

Custom Quilting with Decorative Stitches

Unique, custom quilting designs can be created on your BERNINA by combining decorative stitches and computerized quilting. Let's take a look at how we can do this and turn quilted fabric yardage into a cute project, like a travel tablet case.

Decorative Stitch Size

Depending on your BERNINA sewing machine, you will find decorative stitches up to either 5.5 mm wide or 9 mm wide. However, on the BERNINA 880 PLUS and B 790 PLUS, we have Sideways Motion Stitches.



- Sideways Motion Stitches will sew out larger than the "maximum" 9 mm wide.
- This is possible because our feed dog on these machines can move the fabric not just forward and back, but also left and right and every direction in between.
- Full 360° sewing using the feed dog is called Multi-directional Sewing.
- There are many Sideways Motion stitches built-in to the B 880 PLUS and B 790 PLUS, but you can also create your own using Stitch Designer.

Using Stitches in Embroidery

Sewing stitches can find another life when used in embroidery.

- Combine a decorative stitch with another embroidery design for a decorative flourish.
- Layout buttonholes to embroider a button

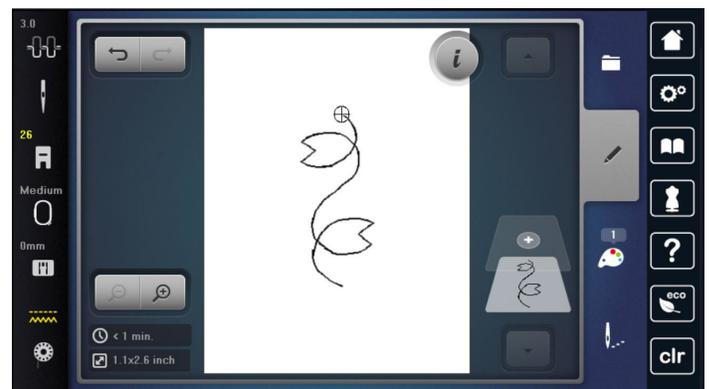
placket.

- Create your own "edge to edge" quilting design with decorative stitches.

Using decorative stitches in embroidery is a feature exclusive to the B 880 PLUS, B 790 PLUS, and B 590.

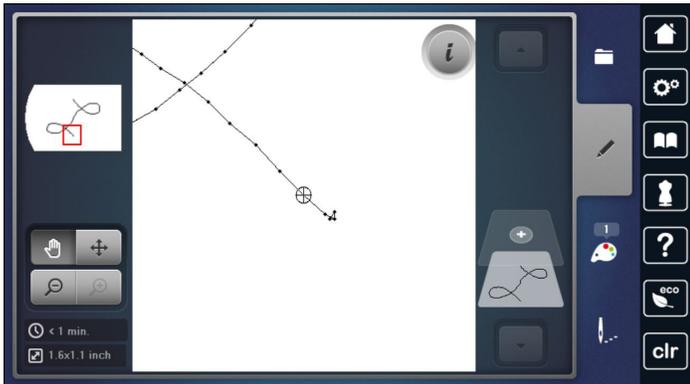
How can you tell what stitches make for good quilting designs?

- Anything that, from the get go, looks like an open, simple linework stitch. That means no satin stitching, or dense overlaps.
- I also say no triple stitches. These are decorative stitches that sew three passes over each "stitch" to have a more pronounced look. There are some quilting designs that are triple stitches. This one is just personal preference-- I prefer single stitch linework because that's how my stitching looks if I quilt free-motion.



- The bigger the better. Even though we have some large stitches, likely you will have areas in your quilt to fill that are larger than one or two inches, and you'll want to enlarge your stitch to fill that space. The larger your starting design, the better the finished result. The more you enlarge a design, the more opportunity there is for issues with stitch density and tension and things like that.

