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Kimberly's Korner

Pearls of Wisdom

For fun, I asked my quilting friends on social media to share the best quilting advice they'd ever received. I was delighted by the myriad of responses! Some were poignant, others humorous, but all were interesting and thought-provoking. There's no way for me to attribute these pearls of wisdom to the persons who originally said them, so please know they are written here in the spirit of sharing among friends. Enjoy!

Got skills?

Measure twice, cut once. Then measure three or four more times. If that fails, buy more fabric and try again.

Take the time to find your personal, perfect quarter-inch stitch.

Square-up your blocks as you go.

Take a class either in person or online. It's never too late to learn!

Always trim your threads and dog ears.

Well done is well begun. Cut carefully and everything else is more fun.

Eliminate the need for speed.

To improve your free-motion quilting skills, practice long enough to empty at least two bobbins.

To learn free-motion techniques, draw, draw, draw. It builds muscle memory and develops your own personal style.

A high-fiber diet

Don't "save" your favorite fabric. Use it in your next project and you'll love it even more!

Reds almost always run. Trust me on this one.

Don't practice on expensive fabric.

Use the fabric you fell in love with, because if you leave it in your stash you'll forget about it and when you find it again, you won't love it anymore.

When it comes to fabric, more is more—not less!

Tools of the trade

A well-maintained sewing machine makes all the difference.

Your seam ripper is your best friend.

Invest in a large cutting mat.

Don't use cheap thread.

A sharp rotary blade in your cutter is essential.

It should cut through fabric like a hot knife through butter.

Use the highest quality fabric, thread, and supplies you can afford.

Mistakes? What mistakes?

There's no such thing as a perfect quilt. Only God makes perfect things.

Mistakes are just design opportunities.

If they're looking that close, they're looking too close.

Once is a mistake, three times is a design choice!

Is it worth the effort to fix a mistake? A few hours of extra work are better than a lifetime of regret.

Pressing matters

Your iron is your friend. So is steam.

You press when quilting. You iron your clothes.

There is a difference.

Buy an iron without an auto-off function.

Especially for you longarm quilters

You don't have to quilt for everyone. You are allowed to be picky.

Retain your sense of humor (especially applied when a gal dropped off a quilt top and wanted to pick up the finished quilt after bowling that night!)

Good advice

Leave the 'quilt police' to their own devices. Relax. It'll quilt out.

Read the directions, then read them again.

The straight-of-grain matters.

Sometimes, honey, it is about quantity not quality!

Make visual decisions visually, not in your mind.

Since no one knows your investment of love, time, labor, and resources, God's eye is the only one that matters.

It's fabric, not nerve endings. Relax and enjoy the process.

Quilting philosophy 101

Everyone was once a beginner.

Finished is better than perfect.

Start small, not with a king size quilt.

It's a hobby, not life or death.

Finish a UFO occasionally.

Make the quilt you feel passionate about right now even if it is not the one you are currently working on.

Don't be afraid to abandon a project you no longer enjoy working on. Let go and move on.

You don't have to create Mount Olympus with every quilt.

This is not your last quilt.

On the lighter side...

As you sew, so shall you rip.

There are no rules in quilting. Only suggestions.

No quilt was ever improved by stitching in the ditch.

Always drink white wine and clear mixed drinks while quilting. It won't stain the fabric like red wine will.

Knock-off the matchy-matchy mentality you learned in the '90s.

There's no award for who finished first.

If a fabric is still ugly, cut it into smaller pieces.

Name your seam ripper; many of us spend a lot of time together. Freddy and I are tight.

Make sure when you change the stitch on your machine, you have the right presser foot attached. Ask my broken needles.

Someone once said, "Be careful buying so much fabric. It turns into a sickness with some people." I must be terminally ill.

"There's no crying in quilting." Oh, wait, that's baseball.

Some days you just need to stop and go bake brownies.

Friends don't let friends quilt ugly!

Don't use a rotary cutter late at night or after drinking.


You don't have to finish all your UFOs. It's our duty to leave this pile to our children. Then they'll be thinking of us!

And finally, my own best advice for you

Progress, not perfection.

Trim your schniblets!

Never square-up your blocks after 9 p.m. no matter how alert you think you are. Ask me how I know.

If quilting is stressful, you're doing it wrong! 

Quilted blessings!

Kimberly

Kimberly Einmo is an author, award-winning quilter, designer, international instructor, quilt judge, and host of five popular Craftsy classes. A proud military spouse, she is the mother of two college-age sons and lives with her husband, three cats, and one pampered pooch in Virginia where she enjoys creating new quilts in her sunny studio.