

Switchback Feathered Border

This is best suited for borders that are at least 6 inches wide, if not wider. There is lots of room for variation and individualization.

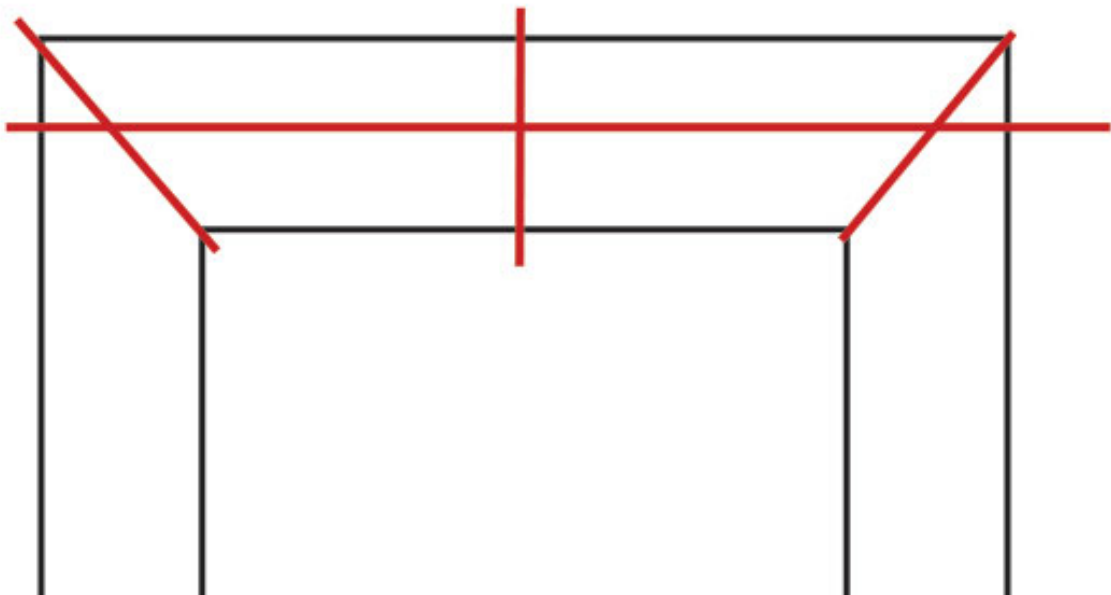
You'll need to pick a circle to be the basis for your design. I like to plop my acrylic circles on the quilt top and pick one by eyeballing it -- but if you want to be a little more scientific about things, you can rely on the Golden Mean to give you an idea of what to choose.

(I use the fraction $2/3$, which isn't quite a true Golden Proportion...if you want more info, you can Google it...)

If my border is 9 inches, I would use a circle with a diameter of 6 inches. But you really could go bigger or smaller, you would just have different negative spaces to fill with different size feathers.

After determining the circle size, I'm going to go through the following steps. At this point, my quilt is loaded and basted into place. I've probably already done some stitch in the ditch to separate the border from the body of the quilt

