

# TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR NEXT QUILT

## CALCULATIONS FOR A PUTNEY JELLY ROLL COUCH QUILT

I have a passion for couch quilts ... partly to protect my couches from my two dogs, but also to protect them from me. I can be sweaty from exercise or dirty from gardening, and still crash on the couch.

In my opinion, there is no one perfect size. I like enough length to cover the arms, at least partially. I've also found that no matter how big you make your couch quilt, the top may fall down the back of the couch, and you'll have to reposition the quilt periodically anyway.

I really like the dimensions of my Storybook House quilts ... the couch quilt started at 100 x 62" and ended up about 94.5 x 57.5 (5-7% shrinkage). The loveseat quilt started at 76 x 62 and ended up 71 x 57.25 (after quilting and washing) - about 7-8% shrinkage.

### Here's my design process:

1. **Define target dimensions:** 95 x 58
2. **Assume shrinkage factor of ~ 7%** ( $1-.07 = .93$ , so divide target dimensions by .93)
3. **Calculate adjusted dimensions:**  $95/.93 = 102$ ,  $58/.93 = 62$
4. **Define pieced section height** - assume 42" useable panel height + 6 to 7" of stagger = 48 or 49" finished strip height
5. **Define border widths:** 62" - 49" = 13", divided by 2 = 6.5" in borders. This can be one big outer border, or use a 2" inner border and 4.5" outer border.
6. **Define pieced section width:**  $103 - 13" = 90"$  (this needs to be an even number ... you may need to tweak a dimension)

Your strips will be cut 2.5" wide, resulting in 2" wide pieced strips.

- Keep a **journal** or **scrapbook**
- **Sketch your design** out with dimensions
- **Track dimensions** after piecing, after quilting and after washing
- Note any **lessons learned**
- **Snap a picture** of your finished quilt!

Now let's figure out **rough yardage needs:**

1. **Calculate number of strips:**  $90/2=45$
2. **Calculate number of panel strips:**  $45/2 = 23$  (I rounded up, so panel strips on each end)
3. **Alternating fabric strips** =  $45-23=22$
4. **Panel Fabric needed:**  $23 \times 2.5 = 57.5''++$  (1.75 yards) - allow for squaring up & trimming off panel borders if separate panels)
5. **Alternating Fabric + spacers for panel strips** - allow ~ 2" extra on length, to square and trim after piecing: need  $(49+2) \times 22 = 1122''$  length plus  $(7+2) \times 23 = 207''$  for a total of ~ 1329 inches of 2.5" strips. Divide by 42 = ~ 32 Width of Fabric strips needed.  $32 \times 2.5'' = 80''$  or roughly 2.25 yards of alternating fabric. You do not necessarily need to use the same fabric for the spacer at the ends of your panel strips.
6. **Inner Border (if desired):**  $90 \times 2 + 53 \times 2 = 286'' / 42 = \sim 7$  strips x 2.5" wide = 17.5" or 1/2 yard minimum (allow for squaring!)
7. **Outer Border:** I don't like to piece my outer borders ... so the maximum quilt dimension (102") defines the yardage for borders - assuming the widths fit in 42". In this case,  $102''/36 = 2.8$  ... round up to 3 yards. There will be sufficient extra for binding.

Next - **plan your stagger.** You can do this on paper, or cut your strips and plan it with fabric. A **design wall** is a wonderful tool for this. My favorite is made from 1" foam insulation board covered in neutral fabric. You can pin right into this design wall.

**Label your panel strips** as you cut them to keep them in order. Blue painters tape works. **Piece your strips using a walking foot** for straight(er) seams. Enjoy! - Marsha Tufft