



IRONING vs PRESSING



February 2024 ~ Sue Harrop

Ironing

- Is a back and forth movement
- Is meant to relax/release wrinkles and make fabric smooth (like when we ironed dress shirts and pants)
- Great for large pieces of fabric – like your backing/front to prep before you cut
- Beware that you can also distort/stretch your block with ironing back and forth
- if moving aggressively across bias can stretch
- If ironing across a long seam, you may get the rainbow effect because of the movement of the iron

Pressing

- More up and down to cement your seam just sewn to avoid distortion

Karen Brown – Just Get It Done Quilts

Trifecta

- Accurate cutting
- Straight sewing
- Good ironing technique - three steps

Step #1 Set Seams - Press After Stitching

- Flatten/set your seams and correct any tension issues especially when sewing on the bias
- If it is possible have the non bias material on bottom when stitching to avoid stretching the bias piece
- Place iron directly down on the block
- **DO NOT** rotate as you can distort the fabric



Step #2 Finger Press

- Take fingers and push fabric as far over as will go before you apply heat
- Finger press – may prefer to use hera marker, craft wooden seam roller, wooden seam presser
- ‘Usually’ press seam closed (stronger seam) to the dark side but not always possible in some projects
 - avoids seeing seam through to front of quilt top
- May be times you are instructed to iron seam open for specific reasons. Be careful as you can take a block that has been ironed with seam open – pull at both ends and it may rip open!



Step #3

Pressing

- No Swishing
- Steam vs no Steam

Ironing / Pressing

- Hot iron - not necessarily expensive one
- Ironing board at correct height – bend elbow at right angles and board should be some 4 inches below your arms
- If significant ironing, suggest a block to rest foot on @ the height of a shoe box – good for your back
- Be aware that ironing surfaces can be dirty with fusibles and even dust and get on your fabric
- How often do you clean the bottom of your iron?

Steam

- Steam may help reshape BUT can also distort fabric. Once distorted it is very difficult to get back into place
- Tap vs distilled water – your preference!
- Spray bottle recommended as no idea what inside of your iron looks like inside after long use with whatever liquid you use

Material Starches

- Adds stiffness (less stretch) and crispness to material
- Known to make material lie flatter
- Lots of choices out there i.e. Best Press, Niagara/Faultless Spray Starch - aerosols, sprays

References:

www.justgetitdonequilts.com ironing vs sewing

Quilty should you use steam when making patchwork

Karen Brown – (7 min video)

Mary Fons - (7 min video)