

The Joy of Quilting!

Text and Photos by Cindy Scraba

One of the most rewarding accomplishments a quilter can experience is the joy of free-motion quilting. It can be euphoric to quilt successfully without thread breakage, while creating pathways of perfect stitches. For projects requiring extended hours of quilting, here are some tips to help enjoy that ride!

Joy Ride without the Drag

Do you recall a toboggan ride with ideal, slippery surface conditions? One proven method to increase mobility to enable a quilt to slide freely over the surface of a domestic machine is to decrease the drag factor or friction between the fabric and machine surface.

Simply insert a *slick* silicone mat as shown. Here a Slip Ez™ mat is positioned directly over the work/play area with a convenient cutout. Note the shiny silicone side faces down and is tacky while the topside is smooth as silk.

The magical momentum of free-motion quilting is maintained by a consistent speed without interruptions from pesky thread breakage. In this example, I chose to follow the birdie path along a metre length of fabric for a mammoth bag project. My double challenge was the extra batting thickness, plus the use of a walking foot in free-motion mode. And notice the Glitter™ Thread—have no fear, I didn't (see final tip)!

Overall, your quilting accuracy increases using a slippery mat, while lessening physical fatigue. The price point is around \$35.00 and measures 12 x 18 inches for this brand.

Gloves for Quilting Divas

Perhaps a pair of nice gloves would also look and feel great while on that joy ride! This time we need the tactile control and support they provide to steer and manipulate your quilt back and forth, up and down or in circular motions. It's time to show off your driving skills and test those fancy quilt patterns you've collected along your quilting journey.





There are several brands of quilting gloves available on the market in sizes that should fit your hands comfortably. I prefer Machingers™ for their clever size chart on the back side of the packaging. Simply place your hand over the hand template* to choose your size from XS to XL.

*For my online customers, I suggest taking a measurement from the tip of the middle finger to the wrist and I'll match this with the glove size.

Needle & Thread Choices

The importance of needle and thread choices for quilting cannot be ignored. I've been teaching to groups for seven years and

routinely meet quilters who appreciate learning the why behind these decisions.

For regular quilting purposes it's wise to choose a quality 40- to 50-weight thread (with two- to three-plys) for a top thread. The bobbin thread could match or it can be a lighter 60-weight. In the birdie fabric example, I used a Superior™ Topstitch #90/14 needle, Bottom Line™ thread in the bobbin and Glitter™ metallic 40-weight thread in the top—all performed harmoniously for hours without drama.

I am most familiar with using and recommending Superior™ Threads; however purchase the best quality of thread you and your machine prefer.

Whether you are a novice or are very confident at free-motion quilting, I hope you're inspired to try these tips on your next free-motion joy ride. For convenience, they're available from my webstore along with a 10% discount to CQA/ACC members who mention this column article.

Happy Free-Motion Quilting! ♦

Education & Inspiration

are the focus of my column, thread talks and workshops.



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