

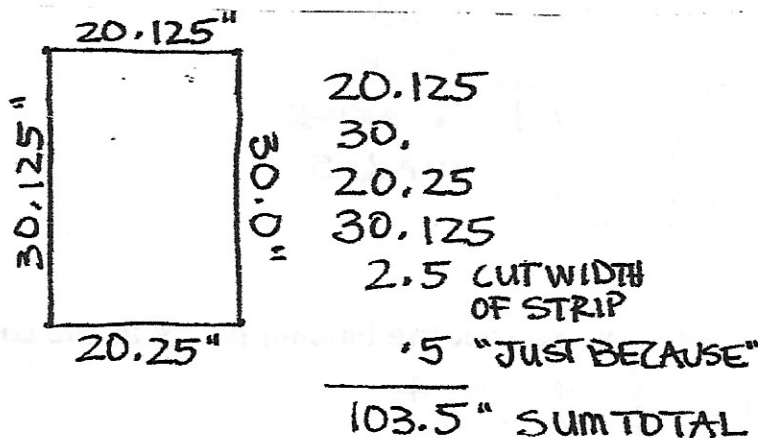
"Binding in the 21st Century"

Part 1: Sew The Binding Into A Loop First

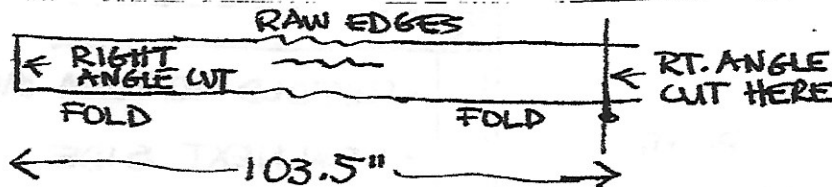
by Wendy Hill

With this method, the binding is *measured, cut and sewn together in a continuous loop* BEFORE pinning the binding to the quilt! Like me, maybe you experience some level of dread about that final step of sewing the ends of the binding together while wrestling with the bulk of the quilt. Never again when you use my method.

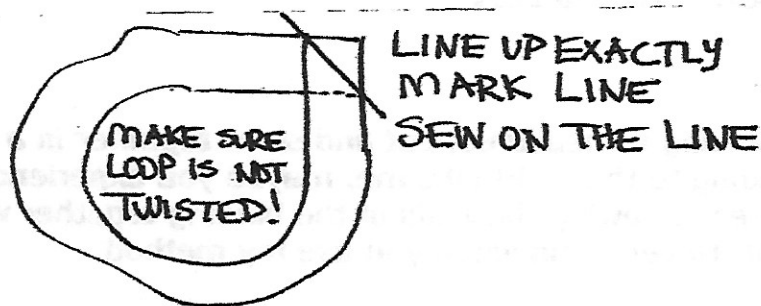
1. Measure and write down the *exact measurement* of all four sides (to nearest 1/8").
2. Add the *cut width* of the binding strips.
3. Add 1/2". Add up the *sum total* from Steps 1, 2, and 3 (all four sides, plus the cut width of the binding, plus one-half inch).



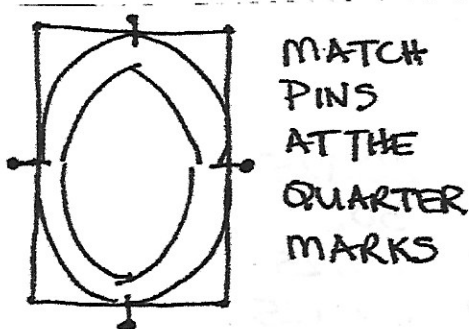
4. Make enough binding to exceed the sum total by a few inches. (I make a double French fold binding, with seams joined at a 45° angle.)
5. Cut one end of the binding at right angles to the fold. Measure the binding with a measuring tape- mark a pin at the end-spot that is equal to the *sum total* in Step 3. (Tip: measure twice, cut once.) Cut at right angles to the fold at the pin.



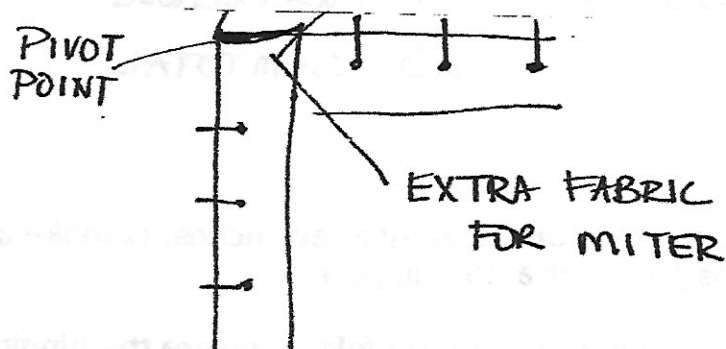
6. Join the ends as shown in the diagram (after making sure the binding isn't twisted).



