

I'M NEW, WHAT DO I DO?

Welcome to the wonderful world of crafting! Are you just getting started and not sure what all of these new crafty terms mean or how to tell the difference between your materials and how to use them? Don't worry, we have you covered! We have compiled this blog to help provide you with all of the information you need to get started.

What do I need?

- Your cutting machine (Cricut, Silhouette, StarCraft, Siser, Brother)
- Cutting mat (Optional on some machines)
- Materials (Vinyl, HTV, Transfer Tape)
- Tools (Weeding tool, scissors/paper slicer, Squeegee)
- Blanks (T-Shirts, Tumblers)

What's the difference?

In short, Adhesive Vinyl is for solid surfaces and HTV is for fabrics and some hard surfaces. Adhesive Vinyl will be tacky and have a paper backing and HTV most often will come with a clear or frosted carrier sheet and the HTV itself will *not* be tacky.

What is a Cut Setting?

Cut Settings are the heart and soul of crafting with cutting machines. Cut Settings use pressure and blade depth to cut through materials. A lot of machine software comes with pre-set settings for their brand materials, however doing a test cut and adjusting pressure as needed helps to get a perfect cut on any material you work with. Most machines also come with the option of creating personal settings, which helps to save your own pressure and blade depth if the pre-set settings do not work for the materials you use most often.

What is Adhesive Vinyl and what can I put it on?

Adhesive Vinyl can be used on many hard surfaces such as glass, plastic, wood, stainless steel, ceramic and so much more. While you can apply vinyl to a multitude of surfaces, the perfect surface is something solid, shiny and smooth. Glass is the most ideal surface as it meets all of these. The farther away you get from this ideal surface, there is more probability that you will see issues of vinyl not adhering properly or not lasting as long.

There are two types of Adhesive Vinyl: Permanent or Removable.

Permanent Vinyl such as [StarCraft HD](#) generally has a life-span of 5 or more years and can be used for outdoor projects like car decals or something that will be hand washed regularly like a stainless steel tumbler or ceramic coffee mug. In most cases, Vinyl is *not* dishwasher safe. The only dishwasher safe Vinyl at this time is the Siser EasyPSV Starling, which you can purchase by clicking [here](#).

Removable Vinyl such as [StarCraft SD](#) has a water-based adhesive and is intended to be temporarily used outdoors, but most commonly on indoor projects like wall decals, seasonal window displays and other home decor. Indoors, Removable Vinyl has a life-span of 3 or more years and has a much greater chance of being removed from painted walls without damage. It is best applied to painted walls that use a water-based paint.

When sending your Adhesive Vinyl to be cut, you will place the paper backing on your mat and the color or pattern face *upwards*. After you weed away the excess, you will gently burnish Transfer Tape with a Squeegee over the design and remove the paper backing. Then, place the sticky side onto your surface and burnish firmly with a Squeegee. Adhesive Vinyl is pressure sensitive and is activated when burnished with a Squeegee for longevity. From there, you are able to remove the Transfer Tape slowly and voilà! Your decal has been applied!

Cut settings for Adhesive Vinyl can vary between types and brands. It is *always* recommended to do a test cut before committing to your full project to eliminate waste. (If your machine does not already come with a test cut option, you can use a 1" star design) You can always refer to the product description or the printable Cutter Settings Document located by [clicking here](#).

What is HTV, how do I use it and what can I put it on?

HTV stands for **H**eat **T**ransfer **V**inyl, otherwise known as "iron-on vinyl". These names are interchangeable, and some brands use one or the other when naming or discussing their products.

HTV, or iron-on vinyl, is a product that has a heat-activated adhesive. This is the reason you need an iron, hand held press or heat press. The heat and pressure will activate the adhesive and adhere the HTV to your material, most commonly fabrics. You will use HTV when you are making products such as t-shirts, tote bags and pillow cases.

The type of fabric used is important to know and understand. Materials such as 100% Cotton, 100% Polyester or a blend of Cotton and Polyester are generally used when starting out.