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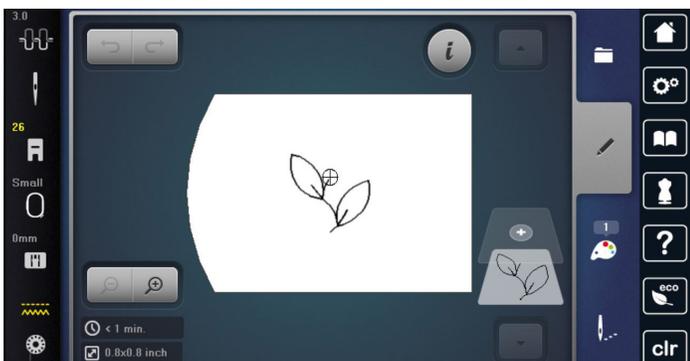


- Your decorative stitches should come together seamlessly. Some have built-in securing stitches at the end of the stitch pattern, and some are more dramatic than others. When we create a row of a stitch in embroidery, those securing stitches can create an obvious knot in the middle of your line of quilting. The only way to see this is when the stitch is opened in embroidery, you can zoom in to find these things.

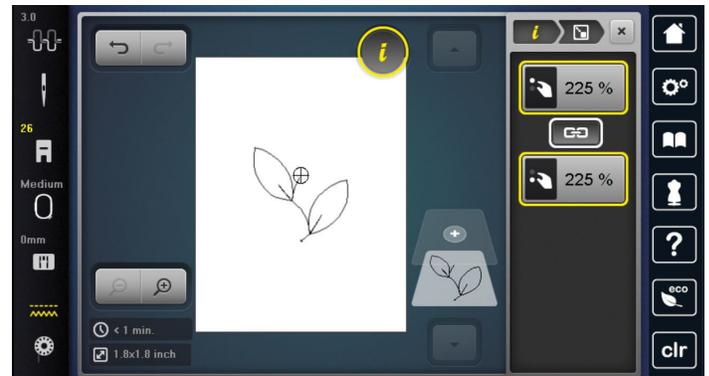
Create a Seamless Design

Let's go step by step to build our quilting design using a Sideways Motion stitch. I will be working on my B 790 PLUS.

- First, decide on a decorative stitch to use. From the embroidery home screen, select the Sewing Stitches folder, then the Decorative Stitches folder.
- Select folder 1601. The stitches in this folder are all Sideways Motion stitches and are all particularly well suited for a quilting design.
- Select stitch 20.



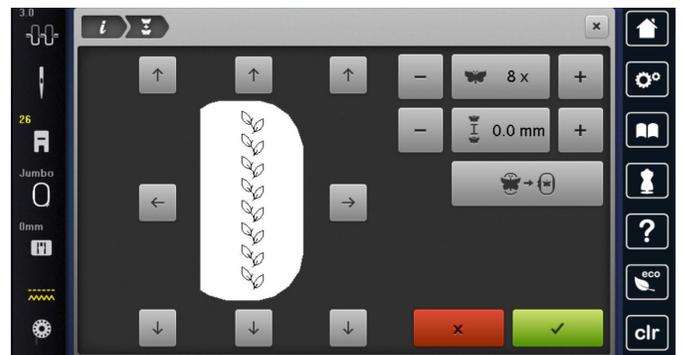
- Resize the design if needed. For my fabric/project, I want to quilt a 2" wide stripe so I will want my quilting to be about 1 3/4" wide.
- In the Information menu, select Change Motif Size. Increase the size of the design to 225%.



- Decide what hoop you will use to quilt your fabric. Generally you will want to use the largest hoop available for your machine, as you will be able to quilt more space before re-hooping.
- Select the Hoops menu. Select the desired hoop.
- Return to the Information menu. Select Endless Embroidery.

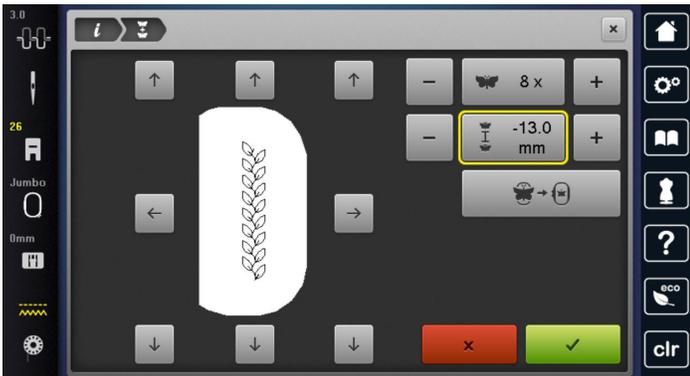
Endless Embroidery is a tool that helps us lay out multiple repeats of an embroidery design precisely. It will automatically fill the length of your hoop with as many multiples of your design as possible, while allowing you to control spacing and include registration marks for multi-hooping.

