



Here are some things to consider before your meeting with our long arm quilter:

1. Review your quilt top and objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of its construction. Many construction issues can be addressed during the quilting process with proper planning. The most common issues are puffiness in the quilt center and wavy borders. The skill and experience of the long arm quilter can help overcome moderate degrees of these types of distortions. If the borders are super wavy consider removing and reattaching them using the procedure outlined in the attached guide. If reworking them is not desirable discuss possible solutions with your long arm quilter. Puffy centers generally can be worked out in the quilting process since rework is usually not required.
2. Your quilt top should be well pressed and threads trimmed. Pay special attention to dark threads that may show up behind lighter fabrics. If you intend to wash your quilt after quilting and binding (recommended) consider using starch or sizing when pressing to tame seam allowances. (Don't use starch if you don't plan to wash the quilt as starch is made from natural food products and may attract damaging pests. Magic sizing and specialty quilt starches may be used instead).
3. If your borders are pieced, stay stitch around the edge of your quilt inside the ¼" seam allowance for the binding.
4. Check for weak or failing seams and repair where possible.
5. Your quilt back must be approximately 3 - 4 inches larger than your quilt top on all sides and all sides should be evened/squared up. The backing should not exceed 5.5 inches larger than the quilt top on any side.
6. Choose a backing fabric with a busy print in a color that will blend with the top thread. Having a high color contrast between the top thread and the bobbin thread increases the likelihood that intermittent tension issues will be noticeable in the final product but hidden during the quilting process. Sometimes when quilting over heavy seam intersections the tension may be imperfect for a short run which is unnoticeable with busy backing or blending threads but stands out (usually on the quilt back) on plain fabric or with contrasting thread.
7. Wide backings are available in a variety of colors and patterns and are an excellent choice for your quilt.
8. If piecing your backing, trim the selvage edges before sewing the seam.

9. Seams should run in a single direction where possible. Centering a quilt top on the long arm machine over a quilt back in a single direction is straight forward. Centering on both the horizontal and vertical is rarely accurate and more costly due to the increased preparation and planning time involved.
10. If we will be applying or applying and finishing the binding for your project the binding should be ready for attachment (e.g., double fold, pre-cut, seamed on the diagonal, and pressed). We recommend you start with 2 ¼ to 2 ½ inch strips for your binding. Binding may be straight or bias cut and should be diagonally pieced.
11. Quilting preferences. Do you prefer the airy look of overall, edge to edge quilting or the heirloom look of custom work? Do you want the quilting to have a relaxed, one of a kind look or a highly consistent finish? Bring samples, pictures, books or any other medium to help communicate your preferences to the long arm quilter. The long arm quilter is also a great resource for helping you to decide what is just right for your design and fabric choices.

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