



How to Use the 'How Many Blocks Do I Need?' Charts

"How many quilt blocks do I need to make a 'fill-in-the-blank' size quilt?" is perhaps the most frequently asked question submitted by readers of this website.

We're going to make it simple for you. Choose a quilt size. Then download and print the answer. The math's already done for you!

To use these cheat sheets effectively, you'll need to know a couple of things:

1. Is my mattress the standard size?
2. What is the depth of my mattress?
3. Do the drops listed cover my mattress the way I want them to?

If you answer yes to all, please continue.

Chart Basics: Straight Sets

Each bed size has its own 3-page cheat sheet, labelled at the top with the name and standard mattress dimensions.

Dimensions and needed blocks are computed for three different quilt types:

- A coverlet, short 13" drop on three sides, no pillow tuck
- A coverlet, 16" drop on three sides, with a pillow tuck
- A bedspread with a 21" drop on three sides, with a pillow tuck

The Finished Block Size is in the far-left column. This is the finished size of the blocks you are making.

The lines highlighted in blue (or gray if you printed in black and white) indicate how many blocks of a specific finished size you need to make.

The un-highlighted row directly beneath is the actual dimensions of a quilt made with that number of blocks—**not including binding**.

How the results are calculated

All the numbers and dimensions in our "How Many Quilt Blocks" charts could be computed right on your calculator...probably even your phone.

But isn't it nice, when you've got a wild hair and it's 11:35pm, not to have to drag out the old calculator and do some math?

What the numbers mean

How many quilt blocks you need for each row and column is calculated as the quilt dimension (the number at the top of the column) divided by the Finished Block Size.

For a twin quilt, 65" wide, made with 4" blocks the math is:

$$65 \div 4 = 16.25$$

Since we only make whole blocks and want the quilt to be at least 65" wide, we round up to 17 blocks (red arrow).

How Many Blocks: Twin/Single, Mattress 39" x 75", Straight Sets

Numbers in the blue rows indicate the number of blocks needed to create a row at least as long as the standard size listed. The numbers underneath are the finished size, in inches, of the quilt top **without** binding.

Blocks are set edge-to-edge in straight rows and columns.

Finished Block Size	Commercial Comforter Dimensions (inches)					
	Short Drop (13" drop) No pillow tuck		Coverlet (16" drop) Includes pillow tuck		Bedspread (21" drop) Includes pillow tuck	
	65" x 88"	# of Blocks	71" x 101"	# of Blocks	81" x 107"	# of Blocks
1 1/2"	44 x 59	2,596	48 x 68	3,264	54 x 72	3,888
	66" x 88 1/2"	---	72" x 102"	---	81" x 108"	---
2"	33 x 44	1,452	36 x 51	1,836	41 x 54	2,214
	66" x 88"	---	72" x 102"	---	82" x 108"	---
2 1/2"	26 x 36	936	29 x 41	1,189	33 x 43	1,419
	65" x 90"	---	72 1/2" x 102 1/2"	---	82 1/2" x 107 1/2"	---
3"	22 x 30	660	24 x 34	816	27 x 36	972
	66" x 90"	---	72" x 102"	---	81" x 108"	---
3 1/2"	19 x 26	494	21 x 29	609	24 x 31	744
	66 1/2" x 88"	---	73 1/2" x 101 1/2"	---	84" x 108 1/2"	---
4"	17 x 22	374	18 x 26	468	21 x 27	567
	68" x 88"	---	72" x 104"	---	84" x 108"	---

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Repeat for the length of 88" or $88 \div 4 = 22$ —no rounding needed because the numbers divided evenly.

Circled in purple is the Total Number of Blocks you'll need for a Twin quilt, 13" drop made with 4" finished blocks. The math is:

$$17 \text{ blocks} \times 22 \text{ blocks} = 374 \text{ blocks}$$

Underneath those blue(gray) highlighted rows are the resulting quilt dimensions.

