

Finishing a Quilt with a Facing

A free project from Vicki Welsh

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Finishing a quilt with a facing is a great option for some quilts. Quilts like my Zombie Ball quilt needed a finished edge that would not show. Every binding that I auditioned for this quilt took away from the design. Eventually I realized that it didn't need binding at all.

It needed a facing.

Facings aren't for every quilt. I wouldn't recommend a facing for a quilt that's going to be used on a bed or as a blanket. The edge would likely wear quicker than the quilt. But a facing is perfect for wall quilts of any size.

Here's how it's done.



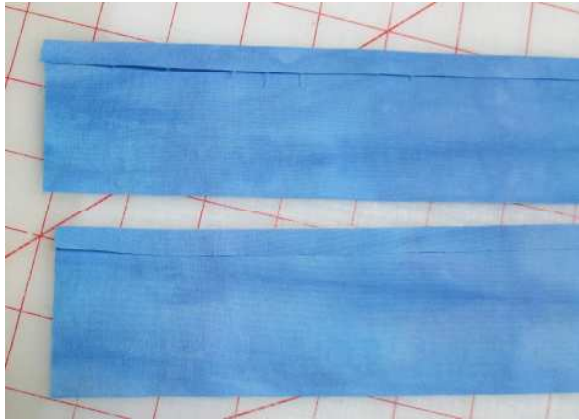
You need a finished quilt that is trimmed to its finished size plus $\frac{1}{4}$ " all the way around. The $\frac{1}{4}$ " is the amount that will be turned back with the facing. Technically that can be more than $\frac{1}{4}$ ", make that seam allowance as wide as you need it but be aware of the bulk that will be added around the edge of the quilt.

You will also need facing strips. For my quilts these are about $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. For my Zombie Ball quilt the facing strips were cut about $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wide.

Two strips will be the full width of the quilt (the top and bottom strips in my quilt).

Two strips will be shorter than height of the quilt. These are the side strips in my quilt and

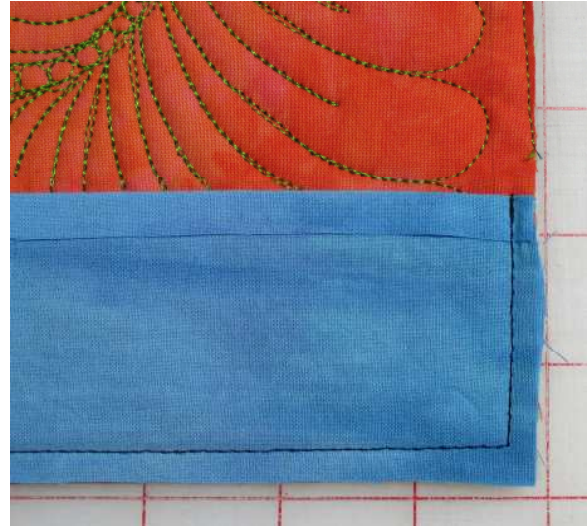
they are cut about 1 ½" shorter than the sides of the quilt.



Press under about ¼" on one long edge of each of the 4 strips. This is the open edge that will be stitched down on the back of the quilt.



Sew the two full width strips to the quilt. The folded under edge faces up and the unfolded edges of the strip are aligned with the edge and sides of the quilt. I planned on a ¼" seam allowance and that 's what I sewed. Stitch down the sides and one long edge.



Here's a close up that shows more clearly the unsewn folded edge and the seam.



Position the two shorter pieces centered (more or less) on the sides of the quilt and sew them in place. Because you cut them shorter they will be just short of the corners and that's perfect. By cutting these shorter you eliminate bulk from the corner.



Here's a close up of the corner.



Here's the tricky part. Cut through all of the layers on an angle on each side of the corner. This will remove bulk to make the corner turn nicely. Don't cut too close. This is one time that it's a good idea to practice on a scrap to make sure you know how the bulky corner will turn so you can determine just how much you need to trim. You don't want to turn this and have any raw edges poke out from the corner.

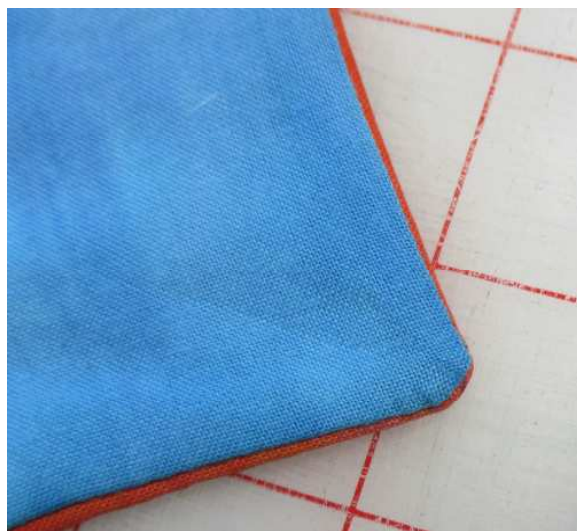
Gently turn the facing to the back and, at this point, only push out the corners with your fingers.

Now turn on your iron and fill it with water so you can have lots of steam.

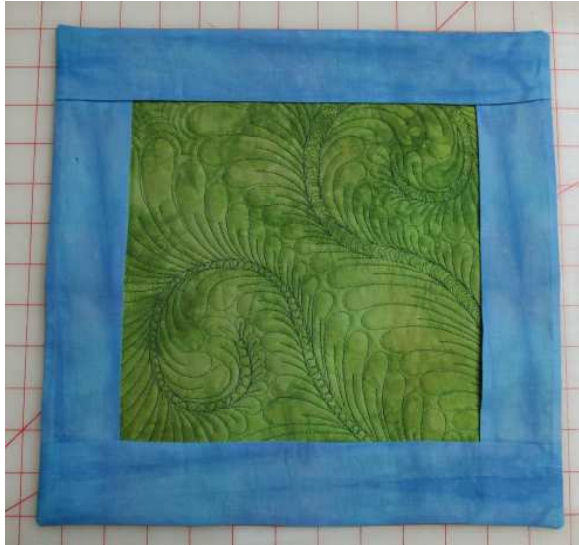


Carefully, using your fingers roll the facing to the back. Work a few inches at a time and once you have it turned the way you want press with steam from the back. It's perfect if you can see a hint of the front of the quilt from the back. Use lots of steam and heat to get that quilted fabric to fold back and stay in place.

Work the sides first and then tackle the corners. Gently push out the corners with a blunt pointy object. A chopstick works well. Don't poke so hard that you push raw edges through the seam but work the corner enough that you see a tiny bit of the front of the quilt on the back.



Here's the corner turned and pressed.



Here's the facing pressed to the back. Hand stitch it down and you are done. If you are in a big hurry you could always fuse the facing in place.



Now, think about it, there's another option that might be even easier. If the quilt is small you could face the quilt with one piece of fabric. Cut a hole out of the center so you can turn it. Cut that hole with wavy edges and you have a very pretty back. In this example the facing is fused in place but I could have easily turned under the curved edges and stitched it in place.



Flip it over and admire your beautifully faced quilt!

Another option is to fully face a piece with the backing before quilting and do the quilting through all layers. This requires leaving an opening along the edge, turning the quilt and then hand sewing the opening together. You finish it up with the quilting. This method is a little trickier because you have to carefully watch the edge to make sure it doesn't get draw to one side or the other with the quilting.