

# Tip of the Month

**November 2016**

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## Coping Strips

A coping strip is essentially a border that is used to bridge the gap between two sections of a quilt or block that do not mathematically fit together.

You would need to use a coping strip when:

1. The actual panel size is smaller than the size indicated on the pattern.
2. A quilt top ends up being too small for the next pieced border.

Coping strips do not have to be the same width on all four sides. The width of the top and bottom strips can be different from each other as well as different from the width of the side strips. If the difference is minimal, it may make sense to add the difference to only one side, or just the bottom. It all depends on the size needed and what looks best in the quilt. If the width of the coping strip is very narrow, it may make sense to trim the panel down so the coping strips will be a reasonable size to work with.

### Calculating the coping strip

**Step 1:** Start with the size that the panel or quilt is supposed to be. These measurements can be found in the pattern, but you may have to make some calculations to determine these sizes. You may need to make the pieced border that you'll be adding and use that as the measurement that you're aiming for. Include seam allowances in your calculations.

**Step 2:** Measure the actual size of the panel or quilt. Be sure to include the seam allowances.

**Step 3:** Subtract the numbers in Step 2 from the numbers in Step 1. Be sure to do the top/bottom separately from the numbers for the sides.

**Step 4:** Divide those two numbers by 2 (as there are two borders, either top/bottom or side/side).

**Step 5:** Add seam allowance ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " ) to get the width of strip to cut.

### Example

Step One - Panel size according to the pattern is supposed to be  $24 \frac{1}{2}$ " by  $42 \frac{1}{2}$ ".

Step Two - Panel size is actually 23" by 42" (including seam allowance).

Step Three -  $24 \frac{1}{2}$ " subtract 23" =  $1 \frac{1}{2}$ "

$42 \frac{1}{2}$ " subtract 42" =  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Step Four -  $1 \frac{1}{2}$ " divided by 2 =  $\frac{3}{4}$ "

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Step Five -  $\frac{3}{4}$ " +  $\frac{1}{2}$ " =  $1 \frac{1}{4}$ ". Cut  $1 \frac{1}{4}$ " strips and add to the top and bottom to get the correct size as per the pattern.

$\frac{1}{4}$ " +  $\frac{1}{2}$ " =  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Cut  $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips and add to the sizes. Because this number is very small, this is where you may need to add the coping strips to *ONE* side only, in which case, you would eliminate Step Four. Alternatively, you can trim the sides of the panel down so that the coping strip will be a reasonable size on either side of the panel.