

# CHOOSING QUILT DESIGNS

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I love it when people bring quilt tops to my classes and we discuss how to finish them. Here are a few prompts to stimulate ideas when you're considering how to quilt your next quilt.

First ask yourself: What's the best part of the quilt? An area? A block, fabric, or color?

How can you emphasize that favorite part?

- You could leave it unquilted or quilt it less densely than the surrounding areas so it "lifts" off the surface of the quilt, attracting attention.
- Other ways to get attention include using echoes around an area, or lines radiating from an area, or a different quilting design in that area.

When you're ready to choose particular motifs, remember to trust your instincts. There is no formula here and you are the person who knows your quilt best!

If there's a motif you love, you don't have to do the whole quilt in it; you may be able to use little bits to still get the effect without committing the whole quilt to that motif.

If you're trying to think of motifs, and you use prints, this is an easy place to start. Look to the prints in your piece to see if they lend themselves to any quilting motifs. Quilting designs that new quilters tend to handle well include edge-to-edge designs and designs that allow for some inconsistency and variety.

Another thing to consider when you're planning your quilting is whether you want the quilting to support the "story" you're already telling with the piecing of the top, or whether you want it to go beyond that story. If you are happy with your piecing and want to emphasize it, you will probably want to respect the seam lines in your work and don't let the quilting cross those lines.

If you feel the patchwork is falling a little flat the quilting can save the day by adding more visual interest and variety, you may want to let your quilting extend over the seam lines.

When you're starting to play around with ideas, try drawing them over a photo of your quilt, to get an idea of how they work with your piecing. At home, I print out a picture of a portion of the quilt, lighten it using a photo editor, and then draw some quilting ideas on it to compare them and see which ones sit with me the best.

I hope these ideas help you when you're ready to finish your next quilt. Trust your creative instincts, they've gotten you this far!

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

[Book: Step-by-Step Free Motion Quilting by Christina Cameli](#)

[Book: First Steps to Free-Motion Quilting](#)

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