How to make continuous bias binding

In this tutorial there are two techniques explained:
1. how to embellish with thread and stitching a plain piece of fabric for binding
2. how to make the continuous bias binding

Try the second technique on a plain piece of fabric first (instead of the embellished piece); in case of a mistake, you waste only fabric, not the time needed for all that stitching.
From half yard of fabric I made 288” bias tape (8 yards), 2½” wide, enough for binding a 70” square quilt.

You need:

1. half yard of quilt weight fabric (18” x 42”)
2. Colored thread (use as many colors as you want); I used Aurifil 12wt thread (a very thick thread); this weight makes the stitching pretty visible. You can use thinner thread too, 28/30wt, 40 wt or even 50 wt.
3. Fine permanent marker
4. Topstitch needle, especially if you use a heavyweight thread.

1. How to embellish the fabric with stitching

Press your fabric.

Using a Clover Hera marker (or an air or heat erasable marker), mark a line parallel with the selvage. Using that line as reference, continue marking parallel lines toward the other selvage; keep the lines evenly spaced at 1”.

Thread your machine with one of your colors. If you know the total number of lines you have to sew and how many colors of thread you have, you can calculate how many lines you have to stitch with the same colors. In this way, you stitch everything that’s needed with this color at once, so you don’t have to thread the machine again with the same color.
Then change the color of the thread and sew a few lines with this new color.

Continue changing the color of the thread and sewing until you have finished all the marked lines.

Then sew in between two sewn lines (bring the needle in the center position and sew in between two lines). Now your stitching lines are evenly spaced at ½”.

Once the stitching is done, press nicely the piece.

Here is a close up of the stitching.
2. How to make the continuous bias binding

For the instructions below, use a plain piece of fabric, if this is your first try with this technique. You can use a smaller piece, too.

Remove the selvages of the piece, straighten the long edges, making if a perfect rectangle (90-degree angles, opposite sides parallel and equal).

Place the fabric on a cutting mat, right side up, and bring the top left corner toward the bottom edge, folding the piece as shown.

The left edge of the rectangle must be perfectly aligned with the bottom edge. This makes a perfect 45-degree angle.

Cut along the fold with a rotary cutter.

Move the cut triangle to the right of the rectangle, positioning it as shown. Pay attention here: the new shape MUST be a parallelogram.

Attach the triangle to the large piece. Place the pieces right sides together, aligning the edges and top corners.

Sew with ¼” seam allowance. Press the seam open.
On the wrong side, draw a line at ¼” from both long edges of the piece (the straight edges, not the edges cut on bias).
Use the permanent marker or any marker that doesn’t bleed.

Then draw lines parallel with one of the bias edges, evenly spaced at 2½” (the green lines), until you reach the other bias edge.
Do not take as reference the bias edge that is intersected by a seam (the edge in the previous picture), use the other bias edge.

NOTES
1. Make sure the green lines intersect the red lines, the intersection points are important for the next steps.

Your binding will be 2½” wide; if you need a different width, when drawing the green lines, use your number instead of 2½”.

At the other end, there will be some excess (what’s smaller than 2½”), trim it off.
In the next steps, you will stitch the two long edges together (edges with the intersection points marked), **but with an offset, see the pictures below.**

**Turn the piece right side up** and bring together the long (straight) edges.

See the offset in this picture.
You have to match those intersection points.

Use pins to keep the edges together.

**First, match the intersection points.**

Then add more pins in between two points to keep everything smooth and flat. If one of the edges is smaller than the other, stretch it so they fit.

By pinning this way, you will create a tube.
To better understand how this offset works, I made these diagrams.

Here are the two edges that you have to join. In this diagram, there is no offset, the edges indicated by the green arrows are aligned. **This is WRONG!**

You have to offset the pieces in one of the ways shown below, either way works.

The first way works better for right-handed people and the second way is best for left-handed people (it makes the final cutting of the continuous bias strip easier—see the next pictures).

**One more trick:**

The first points you have to match are shown in this picture. As you see, one of them (the top point) is positioned exactly on the edge, make sure you match these points correctly.
Continue pinning; when it’s done, your piece should look like this: a tube with a tail at each end. If you don’t have two tails (or no tail at all), something went wrong!!

All those marked lines create now a continuous spiral.

**Sew on the line marked at ¼” from the edges. Use short stitches (1.5 or 2 mm), you will be cutting across this seam and you don't want it to come apart.**

When the sewing is done, press the seam open. You have to do that on segments, as the seam is a spiral, too.

Here is a close up.

**Note how the marked lines must be perfectly aligned after sewing (see the lines indicated by the red arrows). All those lines must be aligned, they should meet on the stitching line.**

Starting at one tail (it doesn’t matter which one), cut along the lines you drew; use a pair of scissors.
Continue cutting along the drawn line, until you get to the end. You will end up with yards and yards of nice, continuous bias strip.

This is the difference produced by the two different ways of offsetting: see how one of the versions is better for right-handed people than the other.
If you can't remember how to offset the edges for easier final cutting, it's OK.

I am right-handed and I ended up with a piece that it is easier to cut by left-handed persons. This trick will make cutting easier: insert your left arm into the tube.

**NOTE**
You can replace the rectangular piece of fabric with a square piece of fabric—the technique remains the same. It all depends on the amount of fabric you have at hand.

I really hope you will give this technique a try. I know there are many pictures and instructions, but the technique is really quick and simple, once you understand it.

Geta

Geta’s website:  [www.getasquiltingstudio.com](http://www.getasquiltingstudio.com)
Email Geta:  geta@getasquiltingstudio.com

© 2018 Geta Grama

If you need new quilt and bag pattern ideas, please visit my pattern store.
Click on the image below.