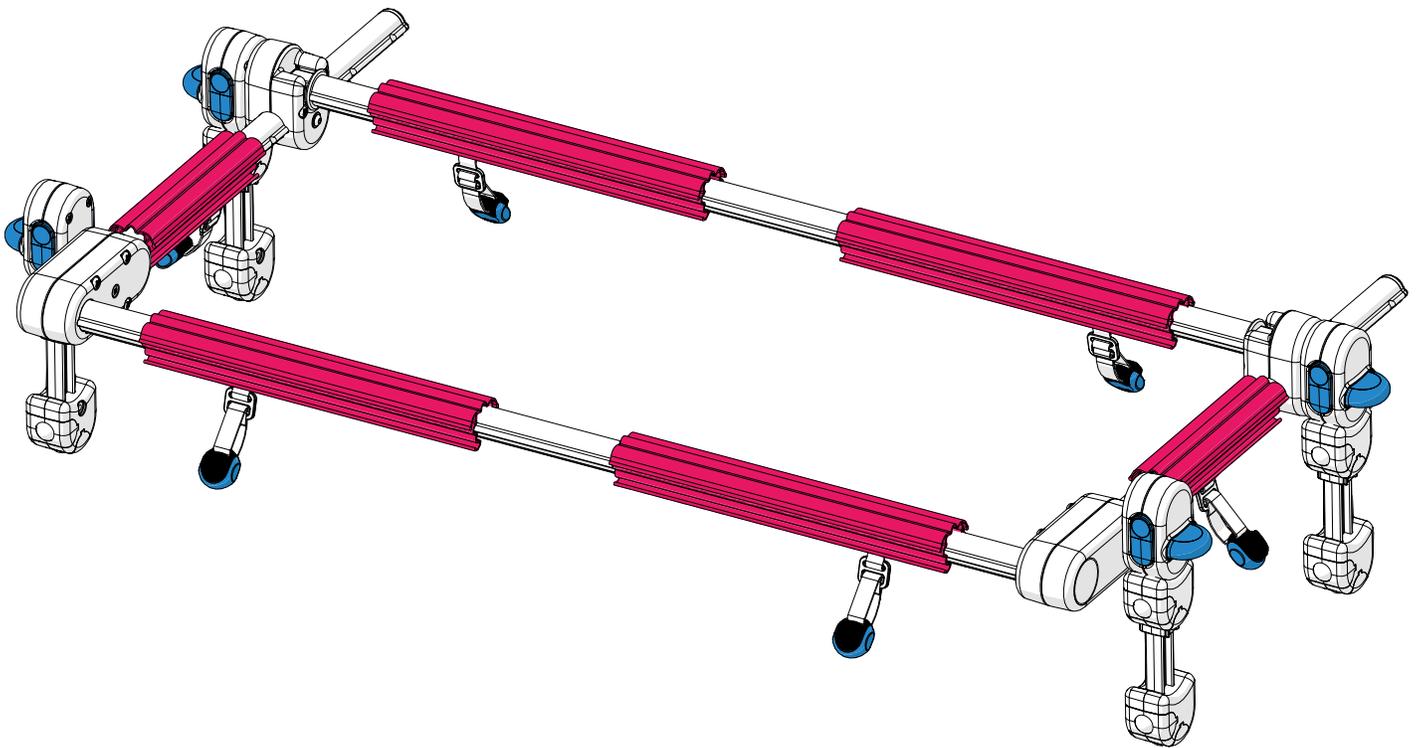


Humming Along with Your Hummingbird Hoop

A project for learning about your new hoop, refining your skills,
and exploring your creativity



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WELCOME TO THE EXCITING WORLD OF HOME-BASED QUILTING!

Whether you're a life-long quilter with a new hoop or you're starting a new hobby, Grace Company is here to guide you toward success on your personal quilting journey.

Read these instructions, refer to them often, and soon you'll be confident using your hoop.

Regardless of your quilting experience, you might want to use the included fabric panel to become acquainted with your setup. Using the provided panel lets you master your new equipment worry-free.

Use the notes section to write down important insights or to doodle your quilting designs. You can even write on the panel fabric—remember, this is practice!

Now, go have fun!

MEET THE HUMMINGBIRD HOOP

Like an embroidery hoop, the Hummingbird hoop holds a small section of your project. When you've finished stitching that portion, you simply shift to a new area and you're ready to continue. This allows you to make a quilt of any size!

The section of available quilting space is called a **zone**. When that zone is filled, you move the quilt to a fresh zone.

The Hummingbird hoop is designed to glide over the mat that came with the hoop. Make sure you always use the mat with the hoop so that the hoop's movements are smoother.

THE PANEL

Your hoop came with a fabric panel for you to practice with. The panel is a stand-in for a quilt top, so that you can learn about your new hoop without the pressure of stitching immediately on your latest masterpiece. The steps in this booklet can be repeated as many times as you like with scrap fabric for additional practice and fun. The more you practice, the more your confidence will grow!



FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What size of quilt can you make with a hoop?
- Why do you need to cut your backing and batting larger than your quilt top?
- What is a zone?
- Why is it important to mark your quiltable area before you start to stitch?
- Why should you pull up your bobbin thread at the start and end of your stitching?

THE SUPPLIES

You need the following supplies to complete this practice project:

- Hoop (including the fabric clamps and removable clips)
- Quilt panel (came with hoop)
- Placement template (came with hoop)
- Fabric for the quilt backing
- Batting
- Measuring tape or 12-inch ruler
- Scissors
- Rotary cutter (optional; scissors will work)
- Thread snips (optional; scissors will work)
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Paper (blank is best, but lined works)
- Chalk (for marking your fabric)
- Pins
- Painter's tape or masking tape
- Thread
- Spare full bobbins
- A penny (to test fabric tension)
- Your machine (set up for quilting)

VOCAB REVIEW

Hoop: A device that holds and tensions the fabric for quilting. The quilt size is not limited by the size of the hoop.

Zone: The portion of a quilt on a hoop that can be quilted without moving the fabric

Note: To set up your machine for quilting, you need to:

- Put the machine in quilting mode (if your machine has that option)
- Swap out your presser foot for a free-motion or embroidery hopping foot
- Lower or cover your machine's feed dogs so they don't catch on the quilt as you are stitching

See your sewing machine manual for more information on completing these tasks.

Before you start, make sure:

your hoop is fully set up,
you have all your supplies,
your machine is set up to quilt, and
you are ready to have some fun!

1

Lesson 1: Practicing Your Designs

KEY CONCEPT

Practicing before stitching will increase your confidence. Take the time to draw your designs on paper and on your panel to make stitching out the designs easier.

Before you start putting together the practice quilt and getting it on the hoop, it's important to understand the types of designs that you can put on your quilts.

Generally speaking, you can quilt in two broad ways: to fill in space and hold the layers together, or to highlight a specific part of the quilt. When you fill in space, you basically ignore any changes in the pieces of the quilt and simply repeat a design over and over until the quilt is filled in. This type of quilting is called **continuous line design quilting**. If you are making a block stand out, you use **motif design quilting**, and you'll focus on the shape of the block itself or the shapes in the block. It's more likely that your design has more starting and ending points.

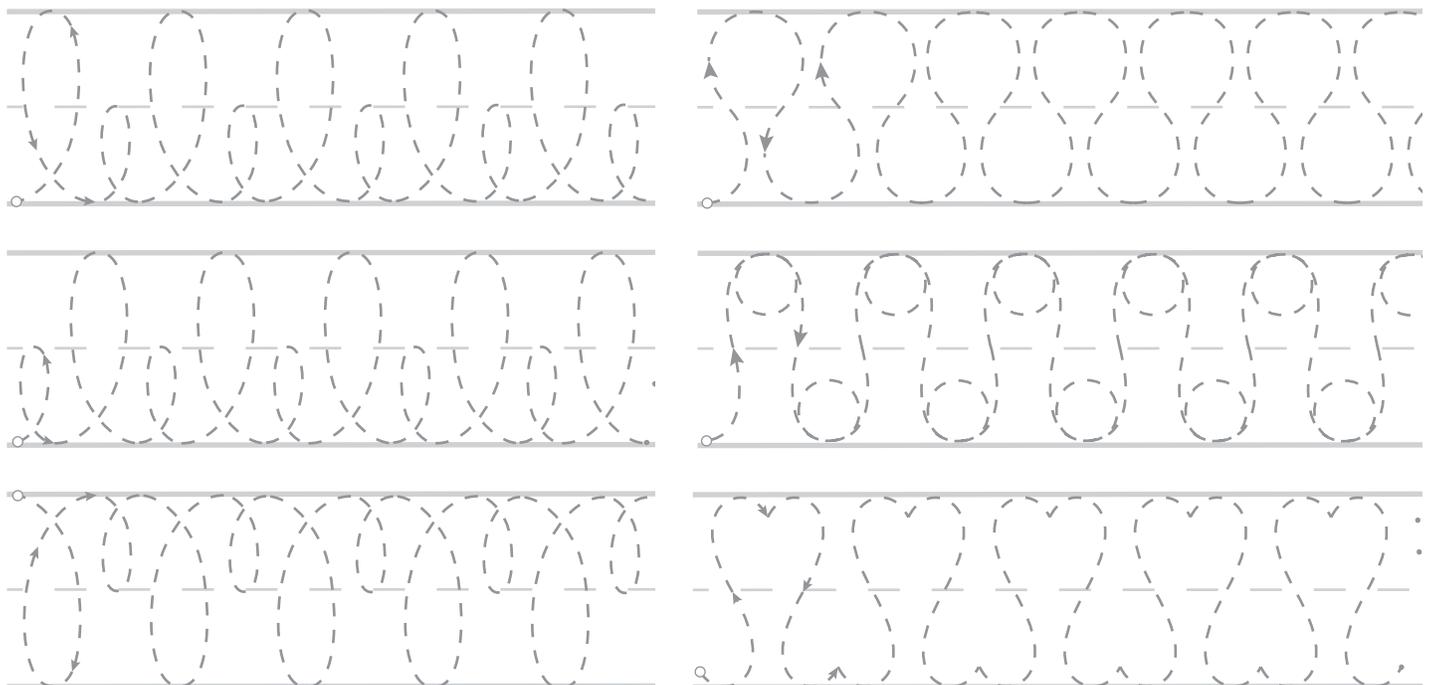
Most quilters choose to use continuous lines for quilting, where the line only stops when the needle can't reach. It takes a little practice to get the hang of creating designs with a continuous line, so don't be afraid to experiment.

PRACTICE STEPS

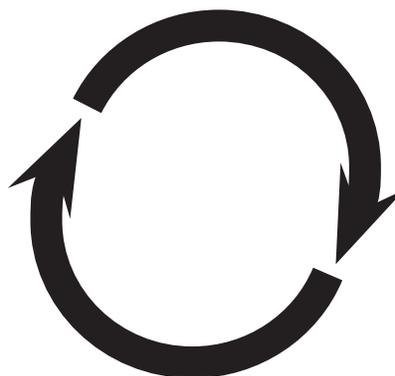
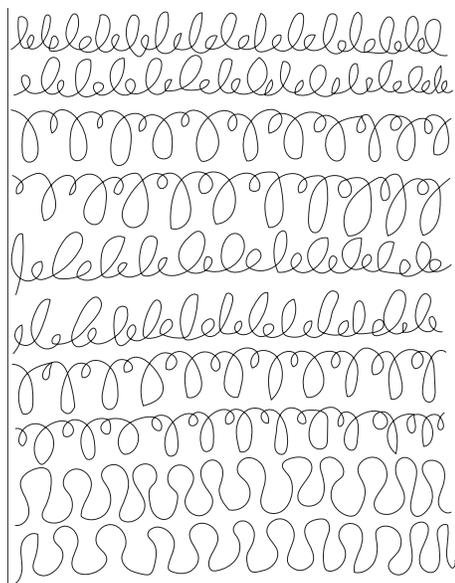
To practice quilting designs, you need:

- Paper (blank is best, but lined is ok, or use the Notes pages in the back of this booklet)
- Pencil with an eraser
- Chalk or fabric marker

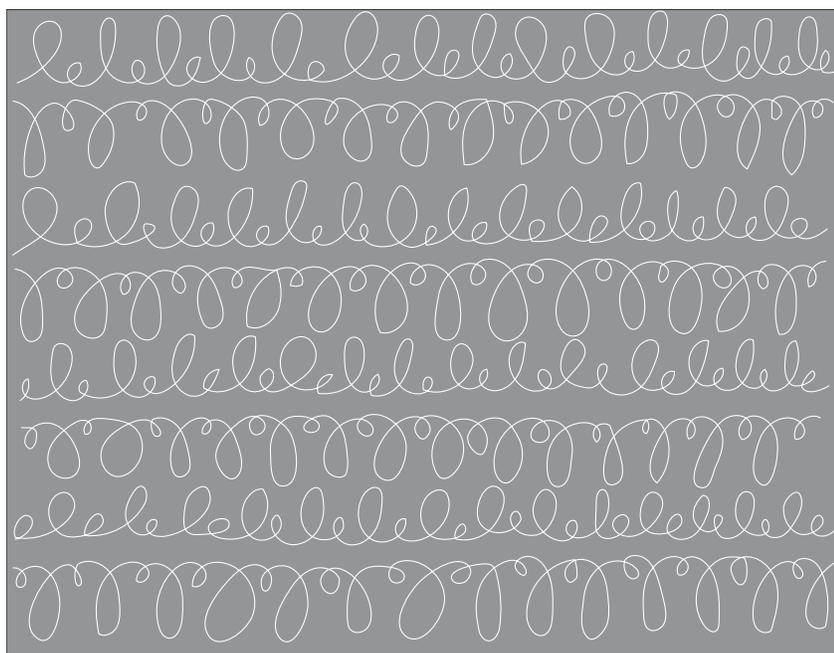
- 1 Think about the designs you want to use and sketch them out on paper. Start on the left, and remember to keep your pencil in contact with the paper as much as possible. The examples below are some options to follow, but they are just examples. Do what you want to do—it's your quilt and your practice!



- 2 Draw the designs multiple times to build your confidence in the movements needed to make the designs. Fill up at least one sheet of paper with your practice.



- 3 Use a marking tool, like chalk, to sketch out the design on the practice panel. Following the markings is easier than eye-balling the design. As you gain confidence, you can make your designs without marking them. Remember though, your marks are just guidelines. Afterwards, you're going to wash the marks off, so if it turns out that your designs don't line up with your markings exactly, it doesn't matter. No one (except you) will ever know!



VOCAB REVIEW

Continuous line design quilting: Using designs that repeat and that aren't necessarily connected to what is going on in the quilt top. The lines start and end at the edges of the quilt top.

Motif design quilting: Using designs that highlight specific parts of your piecing, perhaps to showcase a specific block. The lines start and end where it makes sense on the block.

2

Lesson 2:

Making Your Quilt Sandwich

(Not very tasty, but fulfilling anyway)

A **quilt sandwich** is made of a quilt top laid over a layer of batting and backing fabric. When quilting with a hoop and machine, it's important to cut the quilt backing and batting larger than the quilt top. This extra length helps achieve a neater finish when you bind your quilt, and it also helps position the quilt top within reach of the machine's needle while you're quilting.