These are calculated by multiplying the # of blocks in the previous blue line by the corresponding Finished Block Size. i.e. If the Finished Block Size is 1-1/2" and the blue highlighted numbers are '44 x 59', the calculations are:

$$44 \times 1 \frac{1}{2}'' = 66'' \text{ (blue arrow)}$$

$$59 \times 1 \frac{1}{2}'' = 88 \frac{1}{2}'' \text{ (green arrow)}$$

The quilt measures 66" x 88-1/2" before binding

Again, you can do these calculations on your calculator, but is sure is nice to have the work done for you or as a quick double check, isn't it!

Using the cheat sheets

EXAMPLE: Assume you want to make a twin-size quilt with 6" blocks set in straight rows and columns with no sashing. You've decided that a 16" drop best fits your bed.

These are the steps to follow.

1. On the 'Twin/Singe' chart, locate 6" under the Finished Block Size column.
2. Follow the blue line across to the right until you are under 'Coverlet (16" drop). The quilt should be 12 x 17 blocks for a total of 204 blocks.
3. Move down one line. The dimensions for a 12 x 17 block quilt are 72" x 102" --just a bit bigger than a store-bought coverlet (71" x 101").

Commercial Comforter Dimensions (inches)						
Finished Block Size	Short Drop (13" drop) No pillow tuck		Coverlet (16" drop) Includes pillow tuck		Bedspread (21" drop) Includes pillow tuck	
	# of		# of		# of	
	65" x 88"	Blocks	71" x 101"	Blocks	81" x 107"	Blocks
4 1/2"	15 x 20 67 1/2" x 90"	300 ---	16 x 23 72" x 103 1/2"	308 ---	18 x 24 81" x 108"	432 ---
5"	13 x 18 65" x 90"	234 ---	15 x 21 75" x 105"	305 ---	17 x 22 85" x 110"	374 ---
5 1/2"	12 x 16 66" x 88"	192 ---	13 x 19 71 1/2" x 104 1/2"	277 ---	15 x 20 82 1/2" x 110"	300 ---
6"	11 x 15 66" x 90"	255 ---	12 x 17 72" x 102"	204 ---	14 x 18 84" x 108"	252 ---
6 1/2"	10 x 14 65" x 91"	140 ---	11 x 16 71 1/2" x 104"	176 ---	13 x 17 84 1/2" x 110 1/2"	221 ---
7"	10 x 13 70" x 91"	130 ---	11 x 15 77" x 105"	165 ---	12 x 16 84" x 112"	192 ---
7 1/2"	9 x 12 67 1/2" x 90"	108 ---	10 x 14 75" x 105"	140 ---	11 x 15 82 1/2" x 112 1/2"	165 ---
8"	9 x 11 72" x 88"	99 ---	9 x 13 72" x 104"	117 ---	11 x 14 88" x 112"	154 ---
8 1/2"	8 x 11 68" x 93 1/2"	88 ---	9 x 12 76 1/2" x 102"	108 ---	10 x 13 85" x 110 1/2"	130 ---

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What the cheat sheets can't take into consideration

Shrinkage.

That means shrinkage from washing the quilt—and if it's a bed quilt at some point it will get washed. Cotton batting and fabric can both shrink, especially if they're not pretreated.

It also means shrinkage from quilting. Heavily quilted quilts tend to pull in and get smaller as more stitching is added.

Some prewash their fabric but not their batting and vice versa. Some fabrics (higher thread count in particular) don't shrinkage as much as cotton quilt fabric.

What this means for the quiltmaker

If the quilt size you've chosen just barely covers the mattress, and covering the mattress is important to you, consider adding a block to each row or column for insurance.

In our example, instead of 12 x 17 blocks, your quilt would be 13 x 18 blocks, measuring 78" x 108" with a total of 234 blocks.

Another option is to add an outer border or possibly wider binding.

Go to <https://www.generations-quilt-patterns.com/how-many-quilt-blocks.html> to download the charts if you haven't already done so.

Enjoy!