



How to Make a Hanging Sleeve

The hanging sleeve I make for all my wallhangings came from a lot of trial and error over the years. Instructions from magazines and books always had some component that I didn't like or the quilt was distorted when on the wall. I know that there are some beautiful decorative rods out there, but I don't want to see the rod when my piece is on the wall...I want the wallhanging to be the focal point without any distractions. So I came up with my own method that I use all the time. Hopefully you'll like it too.

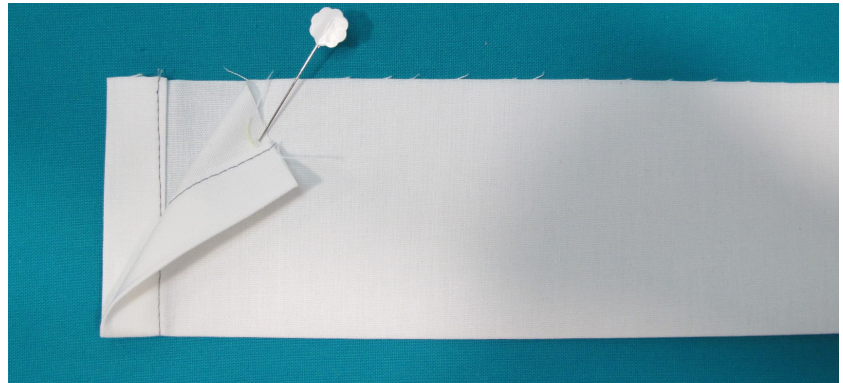
The first thing to do is measure the width of the wallhanging and determine how wide the sleeve is going to be when on the back. If you are entering a quilt into competition or if it's going to be shown at your quilt guild's show there are usually guidelines given out for the width of hanging sleeve required. Usually they are about 4-5" wide (finished measurement, so cut at 8-10") to accommodate the large, heavy rods that are used at shows.

For our purposes for this small wallhanging the cutting measurements are 5" wide (finished width about 2-2 ½") by 20 ½" long (the width of the wallhanging it's being made for). The rods I use most are the inexpensive adjustable ones that are usually used for café curtains unless I'm hanging a particularly large, heavy wallhanging.



Press under ½" on both short sides and then ½" again. Basically you're pressing a double hem. Stitch both ends down.

Press the strip in half lengthwise with wrong sides together. This is an important step because you need the pressed fold as a guide later.



Centre the hanging sleeve on the back of the top of the wallhanging and either pin in place or machine baste (stitch with an extra long stitch within the seam allowance to hold it in place).

Attach the binding with your preferred method (or refer to the *Best Ever Binding* tutorial on the *Quiltish Corner* website. This ensures that the hanging sleeve is held in place at the top with the binding and less hand stitching is required.

Using the creased edge as a guide, push it back by $\frac{1}{4}$ " (toward the binding edge) and pin in place. This extra area within the opening of the hanging sleeve will allow the wallhanging to sit flat against the wall with no distortion from the rod on the front.



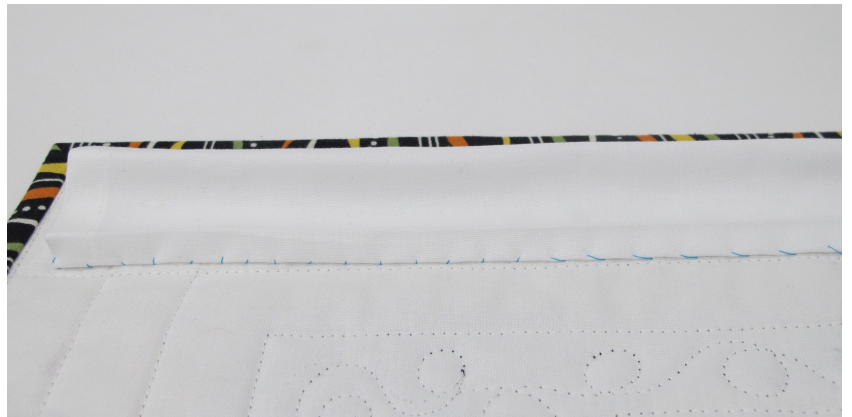
You will still have to do some hand stitching. The following photos show blue thread on white fabric to make the stitches visible for you. Always try to match the thread colour to the hanging sleeve and these stitches will seem to disappear.

With the bulk of the wallhanging facing away from you, knot the thread, hide the knot just below the corner of the hanging sleeve and take 2 stitches at the corner to anchor it. Push the needle into the backing fabric directly across from where the other stitch came out of the folded edge of the hanging sleeve, travel under the backing fabric for about $\frac{1}{4}$ ", come up and stitch into the fold directly across from where the needle has come through. Take care not to stitch all the way through to the front of the wallhanging...only into the backing/batting.

