

BASIC TOOLS FOR QUILTERS

If you have been quilting as long as we have you probably know it's easy to amass many, many tools. Some you use regularly, others quietly collect dust. Yet, if you are new to quilting it can be difficult to know what kinds of tools you really need, and which tools you can purchase later. Therefore, we thought we would compile a list of "Basic Tools All Quilters Should Own". These are items we use regularly when quilting and we feel will help make any quilter successful with her projects. We have decided to be general with this list (with a few exceptions) because there are often many brands and types to choose from, in relation to these items.

- **Rotary Cutting Tools:** Your mat size will depend on the cutting area that you have, but always have on hand a cutting mat, good sharp rotary cutter, two rotary cutting rulers, a 6" x 12" AND a 6" x 24". (ALWAYS keep replacement blades handy for your rotary cutter).
- **Sewing Machine:** There are many types and brands of machines to choose from, but if you will primarily be quilting with your machine look for one that includes the following features: needle down option, blanket stitch, and a walking foot (built in or as an attachment). These are essential!
- **Good scissors:** Even though you will mostly use a rotary cutter, it is important to have a good pair of scissors, and we recommend an 8" pair and a 4" pair.
- **Good quality thread:** You will be less frustrated with thread breaking and tangling if you invest in good thread. We highly recommend Aurifil thread as it puts off less lint into your machine, and the thin nature of the thread allows for more precise seam allowances.
- **Color wheel:** If you're stuck choosing fabrics perhaps a color wheel would help? By having it handy and learning how to use it properly you will be able to choose fabric colors for your project with ease and confidence.
- **Straight pins:** If you take the time to pin your projects when it's required, you will end up with more precise piecing/seaming, which will enhance the overall look of your finished project.
- **Iron:** Again, LOTS of choices here but choose one that has variable heat settings and variable steam output. A non-stick soleplate is a must!
- **Marking pencils:** To get started with quilting make sure you have dark and light marking pencils on hand. If you get into quilting even further check out Iron-Off Pounce with coordinating stencils.
- **Good reference book:** There are plenty to choose from but make sure your reference guide gives you information on piecing, appliqué, quilting, basting, and binding.
- **The Angler 2:** This great tool assists you in making half-square and quarter-square triangles, snowball blocks and flying geese.
- **Seam ripper:** If you need to start over a seam ripper will make the job quick and easy. Remember to replace it when it starts to dull.
- **Appliqué pressing sheet:** We use these for more than just appliqué, and we encourage you to purchase a larger size as it will be more functional for a variety of projects.
- **Thread Heaven:** It is truly Heaven for your thread, use it any time you need to do hand quilting/binding.
- **Add-A-Quarter:** This ruler, with specially designed lip, automatically adds the seam allowance to any angle when you're paper piecing, and provides a straight edge for your rotary cutter.

With all of this knowledge you're now prepared to properly stock your quilting area with useful and handy tools that you'll appreciate having on hand. Happy quilting!

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