When sending your HTV to be cut, in most cases such as [Siser Easyweed](#) or [StarCraft SoftFlex](#), you will put the carrier sheet face *down* on your mat and *mirror* your image. Some carrier sheets will come clear and glossy and some will come frosted (Siser Stretch, Siser EasyPuff) so it is important to determine which side is the carrier sheet. If you are unsure, simply take your weeding tool of choice and peel a small corner of your HTV sheet to reveal the carrier.

After you have cut your design, use your weeding tool to remove the excess of your design. From there, place your design where the adhesive is on your garment. Then use your heat source (home iron, hand press or heat press) at the appropriate time, temperature and pressing settings to activate the adhesive to adhere to the garment.

Cut settings for HTV can vary between types and brands. It is ***always*** recommended to do a test cut before committing to your full project to eliminate waste. (If your machine does not already come with a test cut option, you can use a 1" star design) You can always refer to the product description or the printable Cutter Settings Document located by [clicking here](#).

What is the difference between StarCraft Inkjet Printable Vinyl and Printable Transfers?

[StarCraft Inkjet Printable Vinyl](#) and [Printable Transfers](#) are innovative and easy to use with your standard Inkjet desktop printer. You will use the Print and Cut feature with your machine to get precise cuts around your images. It is recommended to use PNG images without a background.

Printable Vinyl - Is a permanent adhesive that you can use on a variety of solid surfaces or use as stickers. If your project will be exposed to water or several hours of sunlight, it is recommended to use UV Laminate on top of the design for longevity.

Light Material Transfers - Are a clear polymer transfer where you *will* need to mirror your image when using. You can use a pair of scissors to cut around your design after it has been printed, or you can use the Print and Cut feature to cut completely through both the polymer and backing to get a more precise outline. There is *no weeding* your design. Simply place the image onto your garment and press. It is *highly recommended* to use a heat press as the polymer needs very firm pressure to embed itself into the fibers of the fabric. Best used with white or light gray colors. Since the polymer is clear, it will pick up the colors of the fabric and can change the look of your design.

Dark Material Transfers - Have a white background to ensure colors stay as-is on any color or pattern fabric. You will *not* mirror your design and use the Print then Cut feature on your machine to get a precise cut around your design. You will then remove the excess and use Heat Transfer Mask to remove it from the paper backing. It is recommended to use a weeding tool or spatula tool to gently go around the edge of your design to make transferring easier. Then you can place your design on your project and press.

What is Sublimation?

Sublimation Ink uses a specialty ink that turns into a gas when heated and transfers to a surface that has a high polyester content or has a polyester coating.

You can either use a printer already intended for Sublimation like the Sawgrass SG1000 or convert an Inkjet Printer like the Epson ST-C2100 or Epson ST-8000 by filling the tank or special cartridges with [Sublimation Ink](#) instead of using the Inkjet ink that comes in the box with the printer.

When you print your design on your Sublimation printer, you will print with the image **mirrored**. Place the image side of the Sublimation Paper onto the Sublimation blank and secure with Heat Tape as well as use butcher paper around or underneath, below and inside of the blank to prevent blowout. Each Sublimation blank can press at varying temperatures and times, so it is best to refer to the product description for this information.

What are the differences between weeding tools?

Weeding tools are an essential part of crafting and we offer a wide range of options to fit your personal needs such as the PinPen, Stab-n-Grab Tweezers, Siser EasyWeeder and Siser Tweezers.

PinPen: This tool is a fan favorite as it is comfortable like a writing pin, however it has a sharp pin instead of ink to grab the unwanted areas of your Adhesive Vinyl and HTV. It is best to use this tool at a 40 degree angle and store in the felt sleeve it comes in or in a Tool Holder. The PinPen is available in a variety of colors to match your craft room!

Stab-n-Grab Tweezers: These stainless steel tweezers are ideal for weeding smaller, more intricate detail such as mandalas.

Siser EasyWeeder: This tool has a very sharp point that is hooked for easily pulling out the pieces of your design that you do not need. This has a rubber grip, making it comfortable and easy to use.

