Your Answered Top 20 Beginner Quilting Questions

Martha Penner Novacek

www.LearnHowToMakeQuilts.com
From where should I get a Sewing Machine?

Get your very own sewing machine--When considering getting a sewing machine to begin your quilting journey, the first thing I would do is check with any close family members or friends and see if they have a sewing machine in their garage, attic, or closet, that they are not using.

Or, see if they have an extra sewing machine for you to have or use until you have decided on what is the perfect machine for you to invest in.

Secondly, if that doesn’t work, or you can’t get a machine that way, when you go garage selling, keep a look out for a nice workable sewing machine you could pick up for a good deal, or even look on craigslist or second hand stores.

Thirdly, visit a couple of stores that sell sewing machines and talk to a sales person and ask if you can try out some of their popular sewing machines, or ones that are in your price range, or try them out even if they are above your price range, just to see what your perfect fit machine would be.

Also ask them about the features and benefits of the machine. You could also do some online researching on what feedback people leave that have bought certain types of machines.

Then when you have narrowed down your search and you have found the machine for you, then look and see where you can find it at the best price, or check out sales flyers for when they go on sale.

Also, you could then look for that brand machine even on Craig’s list, second hand
The key is to get a feel for the “right” machine. Do you want a lot of features on the machine, like a variety of fancy stitches, or do you just want a very good basic workable machine? For me, the basic one is just fine, because I don’t use fancy stitches very much, and the basic machine has enough fancy stitches to choose from.

I also don’t care to have an expensive computerized machine that will cost me more to have serviced as well.

Another feature I personally would look for is more metal parts in the machine and also a low and high speed knob, which allows for beginners to sew slowly and for advanced like myself, to sew speedily.

Fourthly, also ask others in fabric stores, or friends and family that own a machine, what kind they have and which do they think is the best. Ask them what features they think you should look for.

You could also call around to different shops that sell sewing machine and see what they say as to what machine in your price range is the best. This will help you narrow down your search.

Where can I get deals on fabric?

Fabric at your local specialty quilt shop, can be very expensive, usually around 8-10 dollars a yard. Even online fabric places are usually fairly expensive.

These fabrics are usually prettier than the ones at your local fabric shops like Hobby Lobby, Hancock’s, and Joanne’s.

Sometimes you will find fabric at some online stores that are very pretty but on really good sale, so keep a look out for it.

That’s why I usually shop for fabric at Hobby Lobby, Hancock’s and Jo-Ann’s, because they have sales regularly.
I sign up for their flyers and so I check when they are on sale and I usually wait till then to shop for fabric, if and when I need it.

To really get value fabric you have to look for it at garage sales, Craig’s list, or second hand stores. If you find some, check the fabric to make sure it’s not too old, rotten.

Just try to tear it a little with your hands. In case it does tear, make sure you won’t make a big tear, but if you can tear it with your hands, it is rotten.

You shouldn’t be able to tear it just like that with your hands. Of course in these places you will usually not have much to choose from, although there are exceptions.

You might be lucky and find a great deal with very beautiful high quality fabric. It’s worth it to keep your eyes open for fabric in places like these. Happy Hunting!!!

Another place to look, one you might easily overlook, is to see if there are any of your family members or friends who might have a fabric stash they are not using. Maybe someone in the family who used to quilt, or just sew little girl dresses, and has some leftover scraps that you could have.

How do I get connected with other quilters?

Getting connected with other quilters in your area is very enjoyable and I totally encourage you to do it. Of my years of quilting here in Oklahoma I have only just recently gotten connected with other quilters and I really enjoy it and am learning so much more about quilting, plus it’s just enjoyable to spend an evening chatting and quilting together.

You can check with different ladies at the church you attend to see if there are other women there that quilt or want to learn and you could set aside an evening a week to come together and quilt.

Another place to find fellow quilters would be at your local fabric shop.

Ask employees if they know of any quilting groups in the area, or just ask other shoppers if you see them by the quilters cotton fabrics.
Strike up a conversation with them, and ask them if they have a group they meet with and if they do, if you could join too, or if not, if you want to start your own quilting group.

