

A,B,C's of Quilting Cottons

100% cotton fabric is most commonly used in making quilts. Cotton is durable, machine washable, and easy to press for crisp seams.

- **Why are there multiple numbers listed for a fabric's width?**
 - Due to the manufacturing process, the finished width of a cotton fabric may vary.
 - 43/44": The fabric is between 43" and 44" wide.
 - 44/45": The fabric is between 44" and 45" wide.
 - Note the selvedge is included in the width measurement of a fabric.
 - What's a selvedge?
 - The selvedge is a strip of fabric that runs along the length of the fabric, parallel to the lengthwise grain.
 - The selvedge is sometimes on one or both sides of the fabric and can vary from $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. Cut off the selvedge before starting your project.
- **What does extra wide-fabric mean?**
 - Some cotton fabrics are now made 106", 108", or even 112" wide.
 - Extra wide fabric is great when backing quilts up to a queen size (84" x 92")—you save time because you don't need to sew any fabrics together to back your quilt. Most times, you will also save money using the wider fabric.
 - **For Example:** If your quilt is 84" x 92"
 - You need 2-1/2 yds. of 106" wide fabric for the back. No seaming needed.
 - Alternatively, you need 5-1/2 yds. of 43"/44" wide fabric, which still need to be cut and pieced down the middle.
- **What does fabric repeat mean?**
 - This applies to the number of inches it takes for a printed design to start over again. A repeat may be vertical or horizontal in nature. The repeat goes along the length of the fabric, following the selvedge edge and not the width of the fabric.
 - If you want to have the same focal point for the center of several quilt blocks, you need to know how far apart the design is repeated to ensure you have purchased enough fabric.
 - To determine the repeat: measure from the start of the design to the start of next occurrence of the same design. Often, the repeat is given in the fabric's description.
- **Do I need to prewash my fabric? This question has been debated for many years.**
 - Yes prewash your fabric.
 - Are you are concerned about your fabric shrinking? Prewash.
 - Are you concerned about the colorfastness of a fabric? Prewash.
 - Some hand quilters like the softer hand of fabric after it is prewashed.
 - No, don't prewash your fabric.
 - If you buy good quality fabric, the shrinkage is minimal.

- Quilters who piece their quilt with a machine like their fabrics to be stiff because it's much easier to get precise seams. Some quilters spray their fabric with a starch alternative which makes cotton fabric more stable. This makes cuts easier and reduces stretch in seams.
- Fabric will soil easier with the finish is removed.