



Welcome back to our Summer Quilt-A-Long

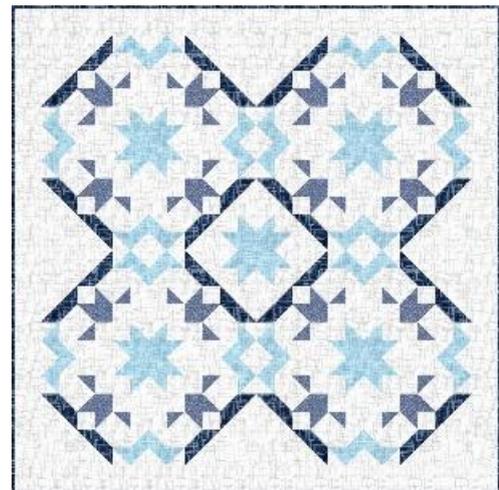
This is part 8 in our Quilt -A-Long and this week we are looking at borders, backing and binding. If you missed the earlier parts of our QAL you will find the instructions on our branch page at www.irishpatchwork.com.

To Border or not to Border?

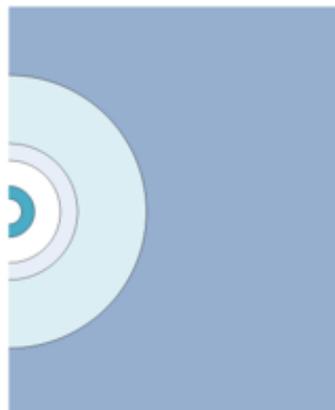
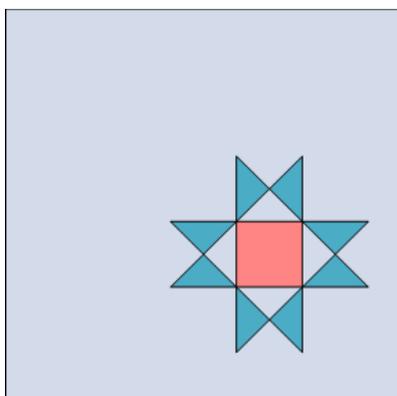
Borders are a matter of personal preference and a subject so large, quilters have created whole courses and workshops about it. From mitred to straight, double, triple, pieced and plain we can't go into it all here.



Traditional quilts are bordered to frame the design. The borders are proportional and don't compete with the pieced blocks but rather enhance the design and give the quilt a finished, polished look.



The other quilt groups don't always use a visible border. In the modern quilting aesthetic, a border that matches the background fabric is used to float the design in the quilt and the border disappears. How big the border has to be, depends on how much breathing space you want to give your quilt design.

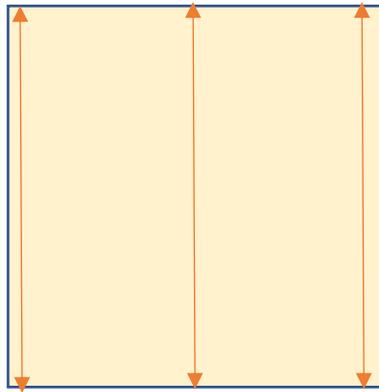


Borders aren't always symmetrical in modern or contemporary quilts. Offsetting the block to play with balance and scale in the design is a lot of fun.



Sewing a border

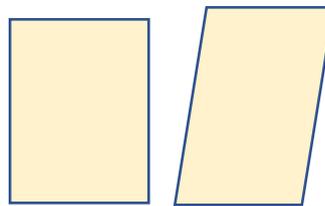
Once you have decided what kind of border you want to add to your quilt top, you will need to measure your quilt top. Depending on your accuracy of seam allowance, fabrics and thread used, you may find your quilt top is a little bit bigger or smaller than you think.



The quilt top is measured at the top, middle and bottom

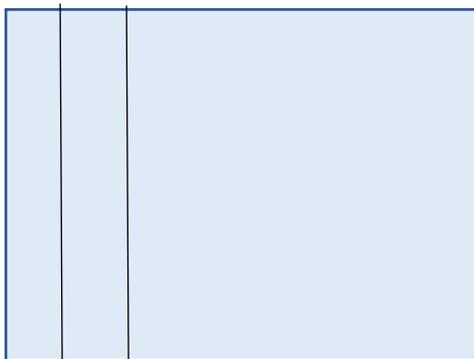
Some quilters take the average of the measurements and some take the smaller number and use that to cut the length of border.

