

Catfield Prints

personalized screen printing in memphis TN

Screen Printing at Home: Contact Paper

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There are several different ways to get started with your **screen printing** ventures from home. I have tried them all, and have decided to share the steps for the easiest method. This screen printing method will require several items that are unique, but many of the same items are used in the other techniques as well.

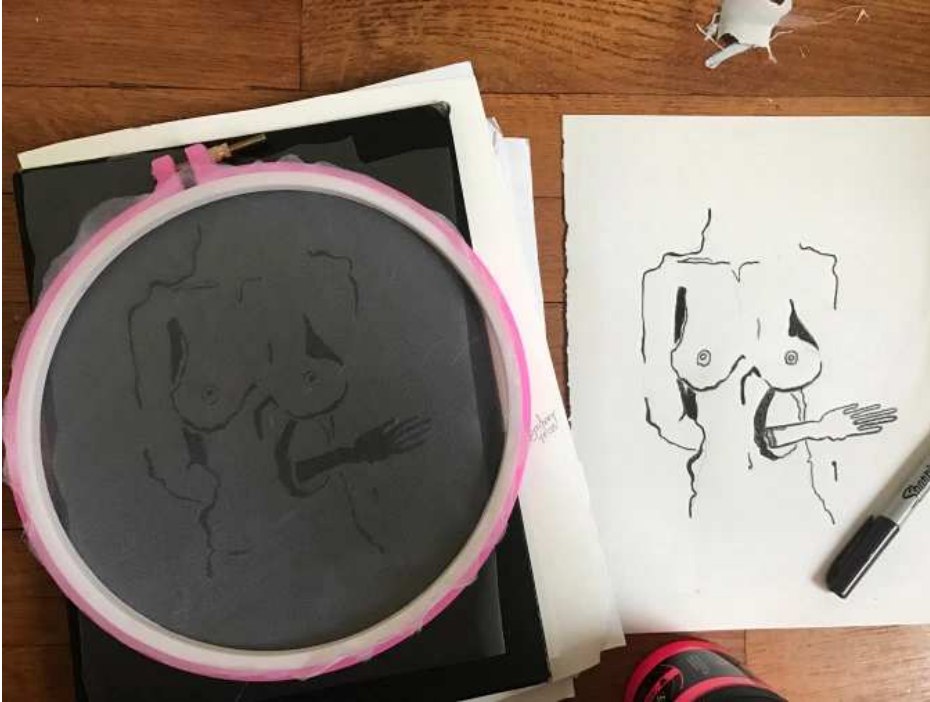
Tools: pencil, paper, sharpie, contact paper, exact-o knife, embroidery hoop, organza, screen-printing ink, squeegee or old gift card, material to print on, iron

STEP 1:



The first thing that you need to do is to grab your pencil and create a design that you would like to see on a shirt! My sincere advice is to keep it simple while you are just starting out. Once you have your design sketched out you are ready for step 2!

STEP 2:



In this step you are going to want to use your fine-point sharpie to color over and embolden the design the you created in step 1. While doing this you have a goal of making sure that you leave “breaks” in your design (places where the line stops for a bit) to create structural strength and detract from the likelihood that you will accidentally cut out your entire design in a later step. Step three will show us how to create the stencil that you see on the left.

STEP 3:



So, you have used sharpie to embolden the lines of your sketch. Now, you need to cut out a piece of contact paper that will cover your design and at least 3/4 of an inch out from the corners of your design. Tape this down over your sketch and pick up your fine-point sharpie once again to trace the design onto the contact paper. Your design is complete on the contact paper, so now you want to tape this down onto a surface suitable for cutting. You will use your exact-o knife (you will want a SHARP blade for a crisp design) to cut out the black spaces in your design. The places that you cut out will be where the ink goes through to the t-shirt in a later step.

STEP 4:



Welcome to step four! You are almost done creating your stencil and ready to screen print. In this step I ask that you grab one of your embroidery hoops that will fit your design within. Cut a piece of organza (very cheap in bulk on amazon OR you can use old curtains from the local thrift store) that you will place inside the embroidery hoop. It is easier to tighten the hoop while the two pieces are separate, so tighten as much as you can because you are going to want the organza to lie very taut in the hoop. The tighter it is the crisper your design will be and the more replications you will get. Slowly, and carefully peel the white grid paper off of the contact paper so that the sticky side of the clear sheet is facing up. Then take your organza-embroidery hoop and place it flat-side down on top of the contact sheet. This creates the stencil that you saw above in step 2.

STEP 5:



You are about to begin screen printing! Ready your shirt by placing a sheet of newsprint (or paper, old book, etc.) in behind the front of the shirt where you want to place the design so that this ink doesn't run and stain the back. Lay the shirt on a flat surface and place the stencil on top where you would like the design to be placed. Industry standard is for the design to be 3-4 fingers down from the collar-line, but you are designing your OWN shirt so have fun and do whatever you want! As you can see above I have already printed with the screen, and now you can see where the ink ran through on a previous shirt and where the contact paper stopped it. So, grab your speedball ink and an old gift card or your squeegee. Scoop up some ink and place it inside your stencil at the bottom (still on top of the contact paper, which should cover the entire stencil) in a glob that is as wide as your design. You cannot really have too much ink as you can reclaim it and scrape it back into the container. Use your squeegee or old gift card to drag the ink over your design in a swift, steady stroke. Sometimes it make take more than one "pull" to get the complete design, but always pull in one direction and try to hold your stencil as steady as you can. Fewer pulls will mean less bleeding.





STEP 6:



Slowly, lift your stencil and marvel at the awesome design of yours that you just screen printed! Allow this to dry for several hours, and if possible overnight. Grab an iron tomorrow morning and turn the shirt inside out. Sit the iron on the design for at least 3 minutes (watch to make sure it doesn't burn!) and then toss the shirt into the dryer for 20 minutes. This will ensure that your design stays intact forever. Some shirt materials and some speedball ink colors are runnier combinations than others, but this method has never failed to get me a solid design that doesn't run in the wash. If you are looking to purchase affordable and comfortable shirts then I suggest making a trip to your local Target and looking in the sale section where there are many comfy t-shirts that only cost me on average 2-3\$ a piece!

Have fun screen printing and check out my designs available for purchase!

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