- Adjust the spacing of your stitches. Use the lower Multi-function Knob to align your pattern so that one stitch stops where the next begins.

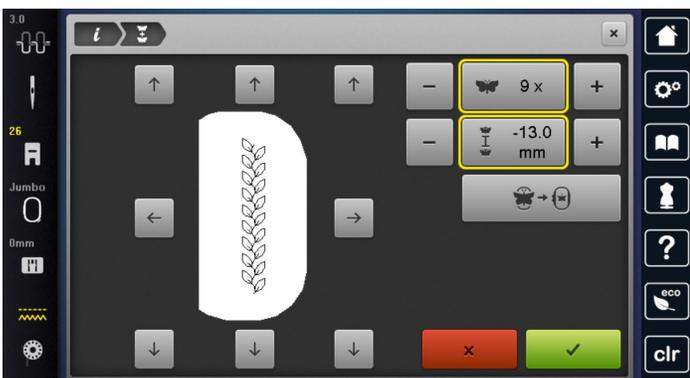


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- Most decorative stitches will need that spacing measurement to be a negative number, allowing the designs to nest within one another.
- For our leaf stitch, set the spacing to -13 mm.



- Increase the number of repeats to 9.



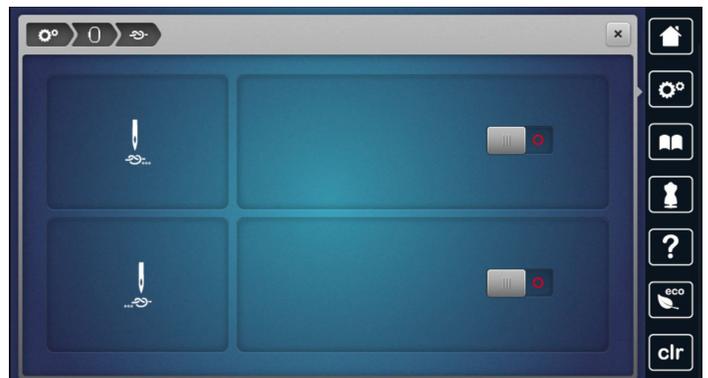
- Select the green checkmark to confirm.
- With my decorative stitch now set up as one long continuous line design, I can now see that the total size is 1.8" x 11.7" which will fit perfectly in the area I am looking to quilt.

Preparing to Stitch Out

Before I stitch out this design, there are a few settings to check for this computerized quilting technique.

- Go to the machine settings and select the Embroidery settings.
- Select Securing Stitches.
- Deactivate both securing settings. If these are

left on, the machine will add securing stitches to the beginning and ending of our quilting design. For most machine embroidery, this is fine or even preferred. But sometimes these securing stitches can create a knot on the back of your quilt. Deactivating both of these securing programs can help create a cleaner finish.



- Return to the Embroidery settings.
- Select the Automatic Cut settings.
- Deactivate both settings here as well. In computerized quilting, I want to take all the same finishing steps that I would in the traditional free-motion process. That means not using an automatic thread cutter and instead leaving long thread tails to bury when I'm finished. These details make for a much more clean and polished finish.



- Close the machine settings window.

One more technical change needs to be made before we quilt our fabric or project and that is

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thread tension. Traditional machine embroidery has unbalanced thread tension, meaning the upper thread and bobbin thread are not pulling at equal strength. Typically the upper thread has lower tension so that it can be pulled slightly to the back side for a clean finish from the front.

However in quilting, we want our thread tension to be balanced. This means we need to increase our upper thread tension.

- Select the Upper Thread Tension from the status bar at the left side of the screen.
- Increase your upper thread tension. This design was defaulting to 3 and I recommend increasing to about 4.5. The exact number for this setting will depend largely on your fabric, thread, and batting choices.

At this point, I recommend test sewing your quilting design on a scrap of fabric. Make any necessary adjustments to size or tension before quilting your quilt or yardage.

Placing with Precision

When your quilting design stitches out perfectly, you can prepare to quilt your final project or fabric.

