been removed. If the quilt is light in colour, stray threads can sometimes be seen through the top when it is quilted. This really does make a difference, especially with white and contrasting quilts. Loose threads can also be caught in the quilting process and spoil the effect.

Your quilt top should be 'squared off' to the finished size. If your quilt has seams at the outside edges (pieced outer border), it is recommended that you 'stay-stitch', 1/8" in from the edge of the quilt, **ALL** the way around to stabilise the outer edge. This step stops any seams from coming undone, reduces fraying and helps the quilt top to load straight as it is tensioned onto the frame. This stitching will be hidden once the binding is attached to the quilt. If your quilt has a border around it is recommended to measure your quilt across the top/bottom to ensure it measures the same. The two sides should also measure the same. This is important to ensure puckering does not occur in the quilting process. Borders or edges that do not lie flat will cause tucks or pleats as the quilt is quilted. In order to ensure the borders lie flat it is recommended that they are removed and re sewn. We are able to do this for you for an additional fee.

Most **IMPORTANTLY**, please remove **ALL** pins, buttons, charms or any embellishments from your quilt top as these can damage the longarm quilting machine. Press your quilt top so it is ready to be loaded onto the frame. Identify what you consider to be the top of your quilt top and attach a safety pin to indicate the top edge of the quilt.

## Backing Fabric

The backing fabric needs to be at least 8" wider and 8" longer than your quilt top i.e. 4" larger on **ALL** four sides, - If the quilt top is 80" x 70", the backing fabric needs to be 88" x 78". This allows for the quilting frame clamps to grab the sides of the backing fabric to keep it taut and flat during the process of quilting to prevent tucks. The extra width allows the moving machine to stitch right to the quilt edge and **NOT** hit the clamps, which could cause uneven stitching. For the machine head to reach the absolute edge of your quilt top, there needs to be a 4" clearance from the quilt top edge to the edge of the backing fabric. For more detailed information, see our PDF – Why does the Backing & Wadding need to be so much larger? as well as my Blog on the subject.

It is heart breaking to get to the bottom of the quilt and **NOT** have enough backing fabric. The excess space on the side also creates a small space to practice on in order to achieve the right thread tension before commencing quilting.

The backing fabric needs to be squared up and pressed **PRIOR** to being brought in for loading onto the frame. For more detailed information, see our 'How to' PDF – How to “square off” your Backing Fabric - as well as my Blog on the subject. If you need to join the fabric, first remove the selvedge and stitch using ½” seam allowance. Press the seam open. It is fine to leave the selvedges on the outer edges of the backing fabric as they will be trimmed after the quilt is quilted. For more detailed information, see our 'How to' PDF - Creating a pieced Backing Fabric, as well as my Blog on the subject. We can also prepare the backing fabric (seams, squaring up & pressing) for an additional charge if you would prefer.

If you wish to use a bed sheet, please ensure it is 100% cotton (**NOT** Poly/cotton) and the thread count is **NOT** high. I usually use an Egyptian Cotton flat sheet with a thread count of 200 or under and have found this has worked well on both my domestic sewing machine (Pfaff) and the longarm. Just ensure the sheet is prewashed, squared off to the correct size for the backing fabric and pressed.

Identify what you consider to be the top of your backing fabric and attach a safety pin to indicate the top edge.

## **Wadding**

The wadding needs to be at least 8” wider and 8” longer than your quilt top, i.e., 4” larger on **ALL** four sides. If the quilt top is 80” x 70”, the backing fabric needs to be 88” x 78”. For more detailed information, see our PDF – Why does the Backing & Wadding need to be so much larger? as well as my Blog on the subject.

During the quilting process the wadding and the fabric will be drawn in slightly, depending on how dense the quilting is, so a little extra is required to allow for this.

We have Hobbs Heirloom 80/20 wadding and a fine thermore polyester wadding available for sale if you would like us to supply the wadding.

## **Please Note:**

If there is a preparation that should have been completed prior to drop off, and we then need to do it, we will let you know and there will be additional charges incurred. Please download the PDF checklist for the Quilt Preparation so you can confirm that all preparation steps have been completed.