

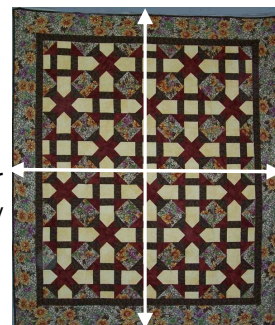


## The Art of Perfect Binding

Achieving nice, straight, even binding on your quilting projects is not as hard as you may think. Master a few easy steps, and you'll never again fear this final step—and you'll revel in finishing those UFOs in your sewing room!

### Step 1: Measure & Calculate

- Measure the length and width of your project through the middle of the piece. No matter how good we think we are, each quilt is going to have some anomalies—so the sides may not be perfectly equal. Measuring through the middle will give you a usable average.
- Double each measurement, and add them all together. Then add another 12”.
- Divide that number by 40. This will let you know how many WOF\* strips you need to cut.



46" wide x 62" long

### ? Why do we divide by 40? My fabric is 44" (45") wide!

Just like clothing—different manufacturers will cut fabric differently. Then the processes used to print/dye/block the fabric could skew the width of the finished piece. Then there's the question of whether each quilter pre-washes or not—which could cause some shrinkage. There are so many variables—we use a standard 40" to assure it works for everyone most of the time!

$$\begin{aligned}
 &(46 \times 2) + (62 \times 2) \\
 &92 + 124 \\
 &216 + 12 = 228 \\
 &228 \div 40 = 5.7
 \end{aligned}$$

### Step 2: Cut & Combine

- After calculating, our example above came out to 5.7—which means we need 6 WOF strips of your binding fabric. Cut each strip at 2½" wide, by the full folded width of the bolt cut.
- Combine the strips so that you will have one long piece of binding. (See Tip box for how to combine the strips).
- By combining your strips at an angle, the joints will be less noticeable to the eye. It also makes for a stronger seam—especially on the edge of the quilt, which gets the most wear & tear!

#### Combining Border Strips

- Place strips, right sides together, at a 90° angle
- Draw a diagonal line as shown (Fig. 1)
- Sew on the line, then trim seam allowance to ¼" (Fig. 2)
- Press seam open
- Repeat until you have the length of fabric required

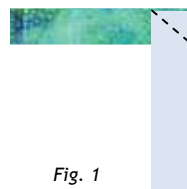


Fig. 1

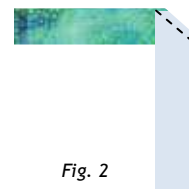


Fig. 2

### Step 3: Trim & Prep

- Be sure to square up and block your quilt if needed. Yes, many will say “Shouldn’t this have been done before I measured in Step 1. Perhaps—but by doing it now, I know I’ll have enough binding to go around! Trim any stray threads now, too!

### Step 4: Ready, Set, Bind!

- Start in the center of any side of your quilt. Take one end of your binding strip, and fold in half, wrong sides together, to form a 1¼" wide strip.

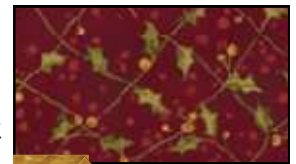
\* WOF = Width of Fabric—from selvage edge to selvage edge



### Wait a minute! Aren't I supposed to fold my strip in half and iron it?

My personal preference is not to do this—why? Because pressing your binding strip obviously puts a crease in it. When you turn that binding around to secure it to the back—if the fabric needs to give a little here or there, it can't easily do that against a hard ironed crease. By creasing your binding before attaching, chances are you will end up with more tucks and gathers than you would want. By not ironing first, your fabric has freer movement, and you can ease your binding over completely and let it ease itself in place.

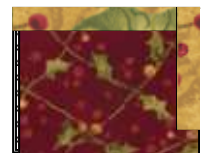
- ⌘ Align the raw edges of your binding strip with the raw edges of your quilt top. Leave a tail of at least 8"—10", and start sewing the binding around the edge of your quilt. STOP sewing 1/4" from the corner. Remove the quilt from your machine.
- ⌘ Fold the binding strip up at the corner at a 45° angle. To get a perfect angle, make sure that the edge of your binding strip and the edge of your quilt form a perfectly straight line! (See arrow in figure 2) Finger press the angle.
- ⌘ Next, fold the binding strip down at a 90° angle. *Make sure the fold aligns with the edge of the quilt.* Even a little over or under will make for a floppy miter! We don't like floppy miters!
- ⌘ Stitch from the edge of the quilt, again, aligning raw edges of folder binding strip with raw edge of quilt. Stop stitching 1/4" from next corner.
- ⌘ Repeat the above steps until you have come back around to the side you started on. Stop sewing about 18" - 20" from where you began. This will give you plenty of room to work to make the final joint and finish your binding.



8-10" tail



Fold up at a 45° angle at corner



Then fold down at a 90° angle and sew from corner

### Step 5: Bringing it all together

- ⌘ Lay out the edge of the quilt with the two tails so everything is laying flat. Align the raw edges of the binding strip and the quilt, until the tails meet in the center of the unbound area. Fold the tails back on themselves, so that the folds meet. Finger press to create a crease.
- ⌘ Measure back from each fold and mark at 1 1/4". (You will always measure back the same amount as the width of your folded binding strip—just in case you have need to use a different width binding strip).
- ⌘ Pick up each tail and to length at your mark.
- ⌘ Unfold each tail and lay out, right side up. Pick up the left tail and twist it away from you until the right side of the fabric is facing you again. Just go around ONCE.
- ⌘ Lay the right tail on top of the left tail at a right angle (just like you did when you combined the strips—see Tip Box on Page 1).
- ⌘ Sew diagonally, from the upper left hand corner, to the lower right hand corner. Trim seam to 1/4" and press open.
- ⌘ Re-fold the binding strip and finish stitching—aligning the raw edges. The binding should fit perfectly to the open edge of the quilt.

### Step 6: Wrap, Roll & Stitch

- ⌘ Wrap your binding around to the back of your quilt, easing it to make sure that the folded edge covers the stitching line on the back of the quilt. Secure a section with pins or binding clips (personally, I prefer the clips).
- ⌘ Secure your thread under the binding, then begin to take small whip stitches, making sure that your needle is going through the quilt back and catching the batting, but not going through to the front. If you can slip your pinky fingernail between your stitches, you are stitching too far apart!



BINDING CLIPS



45° MITERED CORNER

- ⌘ When you get to the corner, stitch to the edge of the quilt, then come back far enough so that when you fold over the next edge, you can catch it and start sewing again.
- ⌘ When you fold over the next side of the binding, make sure you have a crisp 45° angle on the corner, then fold the binding down and catch a stitch with your needle.
- ⌘ Continue turning and stitching until all sides have been completed. Take a few small anchoring stitches at the start/stop point.
- ⌘ Make a small knot, then bury the knot into the batting by pushing through the fabric. Congratulations—another masterpiece completed!