

Quick Reference Chart: General Batting Characteristics

BATTING TYPE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	CHARACTERISTICS
100% Cotton	Natural fiber so batting breathes. Resists fiber migration. Readily available.	May have seeds and plant residue that can release oils and stain the quilt. Often cannot be prewashed. Shrinks 3 to 5% when washed. May be too dense for beginning hand quilters to needle.	Can give a puckered appearance if washed after quilted. Good for experienced quilters' fine, hand-quilting stitches or machine quilting.
Cotton/Polyester Blends: 80/20, 50/50	Some natural fibers so batting breathes. Resists fiber migration. Easy for beginning hand quilters to needle. Readily available.	Some shrinkage, which can be avoided in many cases, if desired, by prewashing.	Low to medium loft. Drapable. Good for hand quilting and machine quilting.
Wool and Wool Blends	Natural insulator. Preshrunk. Available in black.	May have inconsistent loft. May need to be encased in cheesecloth or scrim if not bonded.	Blend of fibers from different animal breeds. Resiliency enhances quilting stitches. Soft, drapable. Good for hand quilting and machine quilting.
Silk	Good choice for quilted garments. Does not shrink. Can be washed.	Expensive. Not widely available. Damaged by exposure to direct sunlight.	Has excellent body and drape. Lightweight. Good for hand quilting and machine quilting.
Flannel	Lightweight alternative to traditional batting. Readily available.	Extreme low loft limits quilting pattern development.	100% cotton. Lightweight, thin. Good for machine quilting.
Polyester	Resilient, lightweight. Cannot be harmed by moths or mildew. Readily available. Available in black.	Synthetic fibers lack breathability.	Available in many lofts. Suitable for hand quilting and machine quilting. High loft is good for tied quilts, comforters.
Fusible	No need to prewash. Eliminates need for basting. Good choice for small projects.	Limited batting options and sizes. Adds adhesive to quilt. Difficult for hand quilters to needle.	Good for machine quilting. Eliminates need for basting.