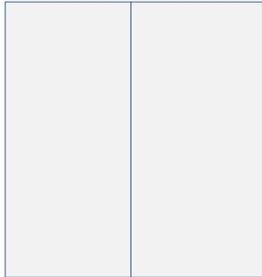


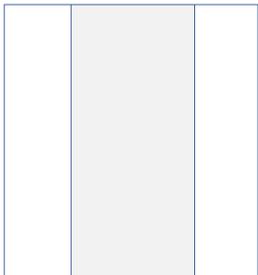
RANDOM THOUGHTS:

Pieced backings:

- Normal pieced backings:
 - When piecing a backing, try to avoid using a center seam. When a quilt is folded in half along the center seam, the fold line stresses the quilt, causing the quilt top and batting to break down in that spot.



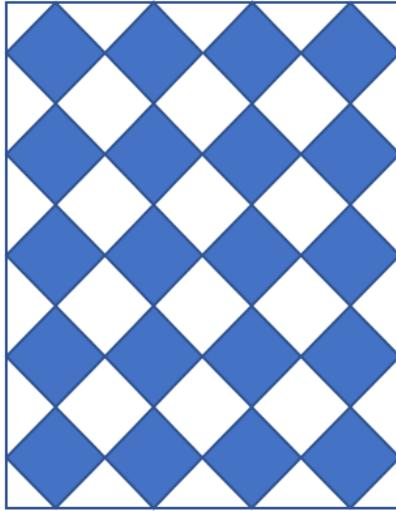
- Instead, cut one of the lengths of backing fabric into two long, narrow pieces. Stitch a narrow piece to each side of the full-width piece.



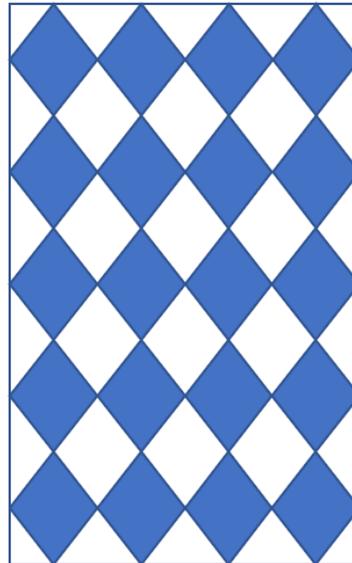
- Pressing seams open or to the side
 - The seams on the quilt **backing** should be ironed to one side or the other, **not** ironed open.
 - The reason for this is that the backing will be stretched onto the longarm frame, so if the seam is ironed open, it could be stretched to the point where there is a gap where the stitching is, possibly splitting the seam open.
 - It is also a good idea to have more stitches to the inch (a smaller stitch length) when seaming backing pieces together, to give the quilt back more stability when it is stretched onto the longarm frame.

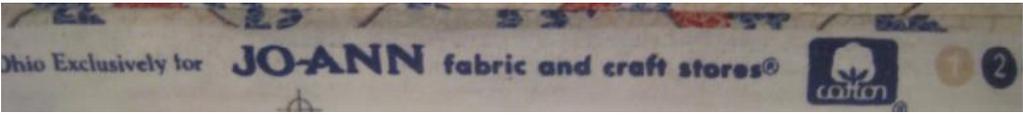
- Pieced backings that are “on point”
 - When the backing fabric is loaded onto the longarm frame, it is rolled onto the roller, and gently stretched.
 - On a quilt that was using squares pieced together on-point for the backing, by the time the quilt was quilted and it was removed from the frame, the backing had turned into diamonds instead of squares.

Example of “before quilting”:



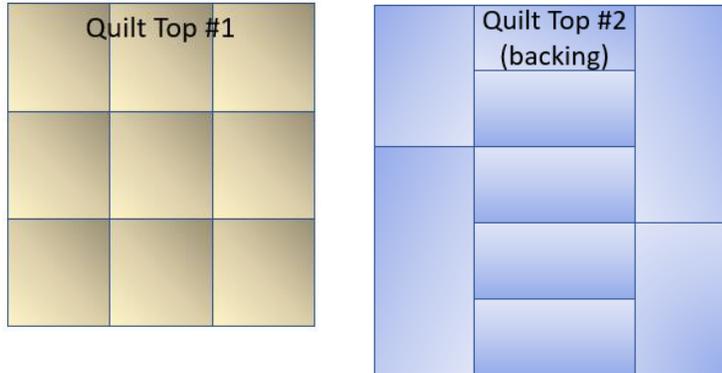
Example of “after quilting”:



