



Tips for making group quilts

Making a group quilt is a great way to be creative, sociable and learn new skills from each other. Use these handy hints to help you plan your group quilt project.

Please contact the Quilt Museum's Education Officer (education@quiltmuseum.org.uk) if you need further advice.

Where do we start?

Before you start, answer these questions:

- Who's taking part and how much time have they got to give?
- How many people are involved?
- Do those involved need to meet regularly and if so, where?
- Who will be sewing the pieces together/finishing the quilt?
- Do you have a budget or are you re-using materials/providing your own?
- What do you all want to achieve? Are you working towards a deadline? What style of quilt would you like to make?
- Is there a theme for your quilt?

When you have answered these questions it's time to put some plans down on paper. Write an action plan to help you stick to a timetable if you have one and note down how everyone will be contributing towards the group quilt. Some people may wish to work together and some on their own, but it's very important that everyone knows what they're working towards and when their work on the quilt needs to be done.

If you're making a block quilt i.e. one with a patchwork top consisting of lots of blocks of the same size, sewn together to create a larger regular shape, you need to set the block size and give a 'seam allowance'. The seam allowance is a border around each block which makers should leave to allow for room to sew blocks together without damaging their design. This is usually 1/4 inch (0.6cm) but if working with children or people who may find a small seam difficult to sew, you may like to give a larger seam allowance.

You don't have to make a quilt with a patchwork top, although when working in a group it is helpful to know that people can work at their own pace, on their own piece. These can also be taken home to work on if a group space is not available.

What materials/equipment will we need?

- Fabric – cotton or polycotton is best to use. You will need enough fabric for the quilt top and backing but it doesn't have to be new. Try collecting fabric donations or reusing fabric from charity shops. You can even piece together fabric strips for borders and 'sashing' between blocks or the back of the quilt. If you do recycle old materials, why not put a small amount of scrap fabric in sandwich bags and ask people involved to create something for the quilt from their 'mystery bag'?!
- Needles and thread (different types for different jobs e.g. piecing fabric, embroidery or quilting). You could also use a sewing machine if you have one.
- Fabric scissors and/or cutting mats, rulers and rotary cutters if you have them.
- Wadding - you can decide what type of wadding you'd like to use when the quilt top is finished. Again this can be recycled from old projects. Cotton or cotton/polyester mix wadding is best but a good quality polyester wadding is fine in the right thickness for your quilt.

How do we make our quilt?

This bit depends on who is making which part of your quilt and if you will work together or individually. If working on a patchwork quilt top, the designs can be as simple or as complicated as the maker wants. Similarly the stitches used can be an easy running stitch or more complicated embroidery.

If working on a block quilt, you will need some time to sew the blocks together. When you know how many blocks you will have, make a quilt plan to decide where each block will go in your design. You can even mark each piece like a grid reference e.g. C3, E5.

When you have a quilt plan, you can start to sew each block together. Create horizontal or vertical strips with the blocks, sewing one to the next along the seam allowance. Then you can sew each strip together, working towards a large quilt top.

When you have your complete quilt top, wadding and backing fabric ready you can start to finish your quilt. See the '[How to...Finish your Group Quilt](#)' info sheet for help with this.