

15. When you start sewing your blocks together – keep your 1/4-inch seam allowance in mind and be careful to match points and seam joints when putting rows together. Pressing every other row in the opposite direction will give a better fit.
16. Press entire top and hang away while you move on to the backing. It will be tempting to just use a big sheet for the backing of your quilt. Don't!! After you've gone to so much trouble to choose just the right fabrics for your top take a moment to think about the back of the quilt. Choosing a complementary fabric will make it seem invisible and enhance the beauty of the top. Choosing a bold color or pattern can give you the versatility of a reversible quilt. Quilt backing fabric is available in most cloth stores and comes in widths about 110 inches wide, which will accommodate most projects. However, if that isn't an option for you – any cotton fabric can be pieced to make the backing and you will be much happier with the overall result. Press and square up your backing.
17. If you've decided to quilt your project yourself the next step is to "sandwich" the three layers. Hold them together with safety pins or by basting stitches. If you've chosen to have your quilt custom quilted by a long arm machine or by hand they will want you to skip this step and send them the quilt top and backing unattached. Check with your quilter to find out their preferences.
18. After your quilting is done – the binding is the next step. Again there are many methods to choose from – select the one that works best for you and your project. The best way to add the binding is to sew it to the topside so that it flips to the back to cover the seam. Hand stitching the binding down with very small stitches (5-7 to the inch) will not only secure it tightly but your stitches will be invisible to the eye so as not to alter the design of your quilt top. It will be tempting to hurry through this step in order to finish – don't!!

## 18 Tips to making your own heirloom quilt

1. Choose a pattern in keeping with your level of expertise. There are thousands to choose from – but your choice could mean the difference between a finished quilt and just another craft project.
2. Decide what size you want and see if your pattern can be adjusted. Do you want to use your quilt as a bed spread (to the floor on 3 sides and up over the pillows), do you have a footboard or pillow top mattress pad or will you be using a bed-skirt? Consider how the quilt will be used when determining the size.
3. Choosing your colors – Do you want the quilt to be the focal point of the room, is it to blend in with existing décor or maybe you just want your favorite colors.
4. Choosing fabric – Quilts can be made from almost any fabric – but using the highest quality of 100% cotton you can find will give you a quilt that will stand the test of time.
5. Choosing your quilting technique –you can tie your quilt, stitch by hand, use your sewing machine or have your top custom quilted by a long arm machine.
6. Choosing the batting – many types and thicknesses are available. After you've chosen the quilting technique to be used – the selection of batting is easier. Some bats work best if tied, some work well for machine or hand quilting but if you'll be hand quilting you'll want to stay away from anything with scrim. Some of the materials available are polyester, cotton, wool and even alpaca.
7. Determine how much fabric you'll need – most patterns will give estimates based on the size of the quilt. Be sure to make any necessary adjustments for changes you've made to the pattern.
8. Gather all of your tools – rotary cutters, rulers, scissors, iron, etc. before you begin.
9. Cutting your fabric – this may be the most important step. Not being precise with your cutting can result in running out of fabric as well as throwing off the overall design, shape and size of your quilt.
10. When it's time to piece your blocks – remember: 1/4-inch seams will give the desired result and must be maintained throughout your project. Smaller seams can cause fraying and uneven wear – larger ones can cause bunching and a mixture of the two will certainly throw off the points of stars or the matching of blocks.
11. Pressing and/or trimming the blocks as you go is very important. Skipping this step can also throw off the overall design of your quilt causing bunching and gathers.
12. Measure each block – they should all be the same size and shape.
13. When your blocks are made - experiment with your layout. Many quilt patterns can be altered depending on how the blocks are laid out. Turning the blocks even 1/4 turn can alter an entire design. Be creative and find the design you like best.
14. Once you've chosen your design lay out your entire quilt and pin the blocks together in rows numbering each row.