Tips for Successful Free-Motion Quilting

PREP:

1. Start with a new needle, a clean, lint-free sewing machine and a drop of sewing machine oil if your machine requires oiling.
2. Use a single hole needle plate if you have one
3. Use a free-motion darning or quilting foot
4. Drop or cover your feed dogs
5. If you have a speed control, set it at 1/2 speed

Suggestions for materials

1. Quilters Gloves
2. Size 14 needle~Quilting, Sharp or Denim
3. 50Wt. Cotton thread
4. Lightweight (low loft) batting
5. Practice “sandwiches”
6. Several filled bobbins-once you start quilting on your quilt, you will go through them quickly! Save time and wind them ahead of time!

To Begin

1. Place sandwich under presser foot
2. Draw up bobbin thread
3. Lower presser foot
4. With arms resting of edge of table and fingertips on the quilt sandwich, begin to run your machine at a moderate speed. Move your fabric left to right or up and down. Never “turn” your fabric. As you become more comfortable with the motion, run your machine a bit faster, and focus on even stitching as you move your fabric. As you become more comfortable with the motion and the speed, you will find a speed that is your “sweet spot”. Now, you can start to focus on smooth turns and curves.
5. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

“Building” Your Quilt

Back sashing: Cut 9 strips twice the width of your finished sashing

Front sashing: Cut 9 strips twice the width of your finished sashing

The finished width of the back sashing is slightly less than the finished width of the front sashing. I recommend a minimum finished width of 1” sashing for the back, then at least 1 1/4” for the front sashing.

1. Join the quilt from left to right, in this order for each panel:
   Fuse panels together on the front side (attach a safety pin on the backside top and bottom to help secure the fusing and prevent it from pulling apart.
   Allow the fusible batting tape to cool completely before shifting or moving panels.
   Attach (narrower) sashing to the back side
   Attach (wider) saddling to the front side

2. Complete each section completely then proceed to add the next panel, this way you are always working your way to the left and avoiding extra bulk to the inside area (harp) of your machine.

3. After you have joined your first two panels, I recommend that you make some type of “jig” to keep your next row of top sashing perfectly parallel with the first row. Using your jig, you can also make a chalk line on the top to help guide your next row of sashing. ***As you add more panels, you quilt will become heavier and tend to “drift”, so this step is very helpful to receive good results!***