Siser Tweezers: These tweezers are curved with sharp points, ideal for grabbing and pulling away any excess from your design. This tool has a rubber grip, making it comfortable and easy to use.

If you would like more in-depth information, you can check out our YouTube tutorials on these tools by [clicking here](#) and shop for all of these amazing tools by [clicking here](#).

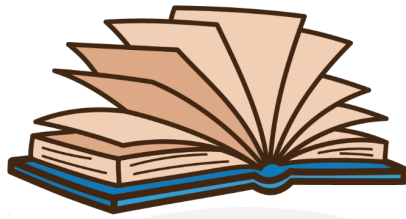
What is the difference between Transfer Tape, Heat Tape and Heat Transfer Mask?

[Transfer Tape](#) is used with Adhesive Vinyl to remove your design from the backing and onto the surface of your project. Transfer Tape *cannot* be used with a heat source.

[Heat Tape](#) is most commonly used with Sublimation to tape down the design onto the surface to help prevent ghosting or the image from shifting. It can also be used with HTV if you need your design to have a little more security when pressing, but is not often needed.

[Heat Transfer Mask](#) is essentially the carrier sheet to HTV, without the HTV itself. This is offered separately as it is sometimes needed for Printed Pattern HTV or can be used with Inkjet Printables for Dark Materials and Siser EasyDTV to remove the printed and cut design away from the backing and press onto the garment.

CRAFTING



DICTIONARY

- **Attach** - Holds your objects in relative position to each other
- **Burnish** - Giving pressure and movement using a Squeegee tool to Transfer Tape over Vinyl or Heat Transfer Mask over a Print and Cut design
- **Compound Path** - Where more than one line combines as a single object and inner lines are embedded into the image
- **Convert to Path** - Most commonly used in Silhouette Studio to take typed text and mimic any shape or design
- **DXF File** - Stands for "Drawing Exchange Format" and is a type of Vector file. This file is what can be used with the Basic Edition of Silhouette Studio for Silhouette cutting machines
- **Flatten** - Converts multiple layers to a single layer and removes the inner cut lines. Most commonly used when creating an offset to make stickers so that the machine only cuts the offset and not the design itself
- **Group** - Keeps multiple objects together to resize evenly or move around your software canvas together
- **Inset** - Is where there is a smaller, evenly distributed layer generated in front of your design.
- **Kern** - Is adjusting the character spacing, most commonly used with script fonts to connect each letter as a fluid word
- **Layering** - Piecing together multiple colors or patterns to create a design. Layering can mean placing colors or patterns on top of each other, or next to each other to create one full design
- **Offset** - Also known as "Stroke" or "Shadow Layer" where there is a larger, evenly distributed layer generated behind your design. This is commonly used when creating stickers or another layer to use with Printed Pattern materials
- **PNG** - Stands for "Portable Network Graphics" and mostly used with the Print then Cut feature with your cutting machine. You want to use PNGs without a background so that your machine and software will cut around the image and not around the background
- **Print then Cut** - A feature using registration marks in your machine's software to print your design and your machine will read the registration marks to cut printed images. Mostly commonly used to make stickers or with printable transfers
- **Release Compound Path** - Taking a single object and releasing it to show inner lines that are able to be deleted
- **Reverse Weeding** - Another form of weeding adhesive vinyl. This can be done by adding transfer tape over the entire cut area, removing the background and then

weeding the excess off of the transfer tape, similar to how you weed HTV. Or by applying the entirety of the cut area to the surface of a project, then removing the excess.

- **Slice** - Also known as “Crop” or “Knockout” that allows you to layer two overlapping images and essentially cut out the top layer into the back layer to create a new design
- **Subtract** - Removes shapes from the bottom layer of any group of objects that are selected
- **SVG** - Stands for “Scalable Vector Graphic” and is the most commonly used cut file for the hobby crafter. These files will automatically import as cut lines for your design software of choice.
- **Ungroup** - Releasing multiple objects from one to multiple
- **Weeding** - The removal of excess material in a design
- **Weld** - Also known as “Union”, where two individual object become one. This is most commonly used with script fonts after the letters have been kerned