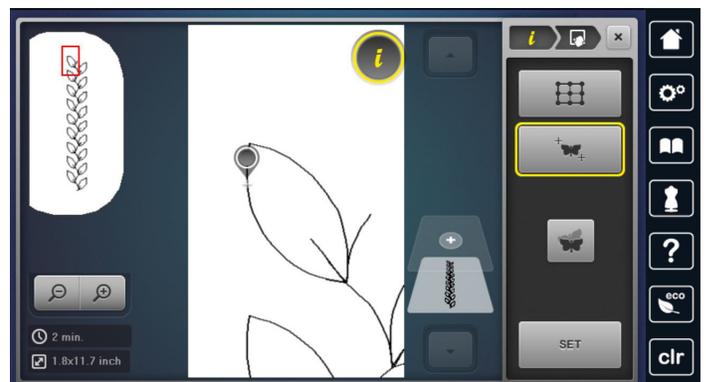
- Baste your quilt sandwich. Use your preferred basting method to temporarily hold all three layers of your quilt sandwich together.



- Hoop the quilt. Place the inner ring of the embroidery hoop centered over the area where you want your quilting to begin. Hold the quilt with the inner ring, pick it all up, and press down into the outer ring of your embroidery hoop. Tighten the hoop to secure.
- At the machine, select the Information menu.
- Select Pinpoint Placement.

Pinpoint Placement is a tool that allows us to choose any two points on a design and position those to make our design fit our fabric. As we move the points on the design, we can see where they will stitch out in real time. It is an incredibly precise tool that allows you to place your designs perfectly, regardless of how neatly you hooped your fabric.

- When prompted, attach the embroidery hoop to the machine.
- Choose Free Point Selection. This will allow you to choose any point you want on your embroidery design for alignment. You can even zoom in to select a single stitch precisely.
- Zoom in and choose a point at the top left of your design. I am looking for a point that is very near the top but is at the furthest left that my design goes.



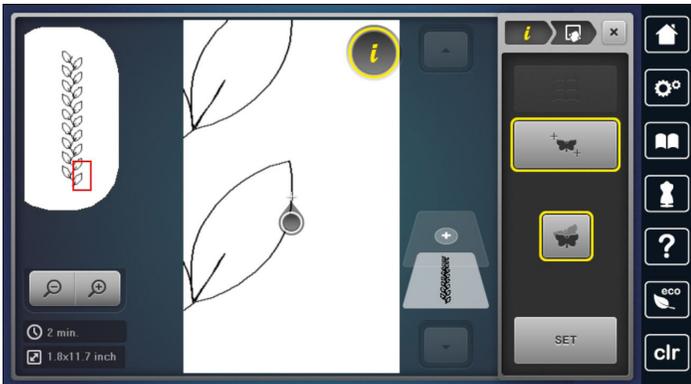
- Use the Multi-function Knobs to move your design so that the visual point you have selected lands where you want on the fabric. As you move the Knobs, the machine will move the embroidery hoop.

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- Check your positioning by lowering the needle with your handwheel.



- When the point lands exactly where you want it, select Set. Zoom back out.
- Next, zoom in to the bottom area of the design.
- Repeat this process by selecting a point at the bottom that is the furthest to the right edge of the design.



- Again, use the Multi-function Knobs to move this point on your design. This will allow you to swing or pivot your design to get it lined up perfectly with your fabric.
- Check your second point's position by lowering the needle with the handwheel.
- When the point falls exactly where you want, select Set.



- Once your design is positioned, select the needle icon to move to the stitchout screen.

Quilting in the Hoop

We have reached the final steps to setting up our quilting design but have two simple boxes to check before we go.

- Be sure that cutting is deactivated at the stitchout screen. Again, we do not want the machine to cut anything automatically.
- Select Single Color Motif to run this as a monochromatic design. This will tell the machine to bypass any "color changes" and continue stitching as one fluid design.
- Bring up your bobbin thread. Holding the needle thread, press the Needle Up/Down button on the front of the machine. The machine will take one complete stitch, allowing you to pull the bobbin thread to the top. Pull a long thread tail (6-8") and lay it out of the path of stitching.
- Press the Start/Stop button to go!

Your machine will now quilt your motif. When you reach the end, cut your thread tails manually and pull the bobbin thread to the top side once again.

Re-hoop your fabric if necessary and repeat the process to place your quilting design and stitch it out until all of your fabric is quilted.