There’s a popular online quilting forum, which I enjoy being a part of.

The only reason I and many others on the forum don’t like it, is because we tend to spend too much time on the forum without getting much of any quilting or anything else done around the house.

It is a really good quilting forum, with quilters all over the world, and you can get connected with others in your area through that, or just feel connected with other quilters online.

You can ask any questions you have or share your thoughts or projects or ask advice about your project etc.... You can get so much good advice from so many different quilters. I really encourage you to join, just be warned you can easily get addicted and spend a lot of time on it (smiley face). [www.quiltedparadise.com](http://www.quiltedparadise.com)

**What Kind of Thread should I be using?**

To simply piece your quilt top, I would say the quality of your thread does not matter. Do make sure it’s not really old and rotten.

Cone threads are okay, even though their quality is not as high as your Coats & Clark etc... Or other name brand thread. I still use it to piece my quilts.

Growing up in the Mennonite community we used the cheapest thread and our quilts lasted a long time.

Even today, I use my quilts till they are worn out, and what wears out the quickest, is not the thread I’ve used on the quilt, but the binding on the edge of the quilt.

My quilts don’t fall apart where I’ve pieced my blocks because I used cheap thread. So, it’s totally up to you what kind of thread you want to use to piece your quilts.
For hand quilting, I do buy thread at the fabric store that says it’s for hand quilting. Whether it’s 100% cotton, or a blend, it doesn’t really matter to me. I’m not even sure they offer a variety. As far as I know, there is only one kind to get.

Once I had finished a quilt for a lady, and she had begun using regular sewing thread to hand quilt her quilt, but had used two strands, so I just continued doing the same thing.

As far as for machine quilting, I’m not so sure. I’m sure there are many opinions on this as well. Since I don’t machine quilt regularly, I don’t have much personal experience in this area.

The couple of times I have machine quilted I have just used Coats and Clarks thread, a little better quality than just regular cone thread.

I would choose a better quality thread than the cone thread, but I wouldn’t buy any of the very expensive thread especially for machine quilting.

I’m sure your quilt will last just as well with the cheaper thread.

As in my experience with my quilts, the binding is the first to show wear and tear on a quilt, with the machine pieced top, and then all the hand stitches or machine stitches on it, it holds up just fine, until you are ready to start using a new quilt.

These days quilts rarely get used and worn out as much as when the quilts you made were the only blankets on your bed. So, I would say, don’t worry too much about what threads to use and what threads not to use.

**What color Threads do I use?**

You can use whatever color thread you like. Most of the time for piecing a quilt top if it has a dominating color I will try to use that color thread to piece it.

If it has a variety of color fabrics, then just use a beige, or white depending on which matches the best.
Generally these stitches are not visible, at least if your machine makes nice and tight even stitches you should have no problem with it showing through.

For hand quilting, I also usually like to match the color of the quilt, and will generally use a beige hand quilting thread, or white.

Sometimes if I want my stitches to be more outstanding I will use a complimenting color.

A friend of mine, who is a fellow quilter, makes an extra quilt block and makes practice hand quilting stitches on it with different colors and designs, to see which ones she likes best and then she knows how she wants to quilt her quilt.

For machine quilting I would use the same method. You can either use different color threads according to the color fabric on which you are quilting, or just stick with the color of the lighter fabric in the quilt, beige or white.

Also consider what it will look like on the back of your quilt. If you use a beige thread for the quilting, but the backing of your quilt is a dark color fabric, just be aware that the threads and design will really show up.

This is just fine as long as you are aware of it. Of course the quilt top is the most crucial, unless of course if you make it as
a reversible quilt.

Be creative and experiment. There is no right and wrong, and if you don’t feel confident of your own choices, then ask a fellow quilter or even just a friend, whether they are a quilter or not, they might have a good eye at picking colors or matching etc... And you value their ideas or opinions.

How Do I Get a ¼ Inch Seam?

Start by sewing a short seam on a piece of fabric on your sewing machine, with the fabric in line with the sewing machine foot on the right side.

