



How to pick fabrics for a keepsake quilt or pillow

Not all fabric types are suitable for sewing into a functional quilt or pillow. This guide will show you which fabrics work best and help you decide which clothing items to save or let go.

Going through a loved one's closet, particularly after they have died, can be an overwhelming experience. Grief often makes us want to cling to every last item or bag up everything to avoid dealing with it. Even if you are not sure yet if you want a memorial quilt or pillow, you may want to choose some keepsake items until you decide.

One important thing: when making your choices, **please take all the time you need to sit with each item** before allowing it to be transformed into a keepsake treasure. You may decide that there are some items you would prefer to keep intact, or even wear on occasion. And that's okay. This process is ultimately about what creates the most meaning for you and/or the recipient of the memorial quilt or pillow.

HOW MANY GARMENTS TO CHOOSE



Minimum recommendations:

Throw size quilt: 12-15 items

Queen/King size quilts: 20-30 items

Pillow: 4-8 items

Please know, if you only have a few items, I can always combine them with store-bought fabrics to create any size quilt you want, so don't let the above numbers stop you from moving forward if you come up short.

IDEAL FABRICS FOR QUILTING

SOLID OR STABLE



The best fabrics are what we quilters refer to as **solid or stable**. These are tightly woven fabrics that don't stretch much. Skirts, dresses, men's (and women's) button-down shirts, slacks and blouses are all great additions to a quilt or pillow.

DENIM



Jeans also are good, but because denim is thicker than most other fabrics, I need to be mindful when pairing it next to lighter-weight fabrics and that can limit the design or require extra work.

NECKTIES



Neckties are lovely. They do take extra work to prepare because they are both cut on the bias and need stabilizing, but they make great visual accents, especially in combination with fabric from button-down shirts.

TRICKY OR DIFFICULT FABRICS

Stretchy/knit fabrics are usable but are more difficult and labor-intensive to prepare for sewing: I need to adhere a stabilizer so that, while I'm piecing it together, the quilt or pillow stays even and square.

Very thin, silky fabrics look great and are totally usable, but they also need stabilizing.

Lacy or loose-knit items are very difficult to piece together with

other more solid/stable fabrics **UNLESS** they are going into a wall hanging in small amounts.

Blazers and sport coats are difficult to deconstruct due to all the interfacing, plackets and padding, which result in many smaller, harder-to-use pieces.

I rarely use **pile/fleece fabric** unless it can be incorporated into an appliquéd design.

Leather is too thick and tough to sew. It does not work.

Finally, **tee shirts** present unique design and construction issues that are not suitable for my work. An occasional few are okay, but if you want a quilt made with a tee-shirt collection, there are others who specialize in quilts that highlight tee-shirt graphics.

Don't worry about curating the exact combination of garments for your quilt. That's my job! If you're not sure about an item, throw it into the mix. I would much rather have too many items to choose from than too few.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT ME!



I hope this guide helps you make sense of what is so often a difficult task. If you still have questions, please don't hesitate to email me: I'm happy to help.



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