

# QUILT SLEEVE CONSTRUCTION

or Why a Quilt needs a Sleeve when it doesn't have Arms

A quilt sleeve is a tube of fabric sewn to the back of a quilt at the top. It evenly distributes the quilt's weight and prevents the batten or hanging rod from touching the quilt. All quilts must have an attached sleeve to be displayed at the Traditions & Beyond quilt show. Quilts smaller than 25" on all sides may have a 2" wide sleeve, all others must have a minimum 4" up to a 6" wide sleeve. These instructions include adding a 1/4" easement which provides room for the batten or hanging rod without distortion of the quilt front when hung.

For a 4" wide sleeve, cut a piece of fabric (left over backing fabric, muslin or other fabric) 9" by the width of your quilt. Fold the short sides over a 1/2" twice and stitch close to the first fold to form the hem. Fold the wrong side of the fabric together along the long sides, making the sleeve 4.5" by two inches less than the width of your quilt to create the sleeve.

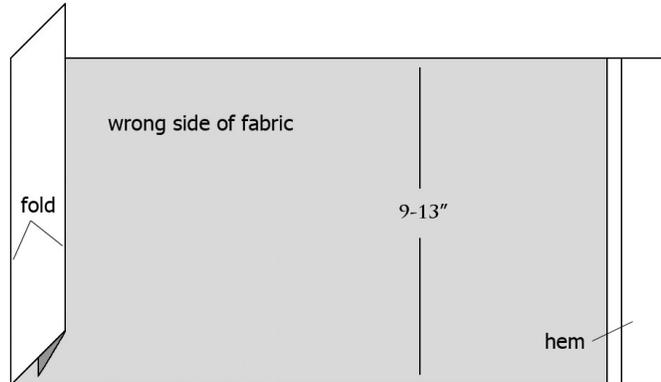


Figure 1.

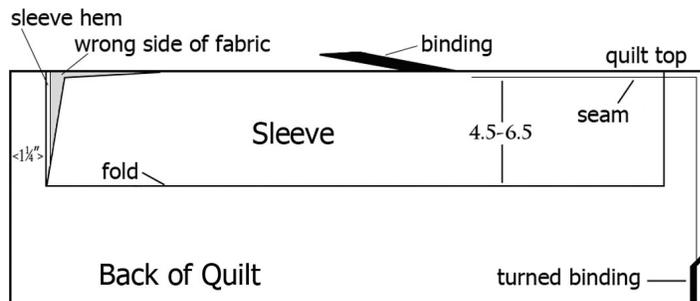


Figure 2.

If you are going to bind your quilt, you can sew the top edges of the sleeve into the seam when you sew on the binding. Align the open edges of the sleeve with the top, back of the quilt. There should be 1/4" from the hemmed edges of the sleeve and the unbound edges of the quilt. Figure 2 illustrates this positioning with the binding machine sewn to

the front of the quilt then pulled to the back and hand sewn closed. You may have another method for attaching the binding; use the method you are most comfortable doing.

Crease the bottom fold of the sleeve up by 1/4" or slightly less than the width of your binding as shown in Figure 3. This allows room for the

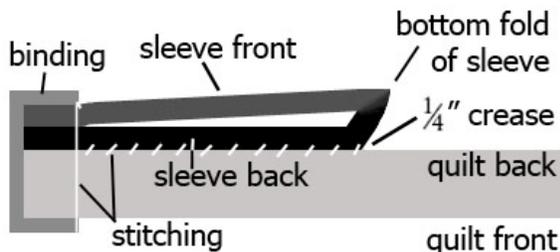


Figure 3.

width of the batten or hanging rod inside the sleeve without distorting the front of the quilt. Whipstitch the sleeve back to the quilt back, taking care not to go through all the layers to the quilt front, leaving the sleeve front loose. Stitch the two short sides and bottom long side along the 1/4" crease. The sleeve will be slightly convex. The crease needs to be slightly less than the width of the binding for the sleeve not to show above the quilt. See Figure 4 for an overall view and Figure 5 for a detail of the sleeve.

