

Bound Edges and Knife Edge Finishes

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Alternative Finishes - Beyond Basic Binding




Shelley Rodgers, pirate_sr@hotmail.com

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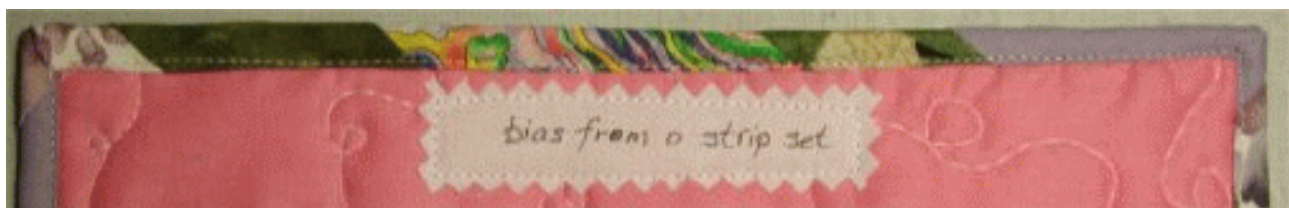
Bound Edge alternative stitches, strip set bias

If you do choose to use a traditionally bound finish for your quilt, consider these two very simple options that don't take a lot of extra time, but add a small something "extra" to your finish.

First, use one of your decorative machine stitches instead of plain top stitching. Personally, I don't particularly care for zig-zag and I am limited to a small number of decorative stitches on my main sewing machine. There are 3 that I have used: Point d' Paris (pin stitch), blind hem stitch and feather stitch.

Point d' Paris (pin stitch)	Blind Hem stitch	Feather stitch
 <p data-bbox="110 1003 561 1222">If necessary, change the stitch width to be narrower than normal so the "bite" of the stitch doesn't go very far into the binding. This stitch has only one stitch between each "bite".</p>	 <p data-bbox="587 1003 1039 1150">The blind hem stitch has multiple stitches between each "bite". Shown here in black for intentional contrast.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1065 1014 1516 1161">This feather stitch was centered on the binding and shows 2 different threads being used: orange rayon & dark metallic.</p>

The second option to consider is to sew a strip set (multiple narrow rows of fabric sewn together to create a large piece of fabric), using the fabrics in your quilt top. The repetition of the quilt top fabrics in the border of is a very nice way to customize an otherwise plain finish. If you then make bias binding from this strip set, you will get a wonderful diagonally striped binding.



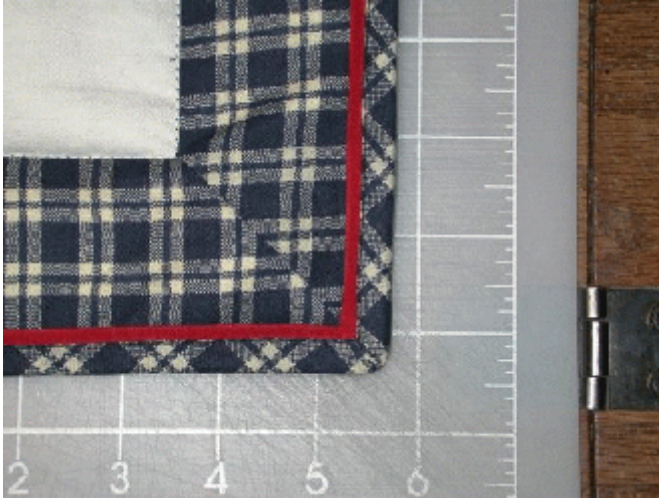
Bias binding from a strip set

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Bound Edge with accent



Finished example of bound edge with accent



Detail of contrast strip corner

This is a simple addition of a contrasting strip of fabric between the quilt top and the conventional binding.

The contrast strip can be either straight of grain or bias. If it's bias, you'll get a very nice diagonally slanting look.

Keep the amount that shows fairly narrow, 1/8" - 1/4". If it's too wide, it will tend to flop over. To determine how wide to cut your strip, you need to know how much of a seam allowance you're using and how much of your strip you want to show. For talking purposes, let's assume you're using a standard 1/4" seam allowance. Furthermore, let's assume you want 1/4" of the strip to show. $(2) \times (1/4") = 1/2"$, then double that .. so you will be cutting a contrast strip width of fabric by 1 inch.

Fold the strip in half, lengthwise, wrong sides together; press. With raw edges even, put the contrast strip on the front of your quilted top, cut to fit and baste just inside the seam allowance. Do the sides first and then the top/bottom or vice versa; just make sure you do opposite sides before you do the other two sides. Overlap the corners.

Finish binding the quilt top with conventional binding of your choice.

