

QUILTESSENTIAL CO. INC. LONG-ARM STUDIO

Preparing your quilt for long-arming

By preparing properly, you will be happier with the finished production and costs will be kept to a minimum.

Pressing

Should quilt seams be pressed to the side or pressed open? It depends on the project and how the individual quilter likes to finish their quilts. The old rule used to be to press to the dark side. This 'rule' originated when all piecing was done by hand, pressing to the side gave extra strength to the hand sewn seam. **Pressing to the side does help secure the seam. Most long-armers prefer to have seams pressed to the side if custom work is required.**

Pressing the seams open could cause them to become weak over time and is more difficult to hide any open seams. If your long-arm quilter stitches right in the seam, because it is pressed open, there is the possibility that the long-arm needle could pierce the piecing thread and cause breakage – weakening the seam. **However, pressing seams open is a good idea when many seams come together.** Many layers of fabric create a bump in the middle of the block which is difficult to stitch over and can cause a needle break, skipped or extra long stitches.

This is the stage where you check your top for any missed stitches, tucks, wavy borders and fix any issues before drop off.

Final Press

The final press allows you to tell if there is fullness in the quilt top or borders. If you are unable to press flat, do you think your long-arm quilter will be able to? Fixing these issues saves your long-arm quilter time and ends up with a better result in your quilting service. If issues are not fixed prior to giving the quilt to your long-arm quilter, you are running the risk of additional fees to take out and redo seams or possibly adding a tuck in the quilt top so it will lay flat to avoid quilted puckers.

Press the top and stay stitch any pieced borders for stability (1/8" from the raw edge so that the stay stitching will be covered by the binding). Remove any extra threads, cat hairs or other guest fuzzies.

Hang the top over a padded coat hanger. Press the backing and hang on another padded coat hanger.

Batting & Backing

You will need to provide a batting and backing that is at least 8" larger than your quilt top. Flannel backings can shrink greater than a cotton top – for best results we recommend you prewash flannel backings.

If you are not using a wideback fabric, chances are you will need to piece the backing. There are some things you must either know and complete OR be prepared to pay your quilter for. The best way to piece the backing is to have all seams parallel to the top and bottom edge of your quilt top. After **removing all selvages** sew the sections together using a 1/2" seam allowance and press all seams to one side, not open. This strengthens the seam. If you press it open, the only thing holding the seam together is the threads that travel between the two pieces. Many quilts go on beds, and are sat on, jumped on, etc. These seams can easily split if pressed open. Create a backing that is a total of 8" larger than the quilt top. We have many recommended batting choices at the best possible prices.

Satisfaction

If you are happy with the quilting services you receive, tell your fellow quilters. If you are not happy, take into consideration that the long-arm quilter cannot perform miracles if your top was less than perfect to begin with and probably does not read minds well. Discuss any dissatisfaction with the quilter to allow him or her to either correct or explain any problems, concerns or issues. If you are thrilled with the quilting, communicating that happiness is highly recommended. If you develop a great working relationship, future projects will be fun and satisfying for you both.

Quilting Credit

If you are planning on entering your quilt in shows or competitions, please give your quilter credit for the quilting. Generally, if you pay for the quilting service, any awards received for your quilt are yours alone, but discussing this possibility ahead of time will eliminate hurt feelings and confusion. Credit for the quilting is usually an adequate compensation, but opinions on this subject vary greatly so confirm this with your quilter.