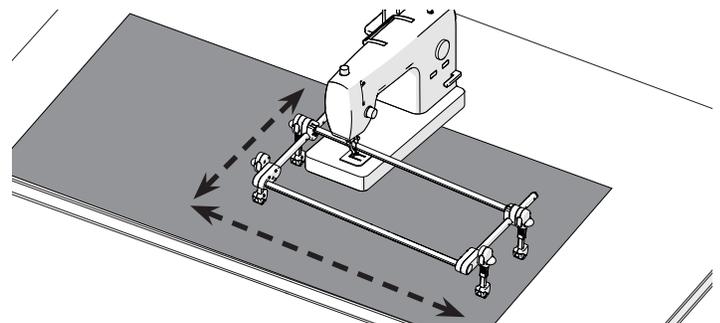
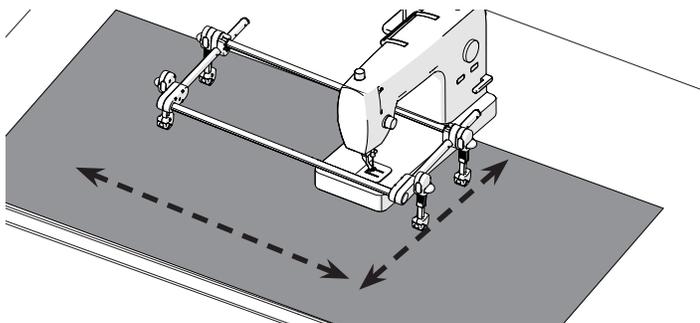
When you're setting up your quilt sandwich, you also need to pay attention to the look of your fabric and batting. The **right side** of the fabric (for both your quilt top and backing) is the side you want to be visible when your project is finished. It might have a pattern on it, or be brighter than the other side. The **wrong side** is the side you want hidden in the finished project. It might be faded compared to the right side. If there really isn't a difference between the two sides, then just pick one side to be the right side. For your batting, one side might be the **scrim side**, which is a structural layer on some types of batting. It often feels coarse or pimpled, while the other side feels smooth or "puffy".

PRACTICE STEPS

To make your quilt sandwich, you need:

- Quilt panel
- Fabric for the quilt backing
- Batting
- Pins
- Pencil or chalk for marking
- Measuring tape or 12-inch ruler

- 1 Take a moment to examine your quilting setup. Move the hoop around the machine, and notice the limits of the machine's reach. You can't get the needle all the way to the sides of the hoop. When you position fabric within the hoop, you need to place the quilt top where the needle can reach. Again, this is why you need your batting and backing to be larger than the quilt top.



KEY CONCEPT

You must cut the backing and batting larger than the quilt top to help position the quilt top on the hoop. If the edges of the quilt top are too close to the edges of the hoop, then you can't quilt the edges of your quilt top.

VOCAB REVIEW

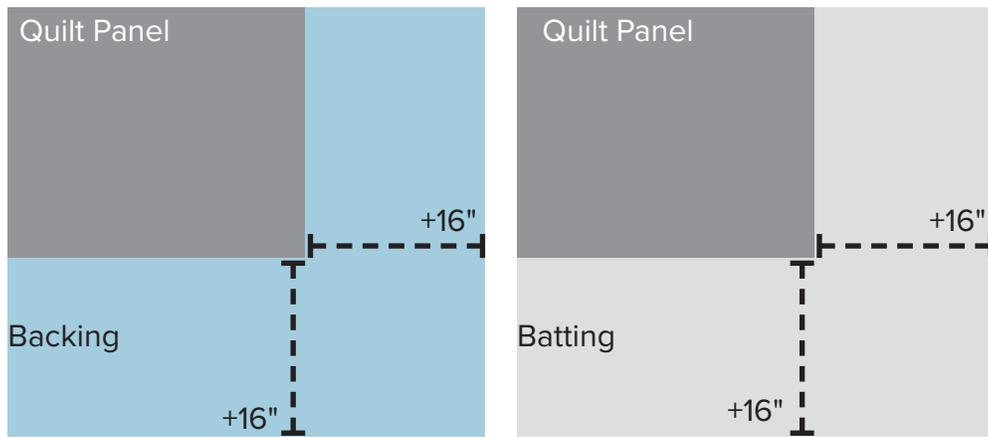
Quilt Sandwich: A quilt top laid over a layer of quilt batting and backing fabric. All three layers are stitched together when quilting.

Right Side of Fabric: The good-looking side of the fabric. It might have a pattern, or be more vivid than the other side.

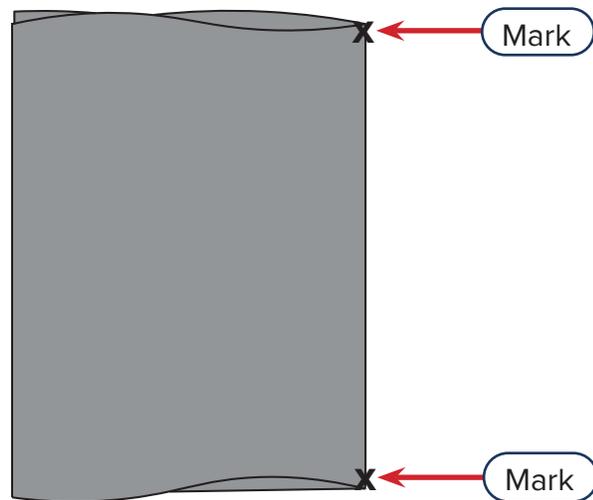
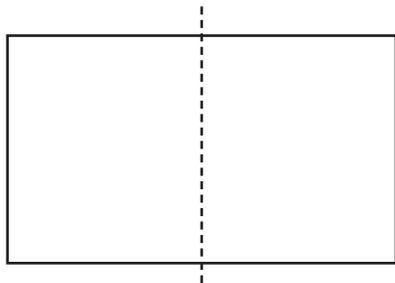
Wrong Side of Fabric: The less good-looking side of the fabric. It might be washed out compared to the other side.

Scrim Side of Batting: The side of the batting that feels rougher or pimpled; the other side will feel smooth by comparison. This structural layer is on some types of batting.

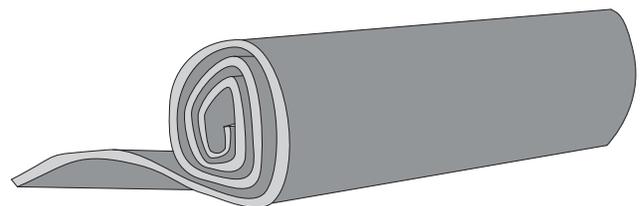
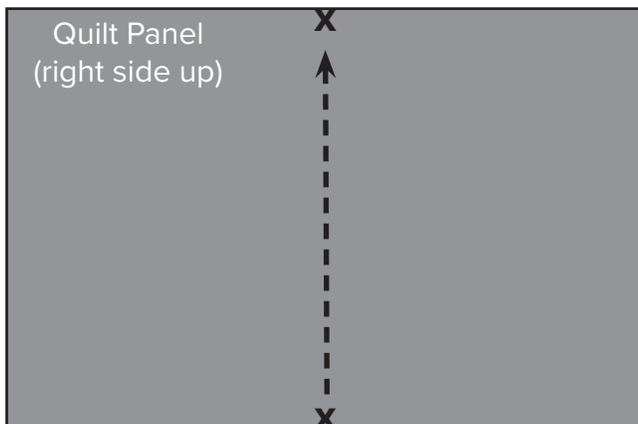
- 2 Cut your **backing** and **batting** so that it is **16 inches longer and wider** than the **quilt panel**. One easy way to measure your backing and batting is to lay your quilt top on the fabric with the top and left edges lined up, and then use a ruler to mark 16 inches out from the bottom and right edges. You can also measure the quilt panel (20" x 40"), and then calculate how much bigger your backing and batting need to be (36" x 56").



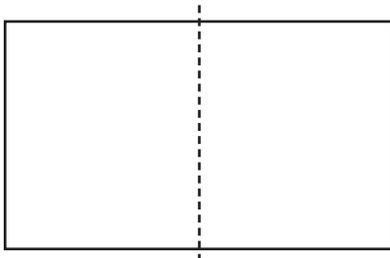
- 3 For this project, orient the practice panel so that it is wider than it is tall. Then fold the quilt panel in half vertically, and then **mark** the center of the **top** and **bottom** edges.



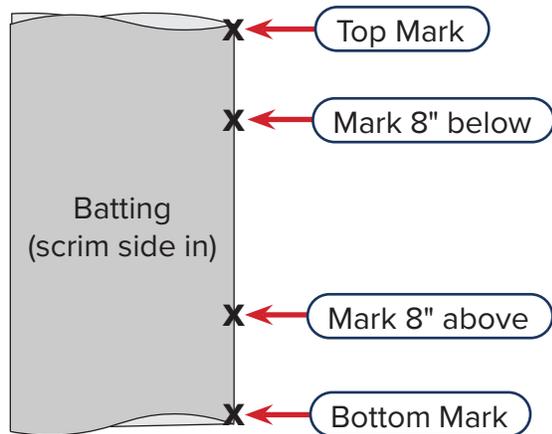
- 4 Now spread the quilt panel out flat with the *right side* facing up. Starting at the bottom, roll up the panel. Rolling up this layer makes it easier to place on the batting later in this lesson.



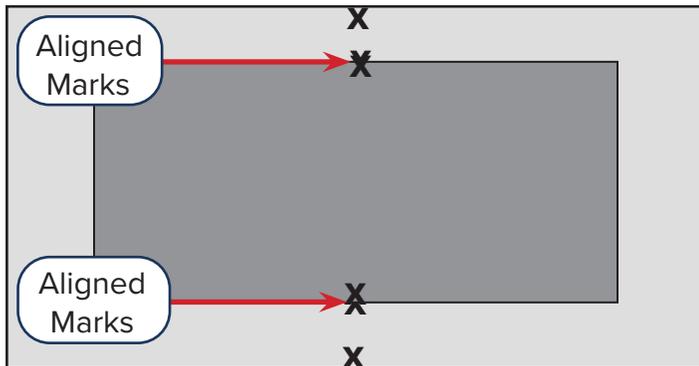
- 5 Fold your batting in half vertically so that the *scrim* is on the inside. **Mark** the center of the **top** edge. Then mark **8 inches below** that point. Next, mark the center of the **bottom** edge and **mark 8 inches** above it.



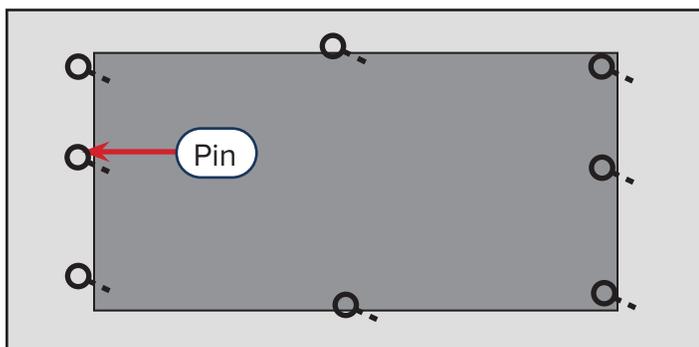
Note: When folding vertically, remember that the batting is wider than it is tall for this project.



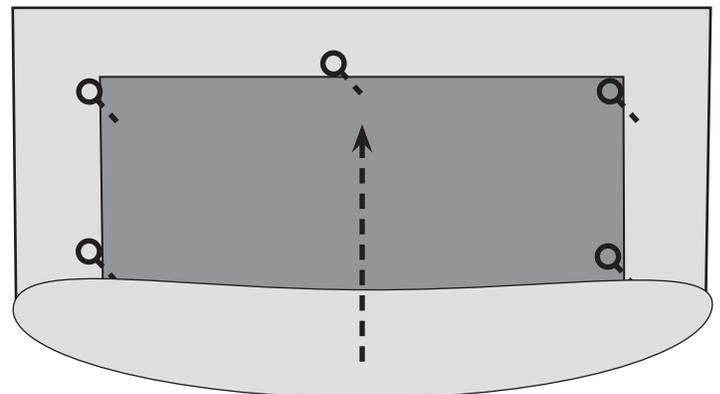
- 6 Spread your batting out flat, making sure your batting has the *scrim side facing down*. Now spread your quilt top out flat on the batting, making sure to **align** the center **marks** on the quilt top with the **marks** 8 inches into the middle of the batting.



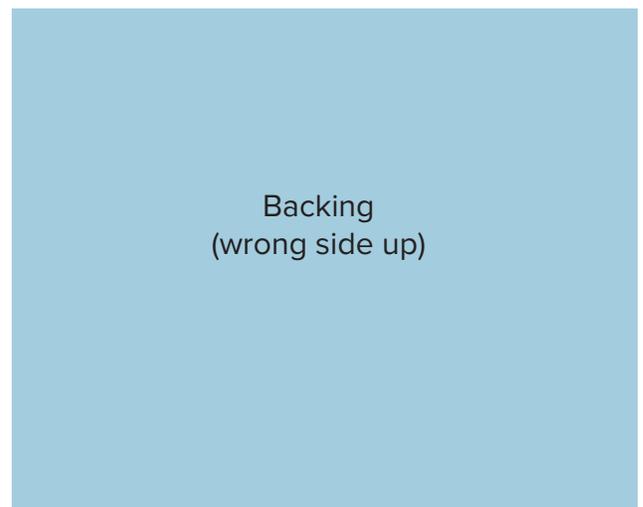
- 7 Smooth out any wrinkles and then **pin** the layers together. **Tip:** Use enough pins to avoid gaps and puckering. Some gaps might appear when the fabric is rolled or moved and can make it difficult to position the quilt on the hoop.



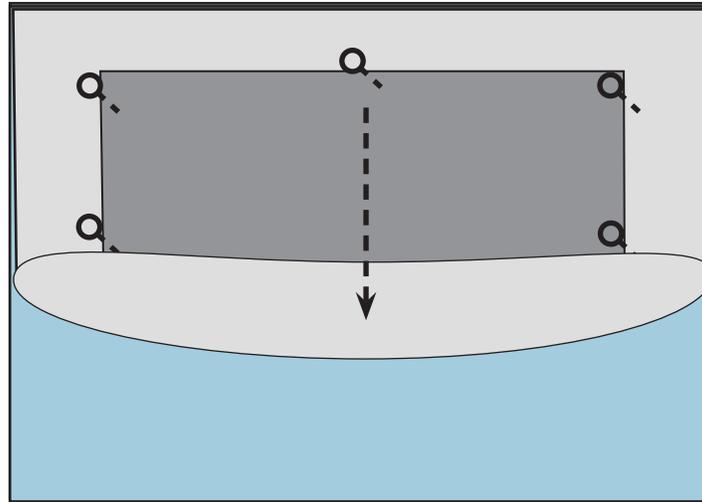
- 8 Start at the bottom and roll up the batting and quilt top layers. Rolling up the layers makes it easier to place them on the backing fabric later in this task.



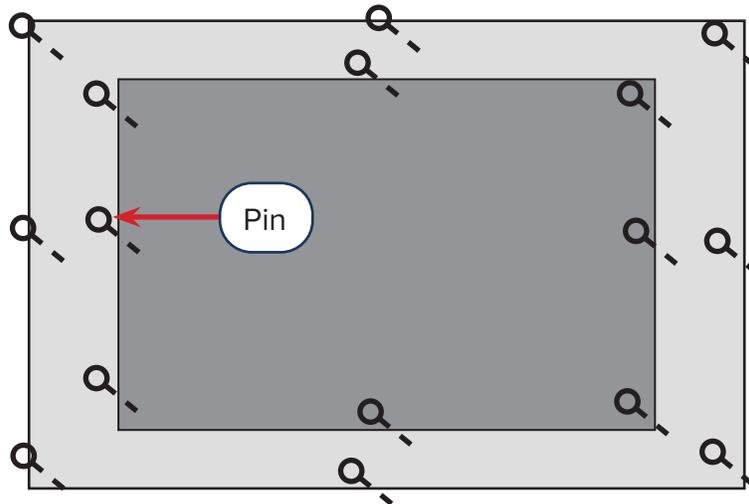
- 9 Lay the **backing** down flat with the *wrong side facing up*. Smooth it free of any wrinkles.



