

# Quilt-Style Binding

A Masterclass from *Hazel A*  
Patterns

This style of binding is standard on quilts, but it is useful for a lot of other projects too. Unlike bias binding, this binding is cut on the straight grain, and once you have mastered the technique of stitching around the corners, you will find that this is the easy way to finish off any padded item you wish to create.

Use a 1/4" seam allowance unless otherwise stated

## Step 1: Cut your binding strips

A quilt-style binding doesn't need to go around curves so can be cut on the straight grain. The fabric needs to be fairly thin, as it will be doubled over, so quilting cotton is ideal. It is usually stitched with a 1/4" seam, so if you are binding a thin layer and want a narrow binding, you can cut your strips 1 1/2" wide, otherwise cut them 2" wide. Your pattern will usually tell you which size is required. Work out how much binding you will need in total, and add approximately 12". Divide this by the width of your strips and round up to the next whole number to tell you how many to cut.

## Step 2: Join your strips

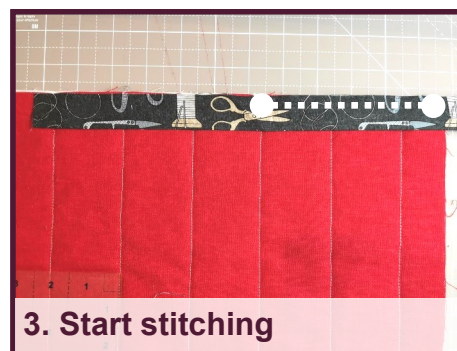
You will frequently need to join multiple strips to get the length of binding you need. Although it is cut on the straight grain, you need to join your strips on the diagonal, so the seam is less bulky when you fold the binding in half. Start by laying your first strip down horizontally, right side up, and working with the right-hand edge of the strip. Working with the left-hand edge of your second strip, lay your strip right side down on top of the first, but this time vertical. If you are working with directional fabric i.e. a one-way pattern, check that the second strip will be the correct way up when stitched. Draw a stitching line diagonally from the top left corner of the vertical strip to the lower right corner of the horizontal strip. Stitch, then trim the seam to 1/4" and press open. Repeat for as many strips as you need, then fold in half, right sides out, and press. You can wind this around some card to store.

## Step 3: Start stitching

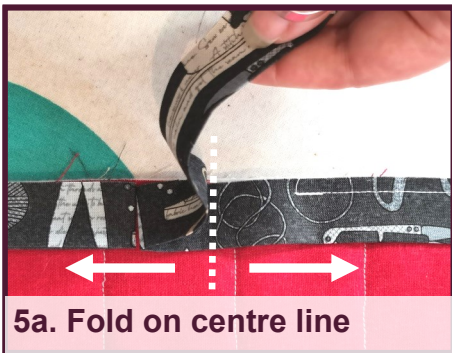
The first seam is usually stitched by machine, with a 1/4" foot if you have one. You can start on the front then finish your binding on the back, or stitch on the back and flip to the front. I prefer the second option, as I like to make a feature of the neat edge-stitching or finish using a decorative hand-stitch. Decide which edge of your piece you want the join to be, this is often specified in the pattern, otherwise the bottom edge is usual. On smaller pieces, you will tend to do a straight join, as it can be done in a smaller space, so if you want this centralised then begin stitching around 3" - 4" past the centre point, leaving an 8" tail. With the raw edge of your binding matched to the raw edge of your piece, stitch along until you are 1/4" from your corner, and finish by either back-tacking or stitching off the side. Cut your threads, and remove your work from the machine. If you want to use a diagonal join, which is less bulky, you will need to start 4" - 6" past the centre point.

## Step 4: Mitre the corner

You need your binding to expand over the corner of your piece, so here is where we create the mitre. With the stitched edge horizontally in front of you, lift the free end of your binding upwards, and lay it down vertically. It will form a diagonal fold in the corner. Now bring it back towards you, forming a fold level with the top edge of your piece, and matching the raw edge to the edge of the side you are about to stitch. Stitch from the top edge down to 1/4" from the next corner, and back-tack again. Repeat for each corner, then end your stitching 6" - 8" from where you started.







5a. Fold on centre line



5c. Trim binding ends



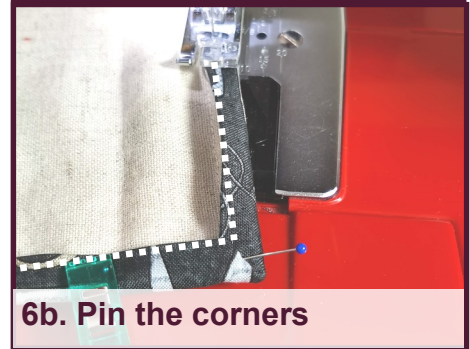
6a. Clip binding in place



5b. Stitch and press open



5d. Stitch a diagonal seam



6b. Pin the corners

### Step 5, Option 1: Join the binding with a straight seam

Take your work to your ironing board. Fold each side of your binding back on itself so that the two sides meet at your centre point. Press the fold flat, then open out each end the binding so that it is a single layer and use the pressed lines to draw your stitching line. Stitch the two ends together, then trim the seam to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", press it open, re-fold the binding and press it again. Now you can complete your stitching.

### Step 5, Option 2: Join the binding with a diagonal seam

Take your work to your table, and lay one side of your binding over the other. Mark the centre line on the top layer of binding. Working towards the end of the binding, measure across by half the width of your flat binding, so 1" for a 2" binding, or  $\frac{3}{4}$ " for a 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " binding, and cut off the excess. A spare piece of the binding is useful for this. Swap over the binding ends, and repeat, working the other way from the centre point. Open out the binding, then sew a diagonal seam in the same way you did to join your strips at the beginning, so one horizontal, the other vertical, and stitching diagonally. Trim the seam to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", press the seam open.

Re-fold and press the binding flat again. Finish stitching the seam. This method works best with larger items, as you need to leave more binding unstitched to allow enough space to open and stitch on the diagonal.

### Step 6: Finish your binding

Press the binding towards the edge of your piece, then turn your piece over so you are working on the unfinished side. Smooth your binding into place and use clips, pins, or dissolvable tape to hold it, ready for stitching. Mitre each corner, securing with pins. To finish by machine, stitch around evenly, starting from your join. I like to edge-stitch, but you can use a decorative machine stitch or a zig-zag. If you prefer to stitch by hand, you can choose to stitch invisibly, using a ladder stitch (this is a good way to finish on the back of your piece) or you can use embroidery floss or a Sashiko thread, and stitch around using a running stitch or other embroidery stitch. This is a great option if you are sewing something small, where it is hard to manoeuvre on the machine, or if you are covering something solid, like board or wood. You only need to stitch through the binding itself and the top layer of fabric, so it shouldn't be physically hard to sew.



Machine-stitched finish



Decorative finish



Invisible hand finish

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