



Aunt Mag's

Binding Tips

As a quilter I have struggled, since day one, with that most important last step of quilt making ... the dreaded binding! If you asked me even a month ago, what is your *least* favorite aspect of quilting—I would not hesitate to say “the binding.” Talking with other quilters, I know many of you have also struggled along to get it just right. My rules for the binding are: Easy to get perfect results every time, and has to be done 100% on the machine (since I rarely hand-stitch binding but know that there are times when it is necessary—my hands just won't cooperate!). That being said, I have finally accomplished just that—and am delighted with the results. I no longer dread binding!

✧ Cut your strips and stitch them together to equal the four sides of the quilt plus about 20” - 24” extra. I personally like to cut mine at 2 1/2” wide, but there may be times when you want it a little narrower.

≈ If you are using a stripe or directional fabric, you'll want to cut your strips on the bias. I use the [Bias Ruler](#) from TQM as it makes quick work of cutting bias strips.

≈ Using the [Binding Tool](#) (lives next to my cutting table) cut the ends of your strips at an angle & be sure to cut the tip off (on the tool). **Figure 1** shows the cut on each end of the strip. Follow the tool edge to cut off tips which will cause your strips to go together perfectly! **Note:** *When using the binding tool you never flip the tool over, you just turn it 180°*



Figure 1

≈ Stitch strips together using a scant 1/4” seam. Have trouble with that scant 1/4””? Try one of our [Seam Guides](#) for perfect seams every time!

✧ Next step: Press your seams open. When you stitch the seams on bias & then press them open it reduces the bulk on your finished binding. While you're here, fold bias in half & press.



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Binding Tips *(continued)*

✂ Decision time: You will need to decide if you are going to **machine stitch** finish your binding or **hand stitch**—

≈ For machine stitching, Aunt Mag prefers to stitch the binding to the back of the quilt & fold it to the front—and make that final stitching on the front. Using the steps below it will come out perfect!

≈ For hand-finishing always stitch to the front & fold to the back.

✂ **Getting ready to attach your binding:** Using a ruler, and the instructions on the front of the binding tool, plus a Frixion Pen (or your favorite removable ink quilting marker) mark 12" on your quilt ... this is your start & stop points for stitching. You'll use this space to join the binding together.

✂ **Now, you are off to your machine.** You may choose to use a 1/4" seam, but usually no more than 3/8" seam. If you have a hopping foot on your sewing machine, this is the place where it will be most handy! Really handles the bulk of the batting & all those layers without any "bunching." Ready, set STITCH!

✂ **Time to turn the corner!** About 5-6" before you get to the corner you will fold your fabric as show in **Figure 2** and finger press. Unfold, and stitch to the crease in the fold you just made. I like to back stitch just a stitch or two to lock this since it is the corner. At this point, you break your thread, and turn your quilt for the next side.

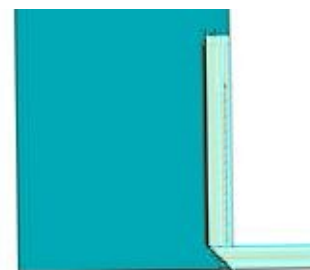


Figure 2

≈ Fold your binding as shown in **Figure 2**. The fold should be right at the corner. You will then fold it straight down as shown in **Figure 3**. Don't worry—it really does fold perfectly! Now you are ready to stitch the next side.

≈ TIP: Start your stitching a little less than a quarter inch from the folded top edge. This will help when you are finishing.

≈ Continue this on all four sides stopping at the marks you made. You should now have a 12" opening on one side of your quilt. It is very important that this is accurate as you will be using the binding tool for the next step.



Figure 3

✂ **Joining the ends together:** We love the [Binding Tool](#) ! Just carefully follow the instructions on the tool face. Note: You never "flip" the tool, you just turn it 180°





≈ **TIPS: Before trimming both ends of the binding** lay them over each other. I like to draw the entire shape of the tool end on the fabric 1st and visually inspect that it is going to overlap about 1/4"

≈ **Before stitching**, pin the quilt so that your binding ends are loose (It's like a big loop—but boy does it give you a lot of extra working space to get that binding stitched)

≈ **After stitching**, remove the pin—your binding should just about “snap” in place, seriously. You'll want to open the binding & press that seam open, then back to the machine to finish stitching it down.

So, now, most of us assume—just fold it over & stitch it down ... but I've got a few more great tips for you to get a nearly perfect finish, every time! Truly, I didn't have too many “technical” issues up to this point, once I mastered my tool—and of course, like momma always said “practice makes perfect!”

✂ **Press!** Take your quilt, with binding attached & press that binding out. It will stick out really nicely all the way around. In the corners you'll just press up the crease, but you'll be able to see how nicely it is going to fold over.

✂ **Snip!** Go to the corner of your binding & see all those little layers (figure 4)? You're going to fold it back so that only the very corner (where you folded your binding) is exposed and make a very tiny snip—may 1/8" (figure 5). Remember where we started a little away from the end at the corners? This is where this comes in handy. If you started at the edge you will have to remove a couple of stitches to expose this little point.



Figure 4



Figure 5

✂ **Wait!** Don't turn that iron off yet! I received a great tip from Chris S. who said that I should now fold my binding over & press it—vs. pinning in place. So, I tried this & added my [Wonder Clips](#) and lo and behold—this was what did the magic for making my binding stitch down beautifully!



Figure 6

Look how nicely my corners go together with that little snip of fabric & pressing! Just pin it & then stitch. With Wonder Clips you can place them so that you can gauge where your seam line is—really is the finishing touch to beautiful binding!

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