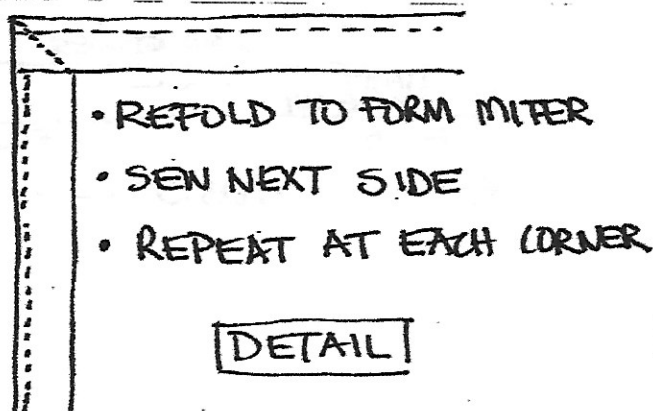
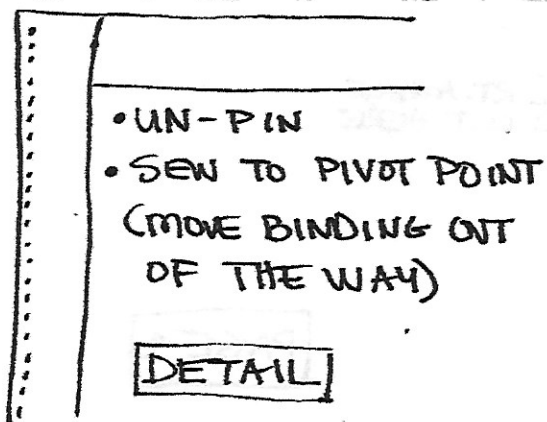
7A. Mark the quilt top in 4 quarters by placing a pin at the halfway point of each side. Mark the loop in four quarters by folding and pinning. Match the pins on the quilt with the pins on the binding.



7B. Ease the binding in place and pin, so that the binding pivots at the corner just like always.



7C. As you sew, miter the corners as you go, pinning and re-pinning as usual. Finish the binding as you usually do or use my Accurate Machine Topstitched Binding method.



TIPS:

1. This method works with fabric cut on the bias or the straight-of-the-grain, but bias cut binding will stretch unless handled carefully. Start with a smaller quilt and binding cut on the grain while learning this new method.

2. The only time I had problems is when I did the arithmetic wrong. Here are conversions of fractions to decimals so you can add it up on the calculator:

$1/8" = .125$; $1/4" = .25$; $3/8" = .375$; $1/2" = .5$; $5/8" = .625$; $3/4" = .75$; $7/8" = .875$

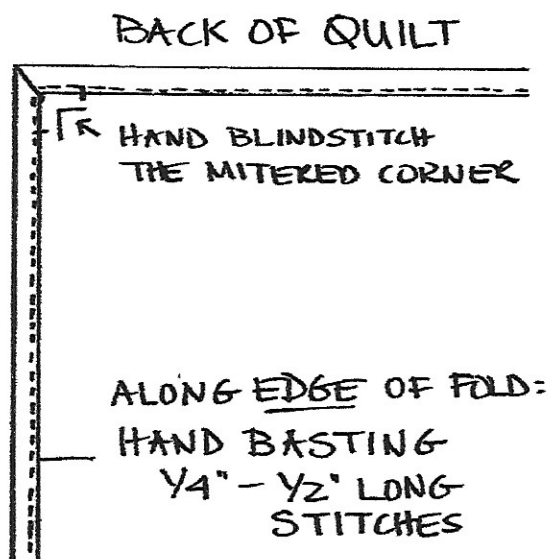
"Binding in the 21st Century"

Part 1: Accurate Machine Topstitched Binding

Between arthritis and time management, I don't always have time to blindstitch the binding by hand. But I still want a professional, clean finish with my binding. I figured out a way to use a shortcut but still have a great looking finish.

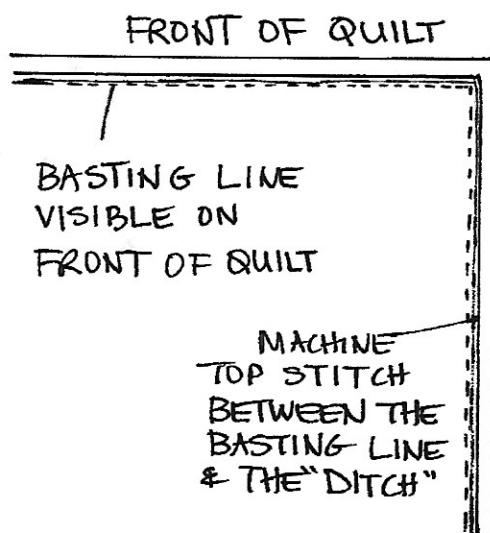
1. Use your favorite method to sew a double French fold binding to your quilt (or use my "Sew The Binding Into A Loop First" method). Cut and sew the binding so it will overlap the stitching line by about $1/8"$.
2. Turn the binding to the back of the quilt and pin. In a perfect world, the folded edge will always fall about $1/8"$ over the line, but if it doesn't, do what we do best: fiddle with it.
3. From the back of the quilt, hand-baste along the outside edge of the fold. Use large stitches ($1/4"$ to $1/2"$) and consistently stitch along the fold. This line will be the stitching guide from the front of the quilt.

Tip: Hand blindstitch the mitered corner, about an inch on either side of the miter.



4. Turn the quilt to the right side. Use a spool of thread to match the quilt top and a bobbin thread to match the binding. Use a normal stitch length. Start near a corner on one side, and machine stitch just to the inside of basting-thread line (in or near the ditch). Once you start stitching, stitch consistently along side the basting line (so it will consistently be along the fold on the back.) Continue around all four sides until you come back to the start.

Tip: After stitching a few inches, check the back to make sure all is well. Backstitch at the start and finish and clip the thread tails or run the knotted thread tails through the quilt.



5. Remove the basting thread. Check the edges of the binding on the back to make sure the machine stitching caught the edge of the binding.