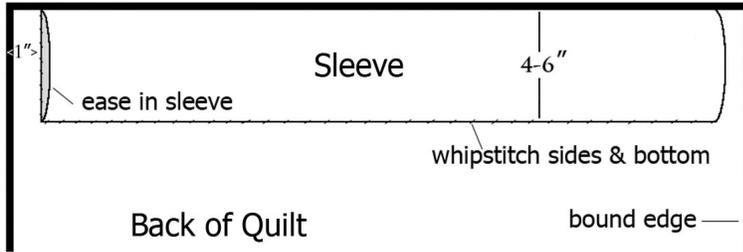


Figure 4.

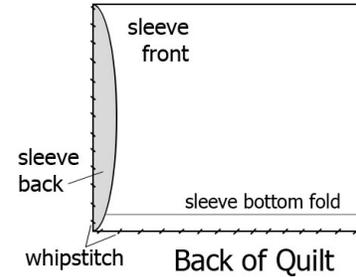


Figure 5

If you use a method other than binding to finish the quilt edges like facing or pillow-casing, you will need to first sew the sleeve into a tube, then sew the tube onto the back of the quilt. You can use this method even if you do bind the quilt but do not want to attach the sleeve with the binding.

Hem the short sides as before in Figure 1. Again fold the fabric with the wrong sides together but this time, stitch  $\frac{1}{4}$ " along the long side, forming a tube as shown in Figure 6.

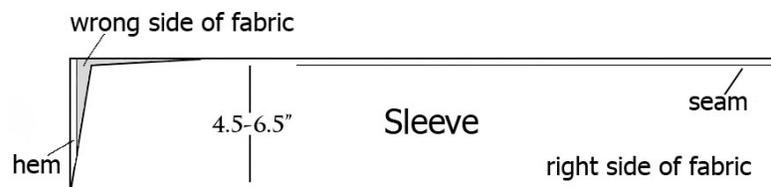


Figure 6.

Press open the seam, rotate it towards the center (Figure 7) and press again to form a top and bottom crease. Figure 8 shows the completed sleeve tube.

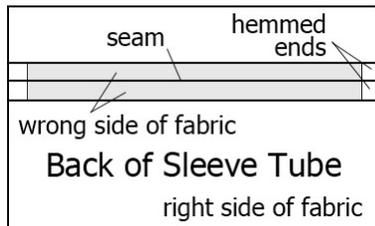


Figure 7.

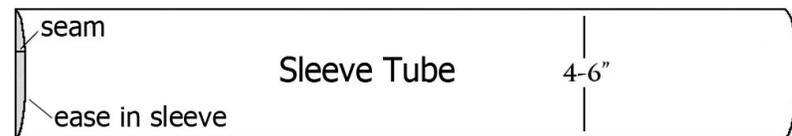


Figure 8.

Again crease the bottom fold of the sleeve up by  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or slightly more (Figure 3.) Position the sleeve with the seam against the back of the quilt so that the top of the sleeve is 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " below the finished top edge and 1" from the finished side edges of the quilt. Securely sew the top of the sleeve tube to the back of the quilt, taking care not to stitch through to the front of the quilt but sinking the stitches into the batting. Finish by whip stitching the sleeve sides and the bottom along the crease line to the quilt back (Figure 9.)

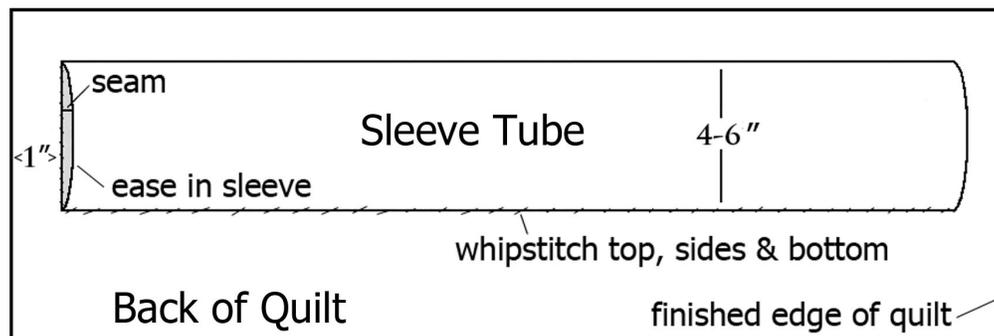


Figure 9.