



5 Favorite Quilting Tips & Tricks

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Ready to improve your quilting expertise? Here is a round-up of helpful tips for quilting including ideas to save time and improve accuracy.

Photo via A Quilting Life

1. Pre-wind neutral bobbins

This is an especially helpful idea when attending a class or retreat. Store your collection of pre-wound bobbins in a bobbin case, and you're ready to sew for hours (or days)! Pre-wound bobbins can also be purchased from some thread manufacturers.

2. Chain piecing

Not only does chain piecing save a lot of time for quilters, but it also helps to save thread. To chain piece, sew a set of fabric pieces together, stopping just before the edge of the fabric pair. Without removing the fabrics from the presser foot, prepare and add another set of fabrics. Begin sewing the next pair without clipping threads. Chain piecing goes even faster when the paired pieces have been prepared and stacked, and are ready to sew in large groups.



3. Increase accuracy

Sewing a precise 1/4" seam is the most important tool a quilter can have. To save time and avoid frustration be sure you are always sewing accurate 1/4 seams. While many machines come with specialty 1/4" feet, these also need to be tried and tested to be sure they are accurate. To test your seam allowance sew and then measuring the width of the seam with an acrylic ruler. Another way to do this is to rotary cut three 1 1/2" x 5" strips of fabric. Sew them together with your 1/4" seam. Press the seams open and measure the width of the middle strip from the right side of the fabric. The middle strip should measure exactly 1" wide. If this measurement is not correct, cut new strips and continue to make adjustments until your seams are 1/4". Some machines allow the needle to be moved to the right or the left, and often it's possible to make an adjustment by simply moving the needle.



Also note that some quilt patterns call for a "scant" 1/4" seam allowance which means that your seam allowance should be just a thread's width smaller than a true 1/4". Make adjustments as described above for this type of 1/4" seam when it is called for.

4. Prepare & stack pieces

Cutting and stacking pieces ahead of time can lead to much time saved later.



5. Maintain your machine

Remember to periodically clear any lint and oil the bobbin case of your machine. A well-maintained machine is one that will provide years and years of trouble-free sewing. One easy way to regularly take care of this routine maintenance is to clean and oil after you have emptied five bobbins (keep empty bobbins together so you know). For professional maintenance, most manufacturers recommend a regular cleaning once a year. Choose one month a year and regularly take your machine in for a "spa" day during that month each year.