

## TIPS FOR EASIER HOME MACHINE QUILTING

#1 Grab the advantage. Take time to set up your space and machine for optimal comfort.

First gather extensions for your quilting space. Quilts will get heavy and you can minimize pull on your arms and hands by setting up extensions behind and on the left side. Anything at the level of your surface can be pressed into service: small tables, ironing board, or a spare quilt rack. If you have permanent area to use you could consider a suspension system of some type.

Now prep your machine. Does it need cleaning and oiling? When did you last change your machine needle? If you piece with a #12 needle you probably should switch to a larger size for quilting. Install your walking foot if you will be using one. If you do not use a walking foot, you may need to reduce the amount of pressure on the foot to limit drag on the quilt sandwich. Consider applying an old fashion kitchen wax to the surface near the quilting area. This will give a slick surface allowing the quilt to move more easily. Set up a comfortable chair of a height to have your elbows at 90 degrees angle. This reduces stress on your neck and back.

Finally prepare your quilt sandwich. Lay out the layers on a flat surface and secure the layers. And yes, you MUST secure the layers even for straight line quilting. You can use quilting safety pins, basting spray or taylor's tacs. If you choose to spray baste keep some alcohol pads near your area to periodically remove glue material from your needle. Decide on a basic quilting plan, starting at the center area of the quilt. Now tightly roll or fold the material on BOTH SIDES of the center. You may secure the folds with quilt clips, pins or basting stitches if desired. Some method of securing will make handling larger quilts less cumbersome.

Start you Engines! You're ready to quilt. Beginning at the center work top to bottom in rows to the edge of the right side of the quilt adjusting the folds as needed. Then turn the quilt 180 degrees, repackage the quilt sandwich and repeat the sewing to the remaining edge. You can now considered your quilt ready for binding. Or you may chose to repeat the entire process in another direction giving the quilt a fancier appearance. You can even choose to try some free motion motifs in the spaces between your quilting lines. This is your design opportunity if you choose to take it!

Above all, have FUN! Quilting should be enjoyable and I am always ready to help with questions and ideas. (believe me I have too many too count)

Happy quilting.