

Making the Most Out of Your Retreat!

By Mary M. Thomas

As we all know, FALL is the perfect time for a Quilt Retreat! Whether you like to “just get away”, or you have some projects you need to finish, or plans for new projects, here are some tips to help make the most of your next retreat!

1. GO OVER YOUR CHECKLIST!! Remember to bring things you need for each project, plus bring a little extra fabric “just in case”. If you find something is not cut correctly, or you need more for that block, you’ll have the fabric for it and can keep progressing on your project. Remember your threads. Remember pins! Bring fabric markers, scissors, and rotary cutter and blades! Need a special ruler? Bring it!!
2. SPEAKING OF PROJECTS...bring several! Yes, you may not get to all of them, but you may want to work on a few tasks on each project. You may want to cut one, sew blocks for another, and put a different top together, or even quilt one. Maybe bind another? Better to have some you won’t work on than to run out of things to do because you went through a really productive day! Yes, you can always shop....
3. CUT out at least one new project to take with you. It’s the thrill of something new to work on, something to share with others at retreat. Plus, you might need something new to weave in between WIPs and UFOs.
4. LAYOUT TROUBLE? Bring that project you’ve been thinking about and get some opinions from your retreat-mates. There are usually design walls and plenty of floor space to work from.
5. PREP your Machine! Yes, it’s painful...but clean it! Get the fuzzies cleaned out and your needle changed (when was the last time??) Pack your power cord!
6. FILL your bobbins!! Most of us have several empty bobbins in a drawer. When you’re piecing, you’ll probably use white or off-white, maybe gray? So fill a bunch of bobbins so you can just stick them in as you need them. If you know you plan to finish binding for one project, bring the color for that.
7. CHAIN-PIECE as much as possible to make best use of your time. Piece A to Piece D for 50 blocks? That’s a breeze!
8. IRON in batches. You just chain-pieced 50 sections...iron all of these at once! Or maybe go to the next 50 and then iron the 100. Use your ironing time as stretching time, too – because sometimes we sit too long at the machine and need a good walk-around.
9. REVIEW what you’ve done each day, take pictures, applaud yourself! You accomplished a lot at RETREAT!