

Heat Press

Why a heat press?

Unlike a normal clothes iron, a heat press will apply precise, even heat and firm pressure to your entire design at the same time, giving you a professional looking result that should have better wash and wear performance.

What can I put in the press?

Designs cut from **heat transfer vinyl (HTV)** or printed (or drawn!) on **transfer paper**, and anything **iron-on**

Items like clothing, tote bags, cushion covers- really anything that's **smooth, a bit flexible**, and **won't melt at iron temperatures**.

Most common heat transfer vinyls and transfer papers will stick to cotton, polyester, poly-cotton blend, and leather. Some high performance products will stick to nylon- check the manufacturer's instructions.

If your item has a tag, look for ironing instructions. If the tag says *No Iron* or *Cool Iron Only*, proceed with caution: consider using another material or plan to test first, in an inconspicuous spot and at a lower-than-recommended temperature, to make sure the press won't mark or discolor the item.

If your item is a stretchy knit, look for a stretch HTV (like EasyWeed Stretch) or stretch transfer paper for your project.

See the manufacturer's charts on the next page for temperature tables for common brands of transfer material.

How do I make a design?

Heat transfer vinyl: Create and cut designs using Silhouette Studio software (available on the Makerspace computers) and our Silhouette Cameo cutter

Transfer paper: Print a design onto transfer paper using a home inkjet (some transfer papers are laser-compatible) or try drawing directly on "inkjet"-type transfer paper with crayons or markers.

Whether you're cutting, printing, or drawing, remember to **mirror** your design so it looks backward! It will be unmirrored when pressed.

Let's Press

Get your design ready

Wait! Is your design mirrored?

Remember to mirror your design when you're creating it! After pressing, a mirrored design will be the right way around on your item.

Weed your HTV

Weed your HTV design following the instructions in the Silhouette Cameo manual. Just like weeding a garden, you will use a sharp tool to remove any parts of your design you don't want, like the center of the letter "o", and leave the parts you *do* want. For some thicker HTVs, you might want to gently warm your design a bit on the **bottom of the opened press** to make it easier to weed, especially large background areas.

Trim your transfer paper

If you are using transfer paper, use a scissors to trim around your design, removing any unprinted background. If you press your entire transfer paper sheet, you will have a noticeable shiny/smooth rectangle around your design.

Warm up the press

Refer to the materials tables in the manual to find the right temperature for your material, then,

- Plug the press in and flip the big red switch on the right side of the case

On the **touch controls** on the left side of the press, press Set to open the menus:

- **P-1: Temperature:** Use the arrows to set your temperature. Set to confirm
 - Use the recommended temperature setting for your material
- **P-2: Time:** Use the arrows to set the timer. Set to confirm.
 - Use the recommended time setting for your material
- **P-3: F(ahrenheit)/C(elsius):** Leave on F, press Set to confirm.
- **P-4: Alarm:** Don't worry about this one, press Set to skip.

The press will start to warm up, and the screen will show the current temperature as it heats.

Set the pressure

- Turn the pressure knob on the press **counterclockwise** to lower the pressure
- Put a piece of copy paper on the platen and close the press
- Tug on the paper.
 - If it moves/slides, turn the knob **clockwise**, then pull on it again.
- When the paper is gripped by the press, you are at Medium pressure.
 - If you have a thick/padded item, you will lower the pressure in the next steps.

Position and pad your item

When the press is fully heated, position your item on top of the rubber pad on the bottom platen. Smooth out any wrinkles and get it as straight as you can so it's easy to see if your design is the right place.

If your item is bumpy (even if it just has seams that stick up higher than the place you want to put your design), use the teflon pillows underneath and inside it to make the area where you're going to put your design **taller than the surrounding areas** and **completely smooth**

Preheat/iron and adjust the pressure

Give your positioned item a quick pressing to warm it up and remove small wrinkles. **If you can't completely close the press**, lower the pressure by turning the pressure knob counterclockwise a bit at a time.

When your pressure is low enough, you should be able to push the handle **all the way down** to the lid of the press without tipping the press or having to use excess force- however, it should take **some** effort to push the handle down, as the pressure helps make your design permanent.

After just a second or two, open the press.

Position your design

Position your design on your warmed, prepared item.

- Most HTV has a slightly tacky backing material, so it should stick beautifully to your warm item. Put your design cut side down with the clear backing up, so the design looks unmirrored.
- If your transfer paper/HTV is curling or you're making a design out of smaller pieces (like precut letters) you can use pieces of the special **heat resistant tape** (Kapton tape, clear dark yellow color) in the heat press accessories bin to hold the pieces in place.
- If your design is complicated and you're uncomfortable working under the heated press, you can instead position your design before putting the item in the press, but it might be a little trickier to get the item onto the platen and pad it.

Press!

- Close the press. It will start counting down the time you set in the first step.
- Wait for the beep
- Open and gently remove your item

Peel

Follow the manufacturer's instructions or the materials tables in this guide to know whether to peel your material hot, warm, or cold

When done

Switch off and **unplug** the press. Leave the lid open unless the press is cool enough to touch-letting it cool before closing will help extend the life of the rubber pad. Return the accessories to the bin.