Then take the fabric with the seam on it, and measure the distance from the seam to the shorter edge, the edge that was on the right side in line with the edge of the sewing machine foot.

If it is more than a ¼ inch, then either buy a ¼ inch foot for your machine, or find out how much further in from the edge of the foot you need to bring your fabric to make the seam a ¼ inch.

And then, place a piece of masking tape or clear scotch tape just in front of the foot, so that you can line up your fabric as you are pushing it under the sewing machine foot, with the edge of the piece of tape.

You can see the piece of tape in the second picture above, with the quarter inch seam of dark thread.
What are the Basic Supplies to make a Quilt?

The basic supplies you need to make a quilt depend on how "basic" you want to be.

The most basic I would say would be a scissor, pencil or pen, ruler, needle and thread, pins, a piece of cardboard to make your template, and of course some fabric.

Then to finish your quilt you would need some batting, and fabric for the backing of the quilt, and quilting thread or yarn or embroidery thread to tie your quilt.

This is if you were to hand piece and hand quilt your quilt.

Now if you went a step up from that I would say get a sewing machine and machine piece your quilt top.

Then still a step further, get a rotary cutter, a mat, and a nice quilting ruler for your cutting mat, like a 6x24 inch ruler, that is if your mat was 18x24 inches.
Which Batting Should I Use?

I use pretty much any kind of batting. Of course low loft, thinner, battings are easier to work with, with either machine or hand quilting.

The easiest batting I have used in hand quilting is Dream Poly, which is a very soft and thin polyester batting. I don’t use it much because it’s expensive.

I’ve heard other quilters say that cotton/polyester blend battings are easier to work with than a 100% cotton batting (Warm and Natural).

I haven’t been able to tell a big difference in the ease of quilting. I think the kind of fabric you use, like a very tight weave cotton, or a fabric that has an embossed design on it, is very difficult to hand quilt. I use cotton batting most often.

I like that it is slightly heavier than polyester batting, and it gives the quilt a nice wrinkly antic look after you wash the quilt because the cotton shrinks.

Polyester batting is a little lighter and your quilt will look little fluffier yet not wrinkly. I also prefer cotton because it’s an all-natural fiber and I’m for healthier, natural and better for the planet as well. So, it’s totally up to you what you want to use. Experiment with different battings and find one you like.

Please Explain these Quilting Terms to Me!

Piecing: This is when you are sewing together the blocks, squares or other design of your quilt. It’s when you are sewing the pieces of your quilt top together.
**Quilting:** This is when you are putting the three layers of your quilt—the pieced quilt top, the batting (the soft part in the middle), and the backing together.

This is done either by hand quilting (tiny hand stitches), or machine quilting, (sewing over the three layers with your sewing machine), or tying it with yarn or embroidery thread.

**Stitch in the ditch:** This is a term used when discussing how to quilt your quilt.

When you stitch in the ditch you either hand quilt, or machine quilt in the ditch. The “ditch” is where the seams come together.

Sewing in the ditch is sewing right on the seams, where your blocks, or different fabric pieces are joined, or pieced together.

**Shadow quilting:** This is when you quilt about a quarter inch away from the ditch, where the seam is for the different pieces of your quilt top. You shadow all the seams of your quilt top.

**Basting:** When I hand quilt I put my three layers on a frame of four boards clamped together, so I don’t need to baste, but if you are planning to machine quilt, or hand
quilt on a ring, or a PVC pipe quilting frame, then you need to baste.

To baste is to put the three layers of your quilt on the floor or table as you want them to be with the backing and batting pieces to be bigger than the quilt top on every side.

Then you take some thread and a big needle, and make big stitches, like maybe roughly an inch big, and make rough stitches through all three layers of your quilt, about every 6 inches square of the quilt.

This is to keep the three layers secure as you move it about and while you are making the fine hand quilting stitches or as you are machine quilting it according to whatever design you choose.

**Binding:** Binding your quilt is the last step of finishing your quilt.

After you’ve finished hand quilting, machine quilting or tying your quilt, we are ready to finish the outer edges of your quilt. We need to bind them.

