

EPISODE 20 CLASS NOTES

TRIMMING & JOINING THE BORDERS

In this episode, we are going to trim your quilted borders, join them with a spacer strip, apply the final sashings, and join the borders.

A quick note before we start: As you put your borders on, you may experience some stretching or waviness around the outside edge. Please don't worry if this happens! It's a common occurrence and we will cover how to fix that in our final episode.

1. Squaring Up Your Quilted Borders:

Before we attach the borders, we need to trim the long sides to their final, consistent width. We will trim the ends (the length) later.

- **Consider the Design:** Look at your quilting and decide how trimming will affect the overall balance. If you're cautious, mark your cutting line with a fabric pencil first to see how it looks before using the rotary cutter.
- **Use a Large Square Ruler:** I find a large square ruler is more accurate and stable for this step than a long, rectangular one.
- **Mark and Trim:**
 - The density of your quilting can cause the border to pull in more in some areas than others. Because of this, you may need to mark your cutting line carefully along the entire length.
 - In some cases where the fabric has pulled in, you may only be trimming the batting and a small amount of top fabric, with the batting edge becoming your seam allowance guide.
 - Mark the cutting line on one long side of the border.
 - Turn the border around and use your ruler to measure from your marked line to your desired final width (eg. 6 inches), then mark the second cutting line.
 - Check that you are happy with how the quilting design sits within your marked lines.
 - With a sharp blade in your rotary cutter, carefully trim both long sides.

2. Joining the Borders to the Quilt:

The process involves attaching a spacer strip to the quilt first, then joining the border to the spacer strip. The side borders go on first, followed by the top and bottom borders.

Step 1: Measure and Cut

- Once your side borders are attached, measure the width of your quilt in three places (top, middle, bottom) and find the average measurement.
- Cut your 2 ½" wide spacer strip to this exact length.
- Trim the ends of your quilted top/bottom borders to this same length.

Step 2: Pin for Precision

- To prevent stretching and ensure an even join, you must mark and pin your pieces. The un-quilted spacer strip is more likely to stretch than your quilted quilt edge.
- Fold your quilt edge to find the center and quarter marks, placing a pin at each point.
- Do exactly the same on your long spacer strip.
- Match the pins on the spacer strip to the pins on the quilt edge and pin them together securely. Pin the ends as well.

Step 3: Sewing the Spacer Strip

- Sew the spacer strip to the quilt with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam.
- Repeat the pinning process (marking center and quarter points) to join the quilted border to the other side of the spacer strip.
- Give the joins a good press, pressing the seams towards the spacer strip.

Step 4: Square the Quilt Corners

- After all four borders are attached, square up the four corners of the entire quilt using your large square ruler for accuracy.

3. Applying the Border Sashings:

This quilt is a sampler and a learning experience, so be prepared to be flexible with your sashing choices. I had to make extra pieces and change my layout from my original plan to create a balanced look.

Pauline's Sashing Examples:

- To avoid a design being "too busy", I combined decorative sashings (like side-by-side triangles) with plain white strips.
- On one side border, I used the small flying geese sashing joined with the two-colour squares.
- On the opposite side, I ran a length of the triangle sashing.

Attaching the Sashing:

- Once you have made your sashing strips to the required length, glue them in place over the spacer strip.
- Stitch close to both edges, using MonoPoly thread.

Machine & Technique Tips

- You don't need a large sewing machine to do this. I demonstrate on my smaller Bernina 335. Simply bulk the quilt up on the table beside your machine.
- If you find the spacer strip is stretching as you sew, reduce the presser foot pressure on your machine until it feeds through evenly.

Next time, join me for the final episode, where we will learn how to fix any waves in the border and put a beautiful binding on our quilt to get it finished.

Happy quilting!