



## 10 Tips for Selecting the Perfect Quilt Batting

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Shopping for quilt batting can be a confusing process. Walk into any quilt store and you'll be faced with a huge array of choices: Packaged or rolled? Natural or artificial fibers? Thick or thin? It's enough to make your head spin!

Gone are the days when quilters put together any natural fiber they could find and hoped for the best. Those colonial and settler quilters had to make due, but quilters today are lucky enough to have enough variety that they can choose the perfect batting for every project they work on. Just like our quilts, not all battings are created equally and it's important to select a type that is appropriate for your specific project.

● The best place to start is to consider the project you're making. Determine what qualities you want in your finished quilt and look for those qualities in your batting selection. Here's a handy list of things to keep in mind next time you're selecting batting for a quilt:

## 1. Package or Roll

If you're making a quilt in a standard size, you'll be able to find packaged quilt battings exactly the right dimensions, and you won't have to bother with cutting large swaths of batting. On the other hand, rolled batting is usually less expensive than packaged and it can be a bargain if you're planning on multiple quilts using the same type of batting. Also keep in mind that packaged batting has important information on the package such as fiber content, while rolled batting sometimes doesn't.

## 2. Price

If you're making an heirloom quilt that's going to be quilted by hand, price is probably no object. If you're making a series of baby quilts for your three cousins' baby showers, a less expensive version might be what you're looking for. Wait for fabric or craft stores to put batting on sale, then stock up for later in the year. If you always keep an eye out for sales, you might even get the premium batting for a cheaper price.



## 3. Fibers

Choose your batting according to its fiber makeup. Natural fibers such as wool and silk make for a warmer quilt, while cotton breathes and is ideal for light summer coverlets. Polyester can be less expensive and good for wall hangings and smaller projects, while some blends like cotton/poly give you the best of both worlds.



## 4. Loft

A quilt batting's loft is a measurement of its thickness. Low loft batting creates a different look from the higher loft varieties. Use high loft batts for comforters, tufting, and quilts where you want the quilting to show off. For thinner quilts, those where the piecing is the star, or quilts with an antique look, low loft batts are best.

## 5. Brands

Each brand has its own line of batting varieties, and the qualities of each will vary from company to company. High loft from one manufacturer may be only medium from another. Don't simply go by what's on the label. Try out a variety of batts to find the right one for your project.

## 6. Samples

Many quilting catalogs and most batting manufacturers offer free or low-cost batting samples. Order as many as you can and pin them in between muslin layers. Do sample quilting on each one, then compare the ease of quilting, the way the finished piece looks, and the overall quality of the material.

## 7. Small Projects

If you're fond of placemats, mug rugs, and other small quilted projects, fusible batt will be your friend. It's thin enough to use in any small project, and the fusible web allows you to adhere the batting between two small layers instead of having to fiddle with basting or pinning on multiple small pieces.

### 8. Dark Quilts

If you love Amish style quilts or quilts in any combination of dark colors, use a black batting. Most quilts suffer from bearding (batting fibers poking out through the top fabric), and black fibers aren't as noticeable as white ones in the middle of your quilt.

### 9. Combining Pieces

After you've been quilting for a while, you may have a collection of smaller batting pieces left over from trimming batts down. It's possible to piece these together to create a new, free batting. It's best to use larger chunks for this process, such as piecing together four baby quilt-sized batts to make one for a king sized quilt. Lay the pieces side by side, and sew them together using a large basting stitch.

### 10. Distance Between Rows

The distance you're planning between the rows of quilting are among the most important criteria to consider when deciding on batting. Check the label on the batting and it will tell you the recommended distance between rows for that product. For bed quilts and those for cuddling underneath on the couch, 2 to 3 inches is the recommended distance, while show quilts and wall hangings can get away with rows 5 to 6 inches apart. The distance on the batting package is the absolute maximum though, so never go past those numbers.



■ Ultimately, there is no perfect quilt batting for every project you do. No one-size-fits-all solution to this puzzle. The more experience you have quilting, the more familiar you'll get with the different batting types and brands, but it's smart to test out new ones as they come out. Who knows, you may find a new favorite even when you aren't looking for one!

[For more tips on selecting quilt batting, check out this video.](#)

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