You cut about 2 ¼ inch strips enough (when sewed together) to go all the way around the edges of your quilt.

Fold in half and iron or press this long strip with wrong sides facing each other, right sides on the outside.

Then sew the strip onto the quilt edge with the rough edge of the strip and the rough edge of the quilt lined up and even.

Then press the folded strip to the outside of the quilt, and then fold it all the way over to the other side of the quilt and stitch on by hand or machine.

For hand stitching, I would sew the binding strip onto the front of the quilt and then fold it over to the back of the quilt to hand stitch it on.

By machine, I would sew the binding strip onto the back of the quilt and then fold it over to the front of the quilt and machine stitch it on.
**Marking:** If you want to hand quilt or machine quilt a specific design onto your quilt, and you are not an artist who can free hand a design and you want to use a pattern, you need to mark your quilt top.

You can do this either by tracing a design on it, or take specific marking pencils to draw on the top, or mark lines or other designs that are easily removable once you are finished following them with your hand quilting or your machine quilting stitches.

**Mitered corner:** A mitered corner is a corner on the binding of the quilt that is an even forty five degree angle.

There is a forty five degree angle where the bindings meet right at the corner of the quilt.

**Layering:** This is when you have your quilt top, backing piece, and batting all ready to be assembled. You layer these three layers, by placing them in the same order and way you want them to be when the quilt is done.

Put the backing piece on the floor with right side facing the floor.

Then lay your batting on top of the backing evenly. Then lay your quilt top on top of the batting evenly and centered with the right side facing you, the top.

Like I’ve said before, the batting and the backing piece should be bigger on all sides of the quilt top as you lay it on top of these two layers.
What Books Do You Recommend?

Currently there is only one quilting book that I would suggest to a beginner quilter. Although, I would say it’s not a necessity, but even I refer to it occasionally.

It is:


It is available at Amazon.com in paperback for around $15.63 new and hardcover too. It’s pretty highly rated so it may be worth your investment.

Other than that, I would say subscribing to some quilting magazines is enjoyable and can really get you stirred up to pick up some of their quilt patterns and start quilting.

Of course, my beginner’s instructional video course will give you all the basics for a solid foundation of quilting.

From there you should be able to pretty much pick up any pattern except for maybe a couple of the most difficult ones, and have no problems following the pattern and making a beautiful quilt.

Should I Pre-Wash my Fabrics?
And, what about my finished Quilt?

Some quilters wash all their fabrics as soon as they bring them home from the fabric store, then press them, and store them away ready for use.

Others wash them as they are getting ready to use them in a project. Some are very strict about washing all their fabrics whether dark or light or bright colored or not.

I usually wash only colors that I think might bleed, which is most of the fabrics.
If all the pieces of my quilt are in the same shade, like all fall colors, I won’t necessarily wash any of them, but if I’m mixing them with fairly light colors, then I will.

It is better to be safe than sorry, and prewash your fabrics. If I have some pieces like quarter yard pieces or fat quarters, I will often just hand wash them in the sink with a gentle soap and then hang them over the back of a chair to dry and then press and use to make the quilt or other project.

I would wash the fabrics in warm water or cold, maybe which ever you want to wash your finished quilt later.

Often though, although I prewashed my fabric in warm water, later, the finished quilt, I will still wash in cold water, especially if I used colors like red, and black with white in the quilt.

Then if you are scared it will still bleed, take your quilt out of the washer immediately after the cycle is done. Don’t let it sit in there wet.

Take it out and hang it over the backs of a couple of chairs to air dry, so that none of the pieces are touching each other, like lying on top of each other. Just use a gentle detergent to wash your quilt, or none at all.

As I use my quilts, I was in warm water and dry in dryer the same as other clothes. I wash them the same as I wash my sheets, since I sleep with my quilts every night. I use my quilts until I’ve worn them out and need a new one. This is the luxury of making your own quilts.

What’s the Best Way to Mark my Quilt?

Especially for marking straight lines on medium to dark fabrics, a soap sliver and a ruler is the best.
It will wash right out when you wash your quilt, or you can just take a damp cloth and wipe it off.

