

HOW TO CREATE A SQUARED-UP QUILT TOP:

Here are some ideas on ways to help you end up with a square quilt top.

- Check your 1/4" seam
 - My sewing machine has a feature to move the needle to the left or right, so I adjust it this way until the needle is in a position that gives me a good 1/4" seam.
- Square up each block **before** sewing them together (i.e. **trim** the block to the correct size).
 - You may feel like this slows you down too much, but your quilt will turn out better and your longarm will love you for it.
- Iron **without** steam
 - Steam can cause fabric to stretch, especially if you push the iron across the fabric.
- Use Best Press, spray starch or magic sizing
 - This firms up the fabric and stabilizes it before cutting the fabric and/or after sewing fabric together.
- **Don't** push your fabric around on your quilt top with your hands, hoping to flatten out any puckers.
 - This just stretches the fabric more and makes it worse.
 - The less handling, the better.
- Use steam to shrink fabric that has stretched.
 - Don't play with the fabric when it is still wet with steam; let it dry and cool down, which should shrink it up a bit.
 - Don't iron it when it is wet from steam, since that could stretch it out more.
- For quilt panels, square up the panel before you add borders to the panel.
 - Quilt Panels are usually not perfectly square when you buy them. I think this is due to the way they are folded and wrapped around the bolt at the manufacturing plant.
 - I have squared up a quilt panel by using steam and a hot iron to stretch the fabric into shape.
 - You could also block a quilt panel as you would a sweater: wet the panel, lay it on a towel, and pin it to something sturdy, like a piece of cardboard, an ironing board, a clothing fabric pinning board, or even a bed mattress. Then let it dry on it's own, or use a hot iron to dry it faster.