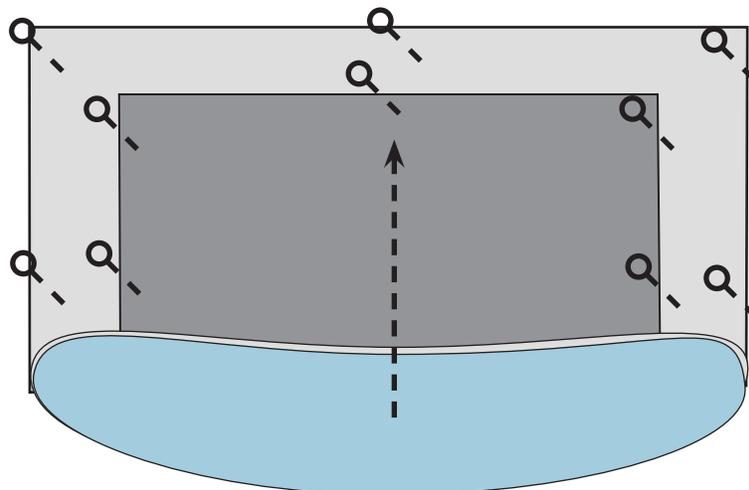
- 10 Line up the top edge of your batting with the top edge of the backing. Carefully unroll the batting and quilt top so that it lays neatly over the backing.



- 11 Smooth out any wrinkles in the fabric and pin the layers together. Remember to use enough pins to minimize puckering and gaps.



- 12 Roll the quilt sandwich up from the bottom edge so you can easily carry it to your hoop.



3

Lesson 3: Attaching Your Quilt to the Hoop

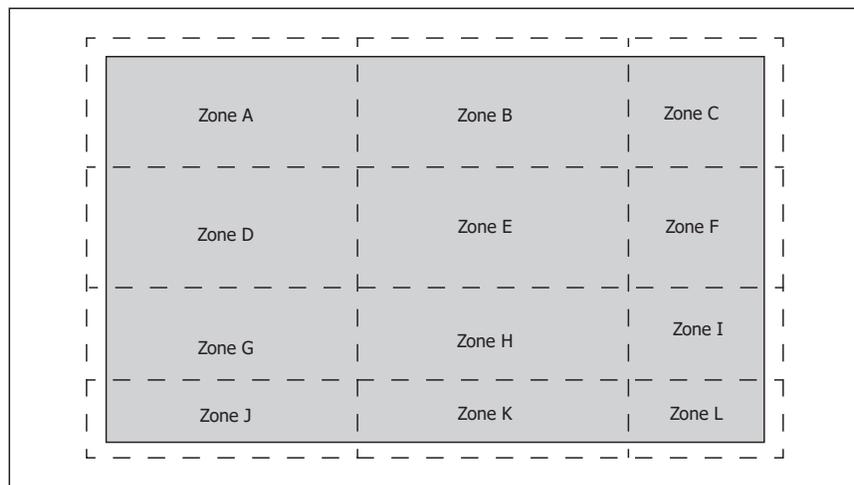
KEY CONCEPT

When placing your fabric, you want to get a portion of the quilt top in the hoop's quiltable area. The quilt should be square with the hoop, smoothed of wrinkles, and have good fabric tension.

As you discovered in Lesson 2, your needle can't reach every part of the hoop. Also, if you get the hoop too close to the side of the machine, then you might bump on the machine, disrupting the movement you planned. If you move the back of the hoop too close to the needle, the take-up rail can collide with the foot, which is like bumping your pencil while trying to draw.

Of course, you want to avoid these issues. To prevent these problems, you need to position your quilt top in the quiltable area. The **quiltable area** is the section of the hoop where your machine is safely able to quilt without the hoop bumping into the machine. When quilting, stay within the quiltable area to keep your machine and your hoop (and by extension your quilt) safe from collisions.

Because the size of the quiltable area is actually smaller than the hoop (and because, like its namesake, the Hummingbird hoop is a small thing) many quilts, including the practice panel, will be larger than the hoop. The section of the quilt that is in the hoop's quiltable area at the moment is the current **zone**. As mentioned in the introduction, each zone is quilted without repositioning the project on the hoop. When that zone is filled, you move the quilt to a fresh zone. You create your own zones on your quilt. The following image is an example of how the zones on a quilt might look.



Your own quilts might have more or fewer zones depending on the size and shape of the specific project. In general, the best method is to start at the top-left corner of your quilt, stitch each zone across, and then move down to the next row of zones. Remember that your zones don't have to be all the same size. In a later lesson, you will learn how to re-hoop your quilt for the next zone.

When positioning your quilt on the hoop, the goal is to place a zone in the hoop's quiltable area so you can quilt freely.

VOCAB REVIEW

Quiltable Area: The area of the hoop that you can move around freely without bumping into anything.

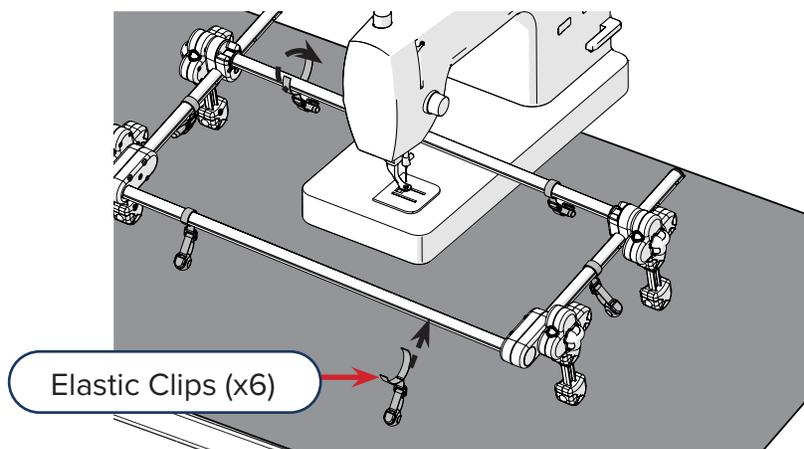
Zone: The section of your quilt that is in the hoop, available for quilting.

PRACTICE STEPS

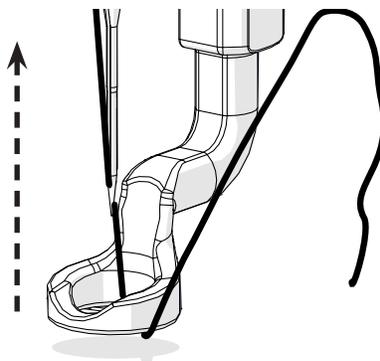
To attach your quilt to the hoop, you need:

- Your quilt sandwich
- Fabric clamps (off your hoop for now)
- Elastic clips (off your hoop for now)
- A penny (for testing fabric tension)
- Placement template (came with hoop)

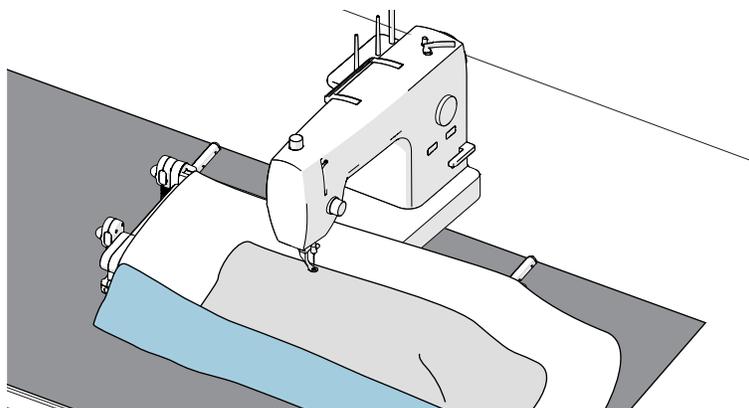
- 1 Locate the removable **elastic clips**, and then secure two clips around the take-up rail, two clips around the front rail, and one clip around each side rail.



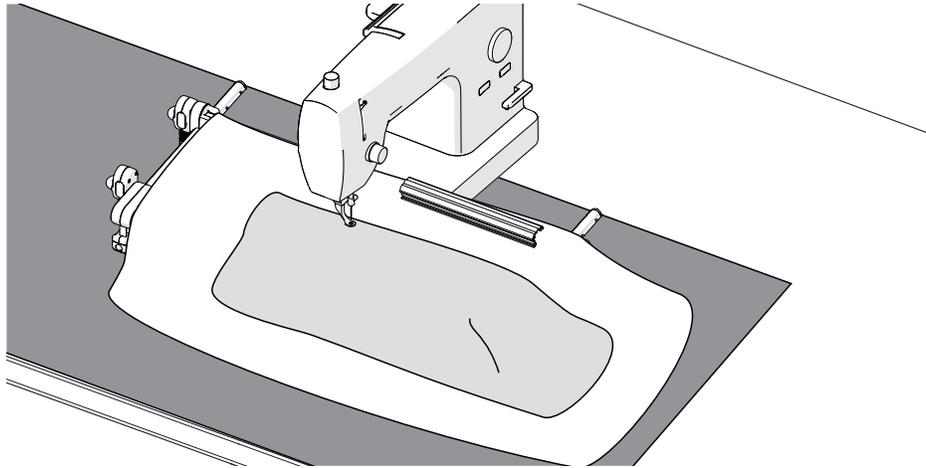
- 2 Raise the needle on the machine so the quilt can slide under the foot. **Note:** It's ok if you don't have the machine threaded at this point.



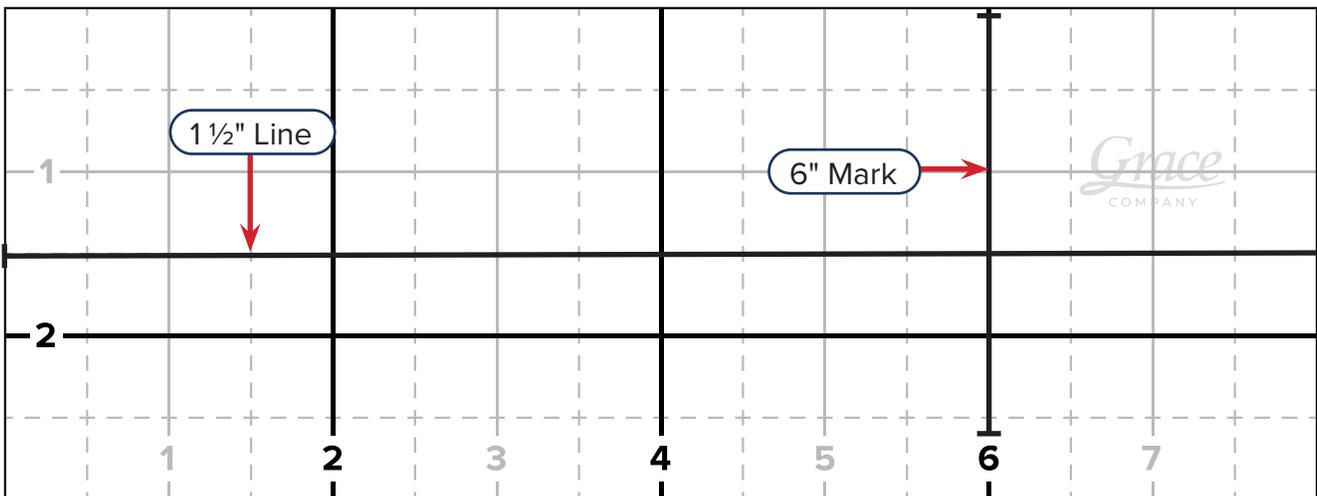
- 3 Take your rolled quilt sandwich (quilt sushi?) to your hoop. Unroll the first 7-8 inches of your quilt on the hoop's take-up rail, making sure to slide the top edge of the quilt under the hopping foot.



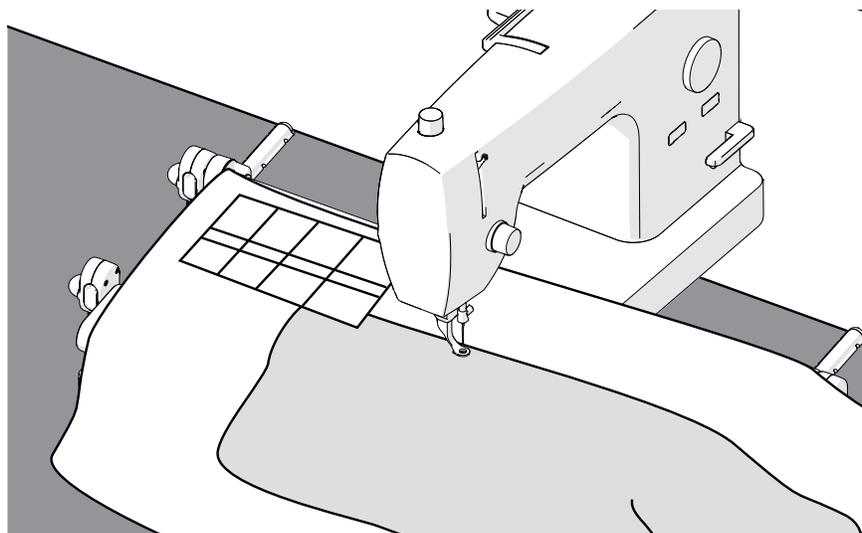
- 4 Unroll the rest of the quilt and spread it evenly and squarely across the hoop. Set the fabric on the hoop such that the quilt top's top-left corner is roughly near, but not touching, the top-left corner of the hoop. **Tip:** Put one clamp on the take-up rail to keep the fabric in place.



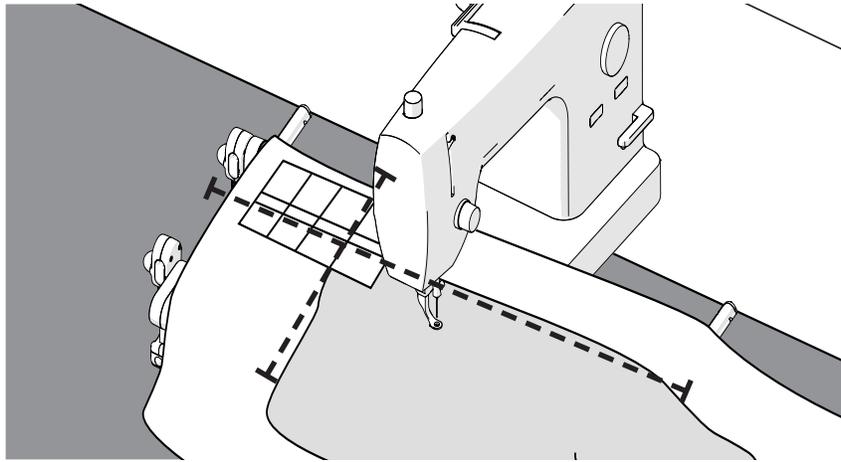
- 5 On the placement template, find the long horizontal line at **1 ½ inches**, and draw a line across the template there. Also draw a vertical line at the **6 inch** mark.



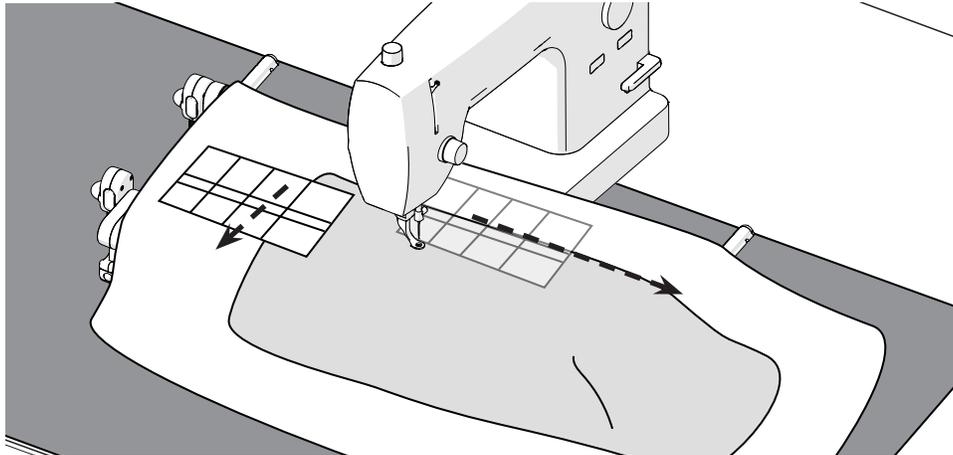
- 6 In the top-left corner of the hoop, orient the placement template so that the short side is touching the left side rail and the long side is touching the take-up rail.



