

## Preparing a Backing & Hanging Sleeve for a Quilt

For longarm machine quilting the backing must be at least 6-8" larger than your quilt top in length and width. This is to allow room to load the quilt onto the frame, use clamps to secure the sides of the quilt in the frame without interfering with the machine & distorting the stitching. Large quilts that are Double size or larger should have a larger backing & batting, at least 8" larger in length & width. Your batting should be the same size as the backing.

The best and most economical fabric for backing a quilt is Wide Backing which comes in 90", 108", 110", & 120". This prevents the need for seams. (For example, 45" fabric is about \$14.00 a yard, 108" backing fabric is from \$15.00-\$28.00 a yard. So, 1 yard of 108" fabric is equal to about 2.4 yards of 45", so \$15.00 for 108" and \$36.00 for the same amount of 45" fabric.)

For the best results, backing fabric should be kept on grain. The only true way to accomplish this is to tear the fabric to establish an on-grain edge (at the end of the bolt before tearing the width of fabric for the quilt). Then measure the amount of fabric you need and take a small snip at the edge and tear the fabric again. If the store where you purchase the backing does not tear the fabric, purchase extra fabric, up to a yard, and square up as you would any other fabric – there can be a lot of waste this way.

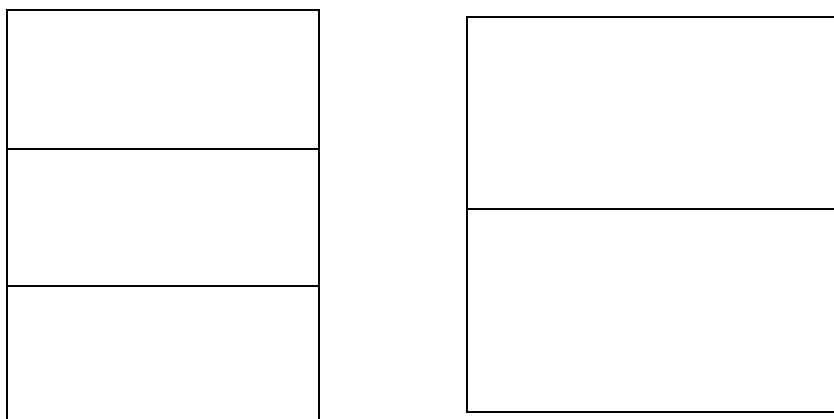
**How to square up a piece of fabric:** find the center of the fabric lengthwise, fold in half, carefully shift the fabric edges until the curve at the fold is smooth, lay on cutting mat and trim the edge on left and then right. You may do a double fold using the same process for large backing fabric, then trim the edges. Next fold the fabric width wise and do the same process.

For a pieced backing the seams should run horizontal, NOT VERTICAL. The seam of the backing fabric should lay on the poles of the frame. First measure the width of your quilt and add 6-8". Measure the length of your quilt and add 6-8". This is the final measurement for the quilt backing. \_\_\_\_\_ Length X \_\_\_\_\_ Width

**To piece the backing** measure the width needed and tear, repeat for the number of widths needed. To determine the number of widths needed divide the Length of the needed quilt backing by the width of the 40-45" fabric. So, for example a quilt that is 64" X 64", the backing needed is 72" X 72". The 72" in Length will need 2 cuts of 45" fabric (this will be oversized at about 88"). Selvedge edges that will not be inside the quilt can be left on the fabric. Selvedges that will be in the body of the quilt should be removed. I use a rotary cutter and ruler to measure and consistently cut off the selvedges. Pinning is suggested to keep the fabric from shifting or stretching during stitching. Then stitch the widths of fabric right sides together with a ½" seam, press open to reduce bulk. Each of the 4 corners of the backing should be 90° & all 4 sides straight. Give the entire backing good pressing.

**To make & attach a hanging sleeve** cut a piece of fabric 8 1/2" -10" by the width of your quilt. Fold each short end in 1" and press, fold again 1" and press. Stitch to finish the edges. Fold the length of fabric, wrong sides together and press. After the excess batting and backing is trimmed following quilting, find the center of the quilt at the top and place a pin. Find the center of the hanging sleeve and place a pin. Match the pins and raw edge of the quilt and hanging sleeve, pin sleeve in place. Stitch 1/8" the raw edges of the quilt and hanging sleeve. Attach the binding and finish as desired. With a ladder or slip stitch finish the sides and width of the hanging sleeve by hand.

**Backing Diagrams:**



**Hanging Sleeve:**

