

Tips for Machine Quilting

By Sue Hausmann, S & H Presents

Putting your Quilt together

When your quilt top is pieced, there are several ways to assemble the quilt with the batting and backing.

The first step is to piece the backing if necessary. Depending on the size of your quilt, and the width of your backing fabric you may need to join several lengths to achieve enough width. The best way to join several lengths is to cut your backing fabric into two equal pieces. Set one of them aside. Cut the other one lengthwise from cut edge to cut edge. It will now be two pieces the same length as the one you set aside, but will be two narrower strips. Cut off all the selvage edges. Sew one of the pieces on one side, and the other piece on the other side of the wider piece. This gives you a full width piece in the center (Figure 1).

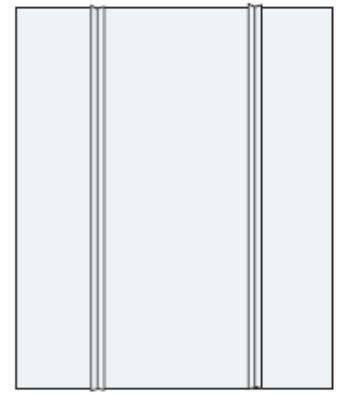


Figure 1

Envelope Method

Fast and easy, the envelope method is great for baby quilts and wall hangings. It can be used for larger quilts as well.

Place your batting on a flat surface. Place your backing fabric on top of the batting, right side up. The quilt top then goes on top, right side down. (Figure 2). This method is easiest if your backing and batting are slightly larger than the quilt top. Pin all the way around. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Leave an opening to turn the quilt right side out along one side.

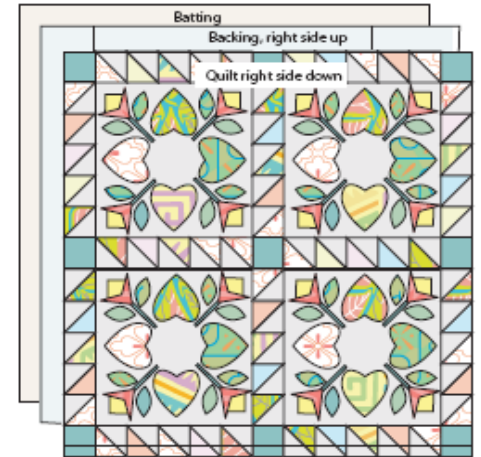


Figure 2

Tip: Begin at the edge of the quilt and sew in to the 1/4" seam line.

Pivot and stitch around the quilt. At the end, pivot and stitch out to the edge. This helps the opening turn in easily. (Figure 3) Leave a generous opening to turn the quilt. 8" is enough for a light weight baby blanket or wall hanging, but a large quilt needs up to 20" or your fabric can rip as you are turning it. Trim off the excess fabric and clip the corners. Turn, press the edges. Tip: Stitch the backing fabric to the batting before closing the opening. Hand stitch the opening closed. Quilt as desired. Binding is not needed as all the edges are finished.



Figure 3

Bound Method

Place your backing on a flat surface, right side down. Place your batting on top of the backing. Place your quilt top on top on top, with the right side up. (Figure 4). Pin with safety pins or use Sulky KK2000 Temporary Spray Adhesive™ to keep the layers together. Quilt as desired. Finish with binding.

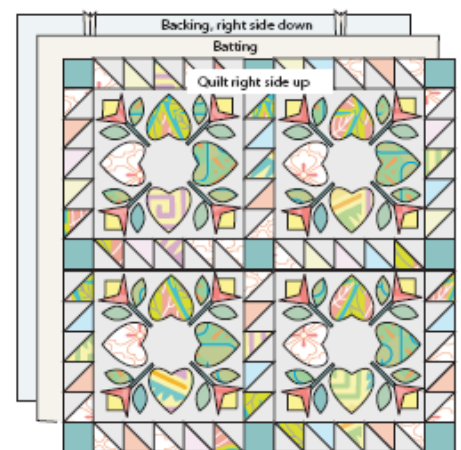


Figure 4

Free Motion Quilting and Stipple Quilting

Ready:

Layer Quilt top, Batting and Backing

Set:

Lower/drop feed dogs

Presser Foot Pressure 0 or Darning position (some machines)

Select Needle Stop Down

Straight Stitch

Length (does not apply when feed dogs are down-you move quilt)