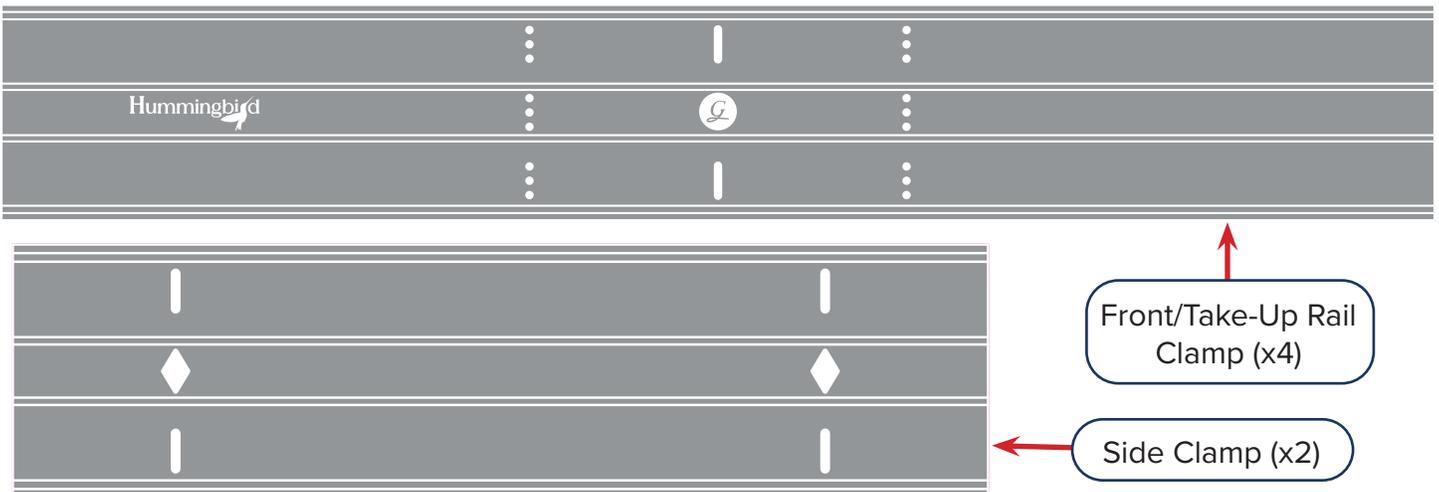
- 7 Adjust the quilt sandwich so that the top-left corner of the quilt top lines up with the marks you made on the template. **Tip:** You might find it easier to line up the quilt top corner if you cut the template at the marks.



- 8 Slide the template along the top and left edges (one at a time) and adjust your quilt sandwich to make sure the quilt top is straight all the way across and down the hoop.

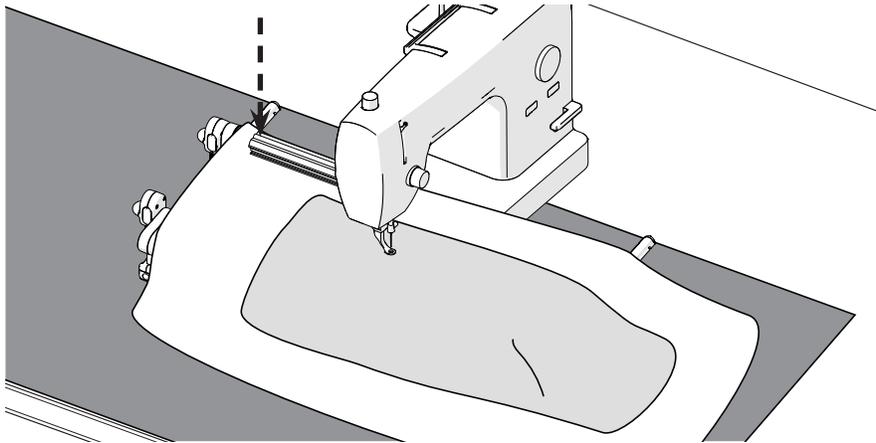


- 9 Now that the quilt is in the correct place, it's time to hold the fabric in place with the clamps. Make sure to use the correct clamps on the different rails. The front/take-up rail clamps are longer and have the Hummingbird logo on them. The side clamps are shorter. **Note:** As you place the clamps, take the time to smooth out any wrinkles in the quilt sandwich.

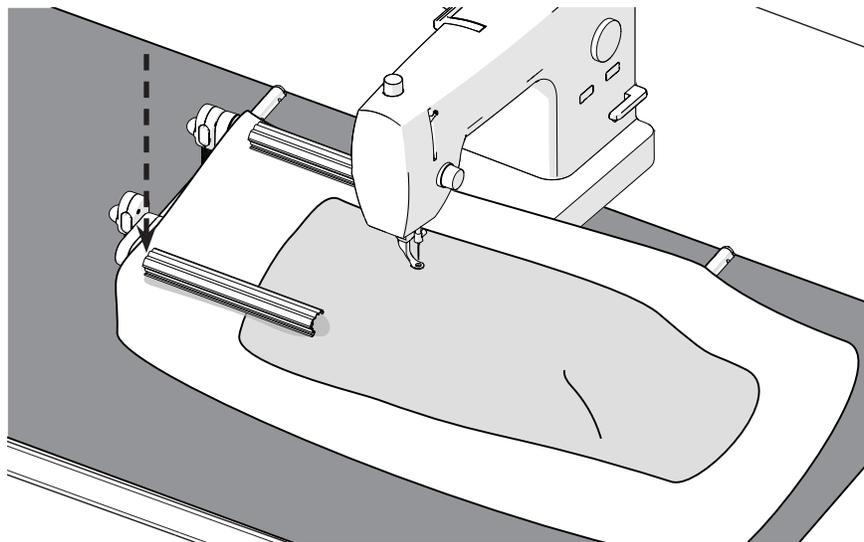


Do the following to put the clamps on the hoop:

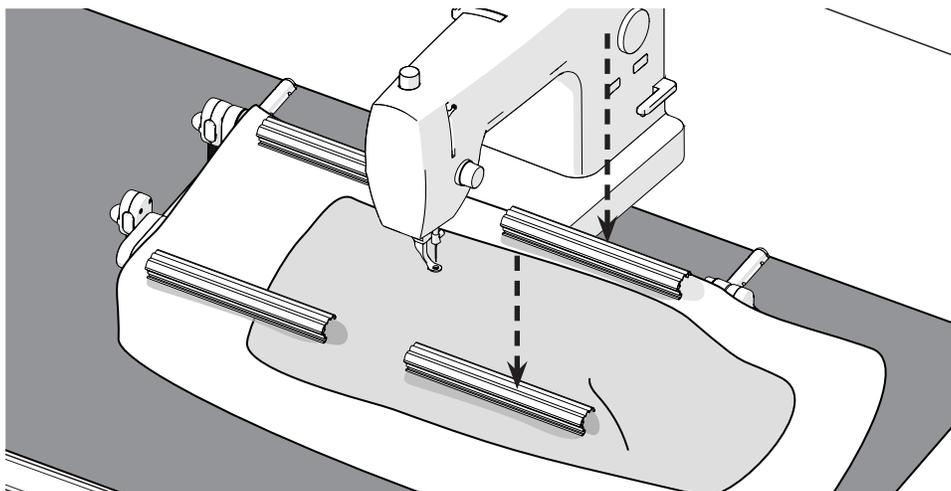
- a On the left, press a front/take-up clamp onto the take-up rail so that the left edge of the clamp is as far to the left as it can be, up against the corner.



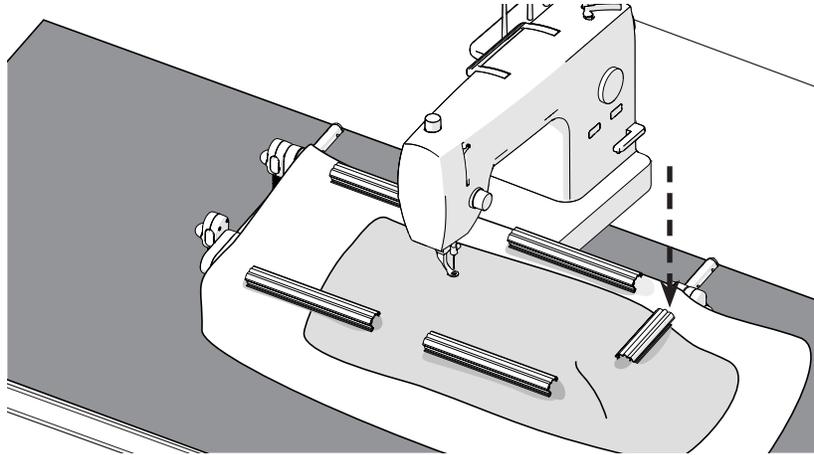
- b On the left side of the front rail, place a front/take-up rail clamp so that the left edge of the clamp is against the corner of the rail.



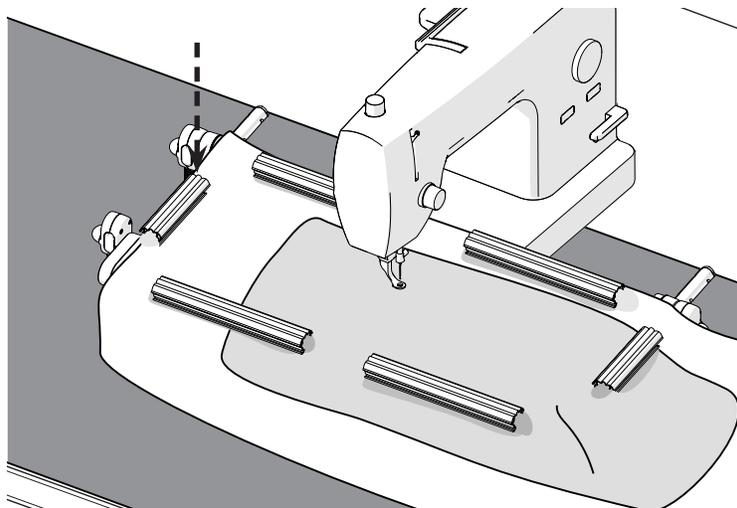
- c On the right side of the hoop, place the other front/take-up rail clamps on the hoop so they butt up against the right side corners.



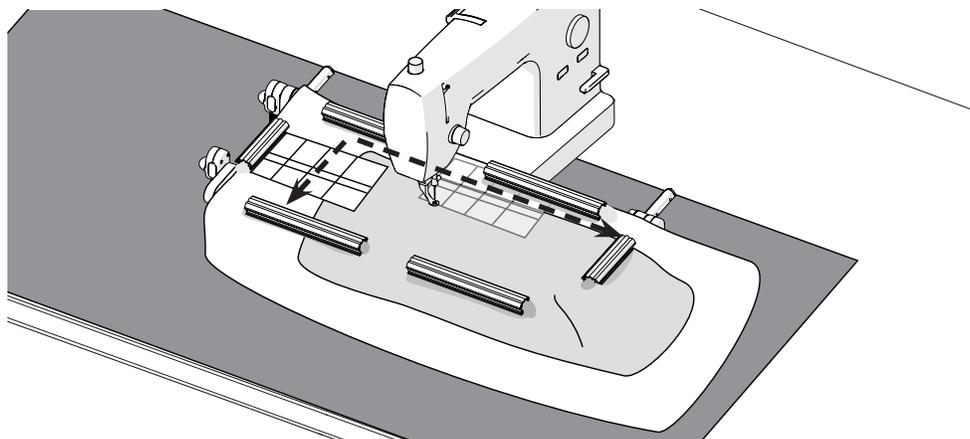
- d Press a side clamp onto the right side rail so that the furthest edge is right up against the corner.



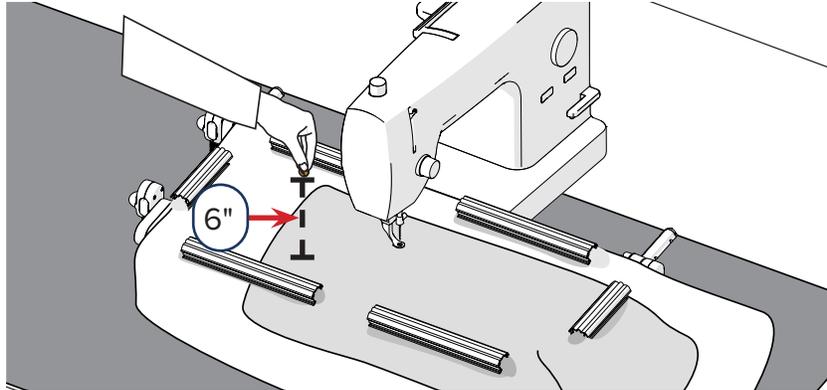
- e The fabric might not reach the left side rail. We tried to make the backing and batting long enough to wrap around the side rail at this point, but depending on all the variation that happens in reality, the fabric might not go over the left side rail. And that's ok! Place the clamp on the rail anyway, again right up against the take-up rail holder, as it's going to be helpful in the next lesson.



- 10 Slide the template along the top and left edge (one at a time) again, just to make sure that your quilt top is straight all the way across and down the hoop. (The clamps will shift the fabric slightly, so it's important to double-check.)



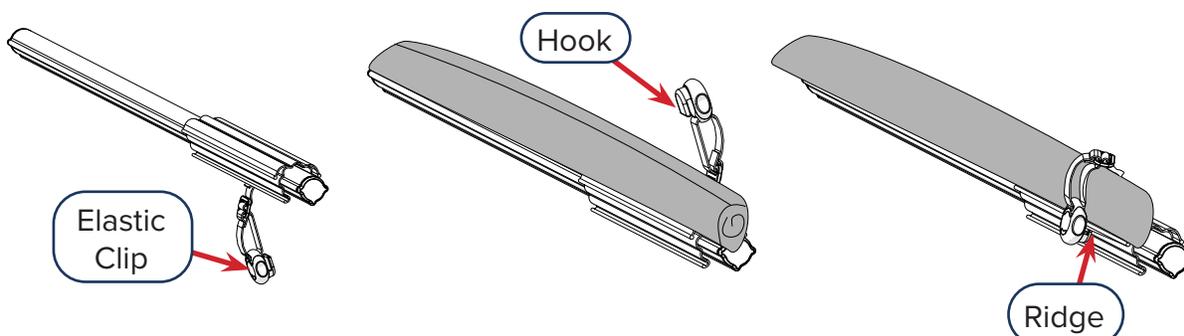
- 11 Next, test your fabric tension. Ideal fabric tension is smooth and taut. Drop a penny **6 inches** from the surface of the fabric and watch how it bounces.



Most of the time, your fabric tension will either be too loose or in a good state. Do one of the following:

- If the penny only partially bounces and does not fully lift from the fabric, then the tension is good. Continue to the next step.
- If the penny doesn't bounce at all, or seems to roll to a low spot in the fabric, then the tension is too loose. Remove the fabric clamps from the front rail, and pull your quilt sandwich toward the front rail a little. Replace the clamps, and then test the fabric tension again.
- If, on the rare occasion, the penny bounces and completely clears the fabric, then your tension is too tight. Remove the fabric clamps from the front rail and shift your quilt sandwich toward the take-up rail a little, or away from the side rails a little. Replace the clamps, and then test your tension again.

- 12 Look at the fabric hanging off the hoop. Regardless of whether the fabric is hanging off the front, back, or side of the hoop, it can get in the way of moving the hoop around the machine. This is where the **elastic clips** come in. Use them to hold the fabric against the clamps when it makes sense. Roll up the fabric, loop the band around the fabric and over the clamp, and then slide the **hook** for the clip into the **ridge** on the clamp.