Quilted Tablet Sleeve



SUPPLIES:

- 1/2 yard of exterior fabric
- 1/2 yard of lining fabric
- 1 fat quarter of binding fabric
- 18" x 45" piece of quilt batting
- 2" piece of 1" wide elastic
- 3" piece of 1/4" wide elastic
- 1 button (1 to 1 1/2" in diameter)
- All purpose thread
- Rotary cutter + ruler + mat
- Hand sewing needle
- Pins or WonderClips

Quilt Your Fabric

- Layer your exterior fabric, batting, and lining fabric together to create a quilt sandwich. Baste as desired.
- Quilt the half yard of fabric as desired. The previously mentioned computerized quilting technique is perfect for this. Try combining techniques, like free-motion, rulerwork, and straight line quilting.



Cut to Fit

From your 1/2 yard of quilting fabric cut two pieces:

- One 9 1/2" x 9 1/2" square (front piece)
- One 9 1/2" x 15 1/4" rectangle (back piece)



The dimensions listed above were taken to fit an iPad Air. You may adjust accordingly to fit a different sized tablet or even a laptop. Note that a larger device will require quilting a larger piece of fabric.

On the back piece, use a large bowl or dinner plate to trace rounded corners along one of the short sides. Cut with scissors or rotary cutter.

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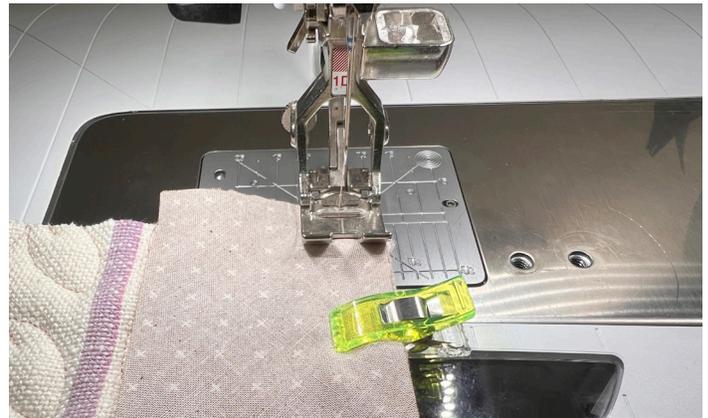
Bias Binding

From your binding fabric, cut and sew enough 2 1/2" wide bias strips to create about 60" of bias binding.



You can find a more detailed tutorial on making bias binding [on the BERNINA WeAllSew blog](#).

- Cut a 10" length of your bias binding.
- Lay the binding right sides together at what will be the opening of your sleeve. Be mindful of directionality of your fabric pattern or quilting. Pin in place.
- Attach the binding, sewing down the edge with a 3/8" seam allowance.



- Press the binding away from the front of your fabric.



- Fold the long edge of the binding in to meet the raw edge of your quilted front piece. Then fold to the back of the front piece. The binding should cover the seam line where the binding was attached. Pin or WonderClip in place.



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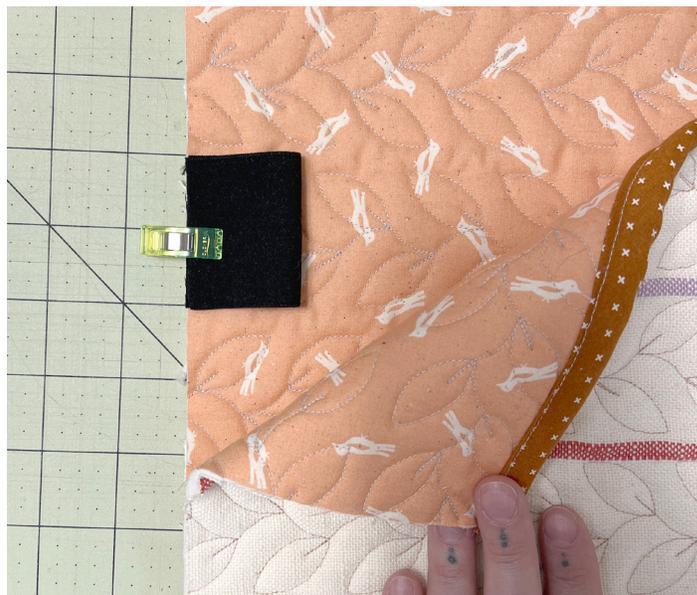
- At the machine, move needle position to the right, to position 3.
- Using Edgestitch Foot #10D, sew down to secure the binding. The center guide on the presser foot should sit right against the initial binding seam.



