

How To Scale Your Jelly Roll Race Quilt To Be Just The Size You Want

By Liz Katsuro



Julie P's lovely batik Jelly Roll Race Quilt from the [Jelly Roll Races compilation e-book!](#)

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Note: This e-book is written assuming that you are already familiar with how to make a Jelly Roll Race or 1600 quilt.

The most frequently asked question we get through the Contact form on <http://jellyrollfabric.net> is "how many jelly rolls does it take to make a _____ size jelly roll race quilt?" The answer is a bit more complicated than that, because ***using the Jelly Roll Race method, you can't simply add more strips to go from a lap quilt to a king size top.*** Since you're doubling your width each time you fold and sew your long strip, you'll eventually get to 64.5" wide and on your next fold, you're all the way up to 128.5" – no matter how long the strip you started with was!!

If you are using the original Jelly Roll Race method, starting with (40) 40" strips, these will be your dimensions after each step:

1600 x 2.5
800 x 4.5
400 x 8.5
200 x 16.5
100 x 32.5
50 x 64.5

Even if you double the number of strips, this is what happens:

3200 x 2.5
1600 x 4.5
800 x 8.5
400 x 16.5
200 x 32.5
100 x 64.5

No matter how many inches of super long strip you start out with, if you're simply folding over and sewing each time, you'll end up with one of those dimensions on the right! We can adjust the width (the value on the left) by adding or subtracting more strips, but we're stuck with the length dimensions on the right using the original method.

So to make a quilt that looks like the Jelly Roll Race, but that is wider than 64.5" and thinner than 128.5", we have to do something else. I'll go through standard size quilt with the work-around, and then get to custom sizes.

Baby (20 strips, or (1) 20-strip jelly roll)

First, for a baby quilt, you can go ahead and use the Race method using just 20 strips. Depending on how long your strips are, your finished top will be slightly larger than 32.5" x 50, which is a very nice sized baby quilt. (You can also cut those strips in half - from (20) 40" strips to (40) 20" strips so your small quilt will look more "Race-y.")

Lap (40 strips, or (2) 20-strip jelly rolls)

The original Jelly Roll Race method will get you a lap quilt about 50"x 64.5". No changes necessary here unless you want a specific lap size - if so, see Custom Sizes below.

Twin (70 strips, or (4) 20-strip jelly rolls)

For a twin, standard size just happens to be 64" (yay!) by 88". Instead of 40 strips, you'll need 70. I'd imagine no one wants to work with a strip that is 2800" long (!), so the solution is to simply use 2 sets of 35 strips to make two quilt tops that are approximately 87.5 x 32.5, and then sew them together to make your 87.5"x 64.5" top.

So you'll sew together your 35 strips to make a 1400" strip, and "jelly roll racing" your dimensions will be:

1400 x 2.5"

700 x 4.5"

350 x 8.5"

175 x 16.5"

87.5 x 32.5"

STOP! Make two, sew 'em together and you're done!

Full/Double

See custom sizing below

Queen (105 strips, or (6) 20-strip jelly rolls)

Standard Queen size is 86 x 93. Using the same method as in the Twin section, just use 3 sets of 35 strips to make 3 segments measuring 87.5" x 32.5" instead of 2, and then sew together side by side. Your finished top size will be approx. 87.5" x 96.5", a generous queen size.

King (120 strips, or (6) 20-strip jelly rolls)

Standard King size is 104" x 93". Using the original 40-strip race method, we can get to 100" x 96.5". You'll need 120 strips, and you'll make it in 3 segments – 40 strips in each. Use the original race method, but stop when each segment is 100" x 32.5" (4 “fold and sews”). Sew all three together and you'll have your king size top!

So you'll make:

1600 x 2.5

800 x 4.5

400 x 8.5

200 x 16.5

100 x 32.5

STOP! Make 3 and you've got your segments for the right king dimensions.

If you want the extra 4" to make the quilt at least 104", simply add a one-strip-wide border all the way around the quilt – you'll need another 12 strips for that.

Custom sizes

If you want to make a Race quilt top that is an EXACT measurement, you can do one of three things:

- 1) Choose the size above that is larger than and closest to the dimension you need, and then cut your desired dimension out of the larger size; or,
- 2) Make the size above that is smaller than and closest to the dimension you need and construct borders to enlarge to the desired size; or,
- 3) Simply sew your top together "line by line," cutting each strip the length you need it to be.