Tip: Because the elastic clips are removable, you can use them where it makes the most sense for your project. For example, you might decide to move one of the clips from the side to the front rail (giving you three clips on the front rail). You'll have to experiment with different locations to decide what works best for your setup and current project.

4

Lesson 4: Marking the Quiltable Area

In the last lesson, you placed your quilt top away from the edges of the hoop so that it is in the quiltable area. Now, as this is your first time using the hoop, we're going to use tape to clearly visualize the quiltable area.

As you gain confidence with your hoop and how your machine interacts with it, you can use the marks on the clamps to remind yourself of the quiltable area, and stop using the tape.

KEY CONCEPT

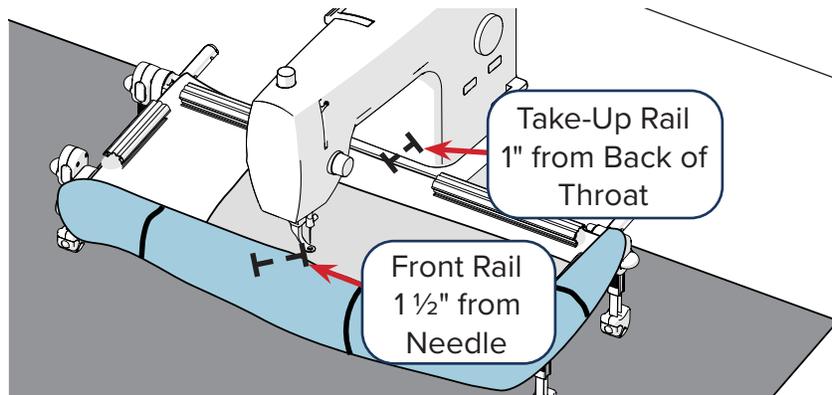
It's important to keep your machine in the quiltable area, so take the time to visualize it. Use tape at first to clearly see the space. As you gain confidence, you can use the lines on the clamps to double-check yourself.

PRACTICE STEPS

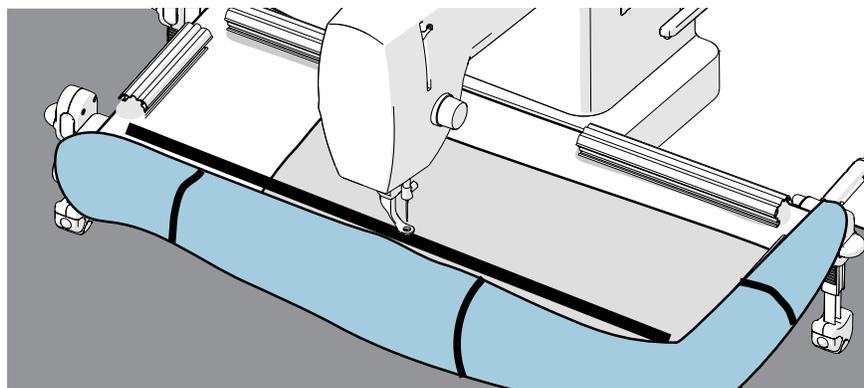
To mark the quiltable area, you need:

- Painter's tape or masking tape
- Measuring tape or 12-inch ruler

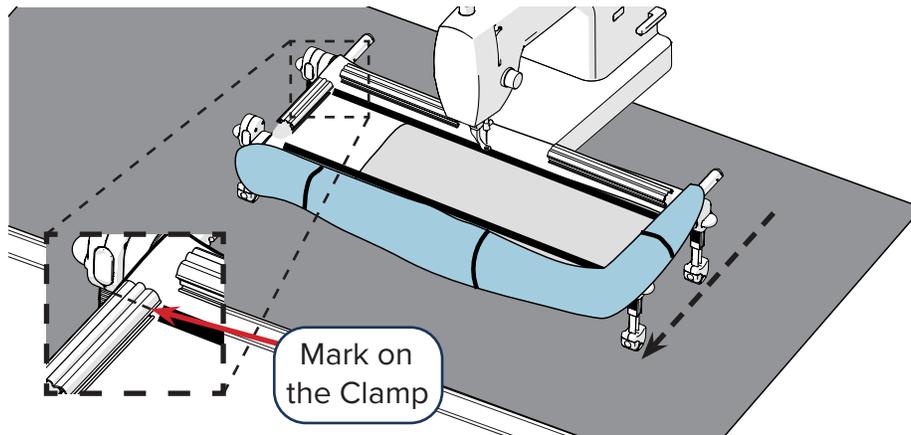
- 1 Move your hoop so that the needle of your machine is close to the front rail. Stop when one of two things happens: the back of the machine **throat** is about **1 inch** from the take-up rail OR your **needle** is about **1 ½ inches** away from the front rail.



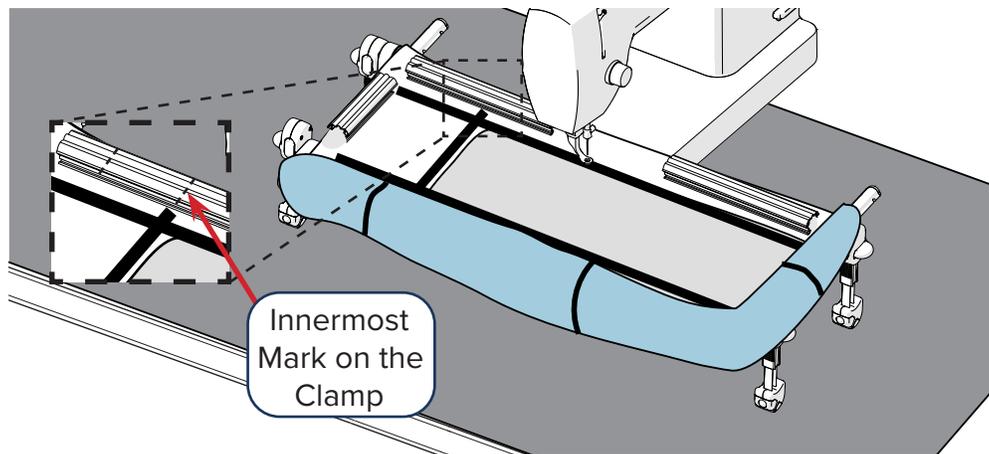
- 2 At your needle, use a piece of tape to make a line all the way across the hoop. This is one edge of your quiltable area. **Note:** Because everyone's machine is a little different, the clamps on the hoop can't help you find this front edge. You can use the clamps for noting where the other edges are.



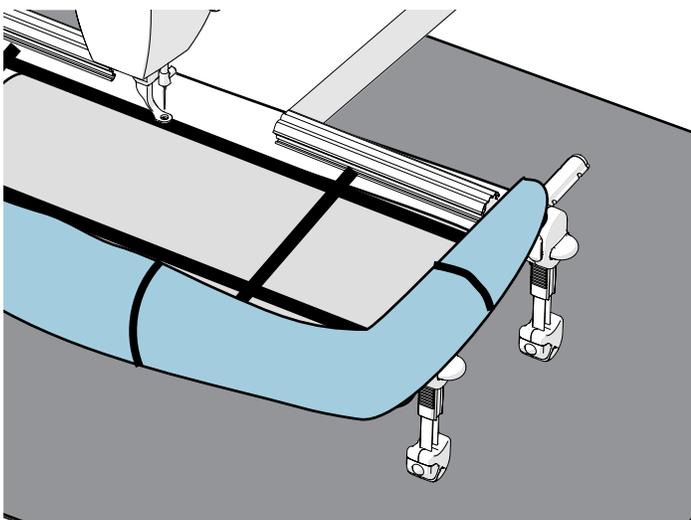
- 3 Move the hoop so that the needle is aligned with the **side clamp marks** that are closest to the take-up rail. The needle should be about 1 ½ inches away from the take-up rail. If it's not, check that the clamps are right up against the back corners. Use another piece of tape to make a line all the way across the hoop.



- 4 On the left side, tape a line from the dotted **lines** on the left front and take-up rail clamps that are **closest to the middle** of the hoop. This line should be about 6 inches from the side of the hoop. If it is much more than that, check that the clamp is right up against the corner.



- 5 On the right side of the hoop, tape a line from the innermost dotted line, just like you did on the left side.



Note: These four lines of tape indicate the edge of your quiltable area. While you're quilting, do not move the hoop in any way that would make the needle go outside of the rectangle you just made. Remember, staying in the quiltable area makes sure you don't hit the hoop on any part of the machine. If you do hit something, you can bump the needle and disrupt the plan for your designs.

5

Lesson 5: Practice Moving the Hoop

One of the best ways to get comfortable quilting is to run the machine without any thread—not top thread, not bobbin thread. You have the chance to feel how easy it is to move the hoop around, how easy it is to make different shapes with the hoop, and so on. But with no thread, you can't mess up anything.

KEY CONCEPT

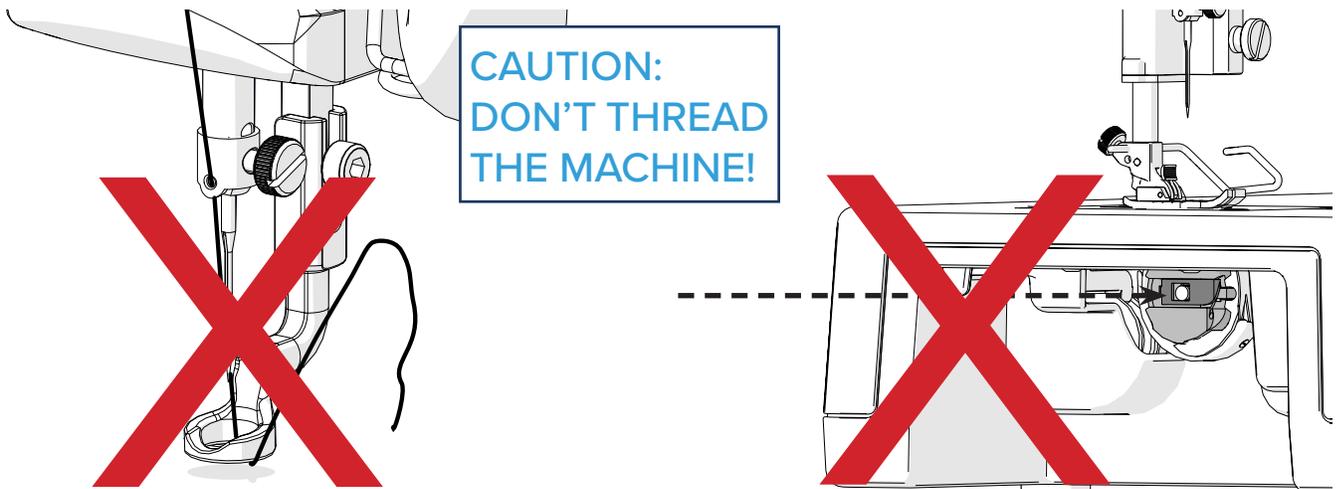
Practice moving the hoop around the machine without thread in the machine. “Stitching” without thread gives you the chance to feel how the hoop moves without the worry of messing up the project.

PRACTICE STEPS

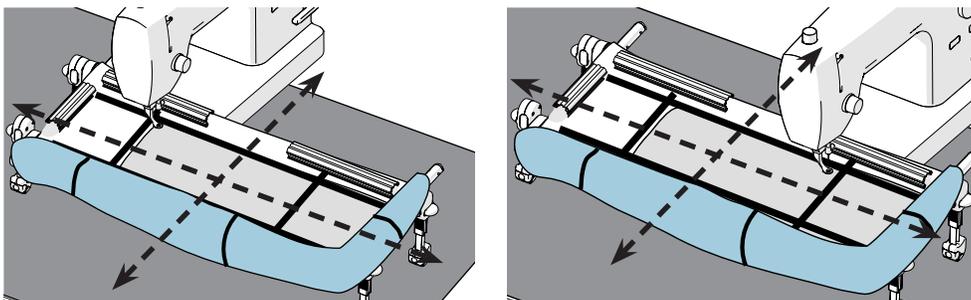
To practice moving the hoop, you need:

- Quilt sandwich installed on the hoop
- Machine set up for quilting

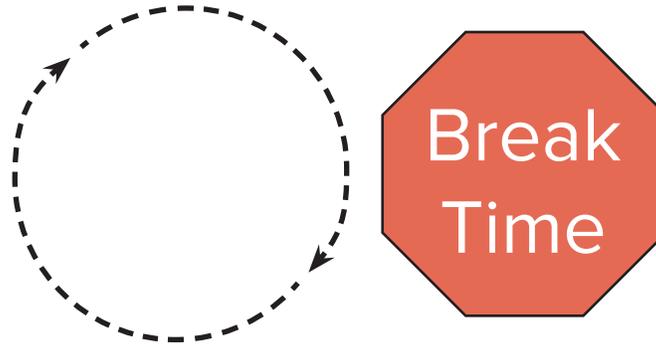
- 1 Make sure your machine is not threaded, *including the top thread and the bobbin thread.*
Note: If you need to remove the bobbin thread, move the hoop to one side of the machine. Remove the side clamp, and then gently lift the fabric out of the way. Pull your bobbin case out of the machine. Smooth out the fabric, and replace the clamp.



- 2 Move your hoop to where you want to start, and then turn on the machine and use the needle as your “pencil,” moving the hoop to get the quilt top where you want to “stitch.” Follow the designs you marked on the quilt top to get a feel for the difference between moving your pencil to make the design and moving your hoop to make the design. As you move your hoop, the needle will punch holes in the fabric.



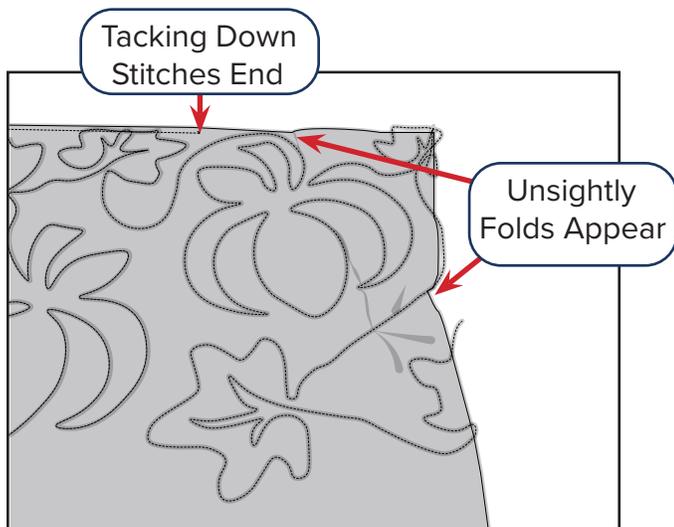
- 3 Repeat this practice as many times as you want. It's a good idea to repeat the practice a few times, until you feel like if you walked away and came back, you'd still be confident continuing. Actually, if you want to, do just that! Stop here, and start again with the booklet after a break. Quilting is supposed to be fun, and you're working hard to learn this new skill. Take a break whenever makes sense for you.



6

Lesson 6: Tacking Down the Edges

Before you stitch any designs into your quilt, you need to **tack down** the edges. As you fill up your quilt, the stitches will start to gather in the fabric and scrunch it up. If the edges are tacked down, they can't get pulled in as far. The image below shows an example of what can go wrong if the edges aren't tacked down.



For now, you will tack down the left and top edges that are in the quiltable area. You will tack down the other edges of the panel later, once they are in the quiltable area. Remember, every time you move your quilt to a new zone and reveal an edge of the quilt top, you must tack down the newly revealed edges—*before* you start quilting your next zone.

KEY CONCEPT

Fabric shrinkage occurs when stitching slowly pulls the edges of the quilt top inward. Tacking down the edges reduces fabric shrinkage and helps to stabilize the quilt layers.

You're also going to learn about **pulling up your bobbin thread** at the start and end of stitching. Pulling up the bobbin thread prevents it from being in the way as you continue quilting. It also makes it easier to cut the threads when you finish quilting a section or a line.

