

Continuous Binding 101

One of the most tedious steps in a quilt for many quilters is to make the binding!

If you are one of them, let me show you the EASIEST method I have found!!

How many of you do not enjoy the long process of making bias binding?

But a quilt is not a quilt until its quilted and bound, right? Binding is very important because it "frames" the quilt; it holds the "quilt sandwich" (that's composed of the top, batting and backing). In addition, the quilt becomes more "resistant" to the wear and tear of normal use.

There is a discrepancy in the quilting world about the width of the strips. Many quilters think a single binding is enough; others, swear by the double binding (which takes a wider strip and it's folded double before applying it). They say it's much stronger.

A good rule of thumb is: if you are making a quilt and you plan to wash it frequently, use "double binding". If it needs to be washed every once in a while, a "single binding" will be enough...

To do your binding the right way, you need to cut the fabric on bias.

If you are new to quilting you might ask yourself, what is that?

 Bias is when you cut the fabric on a 45° angle. The problem is that to get long strips you need to open the fabric, cut the strips and then join them together...

Let me show you what I mean by that:

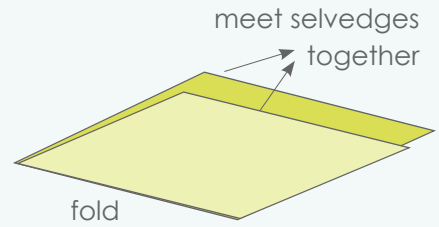


Wouldn't you LOVE to have one continuous strip instead of cutting and piecing strips one after the other?

If you want a smart and easy method, this tutorial is for you!

STEP 1

To start, have a 1/2 yd. of the fabric you'll use for the binding squared up. Fold the fabric in half, meeting selvages and **right** sides together.

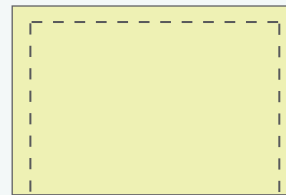


TIP:

If you want longer binding, just cut a larger piece of fabric.

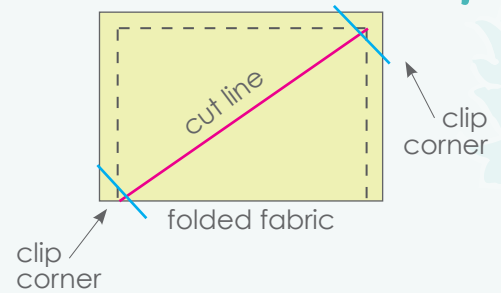
STEP 2

Sew around three sides of the fabric piece with a 1/4" seam allowance



STEP 3

Mark a line diagonally from corner to corner. Clip one corner crossing 1/8" inwards from the corner's seam allowance. Introduce the tip of the scissors and **cut only the top layer** of fabric on the marked line. When you get to the opposite end, clip the other corner.

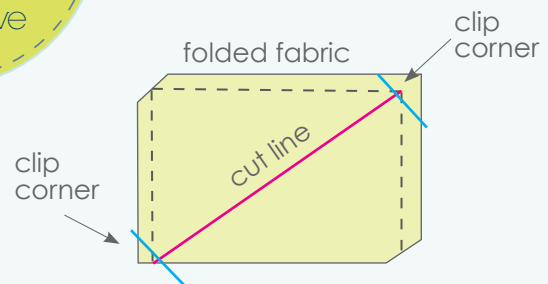


TIP:

Be very careful to cut only the top layer on the step above

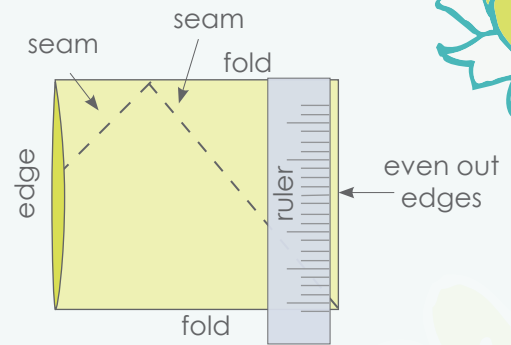
STEP 4

Flip over the entire piece of fabric to the other side, and repeat the previous step (mark, clip and cut) but now on the **opposite** two corners.



