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Finishing Your Quilt Project on a Stretcher Frame

Turn your quilted wall hanging into an art canvas by stretching it over a wooden frame. This finishing technique works particularly well with contemporary art quilts but we have seen it used with traditional quilt designs as well.

Here are our two favourite methods:

Wrapping the frame – This is the simplest technique ... and it can turn a pretty piece of fabric into wall art! You don't even need to appliqué, piece or quilt it ... although we usually can't resist.

Construct a simple frame using $\frac{3}{4}$ " -1" by 1" scrap strips of wood. The frame must be about 2" smaller than the width and length of the fabric or quilt project. The frame will not show so appearance is unimportant. Just take care that the corners are a true 90° angle and that the frame is rigid.

If you are stretching unquilted fabric, layer it with batting and backing to add softness. Lay the fabric or quilt project face down on a table. Lay the frame on the project and center it carefully. Beginning in the center of each side, wrap the fabric around the frame and bring it to the back. Stretch it taut and staple it securely. Add several more staples about 1" apart in the center section of each side. Now move to the corners. Pull the fabric diagonally over the corner of the frame and bring it to the back. Secure with a staple. Fold the remaining fabric to create a neat corner, bring it to the back and staple. (You can also finish the corners like you would wrap a present. Anything works as long as it looks neat.) Continue stretching and stapling until all the fabric is secured. Your project is ready to hang!



Coloring the edge – Although this technique takes a little more time, it really looks great. Accurate measuring is important for a good result. You can match the edge to the front of your project or use either a dark or light solid color to give the impression of an unframed canvas.

Construct a simple frame using $\frac{3}{4}$ " -1" by 1" scrap strips of wood. The frame must be the exact size of the finished picture. (The finished size will be $\frac{1}{2}$ " smaller in both length and width than the dimensions of the final trimmed quilt project.) The frame will not show so appearance is unimportant. Just take care that the corners are a true 90° angle and that the frame is rigid.

Cut a 2" strip of fabric (I prefer a solid color) and sew it around the edge of your picture, right sides together. Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Do not mitre or make any tucks at the corners. Simply clip the strip to the seam allowance, turn it around the corner and continue sewing.

Slip the picture over the frame and wrap the edge fabric around to the back of the frame. Gently pull taut to line up the design edge with the front edge of the frame and secure with staples, beginning in the middle of each side.

