How to make Bias Binding

From Scraps or Yardage

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How much do I need?

Do the math

Measure the sides of your quilt (Ex: 50"x60")

Long Side x 2   60" x 2 = 120"

Short Side x 2   50" x 2 = <u>100"</u>

Total   220"

Basic formula is:

Length needed **220**"
Times **2.54** (for a 2 ¼" bias binding including seams) equals **558.8**

NOW, calculate the square root of the above total: **558.8**

DON'T FREAK OUT!

Using your phone calculator

Both IPhones and Android phones have calculators in them that will calculate the square root of a number.

Open the calculator in your phone and turn the phone sideways.

Do the Math using the length of binding you need times 2.54.

Find the square root button and press.   √

This will give you the square root which is the size square of fabric you need for your binding.

In this example of a 50" x 60" quilt you will then need a 23 inch square of fabric to make 220" of bias binding.

If you were making a scrap binding you still need about the same amount of fabric but you could have several pieces to make up the total square inches needed.

For example, a piece 10 x 23 plus one 13 x 23"
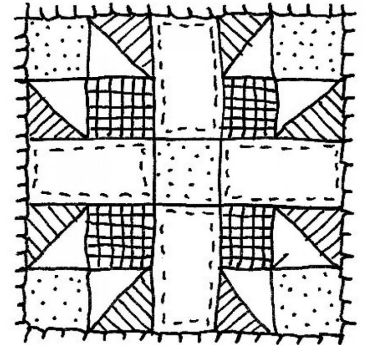
2 1/4" Wide Strip

Length
Length		Square
72"	....	13 1/2" Sq.
112"	....	16 1/2" Sq.
162"	....	20" Sq.
220"	....	23" Sq.
288"	....	26" Sq.
364"	....	29 1/2" Sq.
450"	....	32 1/2" Sq.
544"	....	35 1/2" Sq.

Note: **2.54** is for binding 2 ¼" wide.

There are also binding calculators on the web.

My favorite is a laminated card published by Lamb Art Press in 1985. It is called **Quilters Strip Ticket.**

The Strip Ticket is still available to purchase

391 .... 33 Sq.

2 1/2" Wide Strip

Length
Length		Square
80"	....	15" Sq.
125"	....	18 1/2" Sq.
180"	....	22" Sq.
245"	....	25 1/2" Sq.
320"	....	29" Sq.
405"	....	32 1/2" Sq.
500"	....	36" Sq.

Bias vs Straight Grain Binding

Making Straight Grain binding is quick and easy.

It uses the same amount of fabric (square inches) as bias binding but is cut selvage to selvage rather than diagonally.

Bias binding has more stretch and generally will last longer on a quilt than straight binding. Additionally, bias binding can be massaged around corners and doesn't have to be mitered.

Bias binding can be used around quilt edges that are not necessarily straight. (Scalloped edged).
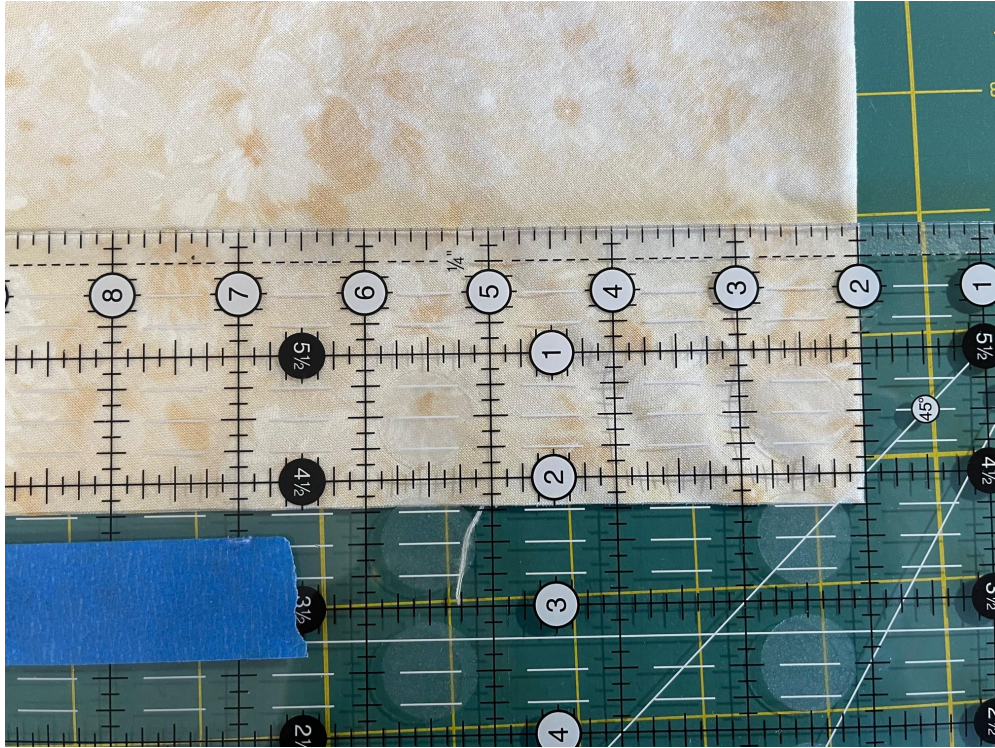
Cutting

Making bias binding doesn't have to be complicated. It also doesn't have to be a perfect 45 degree angle. You need to be close to a 45 degree angle to get the stretch in the fabric.

With yardage, I start with the ironed fabric flat and begin cutting about 5" from the corner.

Most cutting matts have a 45 degree angle for reference.

I like the look of a 2 ¼" binding so I put blue tape on my big ruler to mark where to line up the cuts.

Continue to cut strips until you have enough.

I have marked my cutting area with a two foot mark. I estimate how many strips I might need and then loosely measure them using the two foot mark. When I get enough I cut one more stripe for insurance.

At this point, the strips are all different lengths.

Sewing

When I get to the sewing machine, I sew a long strip to a short one and then sew a long one.
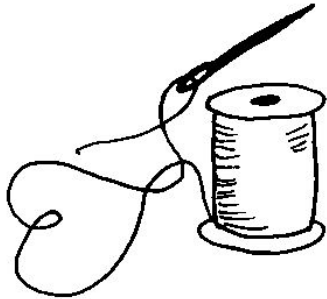
I chain sew until all the strips are sewn together.

At this point there are some ragged edges but I trim them later.

Ironing

Clip and iron open all of the seams. Trim any seams that are needed.

Double check that you have the length you need. Add another strip if you are short.

At the end of the bias strip fold over a quarter of an inch to start.

Then fold in half and iron your binding.

Storage

When you are done ironing, you will have a big spaghetti pile of binding.

I measure the finished binding now.

I like to neatly wrap the binding around my palm and secure it with a scrap of selvage, marked with the total inches.

I like to store my completed binding in Cigar boxes. I get them at Lowe Mill for $5. They are the perfect height and size for binding.

Alternatively, I will put the binding in a zip lock bag and pin to the quilt it goes with.

I sort my left-over bindings by color and use them for smaller projects or combine to make scrap bindings.

Questions?