

Quilting — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into hands-on practice. Each section matches a course module and asks you to choose fabric, cut and sew test pieces, and measure your results the way a careful quilter does. Work through it alongside a real project and you will finish with a planned, pieced, quilted, and bound lap quilt, plus a record you can repeat.

Fabric, Tools, and Cutting Accurately

Choose fabrics by value, set up your cutting kit, and prove your cuts are square before committing a design.

Exercise: Value-test your fabric pull

Lay out the fabrics you want to use for your quilt. Photograph the whole group in black and white on your phone (or squint hard at it). Sort the fabrics into lights, mediums, and darks based on the greyscale photo, not their colour.

- Do you have a clear spread of lights, mediums, and darks, or do most fabrics read as the same value?

- Which two fabrics are closest in value, and will they disappear into each other when placed side by side?

- Have you mixed print scales (a large, a medium, and a small or tonal print), or are they all the same busyness?

Worksheet: Project and materials plan

Record exactly what your quilt is and what you are working with, so your cutting is correct and your results are repeatable.

Quilt finished size (width x length, inches)

Block: name (e.g. Nine-Patch, half-square triangle) and finished size

Number of blocks needed (rows x columns)

Fabrics: name/brand, colour, and value (light/medium/dark) for each

Batting: fibre, loft, and stated maximum quilting distance

Backing plan: single width or pieced, and total yardage

Binding: strip width (2.25 or 2.5 in) and total length needed

Thread: piecing weight/brand and quilting weight/brand

Checklist: Cutting-station setup and safety check

- Fabric pressed flat with no wrinkles before cutting
- Self-healing mat at least 18 by 24 inches, gridded side up, lying flat
- Rotary cutter blade fresh and sharp (no skipping or dragging)
- Thick acrylic ruler with a clear quarter-inch grid in reach
- Fold lined up square to a mat line before squaring the edge
- Cutting hand fingertips arched and clear, blade retracted whenever set down
- Good light and room to stand square over long cuts

Exercise: Square-edge and straight-strip test

Press a folded piece of fabric selvage to selvage, square the ragged end against a ruler line, then cut one 2.5-inch strip. Open the strip fully and inspect it.

- When you open the strip, is it straight, or does it bend in a shallow V at the fold? A V means the fold was not square.
- Measure the strip in three places along its length: is it a consistent 2.5 inches, or does the width drift?
- Did you cut away from your body in one smooth pass with the ruler held firmly, or did you saw and let it slip?

Piecing: The Quarter-Inch Seam and Blocks

Calibrate the seam the craft depends on, then sew, press, and square up blocks that match.

Exercise: The three-strip quarter-inch test

Cut three strips exactly 1.5 inches wide by 4 inches long. Sew them side by side with your quarter-inch seam, press the seams, and measure the centre strip. It must finish at exactly 1 inch.

- What did the centre strip measure? If wider than 1 inch your seam is too narrow; if narrower, too wide.
- What did you adjust to fix it (needle position, seam guide, presser foot), and did the re-test land at a true 1 inch?
- Is your seam scant (a hair under a true quarter inch) to allow for the thread and the fold when pressed?

Worksheet: Machine and seam calibration record

Record the exact setup that produces a true scant quarter inch on your machine, so you can return to it any time.

Machine make and model

Presser foot used (quarter-inch foot / standard + guide)

Needle position setting

Seam guide used (tape / magnetic / flange) and its placement

Piecing thread brand and weight

Stitch length (mm)

Three-strip test result (centre strip measurement)

Date calibrated

Checklist: Accurate piecing checklist

- All pieces laid out in final position before sewing (none sewn in rotated)
- Pairs chain-pieced in one rhythm, raw edge riding the seam guide
- Each seam pressed flat-as-sewn, then to one side or open, before being crossed
- Pressing directions alternated so adjoining seams nest
- Darker seam allowance pressed toward the dark to avoid shadowing
- Pressed (set-hold-lift), not ironed back and forth that stretches seams
- Final block pressed from the front with no hidden pleats

Exercise: Build, match, and square up one block

Make one complete block (e.g. a Nine-Patch or a four-HST pinwheel). Nest and pin opposing seams at each join, sew, then square the finished block to its exact unfinished size with a square ruler.

- Do the seams and points meet from the front? If a point is chopped off, is your seam fat rather than scant?
- What unfinished size did you square to, and does it equal the finished size plus half an inch?
- Do all your blocks measure identically? If one is small, your seams crept wide, re-run the three-strip test.

Assembling and Basting the Quilt Sandwich

Join blocks into a flat top, prepare an oversized backing, and baste the layers so nothing shifts.

Exercise: Lay out and value-check the top

Arrange all squared-up blocks on a design wall or the floor. Move them until values and colours are balanced, then photograph the layout in black and white before sewing any rows.