PRACTICE STEPS

To tack down your edges, you need:

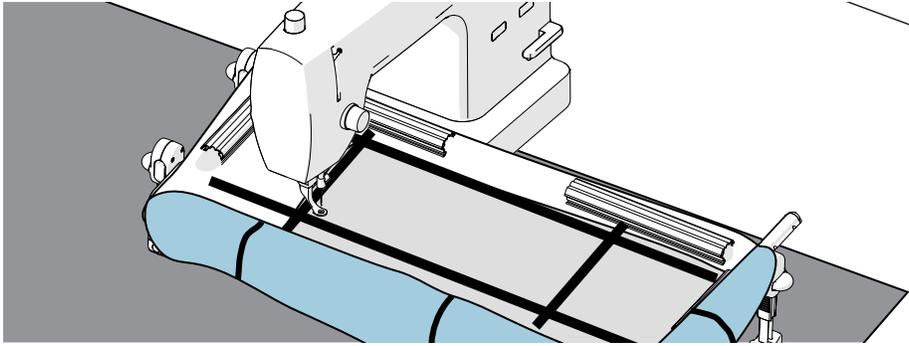
- Thread (installed in machine)
- Wound bobbin (installed in machine)
- Scissors or thread snips

VOCAB REVIEW

Tack Down: Sew the edges of the quilt top to help keep the fabric from shrinking.

Pull Up Bobbin Thread: Move the bobbin thread tail to the top of the quilt. This action helps to prevent the thread from being stitched into the bottom of the quilt.

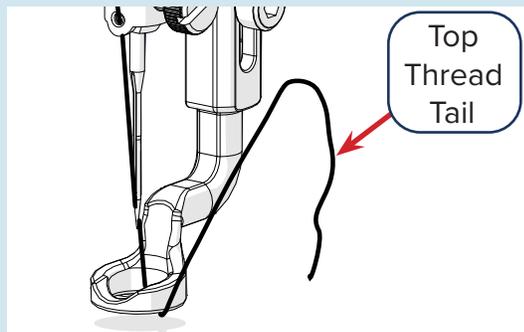
- 1 Move the hoop so that the machine needle is in the front-left corner of the hoop. Make sure your needle is about ¼ inch from the edge of the quilt top.



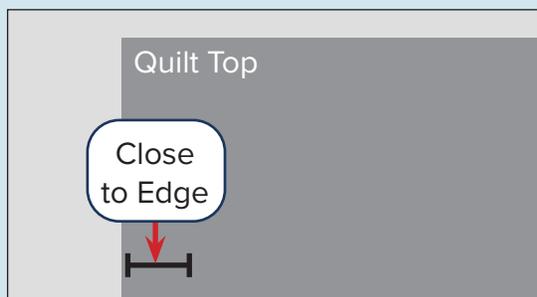
- 2 Start by pulling up your bobbin thread.

Every stitch made with a sewing machine has two threads: the top thread (from the cone or spool on the machine) and the bottom thread (from the machine's bobbin). When you first start stitching, the tail of the bobbin thread is underneath the quilt. Because you can't see it, it's easy to stitch over the tail and end up with an unsightly bunch of thread under the quilt. To prevent this, you must bring the bobbin thread up to the top of the quilt. Pulling up the bobbin thread also makes it easy to trim it with the top thread tail. Pull up the bobbin thread at the start of every tie-on and the end of every tie-off, and at the start and end of tacking down your quilt.

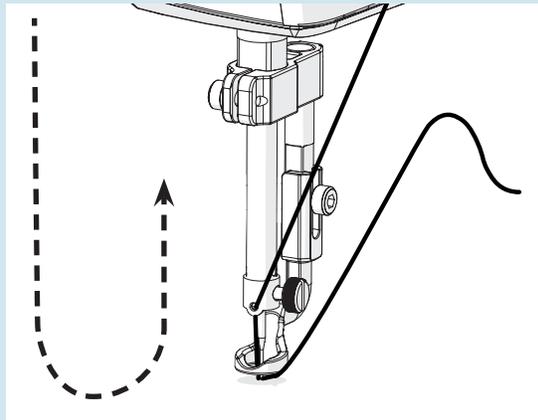
- a Pick up and hold the **top thread tail** that is threaded through the needle. **Note:** It doesn't matter whether the thread is under the foot or not. Also note that your foot might look different depending on your machine, but the process is the same.



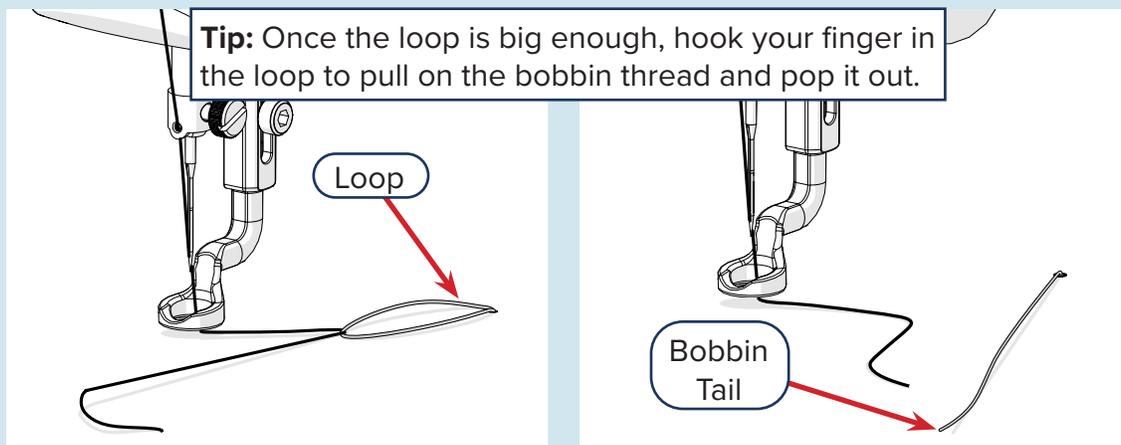
- b Make sure your needle is positioned where you want to start stitching. For tacking down the edges, position the hoop so the needle is **close** to the quilt top **edge**.



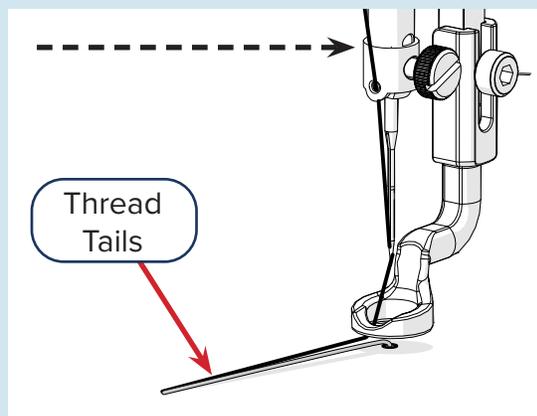
- c While still holding the thread tail, make a **single stitch** in place. If your machine has a single stitch button, press it once. If it has a needle up/needle down button, press it twice. Otherwise, you can use the hand wheel to make the stitch.



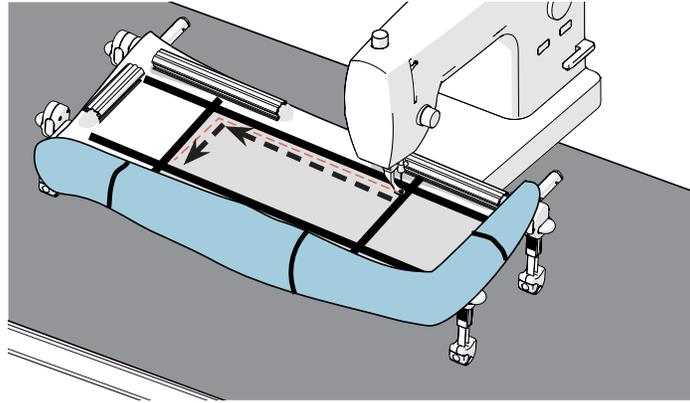
- d Continue holding the thread tail and move the hoop away from the needle. A **loop** of bobbin thread is pulled up to the top of the quilt. Keep pulling until the **bobbin tail** completely pops out.



- e Gather up both thread tails and move the hoop back to the first stitch. Pull on the **thread tails**, especially the bobbin tail, until both threads are tight.



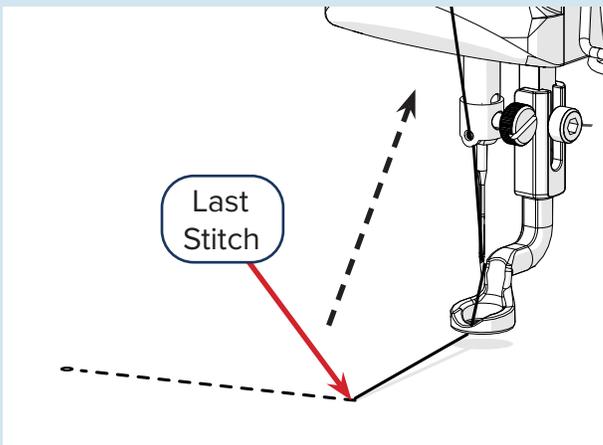
- 3 Move the hoop to stitch along the left edge, up to the back-left corner. Then stitch across the back edge until you reach the end of the quiltable area. Remember to remove any pins in the way before you stitch over them.



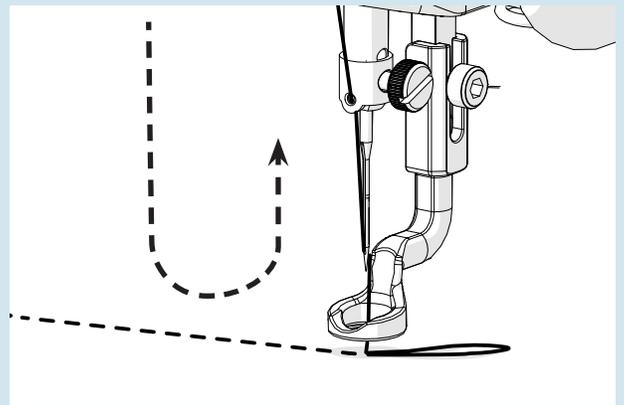
- 4 Now you need to bring up the bobbin thread again, to make sure it's not in the way as you do more quilting. The steps for pulling up the bobbin thread at the end of stitching are a little different from the steps for pulling it up at the start.

PULLING UP THE BOBBIN THREAD (END)

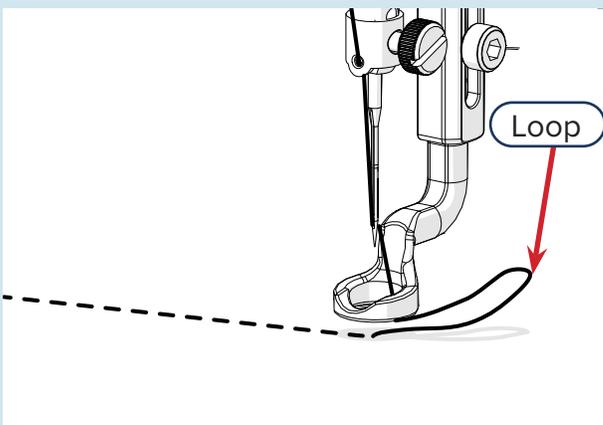
- a Move the hoop away from the **last stitch**.



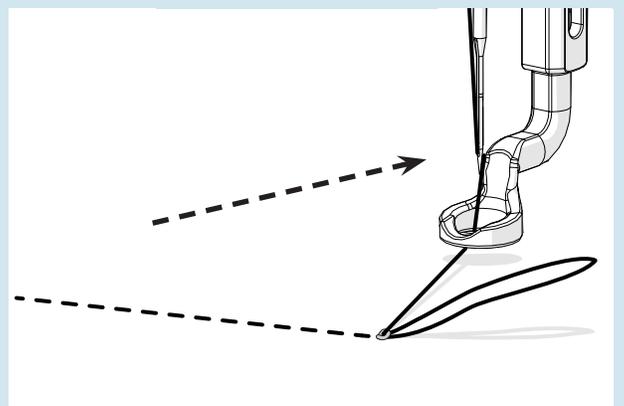
- c While still holding the loop, make a **single stitch** directly over the last stitch.



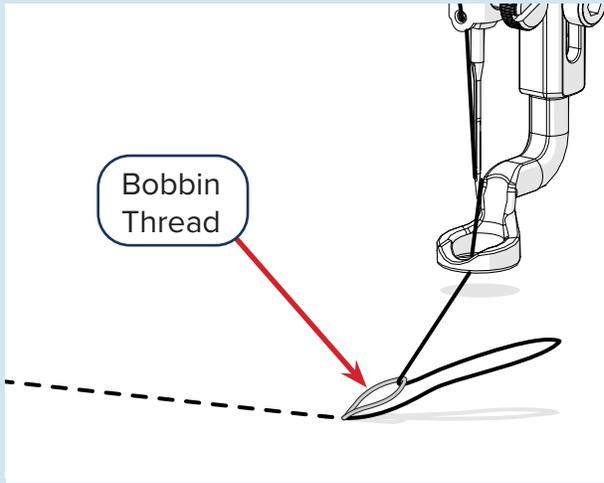
- b Hold the top thread to make a **loop**, and return the hoop to the last stitch.



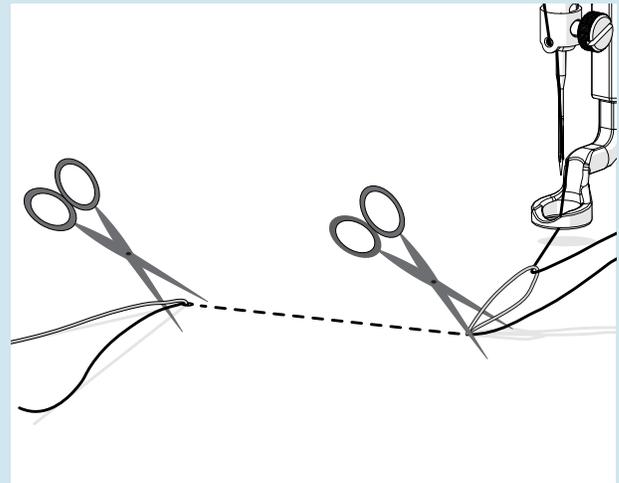
- d Continue to hold the loop and move the hoop away from the last stitch again.



e As you move away, a loop of **bobbin thread** is pulled up. Keep going until the loop is big enough to grab.



f Trim away all the threads close to the last stitch. Also cut the thread tails from the beginning of your stitching.



7 Lesson 7: Quilting Your First Zone

If you're ready, it's time to quilt your first zone! One way to know if you're ready to quilt with thread is to take a break. If you come back and feel like you know what you're doing, that's a good indication you are ready to move on. If you come back and feel unsure, that's ok! You might not be ready to move on. Spend some time repeating Lesson 5 on page 21 where you practice without thread until you're comfortable and confident.

When you're stitching into your quilt, you want to start and end with some **securing stitches**: three stitches you make close together to help secure the thread.

KEY CONCEPT

When it's time to stitch with thread, use securing stitches to keep your designs neat.

VOCAB REVIEW

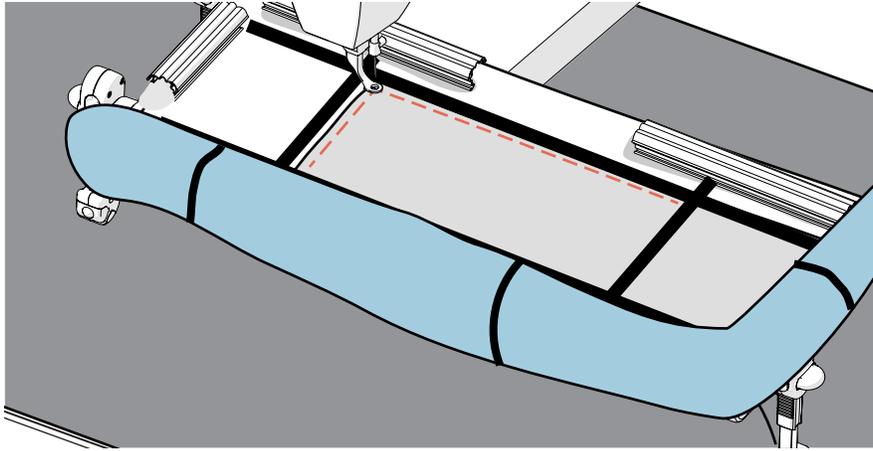
Securing Stitches: Putting three stitches close together to keep your thread from coming undone.