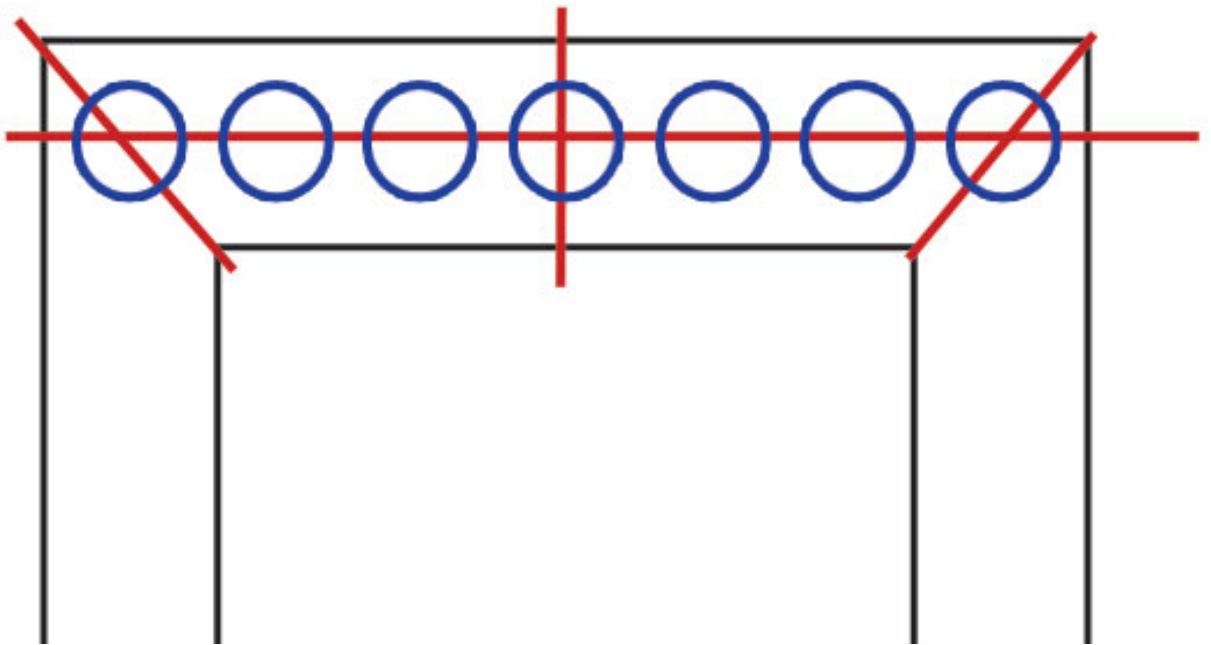
1. Mark the horizontal and vertical centers of the border. Mark the diagonals of the corners as well. The horizontal line should be slightly closer to the inside seam than it is to the outer edge -- you want to leave breathing room so you don't lose your feathers off the edge of the quilt.



Step by Step Feathers

2. Mark a circle centered on the vertical and horizontal centers. Mark circles in the corners.

Mark circles in between the center and the corners. You will do some eyeballing and playing around to determine the best number of circles and their spacing. After you've picked the number of circles, you'll want to do some math to determine how far apart the circles need to be placed.



As an example:

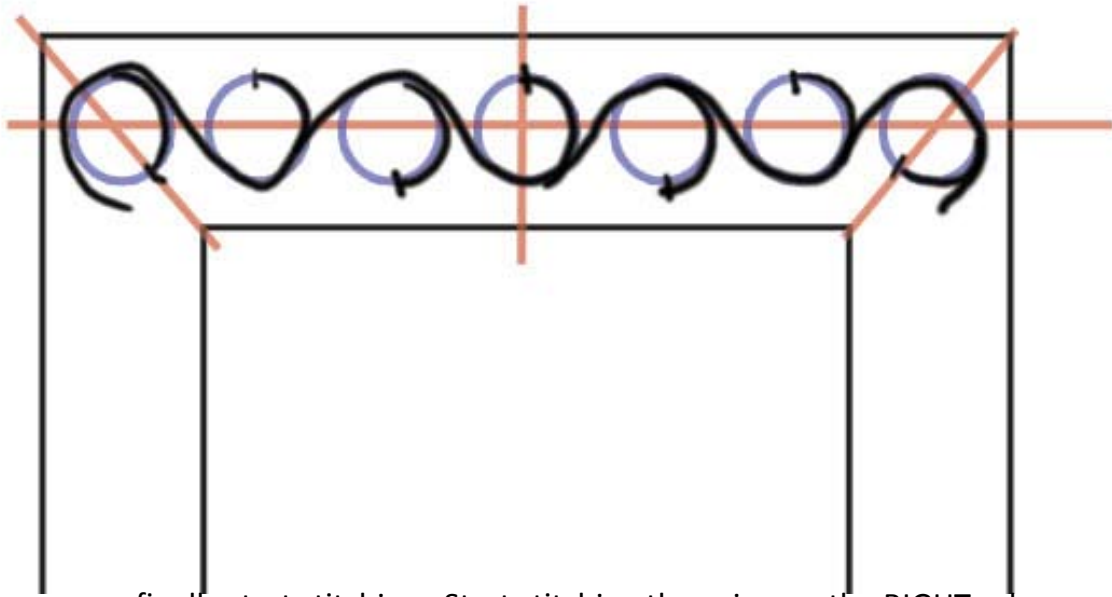
There are 24 inches between the corner circles and the center circle

