

Machine Quilting

Because of the improvement in home-sewing machines, machine quilting has become easier to do, and with practice, just like hand-quilting, great results can be achieved. Machine-quilting can be done using straight-line stitching or free-motion stitching, or a combination of each.

After the quilt is pin-basted, roll both edges toward the center of the quilt with the quilt top facing up. Before beginning, it is best to map out a quilting strategy. The object of your quilting strategy is to find the longest uninterrupted stitching routes. Once these routes are determined, make a directional map of your design to guide you as you stitch. This will enable you to stitch the longest line without stopping. The less you have to stop and start, the better.

The even-feed foot or walking foot is helpful for straight-line stitching. It assists the top fabric through the machine at the same rate as the feed dog moves the bottom fabric. Place unrolled section of quilt under presser foot and stitch. Work to the right. When the right side is completed, remove quilt, turn it, and stitch left side.

A darning foot with the machine's feed dogs lowered is used for free-motion quilting. The quilt is slowly moved with your fingertips from side to side under the darning foot (your hands act as the quilting "hoop"). The machine should be operated at a steady, medium speed to prevent uneven stitches. Meander quilting and stippling are two types of free-motion quilting.

Hand Quilting

Hand quilting is done in a short running stitch with a single strand of thread that goes through all three layers.

Use a short needle (8 or 9 between) with about 18" of thread. Make a small knot in the thread, and take a first long stitch (about 1") through the top and batting only, coming up where the quilting will begin. Tug on the thread to pull the knotted end between the layers. Take short, even stitches that are the same size on the top and bottom of the quilt. Push the needle with a thimble on your middle finger; guide the fabric in front of the needle with the thumb of one hand above the quilt and with the thumb and index finger of your other hand below the quilt.

To end a line of quilting, take a tiny backstitch, then make another 1"-long stitch through the top and batting only. Clip thread at the surface of the quilt.

Suggestions for Machine Quilting

Every method has good points and bad.

Try them all and find which one (or combination) works for you and for your project.

- 1] Stitch in the Ditch
- 2] Stitch 1/4" inside patches
- 3] Determine a Grid... straight or angled, mark with narrow masking tape
- 4] Stencil a Motif with a Pounce Pot or a Water or Air Soluble Marker... Hearts, Flowers, Words!
- 5] Stippling – All-over free-motion background squiggles (See Next Pages)
- 6] Use a Preprinted Pattern on light-weight paper
- 7] Draw or Trace your own Pattern on light-weight paper
- 8] Iron on pre-cut Freezer Paper shapes... Circles, Hearts, Letters... then stitch around the edges. Shapes can be reused!
- 9] Send It Out!

Professional Long Arm Quilters

Cindy Kruse—Tustin/Santa Ana area.
Her number is (714) 679-9220. Cindy is fabulous!

[Quilters Garden](#) in East Anaheim (Lakeview near the 91) Diane and Tina (and the whole crew!) do a wonderful job! And you can shop when you drop off your quilt! (714) 279-8018

Georgia Heidrick (gjheidrick@aol.com) is in the Fullerton area and does great quilting.

Q's LongArm Quilting is located in Fountain Valley. Their number is (714) 963-1177 and they do wonderful work.

Calico House/Cranberry Quiltworks
1243 E Imperial Hwy, Placentia, CA
92870 (714) 993-3091

Stover Quality Quilting
Stover, MO
800-521-4171

And lots of other wonderful quilters in your area!

No-Mark Quilting Patterns

Try your hand at these or make up some of your own!



Trailing Hearts

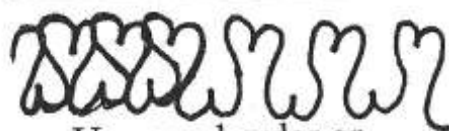
Use as a border or curve back and forth for filler...
Also great echoed.



Two Step Continuous Stars

Start with the pyramids in a line then go backwards to draw in the arms of the stars.

**Practice,
PRACTICE,
PRACTICE!**



Use as a border or curve back and forth for filler...



Tessellating Hearts

Think Alternating Ms and Ws.
Can be closed or open.



**Stars
And
Loops**

Regular stars with loops that alternate up and down.



Partial Stars

Or do you see Random 4s?



Water

Keep as horizontal as possible.

Frankly, this one leans a little too much in some places!

Free Motion Quilting (cont.)

No-Mark Quilting:

This method is fun, informal and casual... and it takes some practice as well. Decide on a pattern (samples are attached). These are mostly doodles and you can develop your own to coordinate with your quilt. Doodle on a piece of paper and see what you come up with... do your own design or pick a simple motif from your fabric and use it as your quilting design! On your sample quilt sandwich, practice writing your name and then move on to curves and wiggles. The easiest pattern for me is trailing hearts, but I'm working on stars and loops, partial stars and the others. Just remember this method should be fun, so relax and breathe and... put on some music and "go for it!"

