

*We have had so much fantastic response to our free motion basics tutorial that we put out there that I really wanted to take a little bit more time and do a couple awesome tutorials all based on the questions out there. So today we are going to focus on one: basting a big quilt and two: taking that big quilt and shoving it into a small little sewing machine for our free motion machine quilting. Let's get started.*

*In today's tutorial, I really want to walk you through the basics of basting. And we're going to start on a little, small project and we're going to go onto this giant project I've created for us just to make this a big challenge, right? And again, this is based on 15 years of my machine quilting experience but a lot of this is opinion based or trial and error so follow along. Some of the supplies we use when basting quilts: blue painters tape to secure our backing to the table. I actually prefer to use some sort of a clamping system a little more eco-friendly and more adjustable. So these ones I had picked up at a hardware store. They're really tight and squeezable. These ones are wonderful sewing based clamps with a rubberized edge. And they're going to lock right around the table like that for you. Awesome, ok? Once we get our backing all secured we're going to need something to secure all three layers of our backing, our batting and our quilt top. So I use curved safety pins. Those are my favorite. A lot of folks will also use a spray baste. Right now I just want to talk about spray baste. There's a variety of different kinds out there. Try to be as eco-friendly as possible. They're making some really good ones. But I will say I generally don't use the spray baste especially on the larger projects. I don't feel that it gives me the bond I really need. But it's mostly I don't like the spray going everywhere in my home studio. So small projects I use it. Big projects I go back to the safety pins. Just a lot easier to manage and it holds up a little bit longer over time. Once we get ready to wad this big quilt inside of our machine, I love these old bicycle clamps. These used to put them around your jeans to keep your, your pants out of your chain on your bicycle. Well now they will keep your quilt nicely rolled up as you're working through the process. So and then of course we need ourselves a nice iron because we want to make sure that everything especially the backing of our quilt is nice and crisp as we get ready to baste.*

*So the first thing we're going to start with today is the actual backing. And I wanted to show you something small first so you get an idea of taping down and then we're going to move right into a ginormous quilt we've made. Now the first thing I do is I take and I make sure I press nice the backing of the project. And usually I'm looking at it print sides up. I just grabbed this small piece of fabric out of my stash here to show you what we're doing. But I want to get it nice and crisp. And one of the things about ironing is after I've got it perfect, I'm not going to move it. I'm going to literally wait until it totally cools down because fabric has memory. Which means that it will go*

*back to the state that it was in when it was last cool. So right now I'm telling you this to stall, kill a little bit of time because I want this to get cool to the touch so that I can move it off of the board and not bring those wrinkles and creases right back into it, ok? So that's just about where I want it there. Now what I can do is I can set this down and out of our way. And then I'm going to bring this onto the table. And you can see I've got more table right now than I do quilt backing. So that works really nice.*

*So the first thing we're going to do if we're using our masking tape is I will go ahead and I tape the far edge. And I want a full piece of tape. And what I'm doing is I'm smoothing it from one end to the other as I go. And I'll actually use the tape itself to really secure it like that, make it nice and solid. And then what I want to be able to do is pull this taut. Oop, didn't quite secure it as much as I would like. Now you know another reason why I love those clamps so much. Now if you live in a humid environment, that also can be a bit of an issue or if you have dust on your table or fiber on your table, that can be a bit of an issue as well. So you want to make sure that's nice and secured and you've got a good edge of your, of your fabric there. And I can see I came off a little bit. So let's just add a little bit more on here. Ok, so that is nice and secured. And this point I'm going to pull it taut. And what I do now is I use small pieces at first. Starting in the middle. When we're quilting, we're always working out of the middle. Think of your quilting designs as the pebble that gets dropped into the bucket and it pushes the batting and the backing and the quilt top all to the outer edges. Pulling down and securing. Pulling down and securing here. And then of course I would do the same to the sides. So I'll just show you real quick. Now as I'm preparing this we're thinking measurements. So my backing and my batting are going to generally be at least two inches larger all the way around. The bigger the quilt, the more extra batting and backing you want because the more of that quilt top is going to move its way from the center to the outer edges. So that's what that extra batting and backing is for, ok?*

