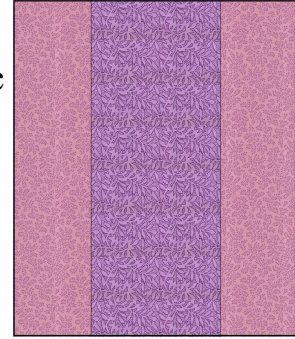


Quilt Backs and Back Art

Your quilt top is complete and you are rightfully very proud of it. You are ready to put the back on it. Your quilt back should be larger than your top. Check with your quilter for their specifications, but generally, 4" all around is a good starting point. This allows for some shrinkage in the quilting process and allows a little extra for attaching to the quilting frame.

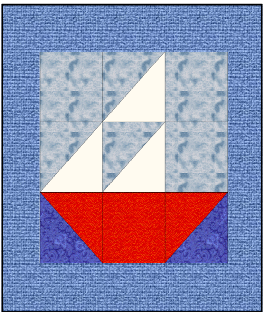
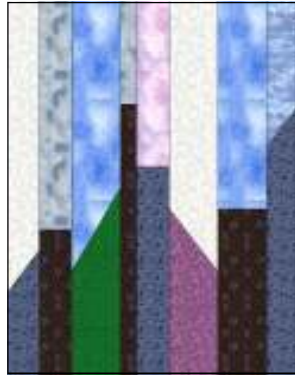
Now, traditionally, you create a quilt back by utilizing fabric equal to twice the length of your quilt plus about 10". This can be a plain fabric, a coordinating fabric or a very wild fabric or even Flannel, Fleece or Minkee back. Again check with your long armer but Flannel (Always prewash to shrink) is soft and warm and can make a fabulous back for a cuddle quilt. And Fleece and Minkee are more alternatives for backs that may even eliminate the need for batting in some cases.

Dig into your stash and find a piece that you liked but never used. Use a great big wild print. Have fun... the fabric doesn't even have to relate exactly to the front of the quilt.



Take off the selvedge of the fabric. Cut the fabric into two pieces, each the length of the quilt plus about 5". Split one of these pieces in half along the length. Now you can create a back for your quilt by sewing the smaller pieces to the larger piece at the sides along the length. This is the traditional method. You can vary it as needed! Sometimes one length will do it or you can use a couple of different prints to use them up and add interest at the same time!

Back Art: But you don't have to let your piecing/quilting creativity end on the front of the quilt. If you have leftover fabric or blocks, use these on the back of the quilt. OR make one huge block like the giant sailboat at right. Piece the block into the back... vertically, horizontally, or on the bias. You'll be amazed what just a little more piecing will do to jazz up the back of your quilt... And make a dent in your stash!



You can even add some applique! How about the recipient's name in huge letters! Or just their initial or a monogram. Or repeat a motif from the front of the quilt... Only bigger!

Quilting Guide: I know some people who have used the fabric on the back of their quilt as a quilting guide. Florals, animal prints, quilt prints all work well for this technique. First quilt in the ditch from the front, outlining the areas where you want to use the design from the back. Then, flip the quilt over, find those areas and quilt from the back, following the pattern on the back of your quilt.

Extras: How about adding a bit of muslin pieced right into your back... Presto a ready made label! You can even add a surprise after your quilting is complete... How about a pocket into which can be slipped an occasional treat or note or used to communicate with the tooth fairy.... Or extra fabric from the quilt for use in later mending should the need arise.

I think the most important thing about your quilt back is it should make you smile! When the quilt is not in use, it will be the back that is seen, folded neatly on the shelf. It should have the clues to the quilt top it supports... and perhaps be a work of art all on its own!

Make it fun!

After all... It's your quilt!