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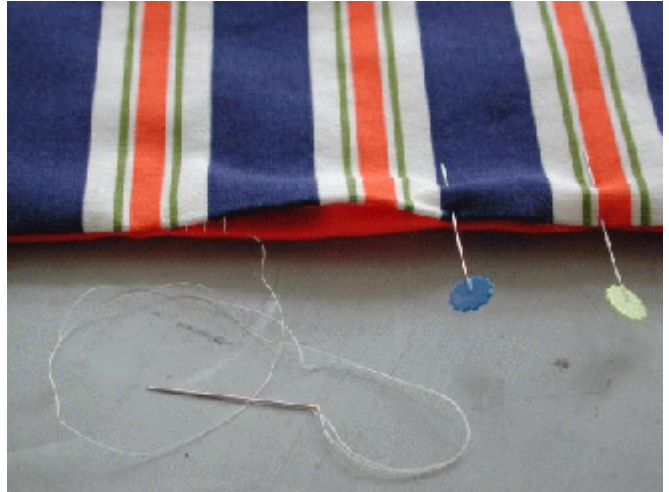
Knife Edge Finishes

A knife edge finish isn't a very durable edge and as such, isn't appropriate for a quilt that is going to be well-loved and laundered. It's perfectly fine for wall-hangings or quilts that won't be getting heavy use.

Envelope / Pillowcase
plain finish



Envelope/Pillowcase
plain (without piping)



Hand stitching the opening closed

This finish is completed before the actual quilting of the top is done.

Sandwich in this order: backing and top right sides together; the batting can be layered on either the top or the backing. I suggest using a spray baste to hold the batting in place. Align all edges and smooth so there aren't any wrinkles. Pin the edges so the layers won't shift. With the batting side up and using an evenfeed/walking foot, sew all 4 sides, leaving an opening of about 10-20 inches (depending on the size of your quilt) in the middle of one side. When sewing a side, I like to sew off the end, rather than pivot at the corner. I feel this gives a more secure seam and a more accurate corner. Trim the batting close to the sewing line. Don't trim the backing or the top. Trim corners.

Stick your hand through the opening, grasp the two opposite corners and pull the quilt through the opening. Using a bluntly rounded object (I use a large sized knitting needle), CAREFULLY poke out all corners.

At the opening, turn the top and backing seam allowances under the same amount as your seam allowance. Press, pin and hand-stitch closed. Use a blind stitch (ladder stitch) will ensure the seam is invisible.

Quilt the sandwich.

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Knife Edge Finishes

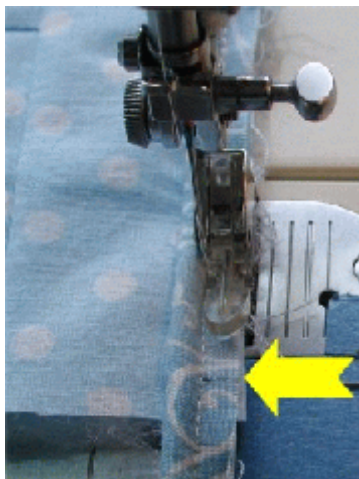
Envelope / Pillowcase piped/corded finish



Envelope/Pillowcase
piped edge

The construction for this finish is the same as for the Envelope/Pillowcase (plain) with the following addition: there is a piping strip between the backing and top layers. I like to take an extra step and baste the piping onto the top layer before sandwiching. In this sample, the piping is filled with cording. The construction and finishing is the same as for the Envelope/Pillowcase (plain).

Here are detail photos on doing the corners with a piping strip:



1. Clip the piping seam
allowance the distance of the
seam allowance.



2. Turn the piping at the corner and
sew off the edge.



3. Clip corners

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Knife Edge Finishes

Turned Edge



Sandwich and quilt. Be sure to leave at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 1" unquilted around the edge. (I've been very lazy here, since it was a very small sample piece, and pinned the sandwich in place instead of quilting.) Trim the batting only very close to the turned edge.

Turn both the top and backing about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to the inside. If necessary, you might want to hand-baste the seam allowances down. Pin and hand-stitch closed with a blind stitch (ladder stitch) or a whip stitch, as is your preference.

Personally, I found this finish to be exceedingly tedious. However, this is one finishing technique that is excellent for irregular edges, such as Grandmother's Flower Garden or Tumbling Blocks.



Edge shot of back & GFG blocks, showing the turned edge.

Knife Edge Finishes

Faced Edge



Faced edge, overlapped corners

This finish gives a very nice border effect on the back of the quilt and can be an effective way of dealing with irregular edges such as diamond, hexagons and scallops. This finish eliminates the problems inherent with many corners when using traditional binding. If your backing is too small, you can center it and cover up the shortage with a facing.

Sandwich and quilt as is normally done (if your backing is too small (see comment above), you still need to quilt out to the edge. Measure the sides and top/bottom of the quilted sandwich.