If you don't measure and just add a border and start sewing you can end up with a quilt top that does not lie square.

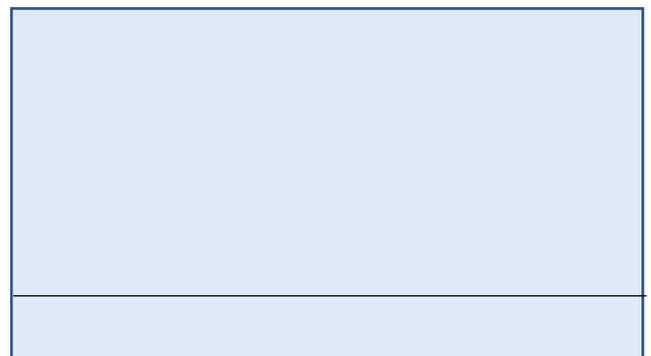


Exaggerated for effect!

If you need a long length of fabric for your border you can piece from smaller widths of fabric or you can cut it parallel to the selvedge along the length if you have enough yardage.

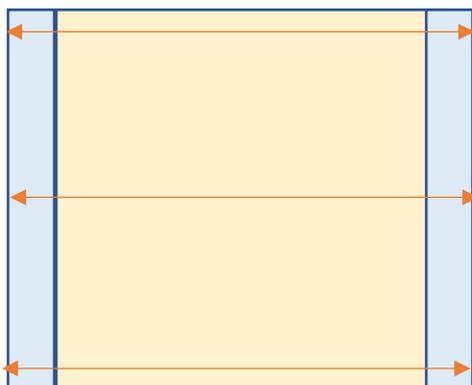


Cut width and piece together



Cut from length

Sew your borders on each side and repeat the above for the top and bottom border by measuring across the width at the top, middle and bottom of your quilt top.



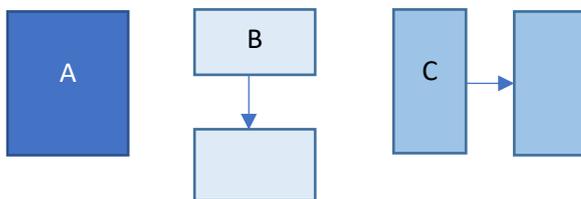


Backing

The usual advice is to have your wadding 2"-3" bigger all around than your quilt top and your backing bigger again. If you plan on sending your quilt to a long arm quilter to quilt it for you, ask them how much bigger they want the backing to be.

There are lots of things you can do to make a quilt back. If you have a large bed quilt the easiest thing to do is to use extra wide backing which is usually 108" wide. The standard fabric width for quilters cotton is 44-45". European & Scandinavian fabric rolls can be larger at 58"-59" or so or 150cm.

If you are using standard width and need to piece your backing you can sew pieces together in strips horizontally (B) or vertically (C).



Backing required for typical quilt sizes from 44" wide fabric:

Type	Size	Backing	Yards
Baby	40" x 40"	A	1 1/4
Throw	48" x 72"	B	3
Single	63" x 87"	C	5 1/4
Double	78" x 88"	C	5 1/4
Queen	84" x 92"	B (3 strips)	7 1/2
King	98" x 106"	B (3 strips)	8 3/4
Super King	110" x 120"	B (3 strips)	9 3/4

Binding

Double fold binding cut on the straight grain is normally used to finish off a bed quilt. A typical binding width is cut at 2 1/2" to have a 1/4" on front and a slightly wider binding on the back. Some prefer a thinner binding on the back to match the front and cut at 2 1/4".