Size 90 Quilting or Topstitch needle

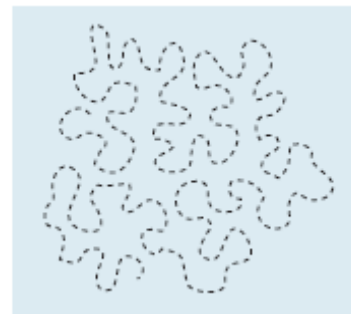
Free Motion Foot (suggest spring/jumper type to hold quilt to stitch plate while stitch is being formed)

Quilt:

If your machine does not lower the presser foot automatically, be sure to lower it before beginning to stitch to engage the top tension. If you do not lower the presser foot, the top thread “birds nests” on the underside of your quilt.

Because the feed dogs are down, you will be moving the fabric! Thread top and bobbin with cotton sewing thread, 30 wt. Sulky Cotton, Sulky invisible thread or Sulky Rayon Embroidery thread, depending on the look you want. Practice on a scrap, until you feel comfortable moving the fabric around. You are controlling the stitch length; by the way you move the fabric. You may need to adjust the tension. That will depend on the fabric, batting and threads that you are using.

A popular free motion quilting technique is stippling. You move the fabric randomly, in curvy motion, creating the pattern shown. Try not to cross over a line as this will detract from the texture.



Built-In Stipple Quilting

Some sewing machines have stippling stitches built-in. Simply select the stippling stitch of your choice and quilt.

Echo Quilting

Ready:

Stitch an outline design, appliqué or embroidery or choose a print design to Echo Quilt around. Layer the quilt top, batting and backing.

Set:

Straight Stitch

Length 2-3 (a shorter stitch length will stitch easier around small areas)

Needle Stop Down

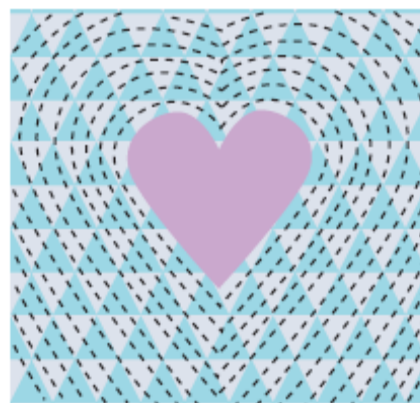
Size 90 Quilting or Topstitch Needle

1/4" Quilting foot or Dual Feed Foot (or engage Dual Feed)

Quilt:

Echo quilting is often used to quilt around appliqué or embroidery designs.

Thread top and bobbin with cotton sewing thread, Sulky 30 or 12 wt. cotton thread or Sulky Rayon Embroidery thread, depending on the look you want. Follow the edge of the appliqué design, with the edge of the foot. Stitch one round. Then move the edge of the foot along the first Echo Quilting line and over and stitch again. Repeat to quilt entire area.



“Stitch in the Ditch” Quilting

Ready:

Layer Quilt top, batting and backing

Set:

Straight Stitch

Length: 2.5-3.0

Needle Stop Down

Size 90 Quilting or Topstitch Needle

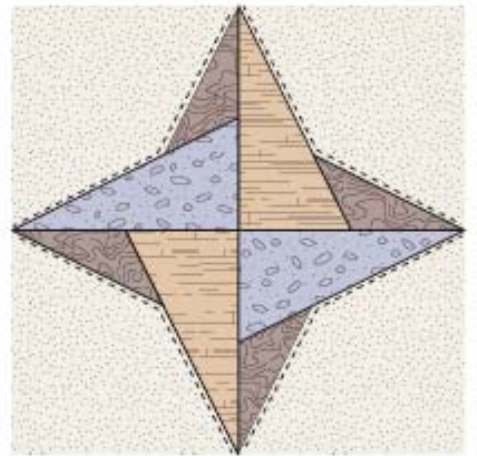
Dual Feed Foot with center guide or Engage Dual Feed with Open toe or center guide foot

Quilt:

When the quilting is not to be a part of the design of the quilt but to hold the layers together use the Stitch in the Ditch Technique.

Thread with Sulky Invisible thread on top. Choose transparent for light colors, and smoke for darker quilts. Wind cotton sewing thread on the bobbin.

Stitch so the stitches are “in the ditch or seam line” between borders, or pieces. The stitching will sink into the seam line.



