

## **PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST FOR FREE MOTION NEWBIES**

If this is your maiden voyage and you're feeling overwhelmed and that there's too much to remember, tape this flight plan checklist next to your sewing machine as a reminder:

1. Feed dogs have been dropped or covered.
2. Stitch length has been set at zero. Remember, you will actually be controlling the stitch length by how quickly you move the fabric sandwich underneath the machine needle and how much gas you give the foot control.
3. Quilt gloves are on. For me, this is an absolute necessity and I really urge you to try a pair if you have not yet. These are not mandatory, but they sure can make life easier!
4. Tension adjustments have been made on a "throw away" quilt sandwich. Know that in general, free motion quilting will necessitate a lowering of your top sewing machine tension setting.
5. RELAX! A big part of succeeding at this really DOES have to do with you being relaxed, so set the stage. Put on music or a DVD or meditate or have a glass of wine or do whatever it takes to get yourself feeling relaxed and ready for a new adventure!
6. If your machine has the "needle-down" feature, try setting it in needle-down. This will "hold your place" on the quilt sandwich every time you stop. When you start up again after stopping, remember to move your sandwich forward a teeny bit so you don't get a tiny thread mound where you started.
7. Lower your pressor foot and if you are sewing on a Pfaff, put your pressor foot in the half-darning position.
8. To begin quilting, drop the machine needle and hold onto the top thread tail as you bring up the needle. Gently tug on it and this will pull up the bobbin thread. Pull at this so you have about 4 inches of thread on the top and bobbin threads and then re-drop the machine needle just NEXT to the first hole. Gently hold onto those threads for the first few stitches and take a series of very short stitches, just next to your first stitch. Avoid stitching these on top of one or you'll get the much-dreaded thread blob! You have now successfully locked your initial stitching and you may take off! Burn some rubber, Baby!

