

BASTING YOUR QUILT

Over the years we have made thousands of quilts. Through all of that “experience” we have created a tremendous library of basting techniques, tips, and favorite products. Read on for information from our years of trials-and-errors!

When it comes to basting there are really two types: pin/thread basting and spray basting. Since we are usually on a bit of a time-crunch spray basting has become our preferred method, but both techniques work for different projects.

For safety pin/thread basting start by cutting your backing and batting at least four inches larger than your quilt top. Tape or pin the backing fabric (wrong side facing up) on a floor or table surface to anchor. (**TIP:** We prefer to use T-pins on a carpeted floor, as this method is easy to secure the quilt firmly). Unfold your batting and smooth it in place on top of the backing. Center your quilt top over the batting, right side facing up.

If you are going to machine quilt, safety pin the layers about every four-six inches, making sure to keep the pins away from areas that might be quilted. If you will be hand quilting your project thread, baste the layers together about every six inches, both horizontally and vertically. (**TIP:** You don’t want to pin baste hand quilting projects because your thread will continually get caught in the pins, and the pins add lots of weight! Additionally, the pins can get in the way of the hoop, causing for headaches when trying to reposition your project in your hoop).

As we mentioned earlier, spray basting has become our preferred method of basting. It can be used for both machine and hand-quilted quilts, lasts for quite awhile (for those of us who baste a project and then “tuck it away” to finish another day), and is quite fast in comparison to pin/thread basting. To spray baste lightly spray the wrong side of your backing fabric by slowly moving the can back and forth. We do our spraying outdoors (and preferably on a non-windy day!), due to the fumes and the spray-off that can make surrounding items sticky. Carefully lay the backing out flat (wrong-side up) and pin/tape to the floor or another firm surface. Place the batting over the backing. (**TIP:** It is not necessary to spray the batting). It helps to have another person assist you in smoothing out the batting as you lay it down over the backing, working from one edge to the other. Lightly spray the wrong side of the quilt top, and carefully lay it over the top of the batting, smoothing from one edge to the other. The spray baste is not permanent so you can reposition the top or batting as necessary.

Over the years many products have been developed to make basting easier and faster. There are a few products that win our two-thumbs-up:

- **Kwik Klip:** This is a tool that assists you in inserting and closing safety pins. After pinning just a few safety pins closed, you’ll know how valuable this tool is in saving your fingers!
- **Thread Heaven:** This delightful product is like lip-balm for your thread! It prevents tangling and fraying of threads, which ultimately reduces hand fatigue. When you’re running long basting stitches, this item is necessary.
- **Basting Bright Safety Pins:** These multi-colored pins glide easily through fabric, and the bright colors are easy to see.
- **Sullivan’s Quilt Basting Spray:** Our favorite basting spray! This product is economical, and is consistent in its application.
- **Can-Gun:** You can find this item in quilt stores or hardware stores, but it attaches to the top of your can of spray baste, so you don’t have to use your finger to hold the spray button down. A must-have for spray basting!

Done properly basting can be quick and painless, and will give you better results in the long-run. Take the time to find the method that works best for you, and you’ll be well on your way to finishing more quilts!

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