

Machine quilt binding

Unless you are using a thicker fabric (like flannel) cut your binding strips 2-1/2" wide and join together as normally done to create a strip at least 12 " longer than the perimeter of your quilt. Press a sharp crease lengthwise along the entire strip.

Using a wide (4) zigzag stitch, couch yarn down the middle of the pressed binding strip, using the pressed crease as a guide. I use a couching foot, but it works with a regular open foot as well. Tip, if you hold the yarn up a little while feeding it, you can see the crease easier.

Sew the binding strip onto the front of the quilt with a 1/4" seam allowance as is normally done. Leave a "tail of about 6-7 inches at the beginning. You can trim the quilt first or after, as you desire. Press the binding away from the quilt. (I often skip this step and turn as I go).

You will now sew "in the ditch" on the front of the quilt, creating the "ditch" by turning the binding under the backside of the quilt. You can feel with your fingernail the "groove" created between the yarn on the back and the seam on the front. You can pin the binding in place with pins, but I find I can go about six inches at a time just by feel. You want the yarn on the left side of the needle as you sew in the seam line.

Turn the corners the opposite way that they were turned when attaching the front of the binding. These I must pin in place as I get close to the corners.

Stop sewing with enough room to join the ends. Use whatever technique you like to join the ends of the binding, cutting out the excess yarn. I like to cut the ends on a bias and join them by sewing right sides together. Finish sewing the binding onto the quilt.

Notes:

Be sure to use a matching thread. You can use water-soluble thread when you zigzag the yarn into the binding and make that stitching disappear later with water. If the thread matches well, I do not find seeing the zigzag on the back of the quilt, from attaching the yarn, objectionable.

For "fine" quilts I still use the hand-sewn method, but for bed quilts, kid quilts, and charity quilts this saves so much time. I can bind a king size quilt in less than three hours (including creating the binding) with this machine binding method.

For flannel or wider binding cut wider strips.