*So now I've got all of that out, I'm going to drop the batting down. I'm not going to tape or secure it. I actually want to be able to massage the batting from the center to the outer edges while I'm working. And then I would go ahead and take my quilt top. Drop my quilt top down here. And I would smooth it out. And I also have a habit of coming back in with my iron. And I'm going to actually iron my quilt top. And what that does is it helps secure it. Now if you're using a fusible batting which is another choice for basting, you do not want to be pressing right now because you haven't gotten it all organized. You would want to stretch it out really nice and then begin pressing.*

*Now let's talk about some basting with some safety pins. And I'm going to actually show you on the big project but you'll be able to see, remember this is an entire quilt top right now. So when I go ahead and baste, I'm going to always start with one in the dead center, ok? And then I'm going to work kind of, you know, hey my hang loose or my shaka sign, that's the maximum distance I want to go. So for this particular ginormous quilt top, you could see I would lay a pin there, a pin here, a pin here and here. And then I'm actually building a quadrant system. So then I would also have pins roughly out here in the corners. And I always want pins on the corners and the edges because I don't want to accidentally get the backing of the project to roll underneath while I'm getting ready for the free motion machine quilting. I've done that way too many times so I always pin the outer edges to keep everything nice and secure. Now let me show you all of this, for real, in the big quilt so we can get ready to put that thing in my little machine.*

*So as you can now see, we are getting into a real quilt and when I did my other tutorial as well, I used a small sampler. It's easier for us to work in a small area with a small project. But I wanted to give you exactly what you've asked for. And I made a quilt purposely larger than my table something used to baste. So when we get into our big quilts, our twins, our kings, our queens, those kinds of quilts, a lot of times we'll go ahead and borrow a set of tables maybe from our local church or community center. A lot of you, I know, are still doing this down on the floor. So I'm going to show you how to do this starting from the middle out working on a table that is smaller than our giant quilt we've made. And the first thing again I want to still iron my backing. I don't want to monkey around, and isn't this, by the way isn't this the most beautiful fabric. This is called Free Fall from Tula Pink. And I chose it specifically. It's 108 inches wide as well as the grays are fantastic. And Tula is a dear friend of mine. And I love birds and I love the dots. There's so many reasons I really, really was dying to use this fabric on the back of my quilt. So it was fantastic. And if you're interested in the fabric or any of the supplies or ever having a hard time finding them, there's just a, there's a little link in the description below the video if you want to follow that, you're welcome to. So as I'm getting ready, I want to iron this backing but I wanted to show you I've made an ironing board out of my whole table. So I took the batting I'm going to use. Non fusible batting. And then I've got the quilt. So you're starting to see a bit of the quilt. This is the big sampler we've got. That's just to help pad it up a bit. And I'm on a wooden table right now. And now I'm going to take my Free Fall fabric or my wide backing like this. And I'm going to just, like I did with that small piece of fabric, begin ironing. I've got a little bit of steam in my iron. And when I'm using steam, you know my rule of all or nothing. So I'm steaming all of the project right now. And I'm going to let it cool. And I'm going to let it sit as I get ready to baste this project. Now of course this backing that you're looking at right now is going*

*to have to go facedown on the table in a second. So once I get all of the creases out and I've let it cool down, I'll be ready to flip it. Sometimes it takes two or three times with these big creases. And of course you know you're often pre-washing your backings and your quilt parts. Of course you won't have as many creases. I'm not a pre-washer so I actually have this straight off the bolt. So a lot of times I've got that wicked crease up the middle. So I'm going to give that a lot of time with my iron to really make sure that it's as flat as possible. And then using nice big clamps, that will help pull that crease out as we're getting ready to baste it. So let me go ahead and flip this over and bring you right back in.*

