

Old-Fashioned/Traditional Quilting

The Frame: Use pine (or other softwood) boards – a little longer than your project(s), about ½” thick and about 4” wide. This makes it easier for FLAT thumbtacks to poke into. Tack it only about 1-2” away from the inside edge so that you can quilt closely to the blanket’s edge! You can either have actual quilting stands OR use 4 chairs that have horizontal backs to prop and C-Clamp your boards to. You need 4 – C-clamps that are big enough to hold both thicknesses of boards. (I use a flat table knife or screwdriver to carefully pry/remove the thumbtacks at the end.)

The Sewing Supplies: The backing is usually one piece of fabric (sewn together as needed for width) and usually cotton or cotton-polyester lightweight fabric. The insulating layer is either cotton or polyester batting that comes in huge pieces, sometimes rolled. (You could also make your own insulating layer by pulling and placing/felting together pieces of washed and dried sheep’s wool.) The top part of the quilt may be also one type of fabric or it may be several types of fabric sewn together to match the approximate size of the backing piece. Thread may be the all-purpose sewing thread (polyester), quilting cotton thread, embroidery thread if it is appliqued (or embroidered patches) or yarn if it is tied.

Kinds of Quilting Methods:

1. **Tied** – It’s the fastest! Use a darning needle and quality yarn in a complementary colour to jab down then up about ¼” away (about ½ cm) , cut the yarn at about 3-4” high and tie a double or triple knot. Trim ends just a bit. Continue to tie yarn strings about every 8-12” apart and roll the quilt as you go. Finish your edging as desired.
2. **Hand-quilted** – It takes time but is the most unique because the stitches, although somewhat even, are often made by different people and thus, spaced a bit different because it isn’t done by a consistent machine. Lines to hand-stitch in a up/down (in-out) pattern are either drawn on with a light pencil (pencil crayon/fabric pencil) that will be washed off in the laundry OR are already pre-printed as part of the fabric’s pattern. I remember my mom drawing diagonal lines with a yardstick on fabric laid on our living room floor, making the stitching lines into diamond shapes for my sister’s quilt. My dad’s mom was part of a “quilting circle” of church ladies who took the fancier patterns of roses and spirals to trace onto plain fabric. They used pre-made templates to do this. If you are also doing a patchwork top, you can hand-quilt but don’t just follow your patch seam allowances – do something different for your quilting lines for better durability! Hint: If the patchwork is “crazy patches” (all over the place and vividly coloured), you might want to place your “top” as your “bottom” piece so that you can quilt from the true top side without as much eye strain!
3. **Machine-quilted** – It requires a sewing machine and some sturdy hands to guide the thickened fabric along the straight or curved lines. Small projects are possible but not bedding (unless crib size) because of the size of the sewing machine’s “arm”. Try potholders, cushion covers, fabric bags, wall art, instead.

There are many different options for designing a quilt top:

- single fabric
- stripping fabric (just along sides or as a full pattern)
- patches (3 to 8” squares or really any shape if crazy)
- triangles (2 triangles equal a square)
- special patterns (e.g. log cabin, sailboat, rings – some are easier to do than they look ☺)
- appliqued blocks or embroidered blocks which are then joined and quilted.

Fabric Measurements: Just like going to buy wood in a lumber store, most fabric is still measured in inches and yards, although meters (which are slightly longer than yards) are fairly common to measure fabric and it is also sold by LENGTH. When purchasing fabric for the backing, you generally ask for a bolt of fabric that is 45" wide to be cut at a certain yard or meter. Sometimes the fabric will be 60" instead but I'd still just keep to the 45" width measurements and then use any extra fabric in other projects.

Hint: Occasionally you can find really really wide fabric that is intended for quilting but it is often more expensive. The cheap way to have very wide fabric is to find commercially-produced flat (not fitted) bedsheets but your colours/patterns are very limited that way and the fabric might feel "tougher", depending on the weave or finish on it.

BEFORE SETTING UP YOUR QUILT "SANDWICH" ON THE FRAME: The fabric store often gives a bit extra length as well so you will want to trim your fabric at home to the correct size. The best way to do this is to **wash** the fabric (to pre-shrink it), **dry** it, **iron** it and lay it out on your floor and measure with a meter stick. Stretch fabric by pulling it on an angle if it looks distorted so that it becomes more "square/rectangular".)

Size for	Crib	Single/Twin Bed	Double	Queen
Mattress	28x52"	39x75"	54x75"	60x80"
Raw, unfinished fabric size to purchase (approximate since you have to put the finished edging around it yet) You want to think of how much you want to hang down on each side (i.e. how thick your mattress is).	26 x 40" – this means 45" wide fabric is great and you only need 0.75 meters of length. Comment: You don't actually need an insulating layer for a crib blanket or lap blanket. I like to simply sew a nice cotton fabric and a flannelette fabric together around the edges by machine, turn inside-out, then finish the opening and do a bit of machine quilting – no batting at all! ☺	53" x 2.5 yards This is the normal 45" wide fabric plus 4" strips sewn on either side. If you are doing one for a bunk bed, 45" is OK.	45" width fabric – 5 yards of it is normal to buy but for a true double, you'd also <u>trim off some of the sides</u> so that it isn't too wide-looking. Use that fabric in your patches or for another project. Keep the seam though down the middle, not off-centred. In other words, you have to cut half of the total amount off of each side. See comments under "Queen". You could also use a 60" width fabric and add strips like the comments under "Twin".	45" width fabric doubled (seam down the middle of the bed) is nice – that means it will be about 90" wide and overhang 15" on either side of the bed. My grandma would ask for <u>5 yards</u> for a backing (2.5 yards for each left and right sides). That means it's about 10 yards of fabric for a top and a bottom for a double/queen, 5 of each fabric pattern.
Finished quilt blanket size (approximate since it depends on the type of edging you decide on – rolled, hidden hand-stitching, seam binding, ruffled edge??)				

Hint: To make 2 matching pillowcases, ask for 1 ½ to 2 meters additional fabric. (Polyester-cotton or cotton is best. Broadcloth is an example of this kind of fabric.) To cut that fabric lay it out double-layered, lay one of the pillowcases you like to use on top, mentally add enough seam allowance and hem allowance and cut one rectangle out for each pillowcase. Iron what your hem will be (seam allowance plus 2-3.5" inches – your choice), sew the straight sides, then sew the hem with a straight stitch or fancy stitch as you go around that hem. Add lace or other trims as desired. These are very easy to make for gifts or for yourself!

YOUR "SANDWICH": Thumbtack a firmly-stretched bottom layer to your frame, then lay the batting (no tacking needed), then thumbtack a firmly-stretched top layer. Quilt and roll as you go, adjust in the c-clamps to hold your frame.