

## **QUILTING LESSONS OUR READERS LEARNED THE HARD WAY**

Courtesy of American Patchwork & Quilting Magazine

Every quilter has learned the lesson "measure twice, cut once" the hard way. We asked our Facebook readers what quilting mistakes they've made and compiled a list of their answers. From rotary cutter accidents to seam miscalculations, we've seen it all.

### **Fabric**

- "Don't buy cheap fabric! You'll watch blocks shrink right in front of your eyes while pressing."
- "Different fabrics will shrink differently! If you don't want it to fall apart, pre-wash everything." -- Yvette A.
- "Make a test block with your fabric choices before committing to cutting all of the fabric." -- Molly S.
- "Buy enough fabric...the first time!" -- Cindy H.
- "Use colors and patterns that make you happy-it's hard to finish a piece if your heart isn't in it." --Jenni S.
- "Always test red fabric to find out if it will bleed, even if it is expensive fabric." -- Bernie A.

### **Cutting**

- "Don't drink wine and cut fabric!" -- Dorothy C.
- "Press first, cut second." -- Jenny S.
- "Accurate measurement on the smallest pieces equal an accurate end product." -- Karen T.--+
- "When I first started, I ignored the word lengthwise for a fairly wide border. I did a huge amount of appliqué on it before adding to the quilt and then ran into big problems putting it on the quilt. The stretchiness of the crosswise fabric made the whole border 7-1/2 inches too long. The appliqué had to be cut off and never quite worked out." -- Catherine H.
- "Don't cut your borders until after the center is complete." -- Molly S.
- "Don't trim down the blocks before you sew them together. My first attempt at a Bear Claw pattern, all my "claws have clipped nails," instead of nice points." -- Lynn B.
- "Never cut the batting and backing layers too close to the quilt top before basting. The layers always shift!" -- Kyria O

## **Piecing**

- "Everything matters! Reading all the instructions thoroughly. Cutting accurately. Sewing accurately. Placing accurately. And DO NOT quilt when you're tired and cranky. You will make a mess of it." -- Donnamarie F.
- "Take my time when working on a quilt, never rush to finish a quilt so you can start another project. It can lead to many unwanted mistakes. If it takes a little longer, it's not the end of the world." --Myree W.
- "Be careful when putting a complicated quilt top together! Use your design wall to pin the blocks up on before you start sewing. Nothing is more frustrating than discovering you had two quilt blocks reversed, after you have put the top together! Lots of quality time with your seam ripper!" -- Lorraine M.
- "I've learned a few lessons, but the most painful was to take my foot away from the pedal when threading the needle or trying to figure out the next step- and make sure the cat is away from it too." -- Rebecca S.
- "Slow down, especially if you are a beginner." -- Peggy B.
- "Check the tension!" -- Carrie C.

## **Quilting**

- "When doing free motion on a domestic machine, make sure the backing hasn't flipped over on itself. I had to pick stitches off half of a table topper one time due to that." -- Molly S.
- "Release the throttle (or foot pedal) once you "get into trouble" doing free motion quilting. Not stopping but forging on just makes things worse-with more to rip out." -- Riana N.
- "Always cut the large pieces of fabric first as smaller shapes can be cut out of the leftovers." -- Ann O.
- "I ask Alexa to check my math! I keep her in my sewing room!" -- Julie M.
- "Wear a glove when cutting fabric! Rotary cutters are sharp!" -- Mary H.

## **Pressing**

- "Press material first to remove wrinkles or creases. I cut into my pattern pieces first then pressed out-found it changed the sizes of the cut pieces and had to re-cut." -- Roka R.
- "Buy a good iron and learn how to use it. A mediocre seamstress is so much better if she, or "Don't bind the quilt and then quilt the border." -- June S.

## **Making Mistakes**

- "If you make a mistake and can live with it, leave it. My mom would say that 'it proves that it was homemade, not mass produced.'" -- Ann L.
- "Stand back 30 feet. If you cannot see the mistake, you're good." -- Larry L.
- "My biggest and hardest lesson has been to not be so hard on myself. I am my own worst critic. I think I must do my piece work perfectly and when I don't it's a real bummer. But I have learned how to move past it and continue. It's about the finished product." -- Leslie S.
- "My best and perfect are different things. I can't be perfect, but I can do my best." -- Kymberly P.

## **General Quilting Advice**

- "I should have hooked up with other quilters long, long ago. Although I started to quilt at age 10, it was very basic piecing with hand quilting. When I developed a deeper interest in it, I was floundering on my own because I didn't glom onto the idea of advantages of belonging to a group. But now I have a variety of quilting resources and that more than satisfies my love of quilting." --Mary Lou B.
- "Quilt with friends often." -- Carla N.
- "It takes a lot longer to do things in real life than it takes on tutorials!" -- Laurie T.
- "There are NO quilt police! Use what you like, have fun, enjoy the play with color, with any machine that works for you, with any fabric you have, with any thread handy, just make it!" - - Karyl D.
- "Don't wash, in the washing machine, an antique quilt that your 95 year old mother-in-law's grandmother made." -- Marina S.

- "Don't drop your pins and needles in the shag carpet. The foot pain of my childhood-thanks mom!" -- John M.
- "Never use a standard No. 2 pencil to mark a quilt!" -- Kathy M.
- "When someone says a quilt pattern is easy, take with a grain of salt! Some are easy and some are not so easy!" -- Julia S.
- "Buy a really good seam ripper." -- Helen M.
- "Enjoy the process, it's going to take a while!" -- Peggy N.
- "Every quilt is a learning experience." -- Juanita M.
- "You can't finish a quilt you're not working on." -- Tracey A.
- "Read the whole pattern before starting." -- Anne S.