



JUST QUILT IT!

What Should I Quilt?

Written by:

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**What Should I Quilt? ■ Blocks ■ Rows ■ Edge-to Edge
Negative Space ■ A Few More Things**



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What Should I Quilt?

Before we start, remember that there is no right or wrong way to quilt your quilt—what matters is how you want your quilt to look. In order to make the best decision on your quilting choice, first ask yourself, "What is the quilt going to be used for?"

WHAT WILL THE QUILT BE USED FOR?

Wall hanging, display only or art quilt

- The quilt will hang on the wall and should not lose its shape.
- A firm batting should be used.
- The quilting in this project could be very dense, and this would be a great place to show off your micro stitching and other texture techniques. The density of the quilting should be the same across the project unless you have parts that you want to pop, and those areas may be left un-quilted.

Baby quilt, bed quilt, kids quilt or throw

- The quilt should be warm and soft.
- The quilt should be easy to cuddle up with.
- Stitches should be secured so that it can be laundered a lot.
- A quilt that will be snuggled and cuddled with will need only a medium density of quilting. The evenly spaced quilting will make the project more comfortable to use.

Heirloom quilt or Wedding quilts

- The quilt will be very special and may be stored in a special place.
- Batting should not hold the creases and will lay flat when ready to show to friends and family.
- The density of quilting in this type of project can be what ever you would like. It can range from heavily quilting to very light quilting.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO QUILT THE PROJECT?

- Do you want to place the quilting inside the quilt blocks?
- Do you want to quilt rows?
- Do you want to quilt edge to edge?
- Do you want to create a secondary design?

After all of the questions have been answered, it is time to think about the design or designs to be quilted.

BLOCKS

The pattern of the pieced block can sometimes guide you to what the perfect quilting style should be.

Stitching in the Ditch

Stitching in the ditch is common quilting technique to use when the quilting design should not detract from the pattern and/or the fabric used in the quilt. To stitch in the ditch, place the stitch line right in the seam of the pieced sections of a block. This can be done with a walking foot on a domestic machine, or by using a ruler with ruler foot on a longarm. This method will also give definition to the piecing.



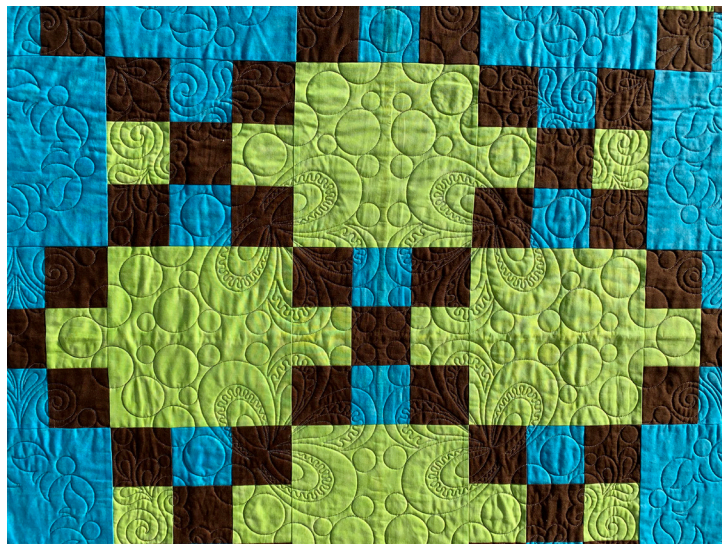
Quilting in Individual Blocks

You may decide to quilt in the individual blocks. A different design can be stitched in each block or you can repeat the design on all the blocks. When quilting on blocks with lots of straight lines, the best quilting design for the block may need to have some curves. The curve of the designs will add interest to the overall look of the block and complement the straight lines of the block nicely. Different designs or motifs can be created free-motion or by using rulers. The key here is practice to be able to repeat the design as needed.



