

The frames are delivered in boxes - heavy boxes - and I recommend you have a helper to put it together. The brochure that comes with it outlines all the parts and how they go together. When mine came, I just couldn't wait for my husband to get home so I had all the parts on the floor - sorted out in the order of the instructions. We then just followed through the instructions and without much head-scratching, we had it together in a couple of hours.

The first thing I put on it to practice free motion quilting was what has become a mattress pad. I used two sheets and a bat and just played with coloured thread that would be easy to see. (some people have problems with sheets but my old 7" Kenmore sewing machine that I was using at the time had no problem at all.)

You will probably find that you shouldn't roll the back and top on to make it really taunt. The needle can bounce and skip stitches so you should be able to indent it a bit if you press on it when rolled on the frame.

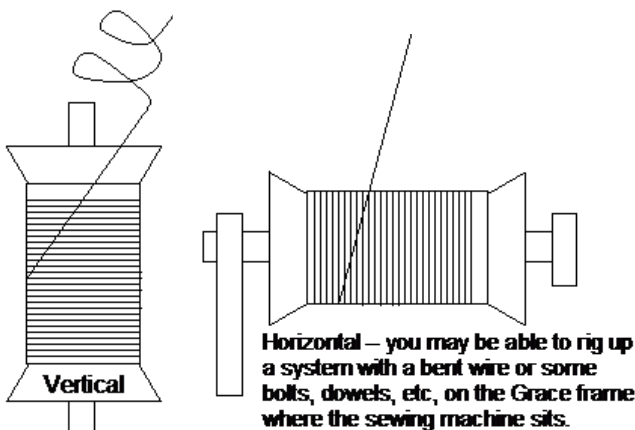
Speaking of needles, many people find they need to use a size 16 or even an 18 needle (especially if using fancy rayon or metallic thread). If the needle is smaller, it tends to shred the thread and you have lots of breaks. The speed you are sewing on a frame is a lot faster than on your table top so it adds stress and strain to the thread.

I have also found a way to do quilts that are larger than the frame and I have photos on my website. Just click on Instructions - loading an oversize quilt. I'm sure there are other methods but that is one idea. ([www.harmonyhanddyes.com](http://www.harmonyhanddyes.com))

The "fabric-fast" system of putting the quilt on the frame is a terrific invention! The Grace Company was really thinking when they created the flexible tubing that just presses into a groove on the rails. A sample diagram is attached to show one way of loading a quilt. Everyone finds the techniques that work for them, so this is just an example of what I do.

A lot of quilters find that the finer the weave of quilt backing, the more often you can get skipped stitches. This is not just a problem for short arm & mid arm machine quilters. The long arm industrial machines do the same thing. One particular fabric that can cause frustration is a very fine batik. I have also heard of problems with 100% cotton sheets with extremely high thread counts. I have used various fabrics and not had a problem but the highest thread count I have used is about 400. If the weave is too fine, the needle can't get through it easily and you can get bouncing and skipped stitches.

Thread – this topic can open a can of worms! Every sewing machine is different and when you combine the various factors such as fabric, needle, tauntness on the frame, and speed of your machine, you may experience thread breaking. I have used and been very pleased with Signature, Guterman and Coats, although I found Coats leaves more lint than the others. Some specialty threads like rayons and metallics require some adjustment. You will probably have to loosen the top tension to lessen the stress and you may have to go to a larger needle than you use with other threads. You will have to clean the lint out of the bobbin fairly often no matter what thread you use.



Fancy threads such as metallics and some rayons may need to pull off horizontally and "unroll". When the spool or cone is vertical, the spool is stationary and the thread pulls from the top and twists around many times before it goes through the eye of the needle. If it is mounted horizontally, the spool unrolls the thread and it doesn't twist. The more twists, the more chance of the thread wearing and breaking. If your sewing machine only has a spindle set so that the spool or cone have to sit vertically, you may need to be a little inventive and create your own horizontal spindle.

Any question? Just ask...  
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Harmony Hand Dyes

# Loading a quilt using Leaders with a casing, flexible tubing and the "fabric-fast" system on the Grace Frame.

