

3 Reasons You Definitely Need a Walking Foot

By Rachel Hauser

Every new quilter should invest in a walking foot. This specialty sewing machine presser foot is essential for [straight line quilting](#). It also increases accuracy when sewing long seams and [attaching quilt bindings](#). A walking foot is one of the first investments I made into my quilting hobby, and it has served me quite well!



How to use a walking foot in quilting 3 ways

1. Straight line quilting

If you want to quilt your quilt on a regular home sewing machine, [straight line quilting](#) is the best place to start.



However, sewing through three layers of fabric (the quilt top, batting and backing) can cause bunching and puckering when the layers shift as you sew. This happens while the feed dogs on your machine pull the fabric from the bottom, a regular presser foot encourages the top layer to move in the opposite direction.

Because a walking foot pulls the fabric from the top of the work as well, your project will feed evenly through your machine as you sew. If your quilt is [basted properly](#), all three layers work under the needle at the same rate. For this reason, a walking foot is also called an even feed foot.

Straight line quilting without a walking foot can create all sorts of trouble. You might find puckers on the back of the quilt resulting from uneven feed. Or, after a good amount of quilting, you might find that the quilt top has been dragged to one side instead of remaining centered over the quilt back. The effects of an uneven feed tend to be cumulative, getting worse and worse as you go.

To fix such errors, you'll need to pick out stitches and start again. Yikes — what a headache! It's much better to start with a walking foot and set yourself up for a more peaceful quilting experience.

2. Sewing long seams

Because a regular presser foot does not move fabric from the top, it always feeds fabrics slightly unevenly. This isn't a problem when sewing short seams in patchwork, garments and bags. But over the course of a long seam, the uneven feed cumulates and becomes an issue. Tucks and ripples of excess fabric may result.

Quilting, more than most other types of sewing, has a tendency to include long seams. When sewing large cuts of fabric together to create quilt backings, use your walking foot to help the fabrics feed evenly. You can also use your walking foot for sewing [sashing](#) and [borders](#) into your quilt tops.

In all these instances you should also use pins to encourage an even feed. A walking foot in conjunction with pins will create the best results.

3. Attaching binding

The last step of quilt-making is attaching your binding along the edges. Now you'll be adding two layers of binding fabric to the already bulky three-layered quilt top! What do you need? You guessed it — your walking foot.



Here again the walking foot will provide that essential even feed so that binding is attached without puckers and gathers.

4. And anytime you like!

Since a walking foot provides an even feed, why not use it all the time? Actually, there's no reason you shouldn't use it for regular piecing and sewing.

Be warned, though: walking feet attachments tend to be noisier than a regular presser foot. But if you don't mind the noise, you may find all your sewing is more accurate with your walking foot attachment!

February 07, 2018

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