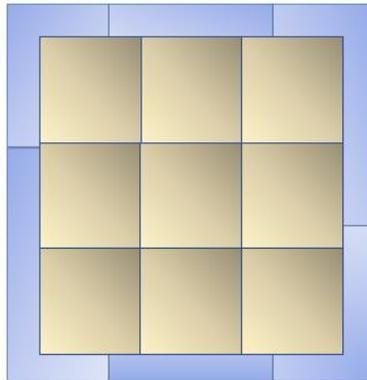
- Selvedges
 - Trim off the selvedge edge of the fabric so that it doesn’t end up in your quilt top or your backing.
- 
- Selvedge edges do not shrink like the rest of the fabric will. So if it is left on, it will cause the fabric to pucker incorrectly.
 - When the backing fabric is pieced down the middle, and the selvedge is left in that seam allowance, the backing fabric will not stretch correctly on the longarm frame. The fabric will bow out on either side of the selvedge seam, with the selvedge seam remaining taught down the center. This will cause the backing fabric to fold over onto itself in places, and be locked down in an unsightly manner, while the quilt is being quilted. Trust me, you won’t like the result.

- Using a quilt top as a backing

- The backing needs to be 8" larger than the quilt top. If you want to have 2 quilt tops put together as the front and back of a quilt, you will need to make sure the larger one is used as the backing, and that it is 8" larger than the quilt top.



- Once the backing is loaded onto the longarm frame, and the batting is loaded over it, it's nearly impossible to tell where the edges of the quilt backing (top #2) are, in order to center the quilt top (top #1) over it. So it is best to make sure that you have extra fabric on that backing (top #2), so that the quilt can be trimmed, after quilting, based on the quilt top (top #1), not based on the backing (top #2).



Pre-Wash or Not?

- Reasons to Pre-Wash
 - For the red, white and blue fabrics we use on the Quilts of Valor quilts, I pre-wash all of the fabric, and I throw in a color-catcher “sheet” into the washing machine with the fabric. This way, if the dye in the fabric “bleeds”, the color-catcher should make sure it doesn’t discolor the other fabrics in the quilt when the quilt recipient washes it later on.
 - You may be surprised at which fabrics “bleed” when they are washed.
 - Some yellows and light-colored fabrics can “bleed”.
 - Not all reds and dark colors will “bleed”.
 - As a simple test, cut a 1-2” square of fabric, get it wet in the sink, then lay it on a paper towel to dry.
 - Another reason to pre-wash fabric is to get out the sizing and other chemicals that are on the fabric when you buy it in a store. This stuff helps to firm up the fabric so that it sits on the bolt nicer, but it makes the fabric feel rougher than it will be after it is washed.
 - Pre-washing also helps to make sure that the fabric shrinks before you cut it to put it into your quilt, since some fabric will shrink at a different rate than other fabric, and you might end up with an unevenly puckered quilt after its first wash.
 - Fabric with sparkles on it should be pre-washed to remove the excess “glitter”, so that you don’t get glitter all over everything when you are working on your quilt. Some of this fabric may take 2-3 washings before you quit seeing glitter coming off. The glitter that remains on the quilt should continue to be seen on the quilt through future washings after the quilting is finished.
 - Batik fabrics should be pre-washed to remove the wax that was used in the coloring process.
 - If you pre-wash your fabrics, be sure to buy an extra 1/8 to 1/4 yard of fabric so you don’t run out of fabric for your quilt due to the shrinkage.
- Reasons to Not Pre-Wash
 - If the fabric is done shrinking before you put the quilt together, you will get less of the “quilted” look when the quilt is first washed. However, depending on the type of batting you use, you might see some shrinkage anyway.
 - Pre-Cut Fabrics should not be pre-washed, since it will alter the size of the fabric.
 - Some fabrics will unravel or fray when they are washed.
 - Washed fabric will need to be ironed before you cut it for your quilt top, to remove the creases it picks up in the drying process.