

10 Tips to a Better Binding

Tip #1: **Prepare the quilt.** Check to make sure the quilt lies flat and the corners and edges are accurate. Square corners should be 90 degrees; if they are not, trim them using a large square ruler. The edges should be straight and without ripples. Measure the middle, the top and bottom of the quilt to see if the top is square, if not, trim as necessary. The more care that is taken at this point, the better the edge finish will turn out.

Tip #2: **Stabilize the edges.** Using your walking foot, sew a small zig-zag stitch around the entire quilt edge. This will help prevent the top from being pulled out of shape during the binding process. This is especially helpful if there is minimal quilting near the edges. Zig-Zagging the edge can also help solve the problem of rippled edges. *This is an important step and only takes just a few minutes to do.*

Tip #3: **Applying the binding.** Use a walking foot throughout and set your stitch length to 3.0 or 3.5 if it's flannel. You're sewing thru multiple layers, a larger stitch length helps if you need to ease in any fullness.

Tip #4: **Where to start your binding.** Start your binding about halfway on the bottom side of your quilt. Leaving an 8" tail, place the binding even with the quilt edge and start sewing. Be sure to back stitch.

Tip #5: **Getting your corners true and square.** Depending the look you're going for and the width of the binding you're using, (2", 2 ¼" or 2 ½"), will determine where you need to stop before you get to the corner. Whatever that width is, use your sewing gauge and measure that same width from the corner and place a pin there. Sew up to that pin and with needle down, sew off the back edge of your quilt top.

Tip #6: **Mitering the corners.** Put the needle up and pull the quilt top away from the feed dogs with the threads still attached. No need to cut the threads! Now fold the binding up to make a miter (45 degree angle). Then fold the binding back onto itself; making sure the folded edge of the binding is even with the top. If don't do this the corner will not look good. Put the quilt top under the presser foot again and start sewing the binding again until you get to the next corner. Repeat the process for the other corners.

Tip #7: **Back to where you started!** After the last corner, stop sewing and backstitch again when you are about 8" from the tail you started with. This will give you enough space to miter the 2 ends together.

Tip #8: **Mitering the 2 binding ends.** Lay the left end of the bind flat and even next to the quilt top edge. Overlap the remaining right side of the binding onto the left side. If using a 2 ½" binding, measure 2 ½" over from the raw edge of the left binding and draw a line on the top binding strip. Now, cut on that line and you're almost done.! Join the two ends of the binding like you would normally when making that binding, draw a line, sew on the line, trim a ¼" away from the sewn line and finger press the seam open. Lastly, line up the binding with the quilt top edge again and stitch it down.

Tip #9: **Pressing is the key** to a smooth, flat and even finished binding. It also makes it much easier to topstitch the edge down. Press the binding up and away from the quilt top all the way around the top. Then turn the quilt over and press the binding back over the edge, being sure to fill the binding completely. Pin the binding in place before topstitching if you feel more comfortable doing that.

Tip #10: **Topstitching** can be done a variety of ways. Use a straight stitch very close to the edge of the binding is the easiest or use any decorative stitch you like. Matching the thread color to the backing makes the stitching on the back less noticeable.