

# RECTANGLE FUN QUILT-ALONG

## The quilt sandwich: a method to ease the bulk

This method does refer to machine quilting (I normally do not hand quilt such a large quilt). And in the case of this particular quilt, there is a little twist to it, too!

1. To begin, I should note that I do not pin baste. I only spray baste, and I don't know if this method would work with pin basting. I used to pin baste, but found it took so long (several hours) to do so. With this method, I am able to sandwich even a large quilt like this one, and sit down to quilt within half an hour. The price of a can of basting spray is so worth it to me.



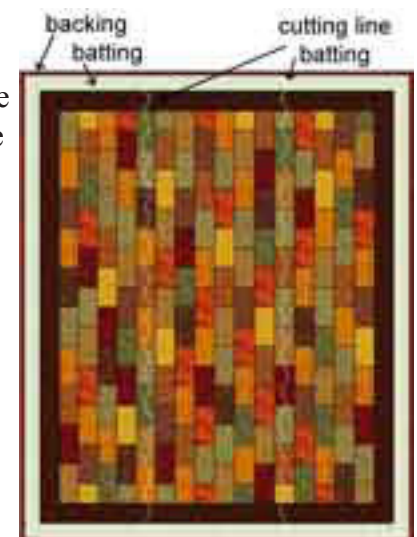
2. As with other methods, I also cut my backing and batting 3-4 inches larger on all sides than the quilt top. One of the reasons is to make sure there will be enough backing and batting fabric in the event that the quilt top stretches out more than expected during the quilting process. The other reason is to give me enough space and something to grab onto while quilting the borders. So the first step for me here is to measure my quilt top, and then cut my backing and batting larger than the top. If the batting isn't large enough, this is also the time to join pieces and then cut to size.

3. Enter now the twist. Normally you would lay down your backing, wrong side up, and tape or clamp it down to your table or surface area. You would then place the batting on top, and finish with the quilt top, right side up. Right? And I definitely use this method for smaller quilts. In this case, however, I am going to place my quilt top down first, wrong side up. And I will slide it on my table, so that I am able to see one of the long edges clearly.

4. I then lay my batting on top, making sure it is layered with those extra 3-4 inches beyond the edge of the quilt top. Next I place the backing on top, right side up, aligning it with the edge of the batting. As you can see, it is an inverse process to the way we sandwich a quilt traditionally.



5. Here is the reason why. I want to divide my batting in thirds lengthwise. In a quilt like this one, with long vertical stripes, it's pretty easy to do that. I have 16 strips, plus two borders. Altogether, 18 strips. Divided by three, that is 6 strips in each third. I am then going to cut ONLY the batting. But I am not going to cut it straight down the seam line, but a little off to one side. This means the center piece will be slightly larger than the two side pieces of batting. If we were to see it from the side of the quilt top, it would look like this:



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6. And I cut my batting in a curved line, down the entire length. By having the quilt top on the bottom, I can make sure I am cutting smack down the middle of that vertical strip, as you can see in this photo. The backing has been folded back out of the way while I cut.



7. Before removing the outside piece of batting, I mark it so that I know what side that piece belongs to. When I place it back, the curves should fit into each other. And by cutting down the center of that vertical strip, I won't need to whip-stitch it together. The quilting will hold it in place for me.



8. I remove the outside batting and set it aside. I now fold back about half of the batting that will remain in the center of the quilt (in this case, about the width of 3-4 of the vertical strips). I spray that area and fold the batting back down over the back side of the quilt top, smoothing it into place. I spray about that same area of the batting, and smooth the backing fabric over it. The section from which I removed the outside batting remains free. If you wish, you can hold the sides down with safety pins.



9. I now repeat the exact same process again with the other side, steps 6-8. I am now ready to quilt! In my case, I will first be quilting the center 6 vertical strips. My batting has been cut down the middle of the two vertical strips on either side of those 6 center strips.

10. Once I have finished my quilting down that center third, I lay out the quilt on my table again (it doesn't matter much at this point if it is with the backing or the quilt top down against the table. Either way works.) I fold the upper layer back (backing or top) and lay the batting down, fitting it along the curved edge. I then lift half of it back (from the inside out), spray baste and smooth in place. Then lift the other half back (from the outside in), spray baste, and smooth in place. I then spray baste the top of the backing, and lift the top layer back down over it (backing or top, depending on how you laid your quilt down), and smooth it down. I then quilt that section. And repeat this whole process with the other side (and last third of the quilt. Quite obviously, I quilt the borders at the end, after quilting on the top area has been finished.

You can use this method to divide your batting into halves, thirds, or fourths. This pretty much depends on the size of your quilt. And on the size of the throat of your machine. Remember that even though you have reduced the bulk considerably with this method, there still are two extra layers (quilt top and backing) that you have to fit in that space.

Note: although we will be covering the use of a label later, for quilts like this one I do something previous to the quilting. On the back of the quilt, in the area where I plan to place my quilt label, I sometimes fuse a plain piece of fabric on which I have written the essential details of the quilt: made by, location, and the date. If my backing fabric is light enough, I will sometimes just write this info directly onto the fabric, in the area where I will later be placing my label. This way I make sure that this information will remain on the quilt at all times, even if the final label is removed for any reason. We have all heard horror stories of lost or stolen quilts. This is just one way to ensure the information stays with the quilt.

Next step... It's time to quilt!