



A guide to finishing your group quilt

Group quilts are a great way to be creative, sociable and learn new skills from each other. Use this easy step-by-step guide to help you put your group quilt together.

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

What do I need to finish the quilt?

- Your finished (sewn together) quilt top. This may be a series of patchwork blocks arranged in a chosen formation, usually a rectangular shape.
- Wadding for the middle of your quilt – a cotton or cotton/polyester mix is easier to quilt with but if you can only get polyester, get a reasonable quality one, around 4oz heavy. You may not be able to get wadding in the complete quilt size but can always sew pieces together to fit your quilt top.
- Backing fabric – a sheet is always good if you can't find enough fabric. Make sure the backing fabric is at least an inch larger than the quilt top and wadding all the way around.
- Pins for the tacking and binding stages
- Spray-on adhesive (e.g. 505 spray) or brightly coloured thread and a needle for tacking
- A sewing machine for quilting or wool/thick embroidery thread and a good embroidery needle for knot-quilting (quilting with a machine will make your quilt stronger but knot quilting is easy and students can help with this).

How do I prepare?

1. Layer your quilt like a sandwich. Start by placing the backing fabric, face down on the floor or a large table. Now add the wadding and finally the quilt top, facing up. If you have a spray adhesive like '505' spray, spray each layer before adding the next one. If not, you will need to put a few lines of large tacking stitches (a large running stitch) along the whole length of the quilt in both vertical and horizontal

lines. Try not to tack where the seams between blocks are - this makes machine quilting difficult later.

2. Remember, your backing fabric is larger because later this will be folded-in to make a neat, bound edge to your quilt. If your wadding is too big, trim it to the same size as your quilt top without damaging the backing.
3. Thread your machine if you will be machine quilting and keep a few spare bobbins to hand.

What next?

4. Quilt the three layers! You can either:
 - a). **Quilt by hand or machine** - create lines of stitches on the quilt top (i.e. vertical and horizontal lines). If you're new to quilting, try to follow the style of the design on the quilt top.
 - b). **Try Knot-quilting** – Use a large embroidery needle and some thick thread or thin wool. Find a point where four blocks meet and take your needle down through the point, all the way to the back of the quilt, and then come back up. Leave around 8cm of your 'thread end' free and make two small stitches on top of the one you've just made. Then cut the other end of the thread to around 8cm and tie in a tight knot. You could even thread a bead or button on before finishing your knot. Trim the thread ends if they're too long.

What happens after that?

5. Take out your initial tacking stitches – the quilt should now hold together.
6. You can now start to bind your quilt. First take in the two side edges of the backing fabric, folding once over towards the quilt edge and then over again so the backing looks like a neat binding around the sides of the quilt. Pin in place. Sew on the machine (straight stitch) or by hand (catching the edges of the binding to the quilt top) up the length of the side. Repeat on the other side.
7. Now repeat step 5 for the top and bottom edge of the quilt. Where the binding meets the sides and crosses you will need to tuck the edge in and fold over to make a neat corner, just like wrapping a present.
8. If you plan to hang your quilt you will need to think about how you might like to do this. The easiest way (which we use at the Museum) is to make a quilt sleeve for the back of the quilt. It's a pocket that runs the width of the quilt, through which you can run a wooden baton with hooks or eyelets on the ends. If you don't want to make a sleeve, simply pin to a display board (if light enough) or perhaps display on a table for people to touch.