PRACTICE STEPS

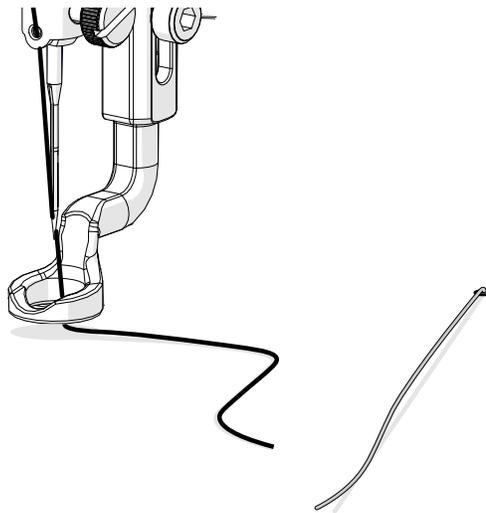
To quilt your first zone, you need:

- Scissors
- Thread (installed in the machine)
- Wound bobbin (installed in the machine)

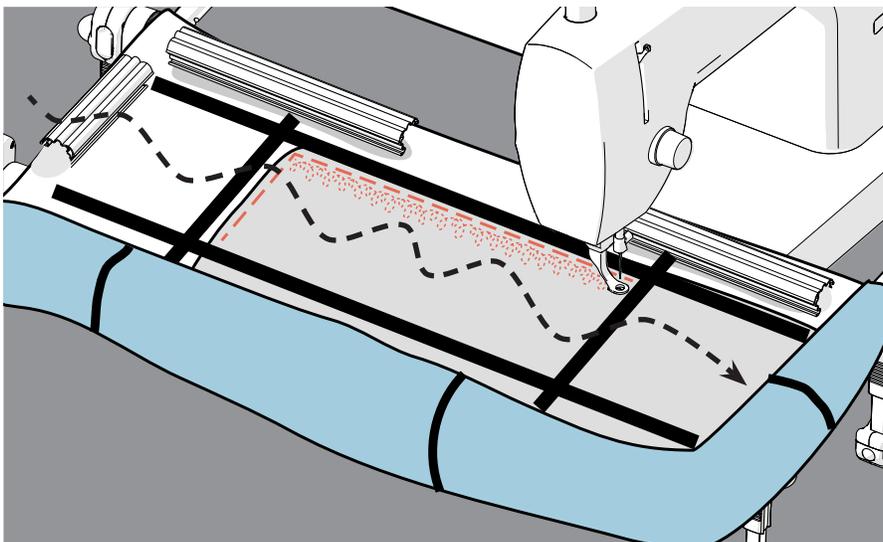
- 1 Move your hoop so that the needle is lined up with the start of the lines you drew for the first row of designs in the top-left corner of the quilt-top.



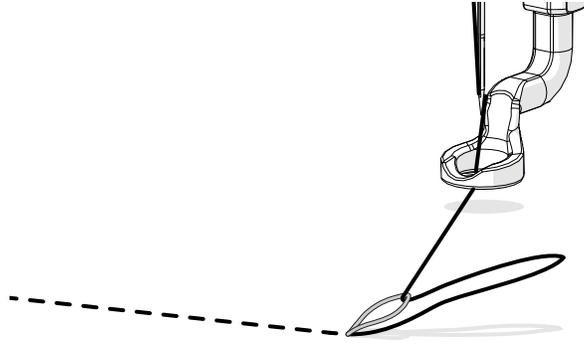
- 2 Pull up your bobbin thread. Follow the steps in “Pulling Up the Bobbin Thread (Start)” on page 23.



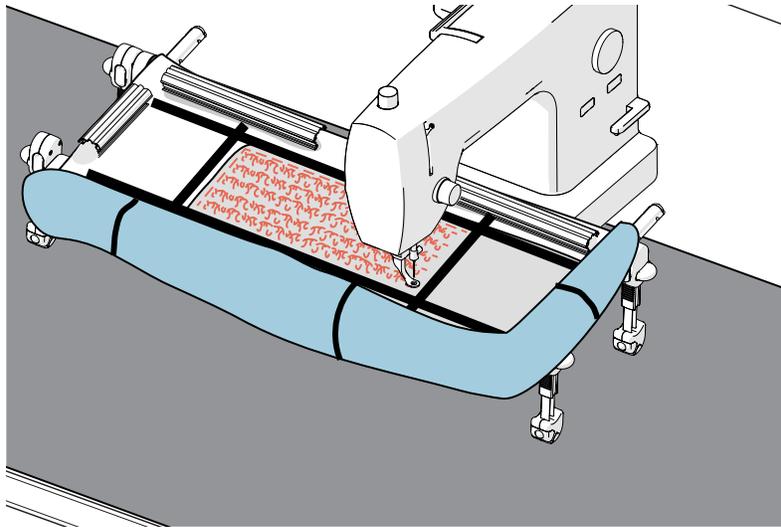
- 3 Make a few securing stitches, and then stitch across the quilt top, doing your best to follow the lines you made with your practice. But remember, no one is going to notice if your design doesn't exactly match your plan!



- 4 At the end of the quiltable area, make a few more securing stitches, and then pull up your bobbin thread. Follow the steps in “Pulling Up the Bobbin Thread (End)” on page 25.



- 5 Move the hoop so the needle is back on the left side of the quilt top and repeat steps 2–4, stitching until you cover the entire quiltable area.



8

Lesson 8: Shifting to the Next Zone

Congratulations on stitching your first zone!

Feel free to take a break again. As always, this is your project, so work on it at your pace. If you do step away for more than a few hours, make sure you take the clamps off the hoop, so that the fabric doesn't get stretched out from the tension on the hoop.

Now that the quiltable area is full, you need to **shift your fabric** to place a new zone in the quiltable area. When you shift zones, it's important to keep a little bit of your stitching from the previous zone in the quiltable area. This **overlap** of zones helps you line up your stitching, keeping your lines looking neat.

KEY CONCEPT

Once you finish filling in a zone with stitching, it's time to shift the hoop to put the next zone into the quiltable area. Make sure your zones have a little bit of shared stitching so you can keep the stitching aligned.

PRACTICE STEPS

To shift your fabric to the next zone, you need:

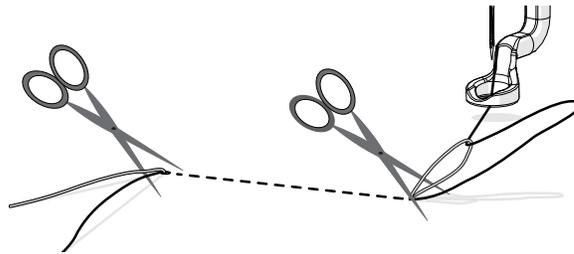
- Clamps (on your hoop for now)
- Elastic clips (on your hoop for now)
- Scissors
- Penny
- Placement template

VOCAB REVIEW

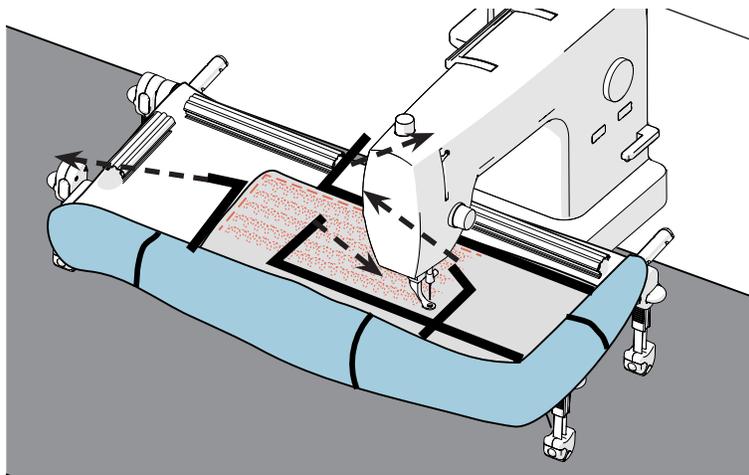
Shifting Fabric: Moving the fabric on the hoop so that a different zone is in the quiltable area.

Overlap: When quilting, it's important to keep some of your stitching in the new zone so you can keep your designs looking seamless.

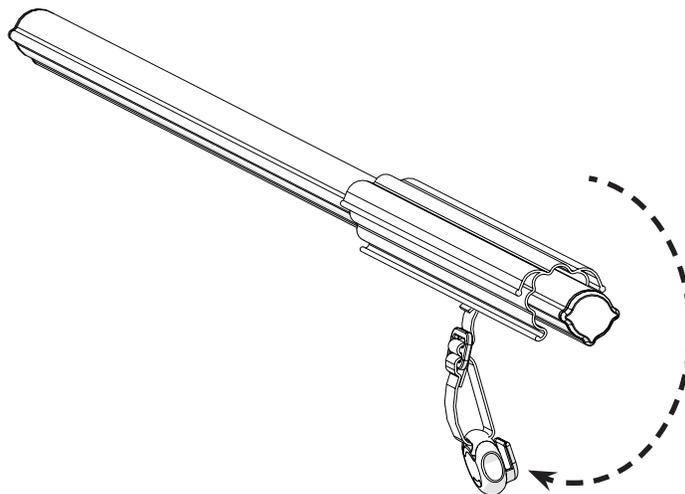
- 1 Make sure you've cut your thread tails. Then put the needle back down in the fabric to mark where you want to start stitching from after you shift zones.



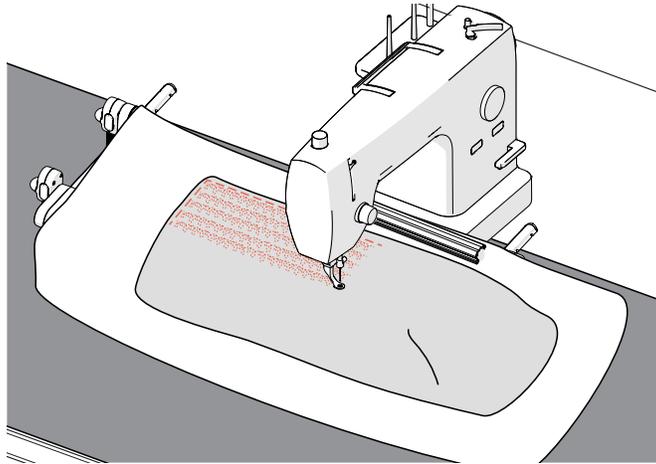
- 2 Remove the tape marking your quiltable area.



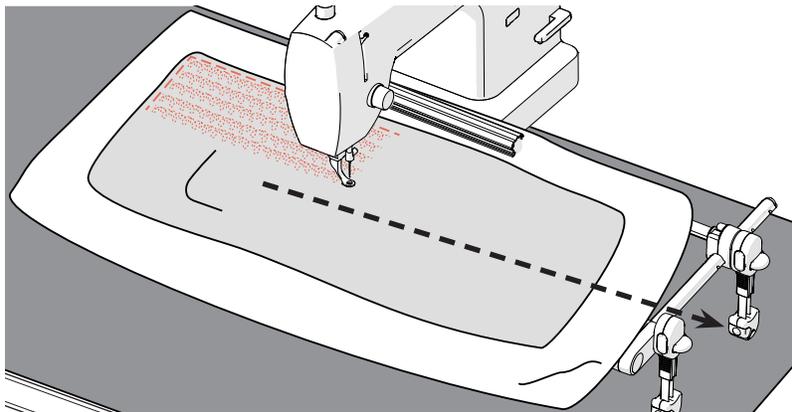
- 3 If you used them, take the clips off the fabric, letting the fabric hang free.



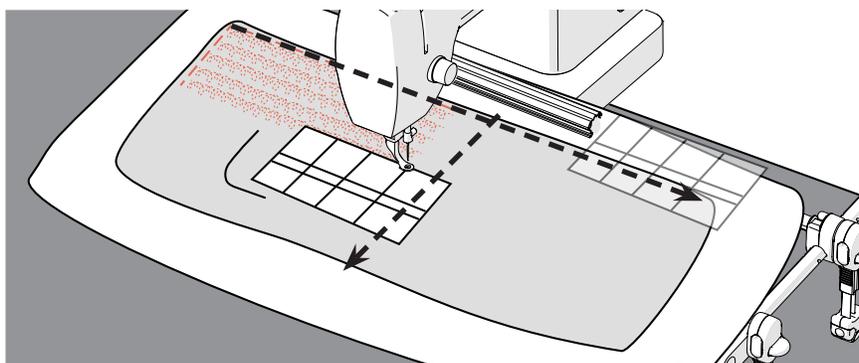
- 4 Take off all the clamps. **Tip:** You might find that when you're shifting your fabric horizontally, leaving one clamp on the take-up rail is a good idea. The clamp might make it easier to line up your fabric with the hoop because it keeps part of the quilt on the hoop at all times.



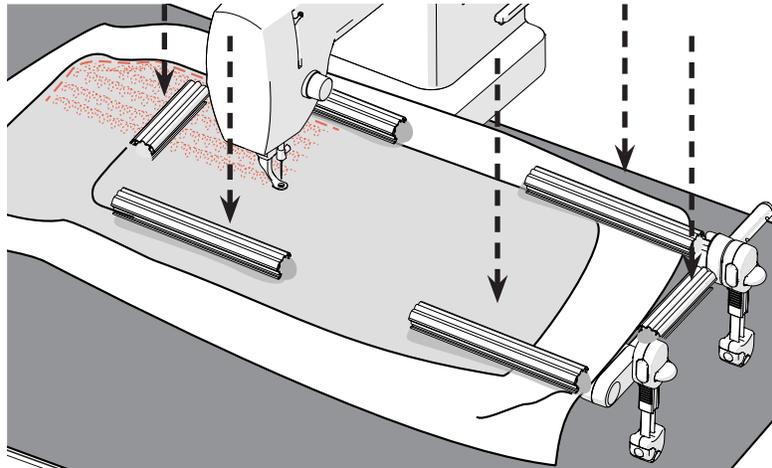
- 5 Grab the right side rail with one hand, and the left side of the fabric with the other. Or if you left one on, grab the clamp. Pull the hoop (not the fabric!) to the right until the next zone is roughly in the quiltable area. Remember to keep some of your previous stitching (1 ½–2 inches) in the new quiltable area. Use the placement template to help you estimate where the new quiltable area starts. Put the template in the same place as for the first zone, and stop moving the hoop when the needle is about 1 ½ or 2 inches away from the 6" mark.



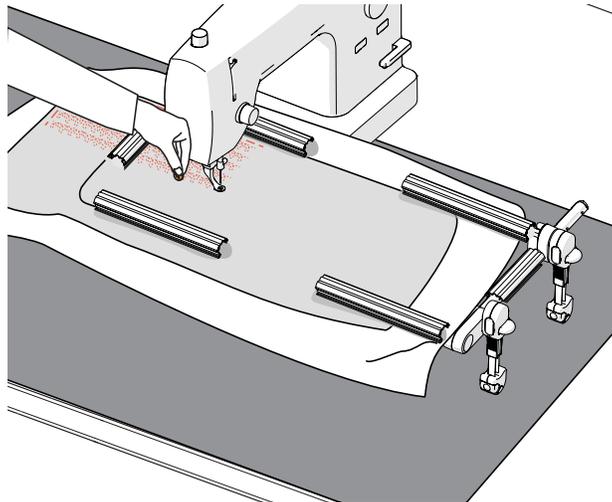
- 6 Confirm that the quilt is still square with the hoop. Use the placement template to check the straightness of the quilt top compared to the take-up rail and side rails, and adjust the fabric as needed. Keeping the quilt top straight will help keep your stitching neat, but it's ok if the quilt is a little off. It's difficult to keep a quilt square with the hoop when you're moving to a new zone, especially when you're just learning this new skill!