The circles are 6 inches in diameter and you are using 2 circles. This takes up 12 inches of the distance, leaving 12 inches to be spread between the 3 gaps. 12 divided by 3 equals 4 -- you'll need 4 inches between each circle along the border.

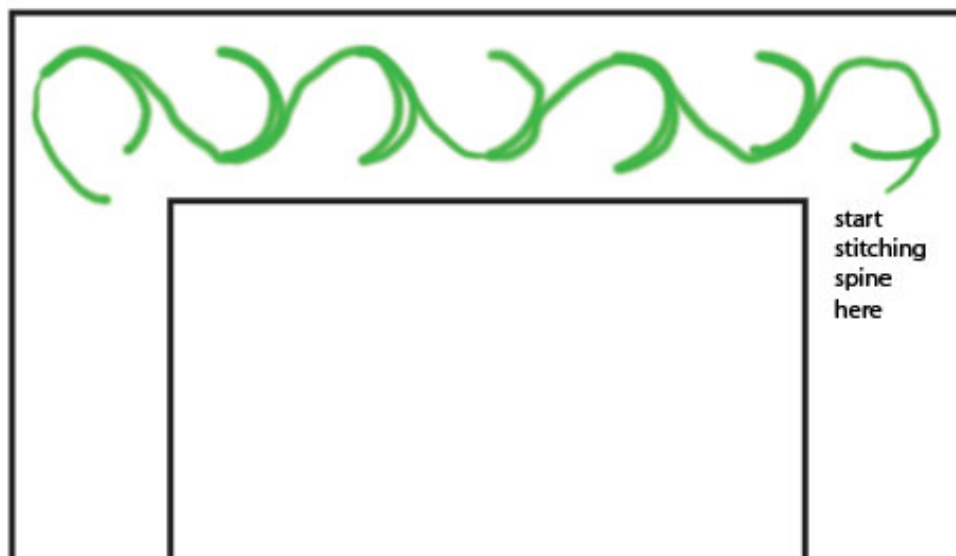
(See all those story problems in math class DID come in handy.)

4. Mark the spine, using the edges of the circle as your guide. Mark the switchbacks and make note of the spot on the circle you don't want your spine to extend beyond.

On the top border, the switchback spine should be on the RIGHT side of the circles. The opening faces the LEFT.



5. Now, you can finally start stitching. Start stitching the spine on the RIGHT, when you get to each switchback, stitch the spine, and then retrace to the main spine. Continue until you get to the right.



Step by Step Feathers

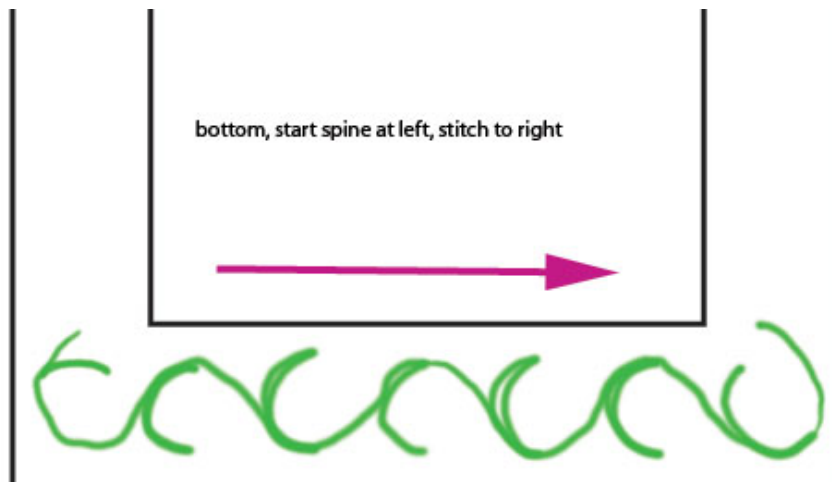
6. Start feathering on the left, and stitch towards the right. When you get to a switch-back, feather out the curve, and then retrace the spine back to the main spine.

