Extra ragging strips for rag quilt edges

By Raewyn Stewart

Adding strips made from three fabric layers around the perimeter gives the outer edge a similar fullness to the seams within the quilt. The strips are secured first, attached to all four sides, then snipped along with the perimeter edge.

1 Cut the strips

Cut each strip to twice your chosen seam width. Prepare enough strip lengths to cover all four edges of your quilt.

Quilt seam ½ inch: cut strips 1 inch wide.
Quilt seam ⅝ inch: cut strips 1¼ inches wide.

2 Secure the three layers

Use three layers with the same fabric composition as your quilt blocks, arranged in the same order. Align their raw edges and sew down the middle of each strip to hold the layers together.

Set your sewing machine to a stitch length of 2.5.



The prepared strip being attached to the quilt at the machine, as described in Step 4.

Attach the strips to the quilt

3 Align the outer edges

Lay the prepared strips on top of the quilt, along its outer edge. Align the outer raw edge of each strip with the outer raw edge of the quilt. Position strips along all four sides.

4 Stitch along the centre again

Attach each strip by sewing down the middle again, following its existing centre stitching. Use a stitch length of 2.5.

Open each block seam as you come to it so the seam allowances lie flat beneath the strip. Backstitch over each seam to secure it. Backstitch at the beginning and end of each strip.



The strip sits on top of the quilt with the outer raw edges aligned.

Snip the perimeter edge

Choose either of the following ways to snip the attached strips.

5 Press the layers towards the outer edge

Using an iron, press all layers of the perimeter seam allowance towards the outer edge. Snip through all layers together.

Make the snips ⅛ inch apart, stopping ⅛ inch before the stitching. Leave ⅝ inch unsnipped at each end for shaping the corners.

Alternative Leave the strips flat

Leave the strips flat and snip each side of the centre stitching separately. Make the snips ⅛ inch apart and stop ⅛ inch before the stitching. Again, leave ⅝ inch unsnipped at each end for the corners.



Snip at ⅛ inch intervals and leave the end sections unsnipped for the corner work.

Shape and snip the corners

6 Shape the strip ends

At each corner, shape the strip ends with a diagonal snip, as shown in the photographs. Work within the ⅝ inch sections left unsnipped at the ends.

7 Soften the diagonal edge

Make two small snips into the diagonal edge to soften it, stopping ⅛ inch before the stitching. Repeat on all four corners.



Left: the corner before shaping. Right: the shaped and snipped corner.

Repeat your chosen snipping method along all four sides, keeping the snips ⅛ inch apart and ⅛ inch clear of the stitching.

Before and after washing

Before washing



After one wash and dry cycle



The perimeter strips and seams before washing (left), and after one wash and dry cycle (right).

The extra strips give the outer edge a similar fullness to the seams within the quilt.

Washing and drying

Cold wash separately. Tumble dry on warm.
Check lint filters.

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