



Notes from Your Long-arm Quilter

There is nothing more satisfying than quilting for a customer and having the quilt turn out AMAZING! It is why I do what I do. I love the joy it brings the community of crafters. Here are some simple steps to help ensure your quilt will become a well-loved heirloom and turn out the way you envision:

- ✿ **Pressing!** I can't stress enough how important this step is. Yes, I do iron and get out the major creases in your quilt top and backing, but the seams should be pressed by you and pressed well. This makes a huge difference as my long-arm machine is stitching. To hit a bulky spot can cause needle breaks, thread breaks and skipped stitches. Pressing is so important for the outcome of your project.
- ✿ **Cut off any frayed threads.** Especially if your quilt top has a light background or light colored backing. Yes, I also try to catch these, but honestly, I am focused on thread tension, pattern design & placement, and getting your quilt done quickly and back to you to bind and enjoy. So cut those stray threads! They can show through when it is quilted and sandwiched together.
- ✿ **Battling.** While I respect your brand choice and type of batting material, some are easier to work with than others. Make sure the brand you choose will hold up to the tugging and rolling of the long-arm quilting process. Also, if your design on the front has dark colors, and you have a light or lower quality backing material make sure your batting is thick enough to hide the color from showing through. Quality batting will guarantee your quilt will last forever and look amazing.
(**Polyester batting causes needle breaks and pattern repair. Not recommended.**)
- ✿ **Wonky Borders!** Say, what? You see, sometimes when you have cut your material on the bias, you can end up with "Wonky Borders." This is where the border has more give than the center of the quilt. Whenever possible cut your fabric for your borders with the grain (or WOF). I try very hard to ease the border to fit the center if it is cut on the bias, but this can lead to.... yep, the dreaded "Wonky Border" syndrome—causing puckering on the borders of your quilt, increasing difficulty when sewing the binding.
- ✿ **Appliques.** If you want to use fusible interfacing to apply an applique design to the quilt it is best to use a feather weight or light weight product. When quilting over interfacing that is too stiff or thick the needle is in danger of becoming stuck and could potentially tear the pieced top. (My machine is moving at a high rate of speed.) Stick to blanket stitching with feather weight or light weight bonding to attach appliqued designs.
- ✿ **Basting Stitches.** If you notice basting stitches on the corners and borders of your quilt, that is how I anchor the quilt to line up the pattern. Feel free to remove these stitches as you bind your quilt. You'll find it reduces the bulk in your finished edge if you do.
- ✿ **Squaring the Finished Quilt.** It is typical for long-arm quilters to not cut or remove any portion of the pieced top. Although I do offer "Cut to Edge" service to make squaring the finished quilt easier for a nominal charge. Please make sure to square your quilts when you receive them back, for the best finished result.
- ✿ **Final Basting.** If you did not put borders on your quilt or you have several open seams on the edge make sure you do a very quick basting around the parameter of your quilt to keep these open seams shut when stretched on the frame.
- ✿ **First Wash.** Be mindful on your first wash of your finished quilt. The thread used is Omni Thread from Superior Threads. They market it as "Color Fast" so it should not bleed, but nothing is ever perfect. So on your first wash, make sure you wash with COLD water and use "Shout - Color Catchers" or "Carbona - Color Grabbers." Both will help prevent color transfer, although "Carbona - Color Grabbers" are fragrance free. In addition, my thread manufacturers have advised to *always use the highest quality quilting material*. Some material is chemically treated during the dye process which may cause color fast products to bleed. If your quilt is meant for a gift or an heirloom quilt, only the highest quality material should be used.

As a Long-arm Quilter, I enjoy the process and being part of the treasure you are creating.
Thank you for trusting me with your projects.