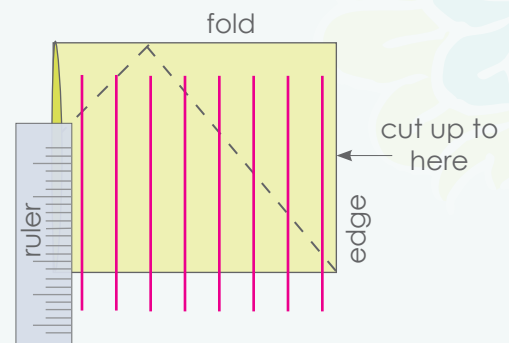
STEP 5

Grab the fabric from the cut edges and open it up. You will get a tube of fabric. Press all seams open. Lay the tube on top of a cutting mat (positioning folds on top and bottom), and square up the edges with a ruler aligning the top edge with the fold of the fabric. Trim both edges with a rotary cutter.



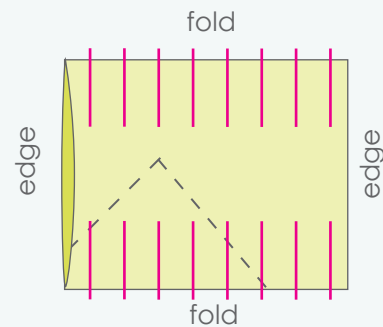
STEP 6

Position your ruler 1 1/2" from the edge and cut the fabric (with the rotary cutter) up to 4" from the top fold. Keep cutting 1 1/2" strips until you reach the opposite edge. You will finish with a piece of strips not totally separated.



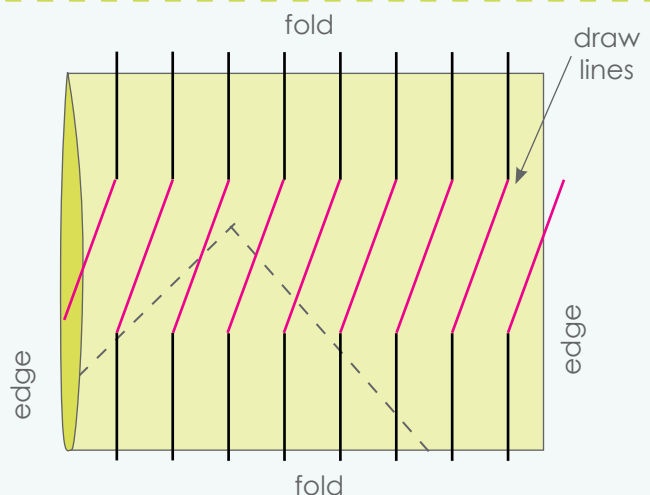
STEP 7

Lift the tube from the table. Inserting your hands in the tube and rotating it, lay it down on the table again, but this time with the sections that were "uncut" *centered*.



STEP 8

Using your ruler and a fabric marker, connect one edge of the strip with the next strip on the left. Do the same with all the other strips. Cut each line with scissors.



Voila!! You now have yards and yards of continuous bias binding! This method is incredibly easy and accurate every time you do it... You will see slight kinks at regular intervals, but this shouldn't be a problem since fabric is on bias and it is very manageable.

I have calculated that with $\frac{1}{2}$ yd of fabric and cutting strips $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, you will yield approximately 15 to 18 yards of binding. If you cut strips for double binding (that is $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide), you will get much less (approximately 7 to 10 yards).

Plan carefully the amount of binding you'll need measuring the 4 sides of the quilt and adding 15" extra for closing the ends.



Hope you enjoyed!!
Handmade rocks...
so let's keep on stitching!

Pat Bravo

Look for more tutorials, patterns and ideas at my blog <http://artgalleryfabrics.typepad.com>

