

APPLYING BORDERS

After the body of the quilt has been pieced, gently press before adding borders. The logical place to measure the finished top is along its outside edges, and this is a useful measurement. However, measurements should be taken *across the center* in two or three places for both the width and length. If these measurements are different from that of the outer edge, accidental stretching has occurred. To keep the finished quilt as straight and square as possible, you must measure the centers.

To make a border with straight-cut corners:

Determine the length of the quilt border by averaging the distance of two or three *center* measurements (see *Fig. 1*). Cut two borders that length and pin them to opposite sides of the quilt matching ends and centers and easing in the fullness. Sew and press.

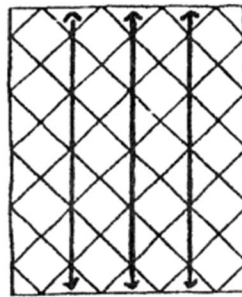


Fig. 1

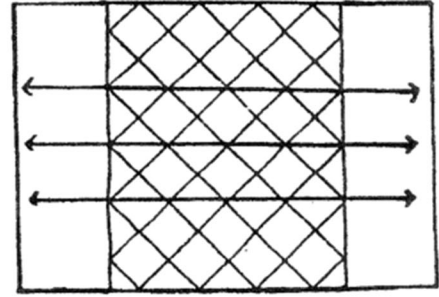


Fig. 2

Determine the width of the quilt border by averaging the distance of two or three center measurements (see *Fig. 2*). Cut these borders that length and pin - easing in the fullness. Sew and press.

To make mitered corners, consult a quilting book that contains instructions for finishing a quilt.

Tip 1. If you just take a strip of fabric and sew to the side, trim off excess your sewing machine is likely to be adding more fabric than is needed. The reason for this is the sewing machine feeds the top and bottom at 2 different rates of speed. Some exceptions to this would be the Pfaff Machine with the Triptonic feed (built in walking foot). You can normally pick up a Pfaff with this feature for 1-2 thousand. Low end models will not have this feature. Bernina also has a few models with the feature but you will pay a good deal more for the machine. I have also found the Bernina models that do not have this seem to work really well on their own. I just want to make sure I have it. Borders can make or break your beautiful Quilt.

You can test your machine by taking 2 long strips of fabric say 60-70 inches long and sew them all the way down. Chances are one strip will be longer.

Other ways to compensate for this.

1. use a walking foot.
2. Lay out on a nice flat surface (I use my ironing board and just move it as needed) Place the border fabric on top of the quilt side you will be sewing. Press gently with steam iron and Pin about every inch or so, If I have a lot of seams then I will pin at every seam in addition. I use Silk Head Pins and sew very slowly over the pins. (warning, this could jam your machine and through off your timing so be very careful or pull the pin out just before sewing over).

Tip 2—The larger your quilt the more important your borders will be.

Once you do this measuring and pinning at the center marks, quarter way marks and ends easing in any fullness in between you will start learning some short cuts that will work well for you. Personally I take my measurement in the center and use that (Make sure you are getting an accurate measurement—Follow a straight seam line if you can) Measure twice cut once.

I also steam press to the top to keep the fabric from shifting and I pin, pin, pin. I have a Pfaff and a Bernina 830 so both have the built in walking foot. My Pfaff is an Expression 4.0 that I found on ebay for \$600.00 (I think it was a bit more but I sent an offer and they accepted) We won't talk about what I paid for the Bernina, lets just say that will never happen again but I own it now and it is a great machine. It is about 12 years old now and still going strong.

Tip 3. If you are doing sashing in between rows going vertical these are long strips also and should be treated the same as a border. You should also stitch each row in the same direction. It is tempting to just flip around and sew but when you do that you might be torking the fabric. Always go from top to bottom.

Tip 4. If you are doing sashing both ways as in the grid. Add a corner stone at every intersection, even if you use the same fabric, this will give you a seam to match to and pin and helps keep that quilt square.

Tip 5. Before opening your seam, gently press with steam. This will set the stitches in. Open seam and finger press then press with steam iron. I do this for every seam as I am making the block.

Tip 6. Sew a scant 1/4 inch seam by moving your needle over to the right just a tad, you will have to sew a seam and measure until you are comfortable. I like to sew a few 2.5 inch strips together. If my seam allowance is good I should have a width of 4.5. I find that even using a quarter inch foot I have to play with the needle placement to get it just right. Once you know what it is make a record of that and keep it handy for the next time.

Most of all—Have fun and keep working on improving your skill. I am still working on mine.

Thanks

Rebecca