

Borders

Pieced tops tend to flare around the edges because of all the un-stabilized raw edges. To help bring the quilt back into square, follow these steps for applying square borders.

Start by cutting your four borders longer than they should be. Measure the length of your quilt through the center and two places a few inches either side of the center and average the three measurements (fig 1). Cut two of your border strips to this length. Fold each strip in half and mark the center with a pin. Fold your quilt in half and mark the center with a pin. If your quilt is long you may want to also mark quarters by folding strips and quilt in half again. Matching the pins and ends, pin the border strips to the sides of your quilt (fig 2), right sides together, and stitch with a 1/4" seam. You may have some fullness that needs to be eased in. If you are not using a walking foot you'll find it easiest to ease in the fullness if the full side is down (against the feed dogs). Press the seams toward the borders.

Measure the width of the quilt, including the borders you just applied, through the middle and two places each a few inches either side of the middle (fig 3). Average these three measurements and cut the other two border strips to this length. Follow the same procedure of marking centers and sew the borders to the top and bottom of the quilt (fig 4). Press seams toward the border.

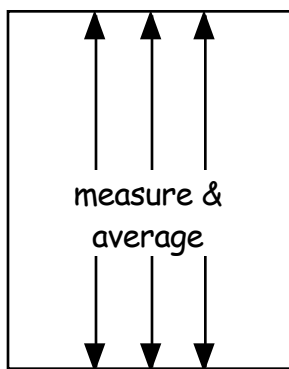


fig 1

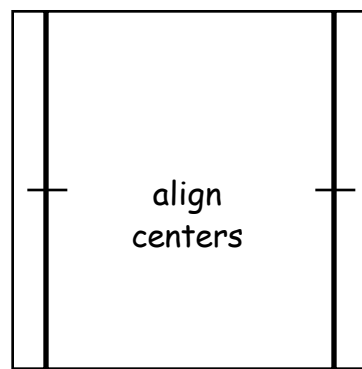


fig 2

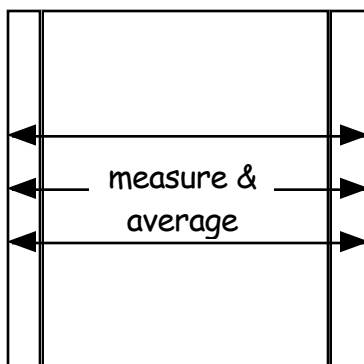


fig 3

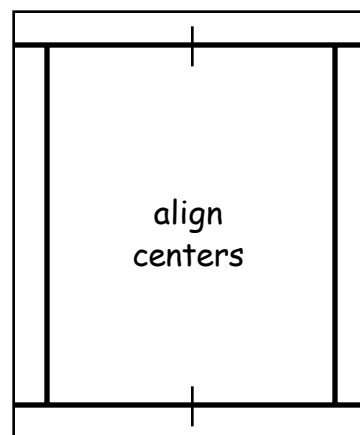


fig 4

If you are applying mitered borders it's a little trickier since you don't cut the borders to length until after applying them. If you're applying more than one mitered border, sew your borders together before applying them to the quilt. The length of the border needs to be the length of the quilt plus twice the combined border width plus about 3-4".

You still need to measure through the middle to get your border length, but instead of cutting the borders to this length you will mark this length on the border with pins. Fold the border in half and place a pin at the center. Put two other pins each the same distance from the center pin using half the measurement you found when measuring the quilt. As you apply the borders, match the end pins to the edges of the quilt and match the center pins. Apply the border starting and stopping stitching 1/4" from each corner. Repeat this process for the second two borders.

After applying the borders, fold the quilt diagonally and line up the border seam and the outer edges of the border. Use the 45° line on your cutting ruler to draw a 45° line on the border. Stitch along this line. Check to see that the border corner lies flat then trim the seam to 1/4" and press open. Repeat for all four corners.

Piecing and Squaring Backing - Preparing for Machine Quilting

If your quilt is larger than 36" in both directions then you will need to piece the backing. Follow these steps for piecing and squaring a single-fabric backing to best prepare for machine quilting.

Example: You are piecing backing for a quilt measuring 86" x 95".

- Decide which way your backing fabric should go - horizontally or vertically. You can make this decision based on whether or not your backing fabric is a directional print and also which arrangement will give you the most efficient use of your fabric. For this example we will assume the backing is running vertically.
- Determine how many widths of fabric you will need to cover the width. Remember that your backing should be 8" wider than your quilt. For our example we will need 3 widths of 45" fabric. It may seem that 2 would be enough but by the time you remove selvages, subtract for seams and add 8" you will need 3 widths.
- Cut 3 lengths of fabric each 108" long. We're making these longer to allow for squaring after piecing.
- Rotary cut each piece to 34" wide. You can do this by folding the fabric lengthwise three times aligning selvage edges.
- Sew along the long edges, using 1/2" seams. Press open (you need to reduce bulk for easier quilting).
- If your quilt is going to be quilted by a longarm quilter, you will need to square the top and bottom edges.