*Ok, just a quick flip around. Just pointing this out, you can see now that this is now right sides down or wrong sides up. So I'm looking at the backside of my print. And I have centered my backing to the, the middle of the table. We're going to start, like I said, basting from the center out. I'm also often looking at the print of my fabric along the edge. So you can kind of see here that I've got half of my circles showing up along the edge. That way I know with this giant piece of backing that things haven't gone too askew. So I want to clamp, and we're not going to be able to baste all of the quilt at once. We're going to do this in phases. So I'm going to take the clamps and so for right now I need to be able to pull it across this table. So I'm going to take my really strong clamps and I'm going to set them on this side over here and this side over here. And then you can see I can pull against them and that way I can take these clamps over here to help secure the backing. Now these clamps are not necessarily adjustable, well they adjust, the flex really nice but I can't put extra squeeze but I want it really taut so let's say you had a situation where you had a skinnier table. Well you could always use a couple of little cardboard shims or something underneath. And now it's really, really tight. What I don't want to be able to do is move the fabric once I have it clamped in position. And so as I'm going around the table now I'm actually looking at the ripples in the fabric itself. I'm kind of pulling and smoothing. You can see these circles are shifting off the table a bit. And I'm just going to secure the quilt backing. We're not going to secure the batting on the big one especially. So I'm going to come down over here. And this is one of the reasons I love the clamps over the tape is of course I can readjust and right now, like I said earlier I wouldn't have anywhere to really tape to. So I can see I want to get a clamp over there. And of course if I was at home or at the church community center, I would just be walking around the table. But I'm tied to this table right now with a microphone cable. So I'm going to do this the best I possibly can. Doesn't this look comfortable right now? So I recommend you walk your table at home, right? Get one more down here and then we're going to do the same here with our batting. We're going to spread the batting across this series just like that.*

*So now comes my batting. And as a reminder, my backing and my batting are several inches larger than my quilt top. When I start to throw my batting on here, it's going to want to grab at my backing and shift my backing around. So I actually want to lay it on here. And now I'm lifting and I'm draping. I'm lifting and I'm draping. So that I'm not monkeying around with my backing too much. And draping here. If you have a quilting buddy that you haven't spent much time with in awhile, I strongly recommend you bake a nice thing of chocolate chip cookies and you invite them over to try out your new recipe and then mention to them Oh I was just getting ready to baste a quilt. Wouldn't you like to be an extra set of hands on the other side of my batting for me today? And then you give them cookies and tea or coffee and then they help you baste your quilt. It's a great way to have a little community time, right?*

*Ok, now comes the quilt top. And I want to get the quilt top centered on my table. I want to do as little reshifting of the quilt top as possible. And the quilt top itself will also need ironed. So I'm just now centering the quilt top to the table. And then I'll begin pressing the areas that we can see up on the top of the table. And I'm not worrying about those bumps because I know that's where the clamps are. So I've got a clamp here, a clamp here, a clamp here. And I'm looking right now, I'm kind of focusing on some of my borders. I can see that I want to bring this edge down so it lift and a drape. Kind of a lift and drape like this, ok? And then because there's a lot of patchwork going on in here, I'm going to go ahead and take my iron starting at the middle. And I'm actually just kind of running a series of nice gentle passes right over the top here. And I'm actually kind of going to do this like I would if I was using my safety pins as well. So I'm going across and then I'm also coming up and down. And you can see how nice that is treating the quilt top itself. I have seen some of the fiberglass or real lightweight tables that you might pick up like at a box store like a Home Depot or a Costco. I have actually seen an iron melt all the way through one of those tables. It was obviously sitting there too long. We were carrying it out at a quilt guild one afternoon and I looked down at the table and I said, Oh it looks like an iron might have melted through here. And the lady says, Well do the think so? It was the perfect shape of an iron right through one of those tables. So you can press like this on one of those tables but you don't want to do it for too long in any one spot because it could cause some bumps or ripples or mounding in that material and I don't want to be the one that gets a nasty love letter about that. So that's my disclaimer for today. I've got it. I'm kind of spot checking some of my seams. I've got quilt hanging off the table as well. But we're perfect to start basting with those safety pins right in the middle. Check this out.*

