



# HOW DO I QUILT THIS?

Rules of Thumb  
for E2E

Whether using a computerized longarm or free motion quilting on a domestic machine, deciding how to quilt a top can be a challenging experience. A few simple guidelines can be helpful.

## First Things First

- Who is the quilt for?
- How will it be used?
- How much time do you want to spend on quilting?

If the answers to these questions is to quilt an all over design, frequently called Edge to Edge (E2E), then read on. The following ideas apply the Elements and Principles of Design to quilting. In other words, look at quilts as art.

## Elements of Design

- Line –straight lines or curves
- Shape –geometric, realistic, abstract
- Form –dimension
- Space –negative
- Color –hue, tone
- Value –light to dark
- Texture –visual

## Principles of Design

- Balance –symmetry, asymmetry
- Contrast –differences between elements

- Proportion –relationships between elements
- Emphasis –first focus of attention
- Movement –path of attention
- Rhythm –repetition of elements
- Unity/Variety –harmony and interest

Additional and/or different Elements (also called Elements of Art) and Principles of Design can be found online. For this discussion, these are the ones we'll use. This gives us a common vocabulary to help describe and discuss our specific challenges in the art of quilting.

### **Look at the Quilt Top Design and Fabrics with the Elements and Principles in Mind**

- Are its lines straight or curvy?
- Are the shapes geometric, realistic, abstract?
- Do the forms add dimension?
- Does it have negative space? How much?
- Do the colors and values suggest a mood, a season?
- Are the textures calming or dramatic?
- Do the elements suggest a theme or style?
- Is the design symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial?
- What is the emphasis of the design?
- Which elements are repeated?
- Does the design have contrast? Unity? Variety?
- How does the eye move through the elements?

### **Choose an E2E to Enhance the Quilt Top**

Quilting adds elements of line, shape, form, space, texture, color and value to an existing work of art. There is no right or wrong; some choices may be more enhancing than others.

Looking at quilt tops with the Elements and Principles in mind takes practice. Asking and answering the above questions and looking at a lot of quilts has resulted in the following guidelines.

## Rules of Thumb for E2E

- add interest to negative space
- add movement to static design
- contrast straight line designs with curves
- use a simple design on a busy quilt top
- add interest to a simple design
- add unity of style, theme, shape
- add rhythm by repeating elements
- use an open design on thick fabric or quilt sandwich

These guidelines are a work in progress. You will, undoubtedly, develop your own list. If you would like to share your discoveries and experiences looking at quilts with the Elements and Principles of Design in mind, please feel free to email me:

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A big thank you to the [Northern California Statler Stitchers](#) for their contributions to developing the Rules of Thumb for E2E.

Marci Gore –Digitized Designs for Computerized Quilting

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