Then there are some washable and chalk pencils available at your local fabric store.

Another method is using some washable, washes out, tracing or carbon paper to trace your design onto your quilt.

Test it to make sure it will wash out, or if it doesn’t wash out very well, and you don’t know how else to mark your quilt; just mark it very lightly, just so you can barely see it.

I use a regular pencil when I want to mark lines onto a very light colored fabric. I mark it as light as possible and don’t make solid lines, but short dashes, and then it is barely visible later.

You can erase with pencil eraser a little, or it will just wash out after a couple washes, and if not it will be barely obvious.

There are also markers where the markings disappear within a couple hours, or some will stay a couple weeks.

Just make sure you use one that will stay in long enough for you to be able to finish your project and the design won’t
disappear before you can finish your quilt.

Or, just mark it a small section at a time, so that you have time to finish it before it disappears.

Some take their paper with the design on it and take it to their sewing machine and sew on the lines, so that the paper where the design lines are is full of pin pricks or holes.

Then they place the sheet of paper with the design on it on the place on the quilt where they want that design.

And, then shake some chalk powder on it and wipe it over the paper so that the chalk falls through the pin pricks and leaves the design on the fabric like that.

You could also mark your design onto a clear plastic sheet, and lay that on top of a glass table, with a lamp underneath the table and the quilt top on top of the sheet with design, and then trace the design onto your quilt that way.

Or, get some plastic sheets from Hobby Lobby and make your own leaf, heart, circle or whatever other design template and cut out and trace around it onto your quilt top.

**How Do I pick out Fabric for my Project without feeling so confused?**

If you haven’t been in a fabric store before, and are little insecure, and uneasy in going into one, take a friend along as moral support.

Then feel free to ask an employee about items you are looking for, like where is their 100% cotton, or quilting fabric, or where their quilting supplies are.

Get yourself well oriented in the store and get familiar with it. Then once you feel comfortable, look around.
If you have a specific pattern and colors in mind, start looking for those colors and just see which fabrics look appealing to you. Then gather all the fabrics on one pile, and see if they look good together.

Ask the advice of your friend as well. If you like the colors together, even if they don’t match, you will have a lovely quilt when you are done putting them together.

As I’ve discussed on the free video you watched, using the Mr. Smith method is very helpful. Pick a fabric that appeals to you, which is usually some sort of floral or multicolored fabric.

Then add pieces of fabric that have the same colors or color as you find in your Mr. Smith fabric.

Or, if you want to use for example all teal fabrics, just find teal color fabrics that match each other, look good together and get different shades of this one color.

Another way is to find a theme fabric that you like and use this as your Mr. Smith, and choose a color or colors in the themed fabric, and find fabrics with this color or colors.

How much Fabric should I get when I have No Pattern in Mind?

If you really like it and it’s a good price and you don’t have a huge fabric stash, I would say buy the whole bolt. My mom has done this a couple times. I can’t recall having done this myself. I might have bought about 4-5 yards of it.

If you like it but it’s not the best price but you do want to increase your stash, buy maybe a yard or two. It’s really up to you to decide.

I would say a yard is pretty good, unless you think it might be a major dominant fabric in your quilt, and then maybe buy three yards of it.
**Which Stores are the Best for getting Fabric?**

Some chain fabric stores are Jo-Ann’s, Hancock’s, and Hobby Lobby. Some Wal-Mart’s still carry fabrics by the bolt, and others that have discontinued this, still carry some small packets or kits of fabric.

Then there are some specialty quilting shops in most cities. Here in the Oklahoma City area, we have Patchwork Quilts in Norman, Oklahoma Quilt Works, and The Savage Quilter in the Nichols Hills area.

Check in your phone book, or check online for fabric stores near you. You can also check online fabric stores, and of course craigslist and check for bargain fabric at your local second hand stores and garage sales. I have heard of some quilters landing some pretty good deals this way.

**Do I use a Back Stitch--or Not when sewing my Blocks?**

There is no need to backstitch when sewing your blocks together. I never do.

If you do strip piecing and you cut the threads right in line with the fabrics, you will have to be a little careful of your handling of the blocks.