*Safety pin number one is going to go all but dead center of the quilt. You don't have to put it right where all of your seam allowances come together. A half inch away will be plenty close to*

the center. And I'm using a curved safety pin. I believe this is a 1 1/16 pin. I like them fairly small. And as I said earlier. I'm going to use about a hand's width, we're going to build a grid across the quilt and then up and down the quilt as our first series. So basically my hand's width, come in over here. Now I'm coming over here so I'm starting in the center and working my way out in both directions with each pinning. The first series or that first grid building is the most important. And I am using also the, I believe these are the nickel based safety pins. You want to make sure you have a safety pin that's not going to rust. Not all of us quilt as quick as I speak. So that means that your pins might be in your quilt for awhile. And you can see here, I'm going to show you this neat tool here in a second. I'm having a hard time getting that one closed. There's a tool called a quick clip. And let me just do one of these right out of the center going the opposite direction to show you how this works. So now I'm going to take my safety pin. And I'm going to start to drive it down and I feel it hitting the table and then I'm putting my quick clip real close to where I inserted the pin and then it's coming right up over the top. And that gives me nice bit of pressure and I can close it very nice and easy. And let me show you that again here. So coming out of the center. I'm going to put my quick clip down hopefully my big thumb is not in the way. And then it pops up like that. And so for me I've been doing this for so many years it feels pretty natural and that's why I like the curved pin because the curved pin is going to make itself its own rotation back up. But a lot of folks struggle getting the safety pins closed and that's where this quick clip tool comes in so handy. I love that thing. Another thing you probably didn't notice but I went ahead and opened all of my safety pins up. And I tell you what I hope my children are watching right now because everytime I go back into my safety pin box I have a chain of safety pins all put together. Those little stinkers love playing with my safety pins but I don't love the fact that they're always pinning them all closed. Now check this out, right here is where that clamp is and I really want a safety pin in this area but I don't want to be pinning up against this clamp, right? So I'm going to come over here real quick for now and just set one and then when I move the quilt, I'll be able to work around that. So let's just go ahead and get one on this other edge here. And the next series of work is going to be basically finding the union between the grid I'm making. I don't want to mention the word algebra because some of us don't like that word but it is kind of like working off that coordinate grid. I'm coming over and up and setting another pin. And at this point, the reason I'm setting my pins in an organized fashion is I'm going to do some marking on my quilt so that I know kind of what I want to do with my motifs. But I'm also going to do a lot of free style work. And that means I'm coming forward and backwards along my quilt and as I do that I want to make sure that I can kind of assume or plan for where that safety pin is going to be. I never machine quilt near that safety pin. I always pop it out a few inches before I get there. And I kind of think I feel that caffeine starting to kick in so I might have to kick into caffeinated mode and finish these pins and bring you back in just a

second here. And I wanted to point out, you notice I'm petting my quilt and it's because I love my quilt. But it's also to keep moving all the batting and quilt top out towards the outer edge. So all of this is to try to prevent as much rippling and wrinkling on our quilt and our quilt backing as possible. That's why we want to baste to begin with.

While you're machine quilting your quilt, as I mentioned earlier, the bigger the quilt, the more the quilt top and the batting is going to shift and move outward. So as I'm approaching the edge over here I have, I'm going to say, about six to eight inches left of the quilt top hanging off of the table all the way around. So I really want to secure these edges so they don't get caught underneath. But if I was machine quilting this, think about that pebble, it's going to start a little wave as it starts to come but as it reaches the edge that little swell is turning into a big rideable good surfing wave. And we're at a tsunami by the time we hit the edge. So the last series of pins are more to keep the backing and batting from getting folded under than they are for security. So in order to do that I'm just going to reach across the table real quick and I'm going to pop all of the clamps and put them into the middle of my quilt so that I have access to them. And I won't need the shims moving forward because now these clamps are going to fit my table better because I have all of the batting and backing on my team. So let's get this out of here as well.

