

Batting Basics

Everything you need to know about batting

Common Batting Fiber Content

NATURAL FIBERS

Bamboo, Cotton
Silk, Soy + Wool

SYNTHETIC FIBERS

Polyester
Recycled Plastic Bottles

BLENDS

Lofts

HIGH LOFT – Thick, can be airy or dense. Generally polyester. Great for highlighting detailed quilting. Best hand-tied.
LOW LOFT – Thin, can be airy or dense. Generally cotton. Easy to sew by hand or machine. Drapes well.

How Batting is Formed

BONDED – Fibers held together w/ Starch or Resin, similar to glue. Needles glide easily, great for hand quilting. Least likely to beard.
NEEDLE PUNCHED – Compressed together by tiny needles. Very stable. Dense. Low-loft. Generally not recommended for hand-quilters. Best for non-wash less-wash items like wall hangings.

Batting & Heat Properties

FLAME RETARDANT – Will not melt or flow when in contact with flame. Ideal for baby & children's items.

FUSIBLE – Outer layers have a heat-sensitive web that gently adheres to fabric. Layer your backing, batting & quilt top, iron from the center out, 3-5 seconds per area. Usually cotton setting with steam is recommended.

POLYESTER – Not to be used for heat-insulating projects, like pot holders or hot pads. Can melt and catch fire.

Standard Packaged Batting Sizes

CRAFT: 36" x 45"
CRIB: 45" x 60"
TWIN: 72" x 90"
FULL: 81" x 96"
QUEEN: 90" x 108"
KING: 120" x 120"

Possible Shrinkage

POLYESTER: None
POLY BLENDED W/ NATURAL: Very Little
SILK: 5
NATURAL FIBERS: 2 – 3% (COTTONS, BAMBOO)

General Recommended Intervals

Recommendations vary widely according to each manufacture.

BAMBOO: Up to 8"
COTTON: Bonded 8" – 10"/Needled 3" – 4"
POLYESTER: 2" – 4" or 3" – 12"
SILK: 3"
SOY: Up to 8"
WOOL: 2" – 3" or 4"+

When in doubt...

Quilt 2" – 4" inches apart.
Do not prewash.

WARMTH

HIGH: Wool
MEDIUM: Polyester, Silk, Bamboo
LOW: Cotton, Poly/Cotton, Soy

Suggested Applications

ART/WALL HANGINGS: Needed.
CHILDREN'S USE: Flame-retardant.
ELIMINATE BASTING: Fusible.
HAND QUILTED: Bonded. Low-loft.
HAND TIED: Bonded. High loft.
LOTS OF WASHES: Polyester/Poly Blends Scrim.
WEARABLE: Natural fibers. Low-loft.
MACHINE QUILTING: Needed with scrim. Bonded. Fusible. Low loft.

HEAT INSULATING: Wool. (POT HOLDERS/HOT PADS)

How can I fluff and remove wrinkles from batting?

Use a steamer, or unfold and let sit out over night, fluff in dryer with damp towel for 10 minutes on low setting.

Washability

POLYESTER: Washable + dryable. Low heat.
WOOL: Only after being quilted.
COTTONS, BAMBOOS, SILK: Washable & Dryable. May shrink slightly after initial wash.
WATER-SOLUBLE BONDING: Loosens after initial wash.

If I don't prewash, will my batting shrink?

If your batting is mostly natural fiber, you will get a little bit of shrinkage (2-3%) after your first wash. The fabric will gap slightly between quilt lines. Experienced quilters call this a "vintage look."

Do I need to prewash/presoak?

Not necessarily. Most manufacture's recommended using batting right out of the package.
BONDED: No, as water-soluble bonding agents loosen with water.
FUSIBLE: No, fusing agents might be washed away. Natural material can shrink up to 3%. This can "crinkle" the look of you quilt. If you choose, prewash/soak by hand, with warm water in sink. Do not agitate in washing machine. Let soak, and dry in dryer on low heat or hang dry.

What is...

...LOFT?

The thickness of batting. High loft is very thick and fluffy, with many layers. Low loft is thin, lighter weight, less layers.

...SCRIM?

A polyester grid used to anchor cotton fibers. Helps keep fibers from separating and distorting when washed. When using 100% cotton with no scrim, need to stitch closer to keep them from separating.

...BEARDING?

Fibers from batting migrating and coming through the surface of the quilt.

LIKELIHOOD TO BEARD:
MOST LIKELY: Polyester & Wool
SOME LIKELIHOOD: Cotton Polyester
LESS LIKELY: 100% Bonded
LESS LIKELY: 100% Cotton Needed (After Initial Washing)

...INTERVALS?

Distance between lines of quilting stitches or ties. Varies per fiber content and construction of batting.