Quilting on your Embroidery Machine

Ready:

Layer quilt top, batting and backing

Set:

Set for machine embroidery (consult your instruction manual)

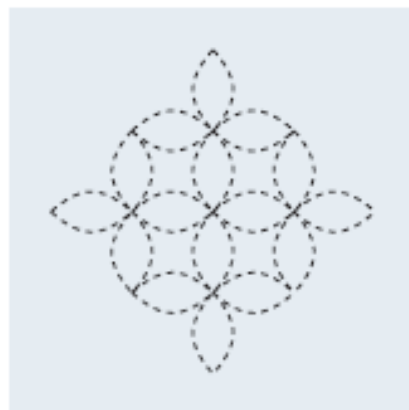
Size 90 Embroidery or Topstitch Needle

Quilt:

There are many quilting designs for embroidery machines. These are digitized especially for quilting through layers. You can also use the outline stitch of some designs but experiment on scraps first.

Thread top with cotton sewing thread, quilting thread or Sulky Rayon Embroidery thread, depending on the look you want. Thread bobbin with cotton sewing thread. Do not use pre-wound bobbins for quilting embroideries because you need the strength and want the beauty of a regular sewing thread.

Hoop your quilt and touch Start! The design will be sewn out. Note: Stabilizer is usually not needed because the designs are not dense, and the batting in the quilt gives enough stability.



“Hand Look” Quilting

Ready:

Layer your quilt top, batting and backing

Set:

Select “Hand Look” quilting stitch (Consult your instruction manual)

Thread top with Sulky Polyester invisible thread

Thread bobbin with Sulky Rayon or Cotton Thread in color for quilt stitches

Size 90-100 Topstitch Needle

Needle Stop Down

Open Toe Foot or Dual Feed Foot

Quilt:

Some sewing machines feature “Hand Look” stitches for quilting.

The top is threaded with Sulky polyester invisible thread and the colored thread is in the bobbin.



The top tension is set higher to pull the color to the top of the quilt while the clear thread between each colored stitch gives the illusion of hand stitching. Most computer machines set the tension automatically for these stitches.

Crazy Patch Quilting

Ready:

Prepare your fabric for crazy patch. Usually the crazy patch stitches are sewn before the quilt is layered for more accurate stitching. Be sure to place stabilizer underneath or stabilize with liquid stabilizer or starch so there is no stabilizer to remove.

Owners of embroidery machines can piece and crazy patch stitch in the hoop with patchwork design collections.

Set:

Select crazy patch stitch

Thread top with “pretty thread” Sulky Rayon or Cotton thread

Bobbin Thread on bobbin (for best results wind with quality bobbin thread)

Size 90 Topstitch needle (100 Topstitch when using 12 weight thread on top)

Decorative Stitch foot as recommended by machine

Needle Stop Down

Quilt:

Most sewing machines feature beautiful crazy patch stitches such as the feather stitch, cross stitches, turkey tracks, and “sew” many more.

Stitch over seam lines or define areas with crazy patch stitching. Practice on scraps to see what stitches you like best. The hardest part is deciding which ones to sew!



Stencil Quilting

Ready:

To mark the quilt top with quilting stencil/template, select a quilting stencil/template to and transfer the design onto your quilt. Use Pounce quilt marking chalk or a water soluble fabric marking pen to trace the designs. Layer the quilt top, batting and backing.

Set:

Straight Stitch

Thread top and bobbin with Sulky cotton or Rayon thread

Length 2.5-3

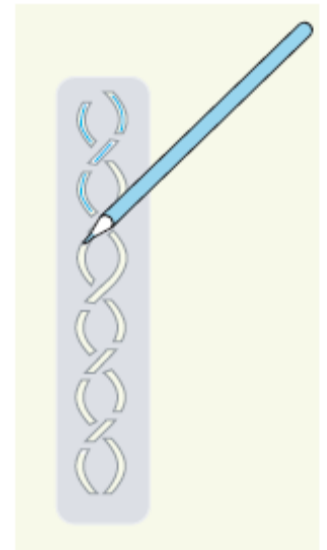
Needle Stop Down

Size 90 Quilting or Topstitch Needle (Size 100 for 12 weight cotton thread)

1/4" Quilting foot, Open Toe Foot or Dual Feed Foot (or engage Dual Feed)

Quilt:

Most design templates enable you to do what is called continuous line quilting. Thread top and bobbin with cotton sewing thread, Sulky Cotton or Sulky Rayon Embroidery thread, depending on the look you want. Instead of stitching around each oval, stitch all the way down the length of the marked design on one side, then go back and stitch the other line.



