

Fabric Preparation and Starch Recipe

Due to time pressures, I often use fabric right off the bolt. However, as a practical matter, I prefer to prepare the fabric before I piece the quilt top. A quilt made from fabric right off the bolt can have a difficult first washing as each fabric may shrink at slightly different rates, and bleed can occur.

Fabric Prep:

Wash

I wash all colors together in water as hot as allowed using dye magnet or commercial dye setting solution like Retayne. (Follow directions on the package.)

Dry and Press

I dry in a hot dryer, removing when still barely damp and pressing immediately.

Note: often, snipping a small triangle off each corner of the fabric can reduce the fray you can get from prewashing.

Starch

Starching both quilt top and backing helps the quilt move easily under the machine and helps prevent pleats.

I find it best not to use starch until I am ready to quilt; so, I starch the pieced top and the backing when I am ready to finish the quilt. (Though, starching can be helpful when using large pieces cut on the bias.)

I do not store starched fabric or quilts because starch can/will attract bugs.

Starch Recipe

Dissolve 1½ teaspoon cornstarch (yes, the same thing you use to make gravy,) with a couple tablespoons of cold water in a 2-cup container.

Add one cup of boiling water, stirring constantly until mixture turns from chalky white to milky translucent.

Add cold water to make 2 cups of starch solution. Use at room temperature in spray bottle. Shake well before use. Spoils in about a week or so. (Keeps longer in an airtight container in a cool place.)