- Trim any excess binding from the left and right side.

Project Assembly

- Lay the front piece on top of the back piece, aligning short ends and sides opposite the rounded end. Wrong sides (or lining sides) should be together.
- Fold the 1" wide elastic in half. Place this along either the left or right side of the sleeve, between the front and back pieces. The loop will sit inside the sleeve with the raw edges of the elastic aligned with the raw edges of the quilted fabric.



- Wonder Clip around the three sides of the sleeve.

Wonder Clips are preferred here over pins because of the bulk of our fabrics. We have four layers of fabric, two layers of batting, and added elastic. Wonder Clips will hold all our layers together securely without shifting.

- Return your needle to the center position. Lengthen your stitch to 4 mm.
- Using Reverse Pattern Foot #1D, baste around the three sides using a 1/4" seam allowance.



Quilted Tablet Sleeve

Along the top (rounded) edge of the backing piece, we will add another small elastic loop for our closure.

- Find the center of the short rounded edge and mark with a temporary fabric marker in the lining side.
- Fold the 1/4" elastic in half and Wonder Clip at this marking. The loop should point down toward the front piece and the raw edges should meet the raw edge of the quilted fabric.
- Use the same basting stitch to secure your closure elastic in place.

Binding All Around

With our layers basted together, the final step is to bind the exposed raw edges.

- Begin binding along the bottom short edge. Leave a tail of several inches of binding before your starting point.
- Attach your binding to the "inside" of the tablet sleeve (or to the front piece), folding to miter the two bottom corners.



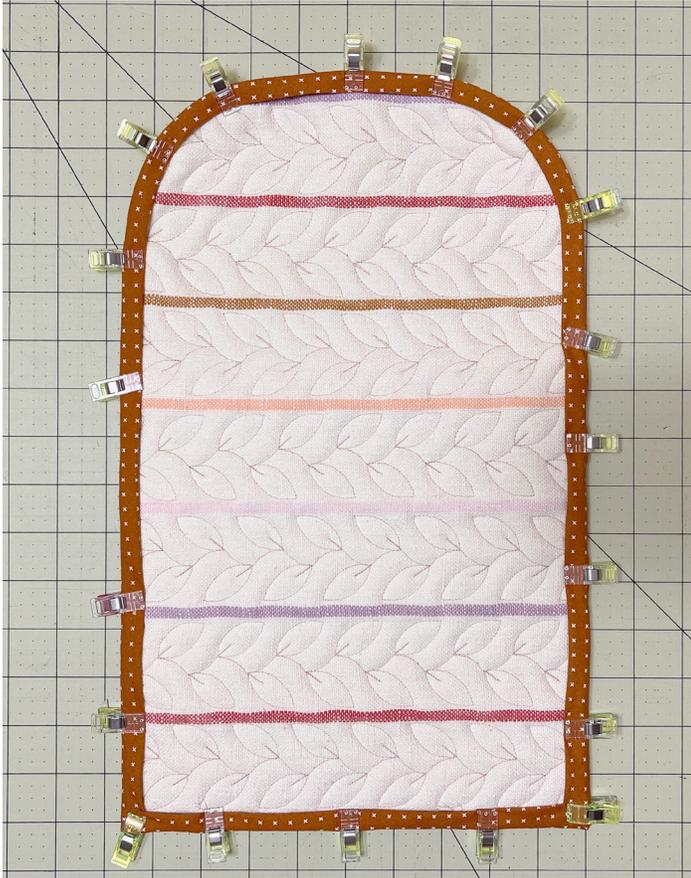
- Along the top curved edge, stretch your bias binding as you sew.
- When you return to the short side you started at, secure your stitch and cut your threads. Join your binding for a smooth finish.



Joining your binding to finish at exactly the right length can be tricky with standard (straight of grain) binding. But because bias binding is inherently stretchy, it is much more forgiving. Err on the side of your binding being about 1/4" short and stretch to fit.

- Fold the raw edge of your binding in and fold over to the back to cover your seam lines.

Quilted Tablet Sleeve



- Stitch down binding as desired. You can do this at the machine, using a blind or ladder stitch by hand, or try a visible running stitch using a decorative thread for an extra handmade touch.
- Fold the curved top edge down over the front piece of the sleeve. Mark a center point about 1" below the edge of the binding. Hand stitch your large button to add the final closure for the sleeve.