Channel Quilting

Ready:

Layer Quilt top, batting and backing

Set:

Straight Stitch

Length 2.5-3.0

Needle Stop Down

Thread top with Sulky Cotton or Rayon thread

Wind Sulky 30 weight cotton or sewing thread on bobbin

Size 90 Quilting or Topstitch Needle (100 Topstitch for 12 Weight Cotton)

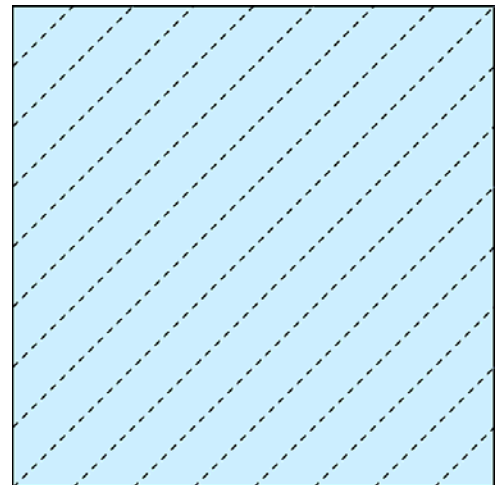
Dual Feed Foot with center guide or Engage Dual Feed with Open toe or center guide foot

Use Edge Stitching/Quilting Guide

Quilt:

Use a fabric marking pen to mark first line of stitching. Channel quilting is often stitched on the diagonal and sometimes again on the opposite diagonal to create diamond channel quilting.

Stitch the first row of quilting. Adjust the edge/quilting guide along the first stitching row so the needle now stitches the desired distance from the first row. Continue quilting placing the edge/quilting guide along the previous row to guide you.



Single Stitch Tie Quilting

Ready:

Layer the quilt, batting and backing. This technique is great for “quick quilts” that have been enveloped together and are ready for quilting. To mark the location for each “tie”, fold a piece of 20” wide Sulky Soft and Sheer Stabilizer over and over into squares about the size you desire between “ties”. About 8-10” squares is a good size. Snip the corners of these squares through all layers to create a hole. Make the hole large enough to pin through.

Place your Soft and Sheer “tie” marking template on top of the quilt and pin through all layers at each “hole” with a quilting straight pin. Move the marking template to the next area on the quilt and repeat to pin mark the entire quilt. These pins will hold the quilt together and mark the place for the “tie stitch”.

Set:

Select Program on your machine. Select the tie off function (Fix) to enter it into program. Select and enter the stitch you desire to “tie” with. Try the satin heart, a cross stitch, or a theme stitch that goes with the quilt.

Select and enter the tie off function again to tie off the stitch at the end of the stitch and select and enter the thread cutter if you have it.

Go to the Sew function

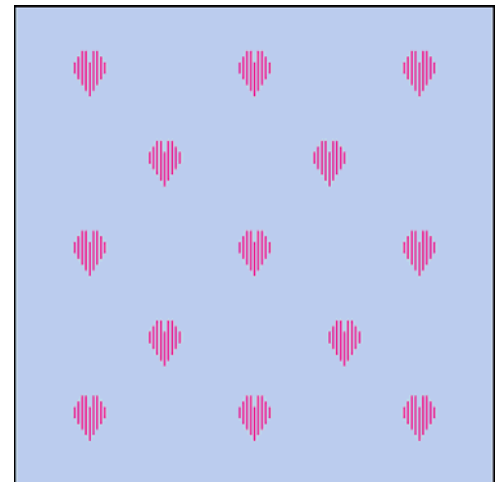
Thread with Sulky Cotton or Rayon on top, cotton on the bobbin

Size 90 Quilting or Topstitch needle

Snap on a decorative stitch foot.

Quilt:

Place the quilt under the presser foot over one of the pins, **remove the pin** and sew. The decorative quilt “tie stitch” will knot off, stitch the stitch, knot off and cut the threads. Repeat for all “pin marked” areas on the quilt.



