

STITCHING THE QUILT BACK

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Sewing panels of backing fabric together can be intimidating. The instructions below are how I stitch my backing fabric together. Yes, these instructions are different than any other instructions you may have seen or used. With my method you will get seams that lay flat and the backing fabric will be straight at the top and the bottom.

First, figure out how much fabric and how many panels you will need for your quilt backing. Be sure to add a minimum of 6 – 8 inches to the quilt length and width measurements. (3 – 4 inches extra at the top, bottom and sides).

Example, if your quilt is 75 x 100 inches, adding 8 inches to the length and width will make your quilt measure 83 x 108 inches. From these adjusted measurements we know we will need 6 yards of fabric for the backing. (Two panels of 45 inch fabric, each panel 3 yards --108 inches – long for a total of 6 yards of fabric. Personally, I would probably buy an extra $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of fabric).

Before using your fabric, machine wash, dry and press your fabric. Leave fabric in one long piece; do not cut before washing.

1. Take your scissors and make a small “nip” across the selvedge on one end of the fabric and TEAR across fabric. The tear should go completely across the fabric. If it doesn't, nip, then tear again; slightly lower than the first nip. Tearing your fabric makes a straight edge and makes measuring easier.
2. Measure down the length of the fabric and make another nip at your adjusted quilt length measurement. Example – 108 inches. Tear fabric again.
3. Measure down the length of the fabric again to the adjusted quilt length, nip and tear again. You should have two length of fabric. Fold any remaining fabric and reserve for other projects.
4. Go back to the first panel you tore. Take and fold in half along one long selvedge edge (lengthwise) and make small diagonal cut. This will form a notch at the center of the fabric. Fold in half again, to fold into quarters and make two more notches. This divides the length into quarter sections. Instead of making notches, you could use straight or safety pins to mark quarter sections.

5. Take the other fabric panel and divide the length into quarters. Make sure the edges marked will be the edges that will be sewn together.
6. Place fabric panels, Right Side Together (RST), matching, then pinning edges and notches.
7. Begin sewing RST using a seam that is large enough that the selvedge can be trimmed away and that no "selvedge printing" is showing. You may have to make your seam up to 1 inch wide or larger. After stitching, both the top and bottom edges should be even.
8. Trim away the selvedge edges. I prefer to use pinking shears but a regular scissors will work. Press seam as desired, either open or to one side.
9. Quilt backing is now ready to be used in your quilt. Note – if you are making a three panel quilt back, repeat these steps for the third panel.