



## WOF or LOG

Timeless Stitches – Quilt Capital of Kansas

Liz Granberg-Jerome



Going back to our quilting lingo list, this week Liz will address Width of Fabric (WOF) and Length of Grain (LOG). These are important acronyms to know when reading patterns or planning how much yardage to buy to make a quilt.

Fabrics made on mechanical looms have a tightly woven edge or selvedge. This is created when the warp threads which run the lengthwise grain are crossed by the weft threads that are looped back and forth on the loom. That repetitive looping is what creates the selvedge. In most cases the selvedge is not used in making quilts; although, in recent years there is a growing interest in making projects specifically with selvedges saved from other projects.

Most quilting cottons are typically 42” to 44” wide; however, a few can be as wide as 60”. Some quilting cottons are made specifically to be used as wide backings and range in width from 90” wide to 120”. Although quilts can be made with pieced backs made of the 42”-44” fabrics, the convenience of using a single piece of fabric is certainly a plus. One thing to keep in mind is the wide backings may have more chemicals or sizing in them than typical quilting cottons to maintain the stability of a fabric that wide that is folded twice before rolling onto a bolt. That’s why I always prewash wide backings after serging or zigzag stitching the raw edges.

Length of grain is the warp threads that run the entire length of the fabric. Coming straight from the factory to a distributor warehouse, a roll of fabric may range from 50 to 200-yards long. These rolls are then folded and rolled by machine onto the flat cardboard bolts at the warehouse before being shipped to quilt shops. For quilting cottons, the fabric is folded in half lengthwise placing the selvedges together when rolled onto the cardboard bolts. For wide backings, the fabric is folded twice before being rolled onto the cardboard bolts. When the bolts arrive in your local quilt shop, most quilting cottons come with 15 yards per bolt, solids often with 10 yards per bolt, and wide backings as much as 19 yards per bolt.



Width of Fabric is the measurement across the fabric from selvedge to selvedge and is the weft threads looping back and forth across the fabric. Fabric is typically folded in half, placing both selvedges together when it is wrapped on a bolt before being shipped to your local quilt shop. When cutting pieces to make quilts, patterns often refer to WOF strips. For large quilts with borders that are longer than the 42”-44” WOF, multiple strips

would be cut and pieced together to achieve the necessary border strip length.

A good point to remember is the WOF usually has more ease in it that can stretch; whereas the LOG warp threads have little or no ease or stretch. Borders cut LOG tend to stay true to length when sewn onto a pieced top. Many quilters who want their quilts to finish as square as possible, they may buy extra yardage so they can cut their long borders as one LOG piece.

To see how the fabric is converted from the factory rolls to the folded fabric on bolts, check out this YouTube from Hoffman Fabrics: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/EohgI0L2V9U>.

Having spent decades sewing my own clothes, I found it interesting to learn as I researched this article that most of the vintage fabrics (am I old enough to use that word?) used to make garments were typically only 36" wide. No wonder those circular skirts had to be pieced—the fabric wasn't wide enough.