Note: I use straight pins for marking smaller quilts. To mark and baste larger quilts, use safety pins for the basting as you would baste for other quilting techniques so you don't get “poked” by the pins as you move the quilt.

Traditional Quilt Binding

Binding is the last step in finishing your quilt. For finished binding 1/2" wide, cut strips 3" wide, depending on your personal preference. The strips can be cut on the cross grain. They do not have to be cut on the bias unless the edge of your quilt is curved. Any curved edge requires bias cut

binding. When binding with a print or a stripe, the bias will create a more interesting binding. You need to cut sufficient strips to go around your quilt with about four inches extra.

Seam your binding strips end to end. A bias seam will give you less bulk. To sew a bias seam, place the two strips right sides together at a right angle as shown (Figure 12). Stitch from corner to corner, then trim the excess to a 1/4" seam allowance.

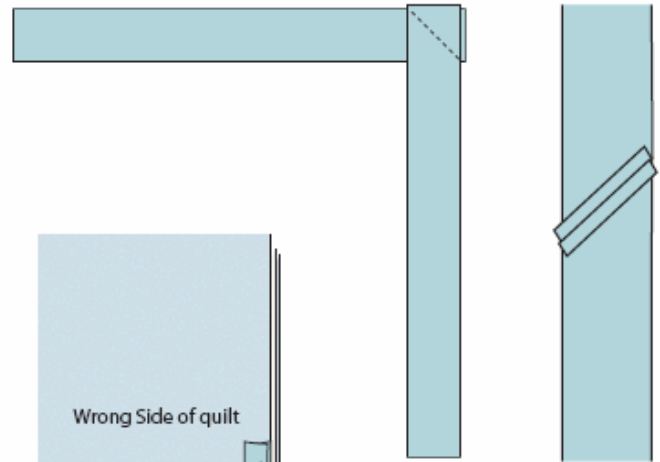


Figure 12

Figure 13

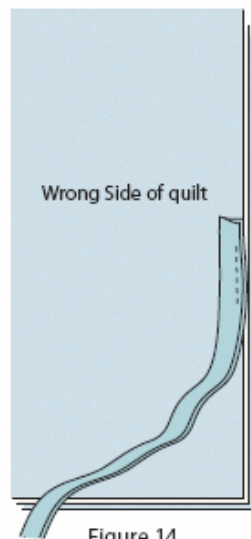


Figure 14

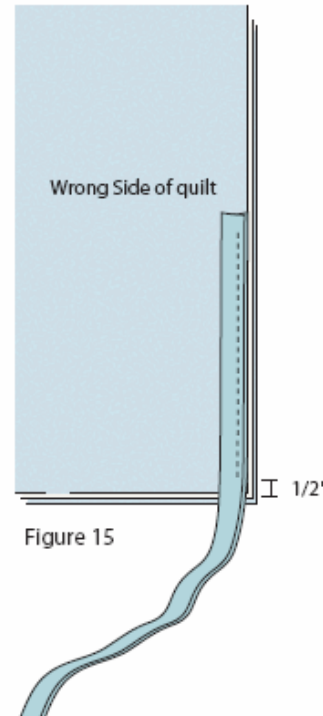


Figure 15

Press the seam open. (Figure 13)

Press the binding in half, lengthwise, wrong sides together. This double thick binding will wear better along the quilt edges. Place the raw edges of the binding even with the raw edge of the quilt. Begin the binding in the center of the edges. Select a straight stitch, needle down. Use a Dual Feed Foot or built-in Dual Feed if available. Sew with a scant 1/2" seam allowance. Start sewing two to three inches from the end. (Figure 14)

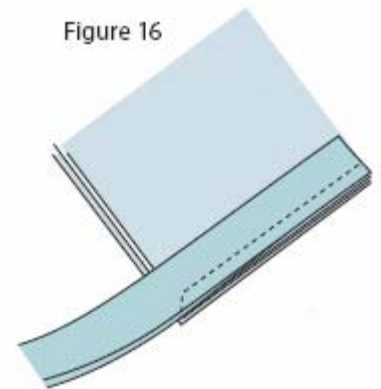


Figure 16

Stitch to within 1/2" of the corner and stop with the needle in the fabric. (Figure 15)

Raise the presser foot and pivot the quilt and sew to the corner as shown. (Figure 16)