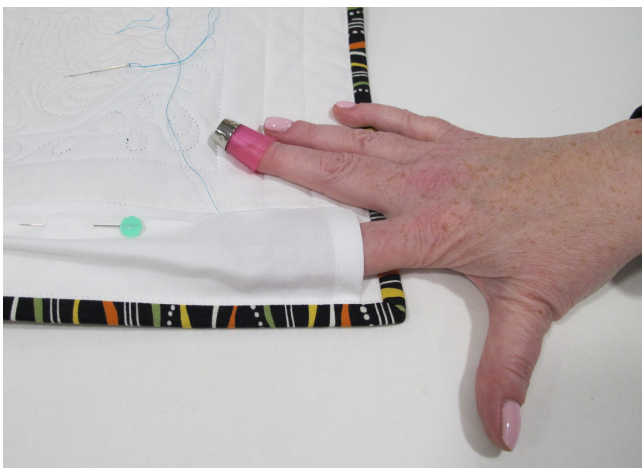


Next page...continue in this manner always putting the needle in directly across from where the stitch came out of the folded edge of the hanging sleeve, travelling under the backing for the $\frac{1}{4}$ " and coming up through the fold of the sleeve. Travel along the entire length of the hanging sleeve in this manner and anchor the stitches at the other end. For those of you who are left-handed just start from the other end moving from left to right...the technique for stitching is the same.

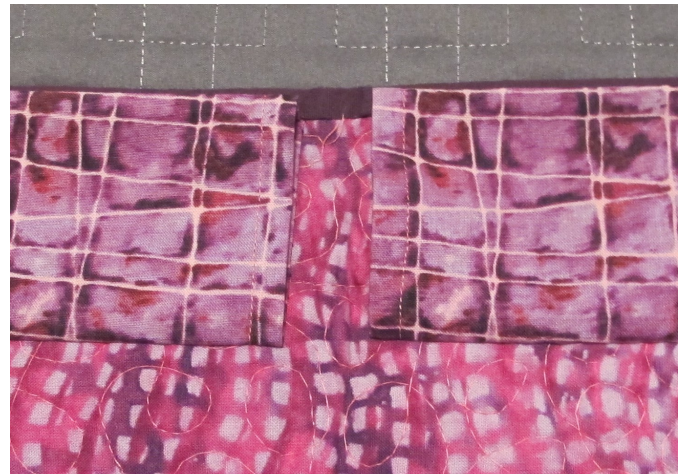
This slipstitch is often called the ladder stitch because when you look at it sideways it looks like the rungs of a ladder. Mine aren't terribly neat at the beginning because I was hurrying, but got better as I went along. The other stitch I've shown on the right side of is a whipstitch, but I don't find it as neat or as rugged as the ladder stitch. I personally always use the ladder stitch for this application, as well as for hand stitching binding, because it gives a beautiful, nearly invisible, professional finish.



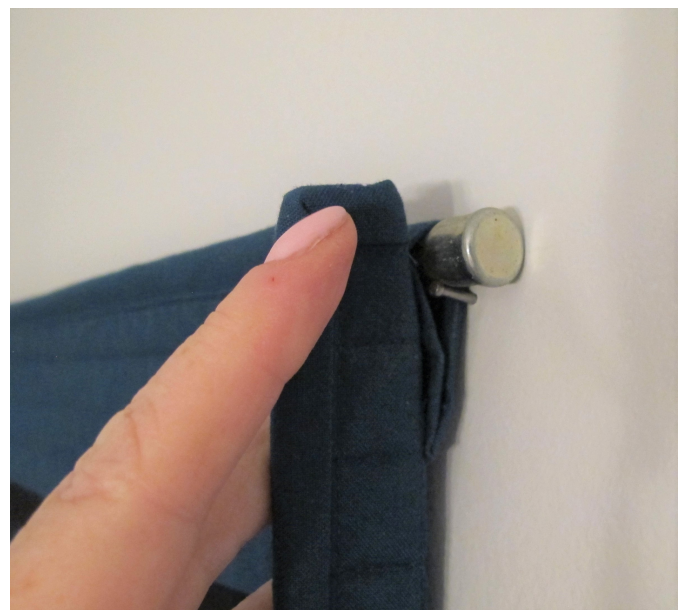
You can see that there will be no distortion to the front of the wallhanging because there is room for the rod. The stitching is nearly invisible when done with a matching thread colour to the hanging sleeve.



Occasionally you will have a particularly large or heavy wallhanging that requires a longer rod. So there is no sagging in the middle, it might be necessary to make 2 hanging sleeves with a space in between to accommodate a nail in the wall in the centre.



Now you can see why the hanging sleeve is set in from the edge of the wallhanging. My preference is for the rod to be hidden behind the edge of my wallhanging so I insert the nail about $\frac{1}{2}$ " in from the edge of the hanging so it's not noticeable and the rod just sits on top of the nail. Again, this is just a personal preference.



Hopefully you've found this helpful and will get your projects out of the drawer or cupboard and finally on the wall!