

# Rhinestone Application Tips and Techniques

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## Cutting Rhinestone Template Material

### Video

- Rhinestone templates can be used hundreds of times. There are several commonly used materials for making these templates. The current most popular choices are:
  - ◇ The green [rhinestone template material](#) sold at KNK USA (also known as Hartco 425S) is the most popular because it is less expensive than the other options and has been around longer. It is recommended over a similar thinner rubber sold by companies who market their material for the lower force cutters. The disadvantages to using any rubber template material is that you need to apply a solid backing after the template is cut and also dust the template with a powder so that the powder will cover any of the permanent adhesive exposed in the holes. The solid backing typically chosen is foam board or stencil board.
  - ◇ The [Rock-It flock](#), also sold at KNK USA, is more expensive than the rubber template materials but doesn't require a backing to be applied after cutting. It also doesn't require dusting. The Rock-It templates can be used to mix and match designs, such as combining letters with images.
  - ◇ Sticky Flock is a similar material to Rock-It but is more expensive still and slightly thinner. It has the same advantages as Rock-It.
- The first step before cutting the template is to check the size of the design you've created and then cut a piece of rhinestone template material that is at least 1" larger in both height and width compared to your design. It is beneficial to have a little bit of material around the edges of the design where excess rhinestones can still be brushed back over the design.
- Some users prefer to cut the template with the backing sheet still attached. That's perfectly fine. You can also peel off the backing sheet first and press the rhinestone material to a clean sticky mat. Brayer firmly to make sure the rubber has excellent contact with the mat.
- Set **Multicut** or **Passes** to 2 times, again to aid in weeding the cut circles. Use a 60 degree blade for cutting. Perform test cuts of a small numbers of circles (say, around 8 – 10) to make sure the force you're using is sufficient and the cut circles remain behind after cutting.

## Weeding and Brushing in Rhinestones

- When the cut has finished, brayer the template material again. As you lift the pattern, the majority of the little circles should remain stuck to the backing sheet or the mat. If there are still circles attached, then press firmly and lift on other parts of your cutting mat. Eventually, you should have the majority removed.
- If your template was cut from a rubber, apply your pattern to a backing material such as [stencil board](#) or foam board. Make sure it's a different color from your rubber. You may wish to first cover the backing board with clear mailing tape for a slicker, more permanent surface. Verify that none of the little circles are still attached to the back of the template and causing a "bump" in the pattern.
- Again, if your template was cut from rubber, use an old toothbrush to apply some powder (talc, baking, or facial) into the holes. Tap upside down to remove excess powder and then wipe the top of

the pattern clean. The powder will stick to any adhesive inside the holes and prevent rhinestones from getting stuck in the holes.

- Place your template into the bottom of a bead tray, cake pan, or other large flat container. Those who use the flock materials will often cover the bottom of their container with a layer of the same flock. More recently, it's been recommended that a whiteboard be used. Personally, I have great luck with just a bead tray. Pour the rhinestones on top of the template.
- Use a [Shur-Line Trim and Touch-up Pad \(also called Edger\)](#) to brush the [rhinestones](#) in a circular motion. Keep brushing and you will find that the stones that landed upside down will be brushed out and correct ones will replace them. This pad type brush is essential to the ease and success of this important step!
- When ~95% of the pattern is correctly filled, then use tweezers, a toothpick, or just your finger to position the last few rhinestones into the pattern.
- Cut the [rhinestone transfer tape](#) to size and then press it down onto your stones. Press firmly but do not push the stones deep into the holes. If you have a problem with the stones jumping as you are dropping the transfer tape, then try using a Bounce sheet or anti-static spray on the tape before pressing.
- As you lift the tape, start in a corner and keep one side pressed down and watch to make sure all stones are being lifted. If a stone fails to lift, press back down to pick it up. Once the stones are lifted, you can now place the transfer tape back onto its backing or go ahead and press the stones to your shirt, other fabric, or even cardstock!
- Note that the transfer tape is reusable! You should be able to get 4 or 5 pressings from one piece, even though it becomes wrinkled from the pressing. Keep using until it doesn't pick up and hold the stones.

### **Heat Pressing Rhinestones**

- If using your home iron to press the stones to a shirt:
  - ◇ Use a hot dry iron (cotton setting or higher with steam option turned off).
  - ◇ Use a firm surface... not a highly cushioned ironing board
  - ◇ Insert a cloth between the layers of a shirt.
  - ◇ Press shirt first to create a smooth flat dry surface.
  - ◇ Arrange pattern on shirt, carefully centering.
  - ◇ Press firmly for 10 seconds. Then move about ½" in case steam holes were over areas of some stones and then press firmly for another 10 seconds.
  - ◇ Move to another area of stones and repeat.
  - ◇ Flip shirt inside out and press for another 10 seconds on side where stones are applied.
  - ◇ Allow to thoroughly cool before removing clear transfer tape.
- If using a [heat press](#) to press the stones to a shirt:
  - ◇ Set the temperature to ~ 330—350 degrees F (165 – 175 degrees C) and set the pressure to medium.
  - ◇ Press garment first for a flat dry surface.
  - ◇ Arrange pattern on shirt, carefully centering. Press for 10-12 seconds.

- ◇ Peel cold, cover with [Teflon sheet](#), and re-press another 10-12 seconds. Alternatively, flip the shirt inside out and press from the back for 10-12 seconds.
- ◇ Use a lower temperature if pressing on 50/50 cotton poly fabric. Use a higher temperature on denim or tote bags.

### **Extra tips on Rhinestone Applications**

- If you are combining iron-on transfer with rhinestones, do not press the rhinestones onto the iron-on vinyl. While it will appear to have worked well, the stones will fall off once the garment is laundered. When using both, create a contour line around your iron-on pattern for the stones.
- Pressing rhinestones to cardstock also works very well. If pressing onto the front of a greeting card, unfold the card first.
- After pressing and allowing to cool, use your fingernail or an old credit card/gift card to scrape the pattern to see if any stones come loose. If so, replace those stones with new ones and press again.