

Title:

Three Keys To Fabric Selection

Word Count:

515

Summary:

There is so much variety available in fabric shops, on-line, and in mail-order catalogs that it's almost difficult to choose. Often, I end up buying fabric whether I need it right now or not. After all, a quilter must always have fabric on hand.

The "magic" comes when you find a fabric that you fall in love with. Finding a suitable fabric usually isn't difficult for a project you're working on. Settling on just one fabric is the hard part.

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Article Body:

There is so much variety available in fabric shops, on-line, and in mail-order catalogs that it's almost difficult to choose. Often, I end up buying fabric whether I need it right now or not. After all, a quilter must always have fabric on hand.

The "magic" comes when you find a fabric that you fall in love with. Finding a suitable fabric usually isn't difficult for a project you're working on. Settling on just one fabric is the hard part.

Here are some criteria to keep in mind when making fabric selections: colorfast quality; fiber content; surface design. If you stick to some guidelines about these criteria, then you're sure to be pleased with the final result of your project.

Surface Design:

The printed or woven surface design and, of course, the color, is very important.

1) Try to pick fabrics with the same color value so one doesn't stand out in the

finished quilt.

2) Check to see if there is a one-way direction in the design; you may need to purchase extra fabric to allow for cutting fabrics with plaids or stripes.

3) The size of the design and the background spaces are also important considerations. Are the designs large, medium, or small? Is the background area prominent? How will this particular fabric look when cut it into small quilt pieces? If the design is too widely spaced, it may be lost in the cutting of the fabric.

Take a few minutes to analyze fabric and keep these questions in mind when purchasing fabric. It is far better to have left over fabric than be working on a project and run out of material. I've run out before only to find that the fabric is no longer in stock.

Colorfast Quality:

Avoid fabrics that fade. Pigment-dyed fabric resists light 40 hours. Wet-printed resists light 20 hours. The best thing to avoid having your quilt fade is to keep it out of direct sunlight.

Fiber Content:

The fiber content is especially important when purchasing fabric for quilts. The way fabric responds to manipulation is determined by the fiber content. The standard 100% cotton fabric sold for quilting is easy to work with and this is the best choice.

Cotton blends are harder to work with; they tend to shift while cutting or sewing them. 100% cotton is strong when wet, absorbs moisture, creases easily, irons nicely at high temperatures and wears well.

Beware of Discount Fabric:

For a good finished product, quilters need to purchase good-quality, colorfast cotton fabric from a reputable supplier. I've bought fabric from discount stores because I liked the print. Then I had trouble manipulating the material; it would shift and bunch as I sewed it.

The finished product usually reflected the problems I encountered while sewing. No matter how much money I saved on material, my time was wasted by producing a less than satisfactory quilt.

In order to be happy with your finished product, I recommend that you buy what appeals to you... as long as it is good-quality, colorfast cotton fabric that is treated with finishes to control shrinkage, resist soil, and resist wrinkling.