

Sewing the Binding to your Quilt

You have basic directions here for **standard** and **reversible** binding.

Regardless of the technique you use for sewing down your binding, you need to determine the amount of fabric you need. Start by measuring your quilt and adding 12 inches (for joining of the strips and for the corner overlaps). For a quilt that measures 40 x 60 inches, you will need a binding that is about 212 inches long. That equates to about 5 or 6 strips width of fabric (WOF) if the fabric is 42-44" wide. Cut the strips 2 ½" wide. Many quilters cut 2 ¼ " but for beginners, the 2 ½ seems to work better.

You need to join these strips into one long binding. To join strips, lay the ends of the strips right sides together and at right angles; then stitch from outside corner to outside corner. Press the seams open and cut away the excess fabric. This technique works for standard and reversible binding. Once all of the strips are joined to form your binding, with the right side of the fabric strip facing down, bring the upper left corner down to fold parallel to the bottom the strip to form a point (this is the end you begin sewing down when attaching the binding to the quilt). Then fold the entire strip in half lengthwise, **wrong** sides together and press. The beginning of the strip will have a point on it. It is important that the raw edges of the binding are up and the fold is down so that when you have attached the binding, the edge you fold over to the back of the quilt is a folded edge.

Standard Directions: Begin on a long side of the quilt, about half way down, and leave about 8-10 inches of the binding free, and sew the binding to the quilt. Use a quarter inch seam and a walking foot if you have one. Stitch within ¼" of the corner edge, stop with needle down, lift the presser foot and turn the quilt to a 45 degree angle so that the corner of the quilt is pointed directly at you. Lower the presser foot and then stitch off the quilt.

Pull the quilt away from the machine to raise the strip straight up to run parallel with the quilt and crease it at the 45 degree angle you created by sewing the angle. Hold the angle in place, and fold the strip back to the raw edge of the quilt so that the top raw edge is parallel with the raw edge of the quilt. The raw edges of the binding and the quilt should be parallel. Begin stitching at the top fold at the corner of the quilt to complete the corner and repeat the steps for the rest of the corners. Stitch around the entire quilt until you are about 12 to 15 inches from where you started. Backstitch and remove the quilt from the machine for this next part.

The beginning 8-10" should be pinned in place to make accuracy easier. Open the right side of the binding but do not unfold your 45 degree pointed fold. Being careful not to leave too much slack as any slack will make a pucker-free binding more difficult. With the right side of the binding open, lay the folded left side inside the right side and cover it with the 45 degree corner. Smooth it out and then slip your fingers into the area where the left and right sides are together and grasp the second and third layer of fabric and secure the two pieces with a pin. When you pull them out you will see that the left and right sides form the same kind of angle you created to join the strips. All you have to do is stitch along the crease created by the fold to join the two sides. Test the binding to make sure it's the right length then continue sewing down the binding after you remove the excess. The advantage of this technique is that once you measure your quilt, you have no math to do. ** I learned this technique from a blanketier at a conference, and have used it ever since for all my bindings and in all of my classes!!! Turn the binding to the back and hand or machine-sew it down.

Reversible Binding Directions.

Reversible binding really comes in handy when you want one color binding to match the top side of the quilt and another color to match the back side of the quilt or when you don't have enough fabric to cut 2 ½ inches for the binding.

Let's say the top of your quilt begs for a blue binding, but the blue binding will look odd or otherwise not match the backing of the quilt, which would look better with a neutral color binding. You will need two fabrics: Fabric A (Blue) and Fabric B (Neutral)

Fabric A: matches the top (Blue)

Fabric B: matches the backing (Neutral)

Fabric A: cut strips 1 inch wide by 212 inches of the blue fabric

Fabric B: cut strips 1 ½ inches by 212 inches of the neutral fabric

Fold and press Fabric B **wrong** sides together.

Stitch the raw edges of the folded B to the raw edge (right sides together) of the single fold Fabric A so that 3 raw edges are sewn together with a ¼ inch seam. Press the seam toward the Fabric A to provide cushion and support for the single fold of fabric. Stitch the Fabric A side of the binding against the top of the quilt and follow the standard directions to complete the binding. Now you have a blue binding to match the top of your quilt and a neutral binding to match the back of your quilt.