- In the black-and-white photo, is the value spread even, or does one corner read too dark or too light?
- Are any two identical fabrics touching, or is a busy print clustered in one area?
- Have you labelled or stacked blocks in layout order so the arrangement is not lost at the machine?

Worksheet: Backing, batting, and border plan

Plan the layers and borders with real measurements so the backing and batting are big enough and the borders lie flat.

Quilt top size after assembly (width x length)

Backing size needed (top + at least 4 in on every side)

Backing pieced? (yes/no) and seam placement (kept off centre)

Batting size needed (top + at least 4 in on every side)

Border strips: width and length measured through the quilt centre

Border grain (length/width, not bias)

Basting method chosen (pin / spray / thread)

Checklist: Sandwich and basting checklist

- Borders measured through the centre, not the stretchy edge, before cutting
- Backing and batting each at least 4 inches larger than the top all around
- Backing pressed, laid wrong-side-up, and taped or clamped taut (not stretched)
- Batting smoothed flat over the backing with no folds
- Top centred right-side-up with even overhang all around
- Basting started at the centre and worked outward, smoothing each area
- Pins or stitches every 3 to 4 inches; backing checked flat with no tucks

Exercise: Baste and flip-check

Baste the full sandwich by your chosen method, always working from the centre out. When finished, flip the whole quilt over and inspect the backing carefully before any quilting.

- Is the backing completely flat, or are there folds and tucks that must be undone and re-basted?
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- Is your basting spaced closely enough (every 3 to 4 inches) that no large unsupported area remains?
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- Are pins or basting stitches clear of the lines you plan to quilt along?
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Quilting the Layers and Binding the Edge

Quilt by hand or machine within the batting's limits, then square up and bind for a durable finish.

Exercise: Quilt a practice sandwich first

Make a small basted practice sandwich from scraps of your top fabric, batting, and backing. Quilt it the way you intend to quilt the real quilt (walking-foot straight lines, free-motion meander, hand stitches, or ties) until your stitches are even.

- Are your stitches even in length, or ragged (hand too fast) or knotted (hand too slow) for free-motion?
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- Is the back free of puckers and pleats, confirming your basting and feeding are working?
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- Is every point within the batting's stated maximum distance from a line of quilting?
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Worksheet: Quilting plan and settings

Record how you will quilt and the settings that worked on your practice sandwich, so the real quilt is consistent from centre to edge.

Quilting method (walking foot / free-motion / hand / tie)

Design (stitch-in-the-ditch / straight grid / meander / loops)

Maximum spacing between lines (from batting package)

Needle type and size

Thread weight and colour (matching to hide / contrast to show)

Stitch length (mm) for machine quilting

Start point (centre) and direction of work

Thread-tail securing method (backstitch / bury)

Checklist: Binding and finishing checklist

- Quilting started in the centre and worked outward, density roughly even across the quilt
- Excess batting and backing trimmed flush; quilt squared with true 90-degree corners
- Binding cut 2.25 to 2.5 inches wide, joined on the diagonal, pressed in half (double-fold)
- Binding length = perimeter + about 10 to 12 inches for corners and the join
- Binding sewn on with a quarter-inch seam, stopping a quarter inch from each corner to mitre
- Binding folded to the back and secured (slip stitch by hand or stitch-in-the-ditch by machine)
- Label added (name, date, quilt name); first wash done with a colour-catcher sheet

Exercise: Square up and bind the quilt

Trim and square the finished quilt, make double-fold binding to the length you calculated, attach it with mitred corners, and finish it to the back. Then complete an edge inspection.

- Are all four corners true right angles and the edges straight after squaring up?

- Did the binding join lie flat with no lump, and are the mitred corners crisp on front and back?

- Did you choose hand-finishing (cleanest look) or machine-finishing (most durable), and why, for this quilt's use?

Your Action Plan

1. Pull your fabrics and value-test them in a black-and-white photo until lights, mediums, and darks are clearly spread.
2. Set up your cutting station, then run the square-edge and straight-strip test to confirm your cuts are true.
3. Calibrate your machine with the three-strip test until the centre strip measures a true 1 inch (scant quarter-inch seam).
4. Chain-piece, press toward the dark to nest, and square up every block to the same exact unfinished size.
5. Lay out the top, value-check the arrangement, sew rows nesting the seams, and add borders measured through the centre.
6. Prepare an oversized backing and batting (4 inches larger all around) and stack the sandwich wrinkle-free.
7. Baste from the centre outward every 3 to 4 inches, then flip and confirm the backing is flat.
8. Quilt a practice sandwich, then quilt the real quilt from the centre out within the batting's maximum spacing.
9. Trim and square the quilt, then make and attach double-fold binding with mitred corners.
10. Finish the binding to the back, add a label, and wash with a colour-catcher sheet for a durable, signed quilt.