This is so that your stitches don’t start to unravel before you have a chance to sew a cross seam by attaching another block.

As long as it hasn’t unraveled past the ¼ inch seam line, then as soon as you
attach the next block, it will secure that other seam by sewing right across it.

The only place I backstitch is on the seams that come at the very edge of your quilt top, so they don’t unravel as I quilt my quilt before I have a chance to secure it by attaching my binding.

**Fabric terms, with the grain, across the grain, on the bias, and selvage confuse me...**

**What’s the difference?**

These terms are little difficult to describe without video or pictures, and I do explain them on my tutorial video course. Your fabric is rolled up on a bolt.

The long piece of fabric is folded in half, and the other two edges are the selvage, and these go with the grain of the fabric.

With the grain the fabric has about zero stretch in it.

With the grain is the length of the fabric, and across the grain is the width of the fabric, which a cotton fabric is usually about 44 inches wide, of course folded in half on the bolt it is only about 22 inches then.

Across the grain the fabric has stretch in it.

Then, if you hold it to a forty five degree angle, meaning you put one hand on the edge of the fabric at one corner and at the opposite side you place your other hand about 24 inches from the bottom corner, and then you pulled the fabric with both hands, it would really stretch.

And, if you cut it like that, you would be cutting it on the bias.
My Blocks and Corners don’t match up on my Quilt Top – I’m ready to give up...What do I do?

Just remember there are No quilting police that are going to come and stop you because your corners don’t match up.

Don’t be afraid about what someone else might say. It’s your project, your quilt, you do what you like. Enjoy the freedom and the more you quilt, the more ideas will come forth from you.

In fact some people will think you intentionally positioned your blocks offsetting purposefully. So, don’t worry about it you’re going to get better and better the more projects you make. It’s just a fact.

Quilting is an art, so all the tips you get from me and other quilters is just a jump start to all your creativity and craftsmanship that will help you improve.

Make your own choices. Follow your creative instincts and be creative. There are no bounds, no limits as to what you can or can’t do. Come up with your own designs, and techniques.

How Do I get the Batting and Backing sized correctly?

Always make the batting and backing of your quilt bigger than your quilt top.

If you buy your batting and backing fabric and the same time you buy the fabric for your quilt top, buy it at least an inch or more on all sides bigger than you figured your quilt top would be.

This is in case you end up making your quilt bigger than you planned and a
quilt top can stretch a little bigger when you baste the layers or when you attach the layers to your quilting frame.

You just want to make sure you don’t end up with a bigger quilt top than batting or backing, because then you have to either cut some from your quilt top, or figure out a way to attach another piece to your batting or go buy a bigger piece, and also attach another strip to your backing piece.

Once you finish quilting your quilt, then just trim off the excess batting and backing and you are ready to attach your binding.

**How should I Press my Seams?**

Quilters have various opinions about this. I always press my seams to one side, to the side of the darker fabric if possible. Some like to press their seams open, meaning one fabric to one side and the other to the opposite side.

In older days they pressed them to one side because they didn’t want the cotton batting to sneak through the seams, or stitches in the seam.

Now they make the batting so much stronger, and in ways which keeps it from falling apart with many washes. So, these days it is totally up to you which way you choose.

I also think pressing the seam to one side is easier, maybe that’s why most quilters do it this way.

Also, most quilters will not use steam on their iron. I do sometimes and at other times I don’t.

Usually I feel I can make a flatter pressed seam if I use steam.

Just a few years ago I heard why most quilters don’t use steam,
Until then, by which time I had quilted for many years, I always used steam when I pressed my seams. I have noticed it occasionally distorting the fabric a little, but it still didn’t make much difference in the outcome of my quilt.

Now I will occasionally not use the steam, if I feel like I can get a flat enough seam without it.

If you find that the steam has distorted your seams too much, just trim all your blocks a little to make them even again, and then stick to pressing your seams without steam.

Also when you press your seam to one side don’t slide your iron hard and roughly over the seam or fabric block. Be gentle, so you don’t distort the fabric by rough hard pushing of the iron back and forth over your seam.