To determine the length of binding required, measure the sides of your quilt and add all four sides together. Then add 12-18" to give enough fabric to turn the corners and a workable length to close the binding. E.g., quilt top that is 52" Wide x 60" long would need $52+52+60+60+12=236$ "

To get the number of strips needed to make binding that goes all the way around your quilt divide the total length by the usable width of your fabric. 44"-45" standard width of fabric is considered to have a 42" usable width by the time you have it cut and sewn together. So, $236"/42" = 5.6$ so round it up 6 strips.

To find out how much fabric we need for 6 strips we multiply the number of strips by the width of your binding strip. So for me, I like 2 1/2" width and I multiply that by 6 to get 15" of fabric. What's that in terms of yardage? Divide by 36" and round up to the nearest 1/4 yard to determine the yardage. So $15"/36"=0.41$ rounded up to 0.5 and buy 1/2" yard of fabric.

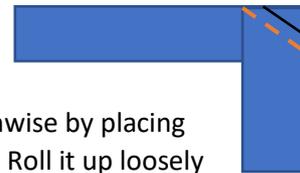
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Fabric needed for typical quilt sizes 44" wide fabric, 2 1/2" wide strips:

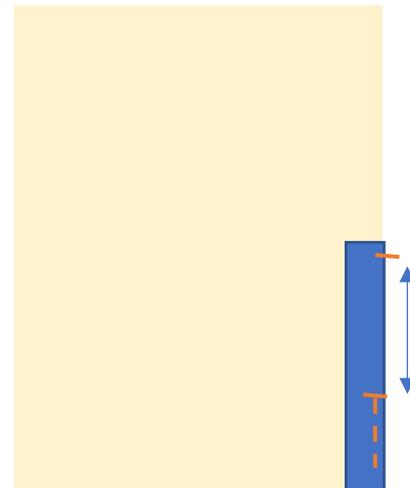
Type	Size	Perimeter +12"	Number of strips	Yardage
Baby	40" x 40"	172"	5	1/2
Throw	48" x 72"	252"	6	1/2
Single	63" x 87"	312"	8	3/4
Double	78" x 88"	344"	9	3/4
Queen	84" x 92"	364"	9	3/4
King	98" x 106"	420"	10	3/4
Super King	110" x 120"	472"	12	1

To make your binding strip, join strips by placing ends right sides together at right angles. Draw a line along the diagonal and sew on this line. Trim 1/4" away on the outside and press open. Repeat for all strips to make one long binding strip for your quilt. Fold in half, lengthwise by placing wrong sides together, right side up, and press along the entire length. Roll it up loosely and put a pin in it to keep it from getting all over the place!

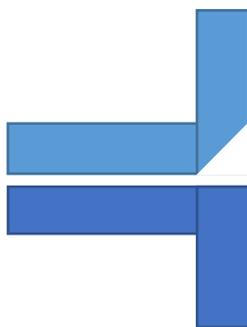


To attach, lay the binding on top of the quilt edge aligning raw edges and starting in a place on the quilt where the join will be least noticeable. I usually chose the lower half of one of the sides of my quilt for this.

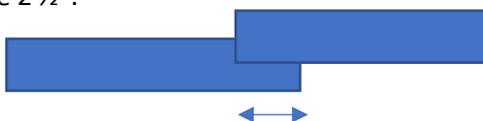
Practice running the binding all along the quilt to ensure a joined section is not lying on the corners to avoid excess bulk. Pin in place with two pins at the start of the binding approximately 8-10" apart. Start sewing at the second pin leaving an unsewn tail at the beginning. Sew with a 1/4" seam stopping a 1/4" away from the end of the quilt edge. Backstitch and clip threads.



Fold the binding up at 90 degrees and flip it back on itself again aligning with the next edge of the quilt. Backstitching at beginning and end repeat for all sides. On the last side sew until you are approximately 8-10" from the tail end of your starting point. Backstitch to secure.



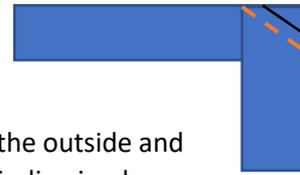
Overlap your binding strips and trim so that the width of your binding is the length overlapped. In my case 2 1/2".





To join the last pieces of binding, fold the bulk of the quilt out of the way and pin to keep it out of the way while you join the binding strips.

