

Millie P's Quilt Shop

5 Tips to Help Your Quilt Lie Flat

The flatter your quilt lies after you piece it, the better it will look once it is quilted. Follow these simple tips to help your quilt lie as flat as possible!

1. Consistent seam allowances

A consistent seam allowance will help keep your blocks uniform. When your seam allowance is not consistent, it can result in blocks that are not square, and that can cause extra puffiness in areas of your quilt top.

2. Square up blocks as you go

Once all your blocks are together, it is never a waste of time to check to make sure they are all square and also that they are the size the pattern tells you they should be. Blocks that are all the exact same size always make for a flatter quilt. Blocks of different sizes which are forced together will usually create fullness that may or may not be able to be quilted out.

3. Apply your borders properly

Usually, the biggest culprit that causes extra ripples and puffiness on a quilt top are the borders. If your borders are too long for your quilt center, they can flare and ripple and they may even require pleats to be added during the quilting process. If your borders are too small for the center of the quilt it can cause bagginess, puckers, or pleats which will take away from the effect of your piecing.

The best way to ensure a good fit is to follow these simple steps:

- Measure your quilt length through the middle point of your quilt
- Cut/piece both side borders to that measurement
- Find the center of the side of your quilt and the center of each border piece – pin at that point, rights sides together
- After pinning the center – pin the ends and then start pinning the rest of your quilt top/border, working your way back to the center.
- Sew borders onto the quilt top
- Repeat this process for the top and bottom borders

4. Pressed is best

A well-pressed quilt lies flat and quilts better. Try to stick to pressing (placing your iron onto the fabric and pushing down) not ironing (pushing the iron back and forth). Pushing the iron around on your fabric and seams can cause unwanted stretching and distortion. Starching your fabric can help to stabilize it so it is less likely to stretch out of shape or distort as you work with it. Be sure to press at every sewing step, so that all pieces with seams that are being sewn together have been pressed first.

5. Stay-stitch to stabilize

After you sew your blocks together, stitch around the entire quilt top. This will help to prevent stretching. This is especially important if your border has a lot of piecing, like piano keys.¹

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