**Which Fabric type is best to Use: Cotton or Poly Blends?**

You can totally use whatever fabric or fabric blends you like for your quilts. Quilters prefer Cotton because it’s easy to work with, and it’s a natural fiber. Poly blends fabrics are made of petroleum, and usually they will last longer and don’t feel as soft to the touch as the cotton fabric, unless the weave of the fabric is not very tight, then the poly blend fabric will deteriorate quicker.

I once saw an old quilt and it had
certain blocks throughout the quilt that had just fallen apart, and these were the polyester fabrics.

So it just depends on you, on how long you want the quilt to last. You will still get years of wear out of quilt that has both cotton and poly blend fabrics in it.

So, because the life of each type of fabric varies, it’s better to use either all cotton or all polyester fabrics in your quilt.

Even after I knew this, I have still made a couple quilts where I had both cotton and polyester blends in the quilt. So, it is totally up to you.

**Should I cut my Binding on the Bias, with the Grain, or across the Grain?**

Unless I have a quilt with curved edges or scalloped edges, I like to cut my binding with the grain so that I have the least amount of stretch in the binding as I sew it on by machine.

If I have a small amount of fabric for my binding, and can’t really cut much with the grain, I do cut it across the grain occasionally, but then, especially if I sew the binding on by machine, I have trouble with it wanting to stretch too much.

If I hand stitch my binding on, it doesn’t matter that much whether I cut the binding with the grain or across the grain.

I have heard quilters say that bias binding is stronger than with or across the grain binding.

Of course if you have a quilt with a curved or scalloped edge, you want to cut your binding on the bias so that it can stretch or give and lay flat around the curved edge.

All more of these terms further in my instructional videos.
A story about me and Quilts

The other day I was explaining to my husband (since he’s not from the same culture as I am) what quilts meant to us in the Mennonite culture in which I was raised.

Quilts were a necessity; something you used every day.

Yes, we made some quilts more beautiful than others.

That is, if we had the means to buy nice fabric, or had pretty fabric scraps left over to make our dresses.

Women wore only dresses—nice floral dresses usually.

We would have the newest and prettiest quilt on our bed only on Sundays—when we might expect visitors.

When it got too worn for Sunday use, it was then used as an everyday quilt until it was worn out.

On Sunday afternoon if you didn’t go out to visit someone, you would be at home with the expectation that someone might come over and visit. It was not by invitation, but an open invitation, a custom.

Your guests would arrive about midafternoon between 2 and 3. The men might visit in the living room and the women would retreat to the bedroom. Since soft cushioned chairs were...
not plentiful, one lady might sit on the rocking chair—which every home had to rock the babies—and the other would sit on the nicely made bed, with the prettiest quilt.

Never did we think—“oh don’t sit on the quilt, you’ll break the threads and wear out the quilt quicker!”

Quilts were not looked at as heirlooms or treasures. They were practical and made to be used, not to be handed down from generation to generation.

I remember as a little girl of about 7 or 8, my aunts had a beautiful quilt on their bed.

It had many blocks and each block had a small embroidered bouquet on it with the person’s name on it who embroidered the block.

It might have had short poems too.

I was so intrigued by this quilt and could spend a lot of time admiring all those beautiful bouquets on that quilt.

I’m guessing it must have had around 30 to 40 blocks. It seemed a lot at least to me. This quilt was their special Sunday quilt.

At around four o’clock or so, “faspa” would be served, which was a light meal served only on Sunday in between lunch and dinner, or as we called it, dinner and supper.

“Faspa” would generally consist of home canned fruit served with the sweet juices in a bowl eaten with home baked “zweiback” (rolls), butter, jam, or cheese, and some cookies, or other dessert. Kind of like the English afternoon tea, except we served coffee instead of tea.

I grew up in a Mennonite community in Belize Central America. In moving to the US in 1999, I left my Mennonite community and culture. Since then, I have been introduced to a whole different view of quilting.

I have learned new techniques, terms, ideas, and so much more. It’s been exciting and my passion for quilting has just blossomed even more.
http://www.LearnHowToMakeQuilts.com

Martha