Multiple Quilting Designs in a Single Block

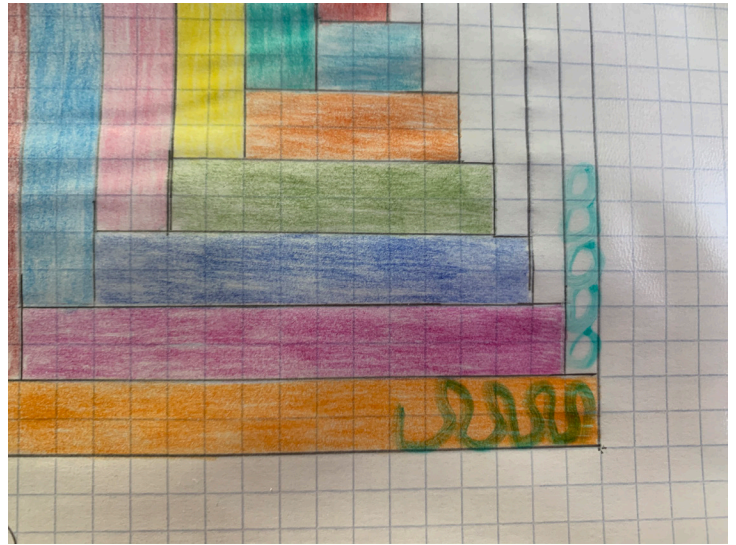
If the design has more open space or larger pieces, then you may need to divide the block into smaller or different segments to quilt the space. It is visually pleasing to break up such a large space, and it let you show off your quilting stitches. To do this, mark your quilt top into sections and use the lines as boundaries for your quilting designs. Think of four blocks as one or subdivide the blocks to create a different space. If free-motion quilting, practice will give you the results you are seeking.



Practicing Block Designs

To practice and audition the design on a block, print the block from a quilting program or draw it out on graph paper. Slide it into a plastic sleeve and mark the design with dry ease markers. This allows you to see what the design will look like on the block. A clear piece of clear vinyl or Plexiglas can be laid right on top of the block to practice as well.

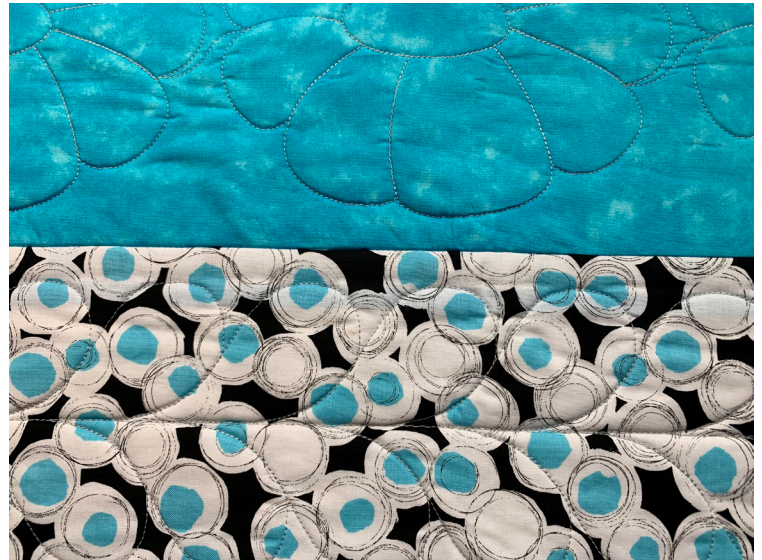
Pick your design and practice. If you don't like what you did just remove it and start over. To remove the dry ease marks, use a micro fiber cloth or a paper towel. Keep trying until you are satisfied.



ROWS

If your top is pieced in very visible rows, you may want to quilt each row. Use the same design in each row throughout the quilt, choose a different design for each row. Audition your design using the method above to help choose the perfect design.

Remember practice, practice. And practice some more!



EDGE TO EDGE QUILTING

Edge to edge quilting works best on very busy quilts, or when you want the piecing of the quilt to shine. Edge to edge quilting can also be a quick method. This style is good for quilts that are going to be laundered a lot, such as children and baby quilts. Sometimes edge to edge is called pantograph quilting. The difference here is that pantographs are usually stitched from the back of a longarm machine. This type of quilting is also sometimes called all-over quilting. All three of these, edge to edge, pantograph and all over quilting, will result in the same look on the quilt.

If there are appliqués or embroidery designs on your quilt, you can go around them or quilt right over them.



QUILTING IN NEGATIVE SPACE

A negative space in a quilt can be divided into smaller areas and shapes for easier quilting. Create different designs to fill in the space. The full layout of a quilt can be divided up as well to create a secondary design element too.

Look for books, tutorials and even apps that will help you create free-motion quilting designs.



Photo courtesy of Amanda Murphy

AUTOMATED QUILTING

Using an automated computerized system to quilt with is yet another way to finish your quilts. With systems like these, you can quilt block by block, row by row, edge to edge or even create a secondary design in and over the piecing. This method of quilting appeals to many quilters because there is less time practicing the skill it takes as compared to free-motion quilting without automation. With an automated system, you can also combine free-motion work and ruler work for added interest.



