

How to prepare your quilt for longarm quilting:

	<u>What to do/not do:</u>	<u>Reason why:</u>
1	Don't pin, baste or join the layers of your quilt (top, batting, backing).	The 3 layers of your quilt go on the quilt frame separately.
2	Double-check your seams to make sure they are secure.	Loose seams may separate when the quilt is loaded onto the frame.
3	Press your quilt top and backing to make sure that your seams are flat, and that the crease from the bolt of fabric has been eliminated or minimized. (Mary Ellen's Best Press works great to get rid of the bolt-caused creases.)	The flatter your quilt top, the more accurate the quilting can be. The hopping foot may push thick seams around as it stitches, and could distort the look of your quilt. (If you have wide-back backing, I'll be happy to iron it for you for \$10.)
4	Trim any excess threads on the top of your quilt, and on the backing fabric.	Threads on the quilt top may get locked down during quilting and be hard to remove later.
5	Trim any excess threads on the back side of your quilt top.	Dark colored thread will show through light colored areas of the quilt top and won't be removable after quilting.
6	Check your borders to make sure they are not wavy or flared. (Cut your side borders to match the average length of your quilt, then pin, then sew. Without pinning in place, the border fabric will stretch and cause waves.)	Excess fabric in the borders may end up getting caught by the hopping foot, causing stitched-down folds in inopportune places.
7	Only use 100% cotton fabric for your backing; no bed sheets or stretchy fabrics.	Bed sheets cause poor tension and thread breakage, as well as encouraging "bearding" of the batting fibers to the outside of the quilt. Stretchy fabrics (like fleece and minky) get overstretched on the quilt frame, and may snap back with undesirable, distorted results once removed.
8	Remove all selvage edges from the fabrics you use.	The selvage doesn't shrink, and could ruin the look of your quilt after it is washed.
9	Make sure your backing is squared/rectangular. (Fold backing in half horizontally, then in half vertically, then measure the length of the outer edge and the folded edge to make sure they are the same length.)	Loading the backing fabric on the quilt frame requires the top and bottom ends to be straight, even, and perpendicular to the sides. This also keeps the quilt from ending up askew.
10	Make sure your backing is at least 8 inches wider, and 8 inches longer, than your quilt top.	For example, if your quilt top is 70x90, then your backing and batting each need to be at least 78x98 inches.
11	If you supply your own batting, make sure it is at least 8 inches wider, and 8 inches longer, than your quilt top.	This allows for some wiggle-room when loading the quilt top over the batting and backing, especially if the backing or batting is not exactly square/rectangular.
12	If you supply your own batting, make sure it is labeled "suitable for machine quilting".	Some battings are not intended for machine quilting.
13	If you will be adding embellishments to your quilt (beads, buttons, bows), please wait to do that until after it's been quilted.	Embellishments could get smooshed as the quilt is rolled onto the frame. And there is an extra charge for avoiding embellishments during the quilting process.
14	If there is a "top" to your quilt or backing, please put a safety pin on that edge.	This will make sure your quilt is loaded on the frame so that any directional quilting ends up going in the right direction for your quilt top.
15	If you will be providing binding to be attached to your quilt top, please make sure it is 10 inches longer than the perimeter of your quilt, and folded/ironed and ready to be attached.	It's easy to attach binding to your quilt top when it's loaded on the machine, and can save you the trouble if it's not something you like to do.