Place ends right sides together at right angles as per previous step above.



Draw a line along the diagonal and sew on this line. Trim $\frac{1}{4}$ " away on the outside and press open, checking to see that the strip lies flat. Finish sewing the binding in place.

Press open and pulling the binding to the back, pin or use clips to hold in place and hand sew along the entire length making sure to secure the corners as you work around the quilt.

I'm not a mad fan of sewing on binding and have tried using the machine to sew it on. Somehow, I can't get the machined binding to look as good as the hand sewn one so I have reluctantly consigned myself to this as a necessary step. Other people seem to find this step really relaxing!

If you prefer to machine sew on your binding you might want to start at the back and pull the binding to the front to sew onto the quilt.

Facing

Facing is a finishing method commonly used in art quilts to finish a quilt with no visible binding. I always follow this tutorial on the Silly Boo Dilly blog.

<https://thesillyboodilly.blogspot.com/2012/09/tutorial-super-duper-easy-way-to-face.html>

Label

All that's left is to add a label. I'm really lazy with labels and have been known to write on the back of my quilt with a permanent fabric marker. Yes, I know, hanging my head in shame. If you choose to do this take care as fabric is stretchy and it can make writing less legible so, go slow!

Labels can get very detailed including care instructions or very minimal with makers name and year completed. Generally, the advice is to include:

- Date
- Quilt maker's name and Quilter if different
- Name of the quilt
- Location made
- Occasion quilt made for /Personal message
- Name of the pattern if applicable

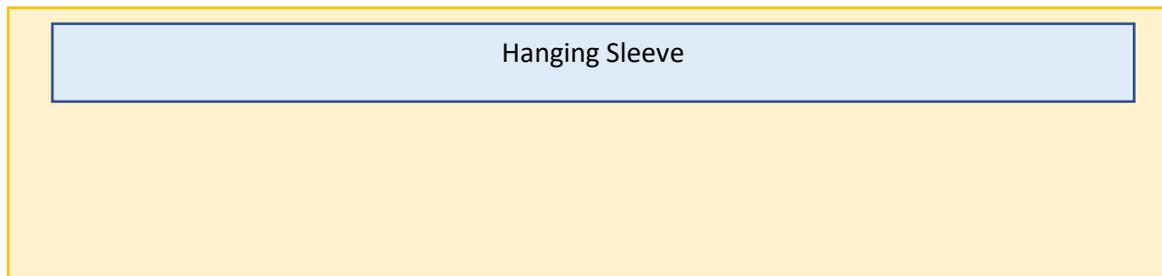
Hanging sleeve

Lastly if you are showing your quilt in exhibition you need to add a hanging sleeve. Most exhibition instructions are for a 4" hanging sleeve that is not visible from the front.

I make mine using a neutral colour fabric like calico or a cotton that looks nice when viewed on the back too as I am very lazy about taking a hanging sleeve off after showing if I plan on using it. Some people like to match the hanging sleeve to the back of the quilt so it blends in.



You want the hanging sleeve to be shorter than the length of your quilt so it stays hidden on the back.



I make my sleeve using a starting piece of fabric 9" width x length of quilt. Fold in the raw edges on the short sides $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " and fold over again to capture the raw edges. Sew along this edge to secure.



Fold the hanging sleeve lengthwise right sides together to make a tube and sew with $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. Pull it inside out, so the seams are on the inside of the tube.

Lay on your quilt back and hand sew along the top edge underneath the binding using a whipstitch and taking care that your stitches don't show on the front.

Pull up the bottom edge towards the top of the quilt by about a $\frac{1}{4}$ " to avoid sewing the pocket flat to the back of the quilt. The extra room in the pocket, that this creates, helps the quilt lie flat against the wall when hung on a rod and avoids stretching the quilt over the rod, which can affect the look of the quilt when on display.



Hand sew the bottom in place, again using a whipstitch and taking care the stitches don't show on the front.

Hang on a wall in pride of place, out of direct sunlight and pat yourself on the back for a job well done!

Thanks for joining us, we hope you enjoyed our summer QAL and making with us.

Stay safe and happy sewing!

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