



# Quilt Preparation

*Follow the guidelines below to get the most satisfactory results  
(and save yourself some money in the process!)*

- **Selvages**—*Ideally you will have cut away all selvages before piecing your quilt. (Selvages are hard for the long-arm machine to handle, especially if they are on top of each other. This is particularly a problem in bulky corners where seams meet.)*
- **Seams**
  1. *For professional quality stitch-in-the-ditch be sure that each seam is stitched down in the same direction at both ends. If the seam changes direction, the needle is prone to "jumping out of the ditch" as it sews.*
  2. *Ensure all seams which end on the outside of the quilt are strongly secured (backstitched). Otherwise they will pull apart when the top is loaded on the long-arm machine.*
  3. *Tucks—The bad news is that tucks will not quilt out—if you send us a quilt with tucks in it, we will send you back a quilt with tucks in it. Wavy borders may come back to you with new tucks—that excess fabric has to go somewhere. We do our best to quilt out the excess, but it is not always possible.*
- **Pressing**—*Press all seams consistently to the side. Where necessary alternate the direction the seams are pressed to minimize the number of layers the needle must penetrate. (This is especially important for stitch-in-the-ditch quilting.)*
- **Borders**—*Calculate border lengths (both top and bottom) by taking width and length measurements from the center of the quilt. Make sure top and bottom borders are equal, and right and left borders are equal also. (In other words, make the quilt fit the borders; DO NOT make the borders fit the quilt.)*
- **Squaring**—*Square up the top AND the backing. Square up the top prior to adding any borders. If you have multiple borders, square up your quilt prior to adding each additional border.*
- **Backing Preparation**—*Cut away all selvages which would otherwise be included in the seams. (You may leave selvages on the lengthwise edges.) Seams should run top to bottom on the lengthwise grain of the fabric and be 1/2" wide. Press all seams open. Make sure the backing measures at least 8" longer and wider than the top after sewing any seams needed. For example, if your quilt top measures 100" X 100", then the backing should be at least 108" X 108". [Click here to see a diagram for backing size.](#) PLEASE do not use sheeting for backing.*
- **Loose Threads**—*Remove all loose threads. this is especially important with dark threads as they may show through the quilt underneath light fabric.*
- *Mark the top with a safety pin.*