Remove the quilt from the machine. Fold the binding straight up at a 90 degree angle as shown. (Figure 17)

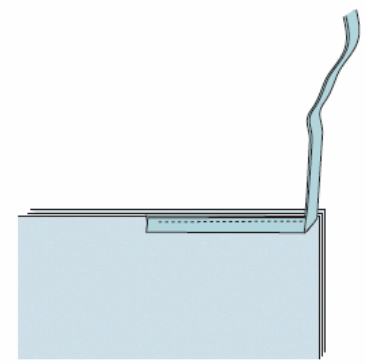


Figure 17

Then fold straight down. (Figure 18)

Place the quilt back in your machine and begin sewing at the edge. Sew to within 1/2" of the next corner and repeat the metered corner instructions.

To join the binding when you get back to the beginning, stop sewing about 3" before you meet the beginning end of the binding. You should have a few inches of tail on the binding at both the beginning and the end. Fold the binding to meet on the bias as shown and press to form a crease. (Figure 19).

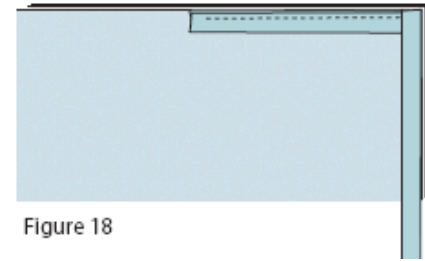


Figure 18

Unfold the binding and carefully pin the creases together. Then mark the sewing lines. Sew the binding ends right sides together. Trim the excess. Refold and stitch the remaining several inches of the binding. (Figure 20)

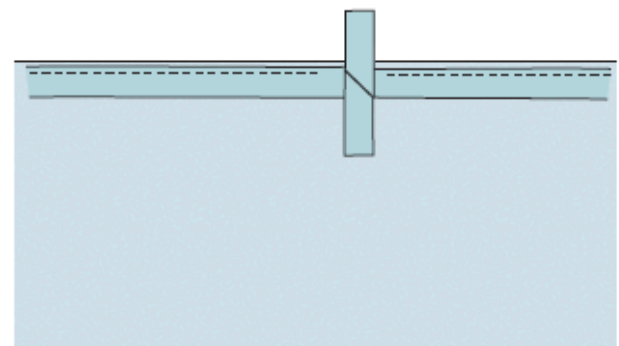


Figure 19

Press the binding over the seam allowance.

To finish the binding, fold it to the right side of the quilt and press. The fold of the binding should just meet the stitching line. (figure 21)

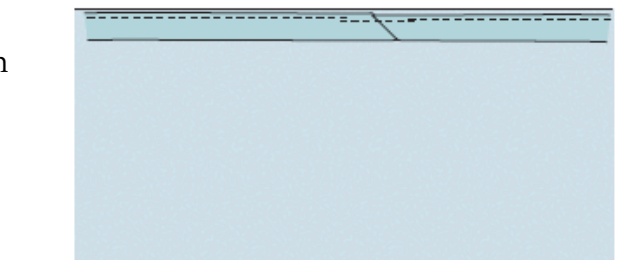


Figure 20

HINT: Insert 1/4" wide paper backed Steam-A-Seam 2 on the wrong side along the fold of the binding. Remove the paper backing and fuse it in place with

plenty of steam, before stitching.

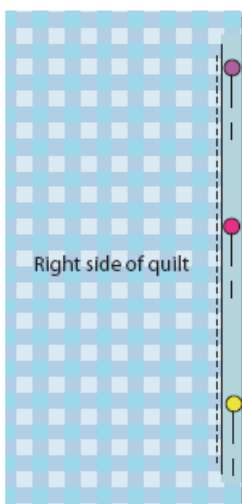


Figure 21

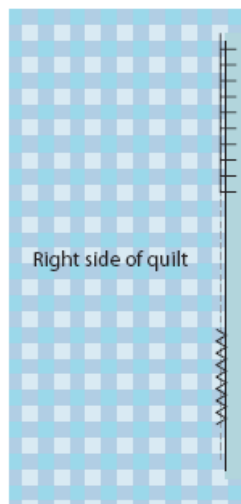


Figure 22

Snap on a Left Edge Topstitch or Bi-Level Foot. Stitch the binding in place with a hand look appliqué, buttonhole, pinstitch or small zig zag. (Figure 22)