Now I'm going to slide this like this. And at this moment I'm going to be able to go ahead, oh you wanted a human moment. Did you see me start sweating profusely? I never checked the other edge of the table. I've got to bring the camera in real close right here. Check this out. So I have just enough of the batting hanging past the quilt. Because I know the batting is going to get bigger than the quilt top. If that was any closer, I would literally take the time stop, take all these pins out and do it correctly. I guess that's what I get for never checking the other edge of the table like I told you. That's where you friend with the coffee and cookies and tea and stuff is good for. Silly me. You wanted a human based quilt tutorial, well here you go. Ok, now I'm going to lock down the batting and the backing with those two big clips there so that I can pull against it. And now I can secure the quilt. These clamps work fantastic through all the layers. But look what I'm doing, I'm using them all over here like yay. Oh those work great that way. Perfect. And now I can come back up here and I can keep smoothing out. And remember I hadn't even pressed this part yet. So I can obviously bring my iron back on duty. Benefit of my cordless iron here. And be able to go ahead and hit this real quick. Just like that. And then we're going to drop a few last pins in there. And I'm going to start thinking, of course I've been thinking the whole time, How do I want to quilt this? What am I going to do for my designs? What am I going to do for my motifs? What am I going to do to impress all of you out there who have put the

*pressure on because remember I have to do this in a small little machine too. But as you know here at Man Sewing we love a good challenge.*

*So now that I have this edge all secured I'm going to go ahead and shift the quilt and do the other three sides exactly the same to make sure I secure it and I don't roll that backing and batting underneath the project. And then you can trim it at your table if you have enough space. But I want to maximize, I don't want to waste any of that wonderful Free Fall fabric, right? So I'm going to actually put mine on the floor and I'm going to trim around giving myself about a two inch perimeter of my backing and my batting. That will give me a bunch of extra Free Fall fabric to save for other things as well as give me the opportunity to have the room I need for the machine quilting. Once that's all trimmed down then we're going to roll this thing up and put it into the standard sewing machine.*

*As you saw, I went ahead and trimmed off the backing, the excess backing. I want to save that fantastic fabric in my stash for other projects, right? So now if you were going to do any kind of motif marking or designing on top of the quilt top, you'd want to do that before we started to roll up the quilt. We're going to roll of the quilt and put these bicycle clips around half the quilt to just go ahead and make it so that I don't have to wrestle with so much of the meat of the quilt while I'm doing this. So I've made it so that it's skinny so I've got a lot of quilt to roll. I'm not going to crease it. I want a nice light roll. You can see we'll be able to get a lot of that into the bicycle clips. And if you'll remember this was kind of the center point of the quilt and so I don't need to go any further past that center point. And now what we're going to do is we're going to go ahead and take our bicycle clips and just kind of stretch them around. And what this does is it keeps everything from getting disorganized under the head of the machine. And a lot of you saw in some of the quilting basics, I like to use a table on my sewing machine and some slip mats and different things like that. So that would all obviously be in place as I get ready to go ahead and load this into the machine.*

*So real quick I'm going to slide this. Hope it holds still for me and then I'm going to move. Oh excuse me. Move this over like this, ok? I have my free motion foot on, my feed dogs dropped, all business is set up as it's going to be. And then I bring my quilt in here to the machine. And this is the Baby Lock Jane so this has got a slightly larger opening. This is about a nine inch opening. The smallest machines, not the featherweights, but the real small machines are about a seven inch opening. So I have a little bit of extra space here but this is still definitely a domestic, ok? And at this point now, what I would be able to do, I'm going to focus on my quilting. And I'm actually going to quilt in an area that is close to the center point. And then as I*

*need I don't want to bring this into the machine. What I want to do is I want to quilt and then as necessary what you can do is you can unroll this a little bit in the clamps and it just feed off the slack that you need and then you can start to free motion this way. So I'm going to end today with a silly little story. The very first quilt I ever machine quilted, I actually was told to do the roll. So I rolled it up and I did exactly what I just told you not to do. So after stopped quilting, I thought I had to roll the whole quilt under here like they're done in long arm machines. So it just got more and more difficult. Less and less space. So you put your roll in and you quilt away from the roll unrolling it out across the table. And then of course having something over here like an ironing board or an extra table to catch the weight of the quilt is very, very helpful as well.*

*Well there you have it folks. There is some basics of quilt basting. Nice and simple. Just a reminder we want everything as taut and as crisp as it can be. And now I'm going to start dreaming up some quilting motifs and get ready to go ahead and start doing some real free motion machine quilting on this while you're getting your quilt basted. And we'll catch you next time here at Man Sewing*