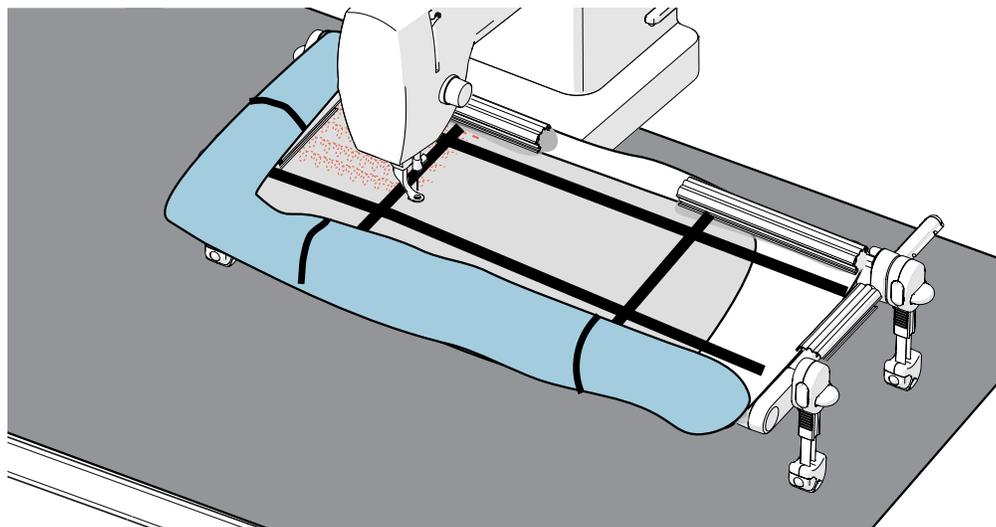
- 7 Reclamp the fabric in its new location. Remember to smooth out any wrinkles as you place the clamps. Pay attention to the location of the clamps. They need to be up against the corners to properly mark the quiltable area.



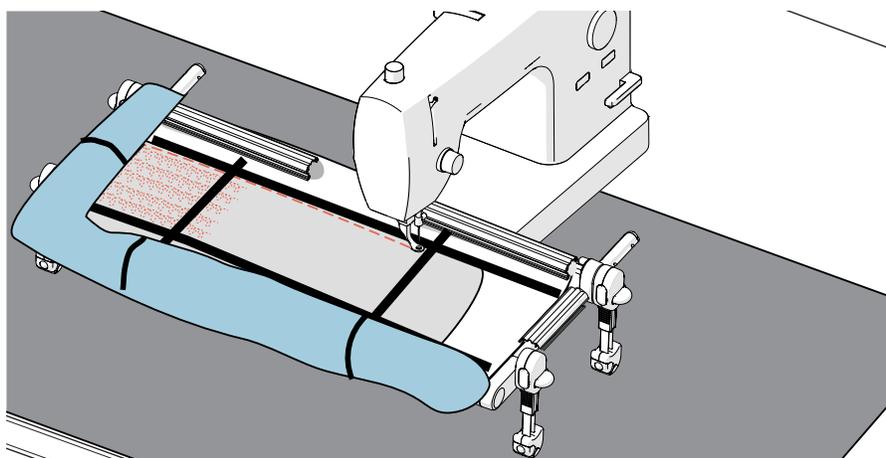
- 8 Use a penny to test your fabric tension again. See page 18 for detailed instructions. Once you're confident the tension is good, use the clips to roll up any draping fabric.



- 9 Use the marks on the clamps and tape to mark the quiltable area. See Lesson 4 on page 19 for detailed instructions.



- 10 Tack down any edges of the quilt top that are revealed in the new zone. As you work across the top of the quilt, you'll be tacking down just the top edge, except for the final zone of the strip, where you'll also need to tack down the right edge.



9

Lesson 9: Quilting the Next Zones

KEY CONCEPT

Each new zone should overlap slightly with the previous zone. As you quilt each zone, take the time to make sure the zone is in the quiltable area and that you've marked the quiltable area. Also, remember to confirm the fabric tension and to tack down your edges before you start stitching each zone.

You're well on your way to completing this practice project. Great work!

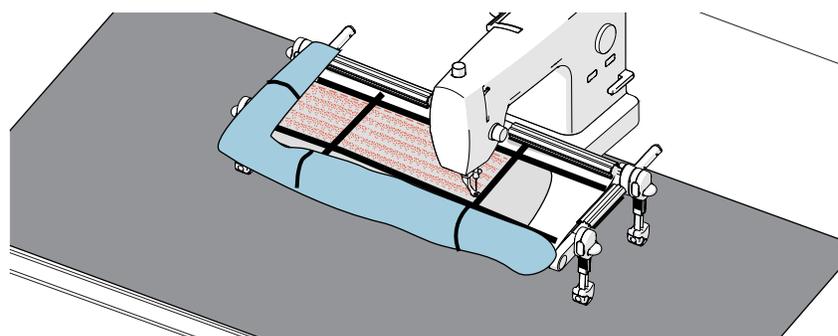
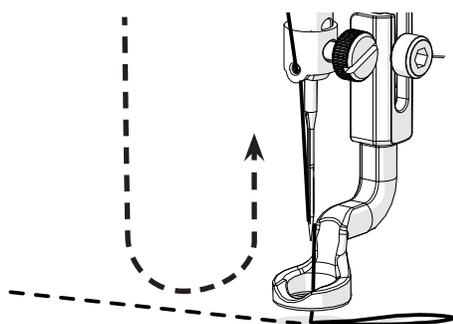
Quilting your next zones is very similar to quilting your first zone. You've already made sure your zone is in the quiltable area (and marked the quiltable area), tacked down the visible edges of the quilt, and confirmed the fabric tension. Now you're ready to stitch out your designs, and then repeat the process until you've finished the project.

PRACTICE STEPS

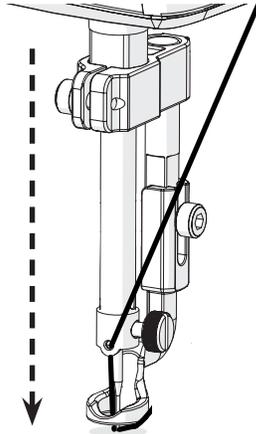
To quilt the next zones, you need:

- Scissors or thread snips
- Penny
- Spare full bobbins
- Placement template

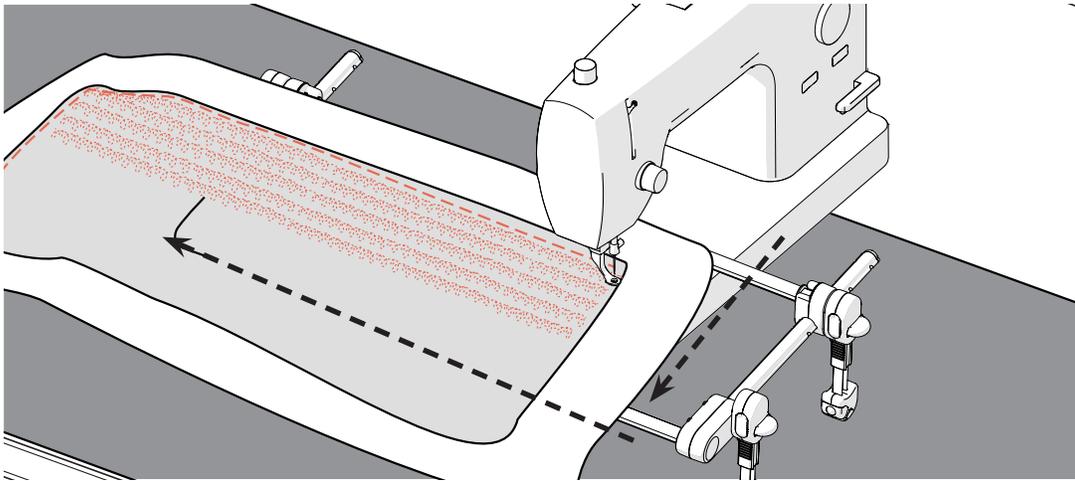
- 1 Quilt your next zone using the same designs as your first zone and following the marks you made. Remember to pull up your bobbin thread at the beginning and end of your stitches. Also remember to use a few securing stitches at the start and end.



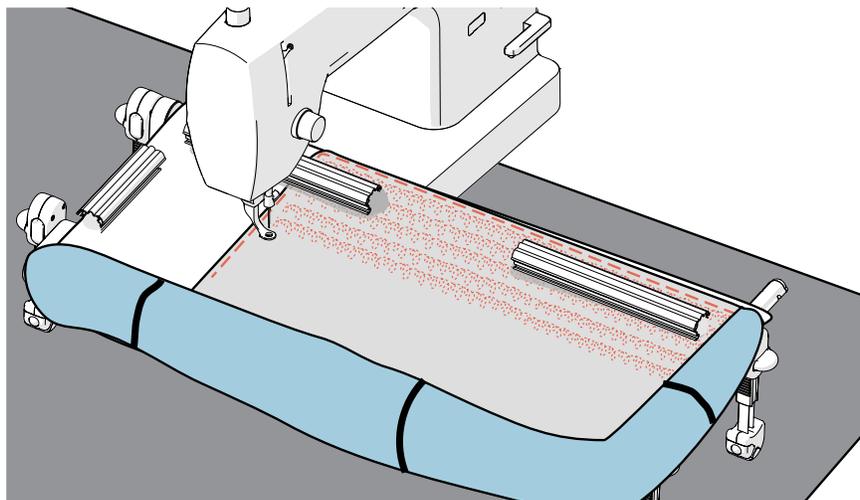
- 2 Once you've filled in the quiltable area again, as before, make sure you've cut your thread tails and that you've put the needle down into the fabric to show where you're going to start from in the next zone.



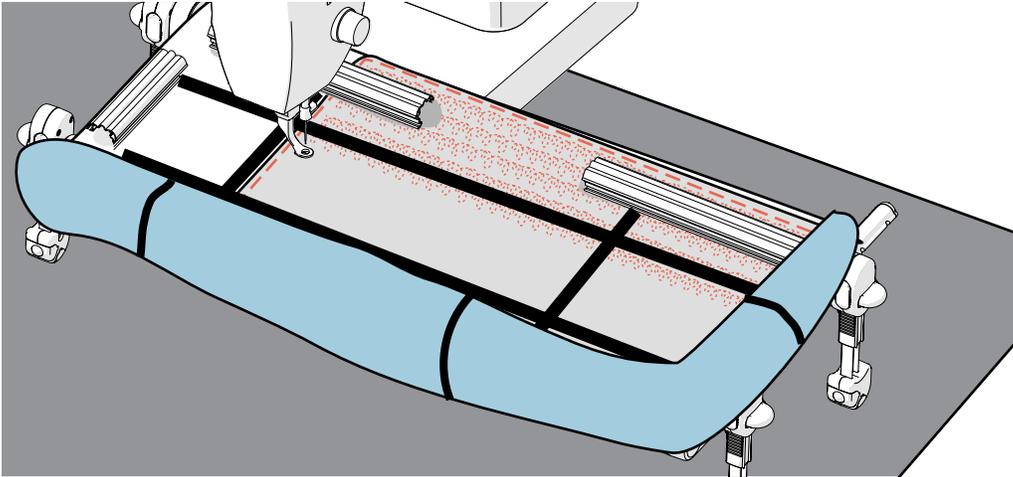
- 3 Remove the clips and clamps from the hoop, and then slide the hoop horizontally or vertically, which ever direction makes sense for the next zone you're working on. Like reading a book, you'll stitch across the quilt top from left to right, and then move left again to the zone below the strip, like starting a new line of text.



- 4 Reclamp the fabric to the hoop, and use the clips to hold the excess fabric to the rails.



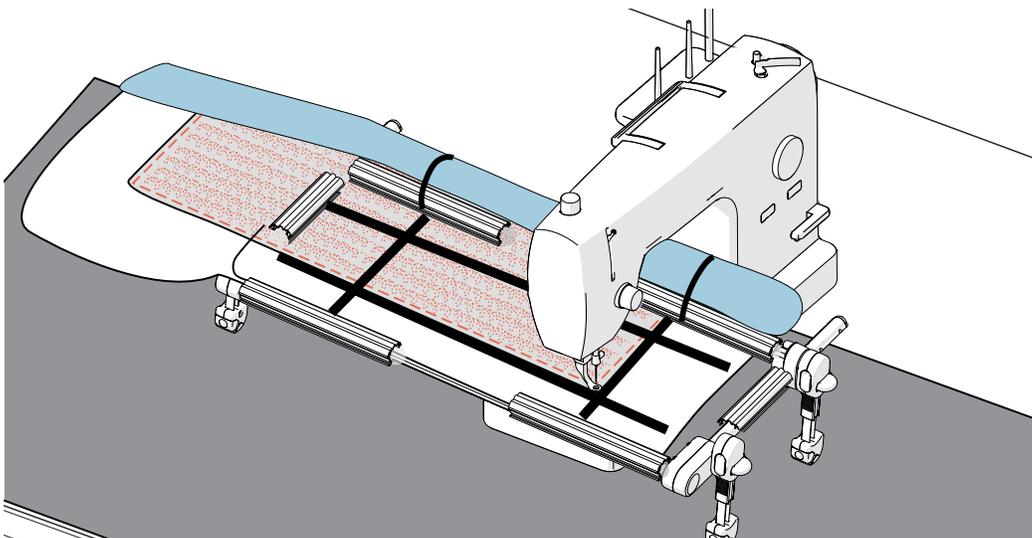
- 5 Mark your quiltable area with tape. Tack down any revealed edges. Remember tacking down helps to minimize distortion.



- 6 Quilt the next zone. **Note:** If you run out of bobbin thread, cut your top thread and move the hoop to one side of the machine. Remove a side clamp, and then gently lift your fabric out of the way. Refill your bobbin. Smooth out the fabric, and replace the clamp. Then place the hoop such that the needle is a few stitches before the thread ran out. Pull up your bobbin thread as normal, and then stitch over the top of your last few stitches. This will keep your stitching secure.

Tip: If you are comfortable holding up the hoop for the time it takes to replace the bobbin, you can instead just cut your top thread, and then tip up the hoop by the front rail and hold it out of the way while you change the bobbin.

- 7 Repeat the process of quilting, moving, and preparing until you've finished quilting the whole quilt top.



Congratulations!

You've finished quilting your first project on your Hummingbird hoop.

Now you know how to size the backing and batting for your quilts, how to place your quilt top, how to find your quiltable area, how to plan and practice your designs, how to tack down your edges, how to start and end your designs, and how to shift your fabric.

Whew! That's a lot of information you've learned. Good job! **Tip:** You put effort into this project. Take the time to bind and display it!

Now go flit off to have some quilting fun!

FOCUS ANSWERS

- What size of quilt can you make with a hoop?
Any size you want!
- Why do you need to cut your backing and batting larger than your quilt top?
So that the quilt top is where the needle can reach in the hoop while the backing and batting still reach all the way to the rails.
- What is a zone?
A section of your quilt top that is going to be quilted all at once.
- Why is it important to mark your quiltable area before you start to stitch?
If you try to stitch outside of your quiltable area, you can harm your quilt, your machine, or your hoop.
- Why should you pull up your bobbin thread at the start and end of your stitching?
To keep the bobbin thread from tangling up underneath your quilt and being stitched in place on accident.

NOTES

Use this space to plan your designs or to practice doodling the designs you've chosen.

NOTES

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