Cut 2 facing strips the length of the sides and 2 facing strips the length of the top/bottom. The width of the facing strips needs to be wide enough to cover the depth of the irregular edge plus at least 2".

The side facing strips will be shortened during the process of making the frame. Making them full length ensures that a proper size frame will be made.

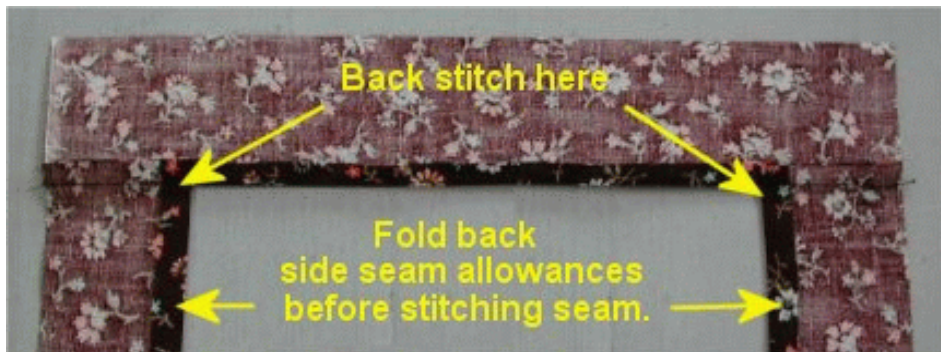
In the sample, the pointy depth is 1", so that the width of the facing strips is $1" + 2" = 3"$.

It is easiest to first make a "frame" of the facing strips. You may butt or miter the corners of the frame. The following sample photos show butted corners.

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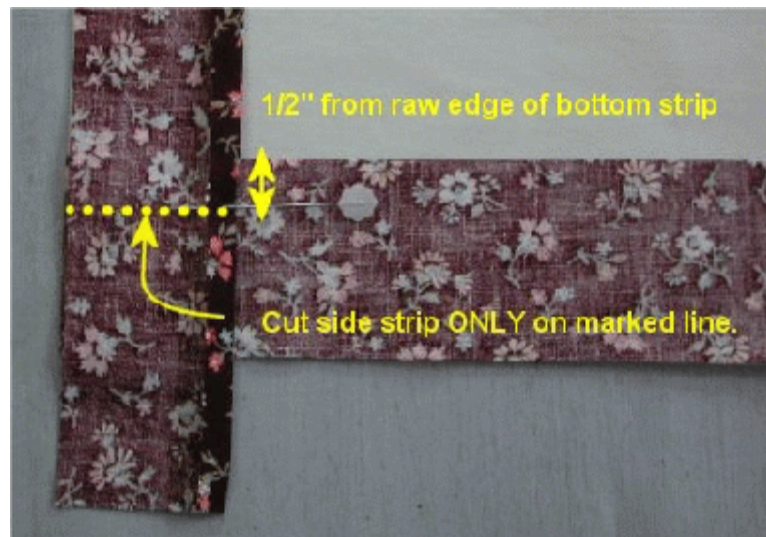
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On one long edge of each side strip, press a 1/4" seam allowance to the wrong side.

Put side strips on the top strip, raw edges even, right sides together, at each end of the top strip. The folded edge of the side strips should be towards the center. Sew with a 1/4" seam; back stitch at folded edge. Press seam allowances away from the side strips.

Photo shows the wrong side of the facing strips after stitching the side strips to the top strip.



The side strips now need to be shortened so that the frame will be the proper size for the quilt. Put the bottom facing strip face down on the bottom of the quilt. Place the sewn frame unit on top of the quilt, overlapping the bottom facing strip.

On the side strips, draw a line 1/2" below the top edge of the bottom strip. Cut the side strips ONLY on this mark. Do NOT cut the bottom facing strip!

With right sides together, raw edges even, sew the side strips to the bottom strip, just as you did to the top

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strip. Back stitch at the folded edges of the side strips. The frame is now finished.

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Put the facing frame and quilt top right sides together, raw edges even. Pin. With the quilt top facing you, stitch through all layers, following the contour of the quilt edges as dictated by the top. Use an evenfeed/walking foot to make sure that the layers don't shift.

Trim the batting close to the stitching. Trim the facing frame even with the quilt top.

Trim corners and outer points (if any). Clip the seam allowances of the inside points (if any) and trim the seam allowances of the inside points (if any) very close to the stitching the less bulk in this area will result in a smoother looking finish.

Flip the facing frame over to the back of the quilt. Using a bluntly rounded object (I use a large sized knitting needle), CAREFULLY poke out all corners.

Stitch the folded edge of the facing frame to the backing by machine or hand-stitch in place with a blind stitch (ladder stitch). Consider embroidering a decorative stitch on top of the seam in the manner of a crazy quilt. You will need to edge-stitch 1/4" - 1/2" away from the edge to keep it from rolling.