If you don't care about the math, you can skip down to the next page!

So for example, let's say you want to make a quilt that is exactly 72" wide x 90" long.

Each horizontal strip going across in your top will be 2" wide once it is sewn in, since your 2.5" strip will lose a quarter inch on each side for seam allowances.

So first, we divide 90" (length) by 2" - we'll need 45 horizontal "lines" in our quilt to make 90" going up and down. (90.5", to be exact)

Next, we multiply the 45 lines x 72". This will give us the total number of inches of strips we need for the top - in this case, 3240.

Next, divide by 40" (the length of a jelly roll strip). 3240 divided by 40" is 81. So, you know you'll need 81 strips to complete a Race in the dimensions of 72 x 90.

NOTE: Although the “Race” calls for 40” strips, most jelly roll strips have at least 42” of usable fabric. So in the example above, you could probably get away with 80 strips and save yourself the trouble of buying an extra roll for 1 strip. This is also why I haven’t factored in seam allowances. If you’re concerned your strips are closer to 40”, add some extra strips to be safe.

So the general formula for a custom sized race is:

$[(\text{Length}/2) \times \text{Width}]/40 = \text{number of strips you'll need!}$

If you skipped the math, start here! Now to make the custom sized race, you can simply sew the number of strips needed (see handy-dandy chart below!) together end to end, like you’re making a regular race quilt. But instead of folding the long strip in half, sewing, folding in half again, etc., you’ll just cut your long strip into pieces that are the width you want (in the example above, 72”). Then when you have your all your width strips cuts, you can mix them up and sew them together in whatever order is most pleasing to the eye, or just sew them together right in the order you cut them. They’ll still be all haphazardly laid out, like in a regular Race quilt. Don’t forget to cut about 10” off of the beginning of your long strip to make the layout a little more zig-zaggy.

If you’d prefer to have your strips set vertically, all you need to do is cut your long strip by the length instead of the width– so you’d just cut your long strip every 90” instead of 72” in the example above. You’ll need the same number of starting strips either way.

See chart below for 30 different custom sizes, and how many strips are needed for each. Remember, this is a guideline, and if you’re concerned you might end up a little short, add a few extra strips to be safe.

Happy Racing! :D

Liz K., <http://jellyrollfabric.net>

Size	Number of Strips Needed	Cut long strip every
50 x 50	32 (2 20-strip rolls)	50"
50 x 55	35 (2 20-strip rolls)	50"
50 x 60	38 (2 20-strip rolls)	50"
50 x 65	41 (3 20-strip rolls)	50"
50 x 70	44 (3 20-strip rolls)	50"
50 x 75	47 (3 20-strip rolls)	50"
55 x 55	38 (2 20-strip rolls)	55"
55 x 60	42 (3 20-strip rolls)	55"
55 x 65	45 (3 20-strip rolls)	55"
55 x 70	49 (3 20-strip rolls)	55"
55 x 75	52 (3 20-strip rolls)	55"
60 x 60	45 (3 20-strip rolls)	60"
60 x 65	49 (3 20-strip rolls)	60"
60 x 70	53 (3 20-strip rolls)	60"
60 x 75	57 (3 20-strip rolls)	60"
60 x 80	60 (3 20-strip rolls)	60"
60 x 85	64 (4 20-strip rolls)	60"
70 x 70	62 (4 20-strip rolls)	70"
70 x 75	66 (4 20-strip rolls)	70"
70 x 80	70 (4 20-strip rolls)	70"
70 x 85	75 (4 20-strip rolls)	70"
70 x 90	79 (4 20-strip rolls)	70"
75 x 75	71 (4 20-strip rolls)	75"
75 x 80	75 (4 20-strip rolls)	75"
75 x 85	80 (4 20-strip rolls)	75"
75 x 90	85 (5 20-strip rolls)	75"
80 x 80	80 (4 20-strip rolls)	80"
80 x 85	85 (5 20-strip rolls)	80"
80 x 90	90 (5 20-strip rolls)	80"
80 x 95	95 (5 20-strip rolls)	80"