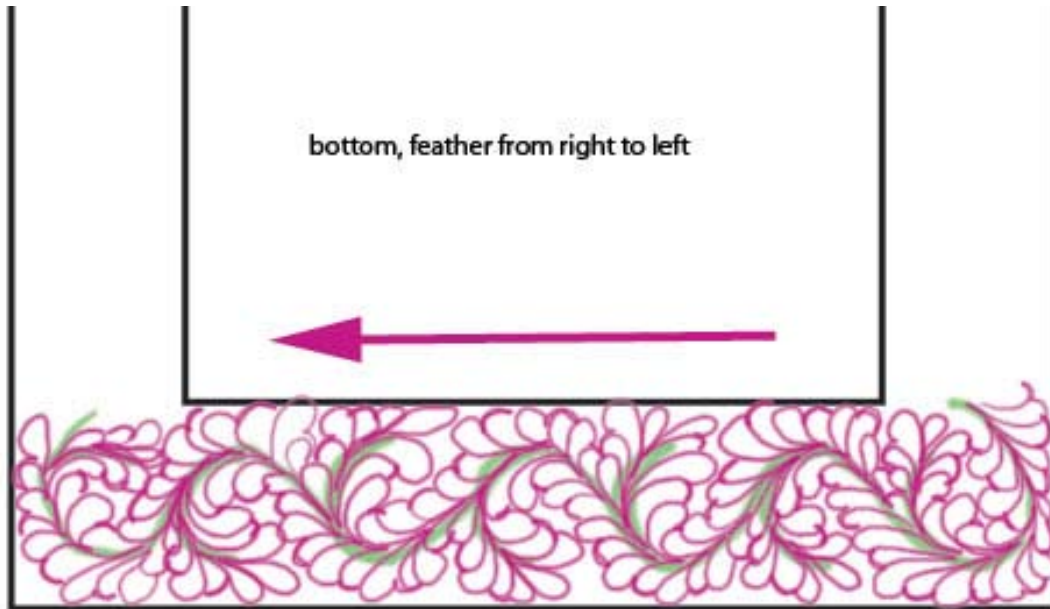
You might want to draw in some guidelines ahead of time that show you how far you should stitch your feathers. You might want to stitch them out to fill the whole border, or you might want to contain them to a certain size, so that you can fill around the feathers later with a background fill.

Stop stitching on the right, after feathering the final corner switchback. Make sure you don't feather into the seam allowance at the edge of the quilt.



You'll baste the sides as you quilt the body of the quilt. When you get to the bottom, you'll reverse the process. Make sure you've made notes about the size of circle you used, the spacing you used, etc...just do it all in the OPPOSITE direction. Remember, you want your feathers to flow CLOCKWISE around the quilt.





After you feather the bottom, take the quilt off the frame, turn it **CLOCKWISE**, and now you have a “new” top and bottom border on which to repeat the process from the beginning.

On the sides, you may need to use more (or less) circles depending on the dimensions. You’ll want to try to keep the spacing approximately the same as the original two sides, but you may need to use something slightly different (i.e. 3 circles 5 inches apart instead of 2 circles 4 inches apart).

You can also experiment with **DIFFERENT** circles -- maybe use bigger ones for the center and corners, and something smaller for the mid-border circles.

Or maybe you could start the border in the center and feather out to finished plumes in the corners -- or flow down the sides and meet in the middle.

Use your feather variations.

Play with different spine variations

The list is pretty endless...