

Cutting Bias Bindings!



The other day I got a comment on my [Binding Tutorial](#) that read:

“Do you know of a binding chart for measurements, on how you can figure out how much binding you will need for a quilt when you are making BIAS BINDING? I have seen he chart for straight binding, and that's great, but how do you figure out the measurements when you're cutting bias binding??”

Quilts with curved edges require bias binding so the binding fabric will easily move around the curve without cupping and puckering. And sometimes, a stripe or plaid look BETTER cut on the bias than on the straight for the effect that you want. I've also been told that bias binding doesn't wear out as quickly because the straight of grain is not on the edge of the quilt. It's stronger.

((This pic is the BACK side of a quilt that is being released in a German magazine coming up, I can't show the front yet!))

The challenge with cutting bias binding comes in the calculation -----Usually a square is cut from the fabric, the square cut on the diagonal, and the pieces rotated and joined back together into a parallelogram. Lines are drawn, pieces are offset, and re-sewn into a tube, and then the tube is cut on the line with scissors.

The problem with this is that if you are "offsetting" your lines, aligning the top line with the line 2" below it --- your bias binding is not really on the "TRUE" bias. And you have to cut all that bias by hand with scissors after your tube is sewn together. To me the process is awkward.

And sometimes it doesn't WORK for me to cut a big honking square of fabric! What if I want to bind a quilt that says that I need a 29" x 29" square? And I only have 1/2 a yard that measures 18" X 42"? Can't I make better use of the fabric that way?

First off, you need to know the perimeter measurement of your quilt. Side + Side + Top + Bottom. And just to be safe, I add another 12" to that measurement. I need to figure the excess I need to miter corners and join the binding ends within that measurement.

And it also helps to think of standard quilt sizes when planning binding. That way I can figure out in my head based on the following what I'll need:

Twin: 68" X 90". Perimeter measurement + additional 12" = 328" of binding needed.

Double: 80" X 90". Perimeter measurement + additional 12" = 352" of binding needed.

Queen: 90" X 108". Perimeter measurement + additional 12" = 408" of binding needed.

King: 110" X 110". Perimeter measurement + additional 12" = 452" of binding needed.

So these are my ball park figures that help me decide what size of fabric yardage to start with.

The more narrow the bias binding, the easier it hugs the curves and the better it looks in my opinion, so I tend to cut my bias at 2" for a binding that finishes at a snug 1/4". I know some people like 3/8" binding and want to cut it at 2 1/4". Just do a small recalculation using the following formula and should work for you!

So here we go! Are you ready?

1.) Measure the perimeter of your quilt and add 12". Divide this number by 42 (assuming about 42" of usable width on 44/45" wide yardage) and round up to the next even number.

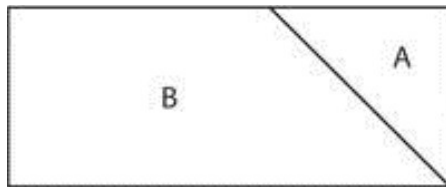
2.) Multiply this number by your desired cut strip width . This final number is the length of the rectangle needed to make your continuous bias binding strip.

For example:

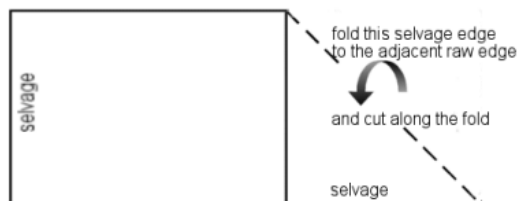
- Quilt measures 71" x 90"
- Perimeter = $71+90+71+90 = 322$ and add 12" for a total of 334"
- 334 divided by $42 = 7.95$ Round it up to 8
- 8×2 (for 2" binding strip width) = 16
- You'll need 16" x 42" piece of fabric for the binding

So I can get that bias binding out of a 1/2 yard of fabric instead of having to cut a 29" square!! That's a much better use of the fabric, don't you think?

You can use your own measurements in the formula above for figuring out your OWN needed size! Try it, it's easy!



This is my drawn piece of yardage! And This is my actual piece of yardage! Fold one end of the rectangle over and align the edge like this:



I leave the fabric folded, and use my scissors to cut along the fold like this:



This is my TRUE bias. You can see I've placed a couple of pins away from the fold to keep things from shifting as I cut....And yes, there is a piece of green fabric tied to my scissors to warn any family members that these are FABRIC SCISSORS ONLY!



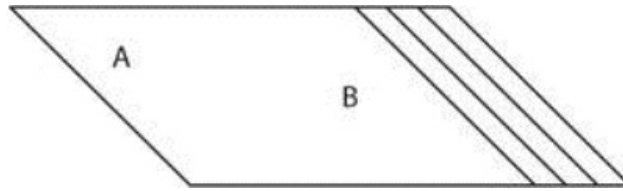
sew the selvage edges together in a plain seam. Press open.

Move the cut off triangle to the other end of the rectangle, and sew the selvage edges together. Press this seam open.

Here it is on MY fabric:



Yes, I was making LOTS of purple bias binding! I was binding scallops, so I had to calculate in extra length. This is a fairly LARGE cut of fabric for that reason, but the method is the same!



At this point, to keep the true bias, I just cut strips the width that I need from the bias edge of the parallelogram. You CAN do the drawing all the lines 2" apart, and sew the whole thing into a tube by offsetting it one line, and then cut with scissors on the lines to have it all in one length, but remember....it's just "THAT MUCH" off the true bias if you do. And I find that the ability to fold the piece, use my rotary cutter to quickly cut strips, and seam them end to end is actually a faster process for me.

If you want to view the "tube" method with squares, go [HERE](#).



My 12.5" ruler isn't long enough...I like this 14" one with it's easy to read big numbers!

When joining the strips end to end, be sure to overlap and leave dog ears at each end. Your stitching should come out right at the "V" in between the two pieces of fabric. Press seams open!

Applying the binding to straight edges is the same as with straight cut binding. You can visit my [Binding Hints](#) page to see how I apply binding, miter corners, and join ends.

I plan on doing a curved binding tutorial when time allows! I know I'll need to have one in place when the quilt I have in the German Magazine is released...so be watching for it!

Bonnie