



Binding 101

with Courtenay Hughes

Wrap up your quilt with confidence! In this Binding 101 tutorial, Missouri Star's sewing specialist Courtenay Hughes walks you through the essential techniques for creating clean, beautiful bindings. From single-fold and bias binding to simple corners and finishing tricks, this quick reference is packed with helpful tips to make your edges crisp and your quilts look professionally polished. This handy guide has everything you need to stitch the perfect finish!

Things to Think About

- How wide should you cut your binding?
- Do you want a double-fold binding or a single fold?
- Are you planning to add a flange?
- Will your quilt have thicker batting or even two layers?
- Do you prefer a faced binding instead of a traditional one?
- Traditionally, double-fold binding is cut at either $2\frac{1}{4}$ " or $2\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Do I Need to Cut My Binding on the Bias?

Binding often performs better on the bias because the diagonal weave helps it curve smoothly around the edge of your quilt. This makes it less likely to fray or ripple.

If you're binding scalloped or rounded edges, bias binding is essential. We also used this method on our Garden Friends hexagon samples.

Use the **TQM bias binding ruler** to cut fabric on the bias. Cut your fabric into 18" pieces. Each $\frac{1}{2}$ yard will give you about **280" of $2\frac{1}{2}$ " bias binding.**

Tips & Tricks

- When piecing binding strips, join them with a diagonal seam whenever possible. This reduces bulk when you fold the binding over the quilt edge.
- Before sewing binding to your quilt, lay the binding around the perimeter to check that your seams won't land on a corner (which creates extra thickness). Clips work great for holding everything in place while you check.
- When pulling the binding to the opposite side of the quilt, after sewing it on by machine or hand, make sure the binding is pulled snugly so the quilt edge fills it completely. The edge should fill the binding but not stretch it. Judges often look for this in shows.

Types of Binding

Flange

A flange binding is cut at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " wider than your main binding fabric. For example, if your main binding is cut at $1\frac{1}{2}$ ", cut your flange strips at $1\frac{3}{4}$ " for a $\frac{1}{8}$ " flange. Press the seam toward the main fabric. When piecing your strips, stagger the seams so they don't stack on top of each other.

Sew the flange binding to the back of the quilt with the back (not the flange side) facing up. Join the ends as usual, then press the binding away from the quilt back. When attaching to the front, I like to use a stitch-in-the-ditch foot. Match the bobbin thread to your backing or quilting thread.

Two-Color Binding

For binding sewn to the back and brought around to the front:

- Cut strips $1\frac{7}{8}$ " wide for the front color and 1" wide for the back color.

For binding sewn to the front and brought to the back:

- Cut strips 1" wide for the front color and $1\frac{7}{8}$ " wide for the back color.

Sew together with a full $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. When piecing multiple strips, offset the seams, then press the seams open.

Striped Fabric Binding

Use the fabric as-is from the bolt, or cut it on the bias for a diagonal stripe. You can also piece your own custom striped binding.

Single-Fold Binding

Single-fold binding uses less bulk and less fabric, making it perfect for placemats, wall hangings, small projects, and specialty edges like scallops and hexagons. Cut strips $1\frac{1}{4}$ "– $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide.

Faced Binding

Faced binding is ideal when you want a clean, modern look and don't want the binding to show, often used on art quilts or contemporary projects.

Prairie Points

Prairie points add a fun, dimensional finish to any quilt edge.

Scrappy or Pieced Binding

A great way to use leftover fabrics! Piece strips together to create a colorful, playful binding.

Binding to Match

To match the binding to each block on a quilt top, cut your binding strips $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. Sew the binding to the front, matching fabrics at the seams by folding the binding back onto itself. Press well.

Fold the remaining fabric away from the quilt and stitch in the fold line. Trim the seam allowance to about $\frac{1}{8}$ " and press open. Continue until all sections are sewn.

Press the binding away from the quilt top, fold to the back, tuck the edge under, and hand-stitch in place.

Store-Bought Binding

You can always choose the convenience of pre-made binding designed specifically for quilts.

How to Stitch Binding After Sewing It On by Machine

Finishing Options

- Hand stitch
- Big-stitch hand quilting
- Machine straight stitch
- Decorative stitch

Binding by Machine

When attaching binding by machine, I sew the binding to the back of the quilt first. Then I press the binding away from the back and topstitch it on the front.

I recently discovered a compensating foot for my Juki (it goes by a few different names). One side of the foot is slightly lower than the other, allowing it to ride right along the edge of the binding. This gives you a beautifully consistent $\frac{1}{8}$ " topstitch.

Corners

Try to press the folds in opposite directions. Judges pick up on little details like that. And if it's going to a judged show, sew the folds closed.

Products Used

The Bias Ruler by TQM Products

msqc.co/biasruler

Perle Cotton

msqc.co/perlecotton

John James Embroidery Needles

msqc.co/johnjamesneedles

MSQC 2 ½"x 8" Ruler

msqc.co/ms2.5x8ruler

Notes

