

My First Try at Screen Printing

Not really a step by step tutorial it' more of a guide

What you will need

- A design
- Iron on Vinyl – I used a [Heat and Bond product](#)
- Organza – Silk or Poly – something that is somewhat heat resistant
- Pencil
- Permanent Marker
- Scissors
- X-acto knife and/or rotary cutter
- Cutting mat
- Parchment paper – located with the zip lock bags in the grocery store
- Iron and ironing surface
- Light box – or a large window during the day will do
- Squeegee of some sort – old credit card will work
- Ink – I used [Speedball](#) brand purchased at a local craft store.
- Pan of water and dish detergent
- Plastic spoon
- Tape
- Paper
- Fabric – best to prewash fabric to get all the manufacturing sizing out. Press but do not starch.



This is what I did on my first try with screen printing. I have not perfected the art as of yet. But this is a good start. I got the information on screen printing from an episode of Quilting Arts TV. Season 16 Episode 5

First you need a design. I am using a copy of a snowmobile trail sign. I borrowed some signs from the Baker River Valley Snowmobile Club a few years ago. I used my scanner to get copies of them. Unfortunately, they were bigger than my scanner so I had to splice them together. My goal is to make a quilt from all the signs for the club to raffle off as a fund raiser.

You will need to trace the design onto the paper side of the vinyl using a pencil. There is no need to create a reverse image, which makes the process a whole lot easier. I found using a light box (my back porch window) make is easier to see the design. I taped my design to the window. Then I taped the vinyl over that. I used a ruler to trace the straight lines.

After you trace the design, use a permanent marker on the vinyl side of the design. This will give you more visibility of the design. It will make more sense as we go along. I scribbled over the back of my entire design. Next time I may just outline it. It was a large area and took a bit to dry.

Now you need to cut out your design. You may use which ever tool or tools you are comfortable with, scissors, rotary cutter, x-acto knife. You want to cut through the paper and vinyl together. Remember to save the little pieces within the design. You will need to put them back in, like the dots in the letter R and P in my design.

Once you have completely cut out your design, you will need to remove the paper from the vinyl. Be careful not to tear the vinyl. I did not remove the paper from the dots until I was ready to iron them down. I did not want to lose them.



I used two sheets of parchment paper. First place a piece of parchment paper down on the ironing surface. Place the vinyl sticky side up. The side with the permanent marker should be facing the ironing surface. Your design will be backwards or upside down. Lay your organza over the vinyl. Gently smooth it out so there are no wrinkles. Place the second piece of parchment paper over everything. Press according to the directions that came with your vinyl.

After I pressed the design down, I went back with the small dots for the P and R, using my original design to place the dots on the organza. You may need a tooth pick or something similar to adjust the dot placement. Press the whole design again. Make sure to use the parchment paper. This will keep

the organza and vinyl from melting to your iron.

After the design was pressed to the organza, I used my rotary cutter and ruler to cut the design to a usable size. Make sure you leave plenty of space around the edges so you do not get ink off the edge of the vinyl. Your screen is now ready to use.

I tested out my design on paper first. I didn't want to ruin good fabric. It's been many years since I took screen printing in middle school. Not sure if I remember exactly how I do this. It looked easy on Quilting Arts TV.

I set everything up outside on the picnic table. Along with a pan full of water to rinse the screen and spoon off when done. I also brought out a partial roll of paper towels. You just know you will make a mess if you don't.

I taped a piece of paper down onto my cutting mat. Then I taped the screen down over that. Placed ink across the top of the design using my spoon. You need enough but not too much. This is a trial and error kind of thing. Only with practice will you figure out the right amount of ink. Make sure you place enough ink so it goes past the outer most parts of your design.

I used a store rewards card as my squeegee. You need to apply pressure to the squeegee as you drag the ink across the design. Again, this is trial and error to figure out the exact amount of pressure needed. I found that if I went over the design more than once I got bleeding of the design. I also needed to make sure the design was tape down well. Once, the design lifted a bit and made quite the mess.

I wiped the screen off in between tries. I found I got a bit of ink on the back so it kept making a mess. I washed the whole screen with water and dish detergent before moving on to fabric. I used a warm iron and the parchment paper to dry the screen off.

Again I taped the fabric down, then taped the design to my fabric. I used clear cellophane tape, the kind you use for wrapping gifts. Next time I'm going to use a masking tape. I think it would hold better.

There is an art to how much ink you need. I clearly do not have that mastered as of yet. But I'm working on it.

Once your design is dry, you need to set the ink with an iron. Check the direction for the particular ink you use.

The next time I'm going to try using Tsukineko inks. This can be applied with a sponge applicator. I will let you know how it comes out.

