

QUILT TOPS

I get to talk about the “prettiest” part of your quilt! When someone brings me their quilt, the 1st thing is to lay it across the table and look at it. My customer has usually taken great care to press the quilt and remove stray threads. I then measure it across and lengthwise, discussing what my customer might want on it. This is another area of creativity that sometimes draws a blank-even from me!

Next, the thread color is chosen. The whole time this is going on, I’m looking at the pressing of the top, and trying to observe how it lays. It’s not always possible to tell if a quilt top will be flat when it is loaded on the machine, what looks flat may not be so! A top can “grow” an inch or so when it is loaded.

A few years ago, (not many), I learned I was pressing my tops wrong. Many of you could probably give me lessons, but this is what I learned. After you set the stitches with the iron, you press from the TOP first! This was revolutionary to me. Use the tip of the iron to push the seams in the direction you want them to go. It seemed a little awkward at first, but I learned how to get my fingers under there and guide the seams. Its fine to press the back after, but that top pressing is so important! Start with your smallest unit and as you build them into bigger ones, keep pressing from the TOP. You may feel like you’re in a wrestling match before you’re done. The borders will be the part you really need to pay a lot of attention to. Those simple, long pieces of fabric will give you more trouble, probably because you’re on the home stretch and want to get done.

What all this pressing does is help prevent those tiny tucks from forming. Tucks that are pressed into your top can cause it to grow an inch or so all the way across; they can even make the edges wavy, and they are almost impossible to get out. This added fullness will not be even-it will be problematic. After the top is loaded on the machine, the hopping foot will push at tucks, and can create fullness that doesn’t show when it’s just lying on the table. If they are larger ones, I can sometimes go over them, but that’s not always a good idea. Of course the same thing can happen lengthwise too.

This doesn't mean my own work is perfect, far from it! I sort of feel like a football coach sometimes, they can tell the players how to play, but that doesn't mean they can do it! I've made up some samples to try and show you what I've been talking about, and there will time for questions and answers later.