Quilting

Once you have practiced on your sample, you are ready to move on to your real quilt. Stop and start stitching at a seam line if possible, to hide your stitches. If that's not possible, stitch in place a few stitches to knot the thread. I tend to use the "**Fluff and Stuff**" method rather than rolling the quilt. You want to *fluff* up the part of the quilt that is in your lap and *stuff* the sections that need to go under the arm of your machine. Work in sections and stop with your needle down so you can plan where you are headed. Most of your quilting time will probably be spent arranging the quilt, with spurts of using the machine... So **do it while you are there**. If possible do all the quilting necessary to a section at the same time. Don't leave an area blank and then have to come back to it!

Don't be afraid to mix straight line walking foot quilting with free motion. Usually, I do the straight line quilting first to stabilize the quilt, then add in the free motion stuff. Take it a section at a time and don't get overwhelmed. Get up and walk around every once in a while to relieve the tension in your shoulders.

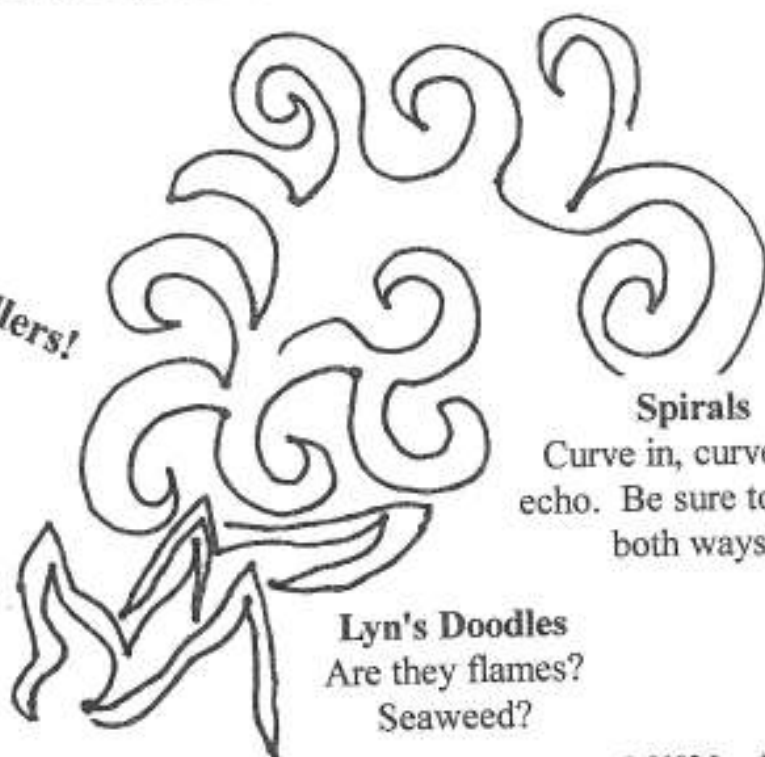
Most of all, Be Creative and Have Fun!

Continuous Cs

Start with 2-3 piggyback Cs, then move on to 2-3 more and keep on going.



Great Fillers!



Spirals

Curve in, curve out, echo. Be sure to curve both ways!

Lyn's Doodles
Are they flames?
Seaweed?

Machine Quilting Checklist

- Clear A Space and Your Schedule.** Your work will go smoother if you have enough room to move your quilt all around near your machine. You'll be more relaxed if you can concentrate. Turn on a good movie or some great music!
- Mark** your quilt as necessary. Use Chalk pencils, soap slivers, masking tape, chalk wheels, pounce pads, stencils, lightweight paper, whatever works! But don't be afraid to just trust your eye.
- Practice** on a scrap quilt sandwich. Turn some corners (Always pivot with your needle down) and some curves. Try to write your name.
- Use **Different Designs**, one in the quilt center, another in the borders. Mix straight lines and gentle curves.
- Set up your machine with your **Walking Foot**. This step is easy to forget.
- Change Your Needle.** A new, sharp needle makes all the difference.
- Wind At Least TWO Bobbins**, more for bigger projects.
- Start And Stop At "0" Stitches Per Inch (SPI).** Work your way up to "3" or about 8-10 SPI then when finished back down to "0" again. No Back-tacking.
- Plan Your Work.** Basically, work from the center out. Plan a way to stabilize that center... with a cross or an "X" or whatever your pattern allows.
- Match** your bobbin thread to your backing and your top thread to your top.
- You can **Change Your Top Thread** to match the area you are working on.
- Roll Your Quilt** to get to the center. Roll parallel to your quilting path. Reroll as necessary.
- Trim** your threads, top and bobbin, as you go.
- Be Adventurous.** Try different threads (Rayons, variegated, heavier weights) and more difficult patterns on every quilt.
- Get **Comfortable** in your chair. It's amazing how this helps! Get up once an hour and stretch.
- Relax and **Breathe.** You'll be holding your breathe, for sure!
- Strive to get better with every stitch!**
- Take a **Class** dedicated to machine quilting.
- Enjoy** the process!