

Sew What Else – Tips and Best Practices for a Successful Project

Preparing Your Quilt Top:

- ◆ Careful preparation of your quilt top prior to dropping off for quilting can save you time, inconvenience and dollars. It is very important that your quilt be smooth, flat, and square before loading on a longarm. Any excess fullness in your top, rippled or wavy borders can create problems when machine quilted - it will not quilt out!!! Having your quilt top flat and squared will help to ensure a quality finished quilt.
- ◆ Please no embellishments - they must be removed before loading on the machine. Never stitch embellishments (buttons, beading, charms, etc.) to your quilt until after the quilting is completed; they can make it dangerous for the quilter and affect the way the quilt rolls onto the machine affecting the tension and the final appearance of the quilt.
- ◆ Press all seams in one direction; take care to ensure all seams are flat and not twisted, be careful to not distort your top by overly rough pressing and handling. Carefully fold and hang on a hanger when finished.
- ◆ Ensure all seams are strong and free of holes – loose seams and hanging threads can catch the hopping foot of the longarm which can cause tucks on the surface of your quilt and sometimes tears. Please pay careful attention to this step.
- ◆ Be sure all seams ending at the outside borders are backstitched. When the quilt is loaded on the machine for quilting some pressure is applied by rolling onto the rollers, this can cause poorly stitched seams to come apart. If you are not a backstitcher please run a line of stitching slightly less than 1/4 of an inch inside the the edge of your top all the way around the perimeter to secure the edges.
- ◆ Clip all loose threads showing on the front.
- ◆ Please be sure that your borders are straight and square – wavy borders will not quilt out!!! I can provide you with instructions for adding borders if you need them. Taking a little extra care when applying borders will add up to a quilt which hangs straight and square.
- ◆ Mark the center of the top and backing with a safety pin; this is especially important if the fabrics are directional. It assists me when loading the quilt to determine the direction of the quilting and ensures directional quilting runs the proper way on your finished quilt.
- ◆ Quilt tops with high contrast colour schemes can be particularly challenging; seams need to be carefully pressed in one direction to ensure darker fabrics do not show through the lighter fabrics.
- ◆ Dark threads used in piecing and not cleaned off of the back of the quilt can get quilted into the finished quilt and detract from the finished beauty of your quilt. and are then a permanent part of your quilt – please ensure all threads are removed before quilting as they can show through. Raveled and frayed edges can also be a problem; minimize the amount of handling to prevent fraying. Before quilting your top should be folded right side out to minimize damage and fraying to the wrong side.
- ◆ Clean the top and backing of any lint / pet hair.