

Why is my HTV peeling? Why isn't my HTV sticking?

If you can't figure out why your heat transfer vinyl won't stick or peels, read below for some helpful pointers and tips

1. Are you using the proper technique for that particular brand of HTV?

HTV is not a "one size fits all" application. As well as many different brands, there are also several different TYPES of HTV. Each type/brand of vinyl has its own technique that should be followed for optimum results.

Time, temperature, and pressure are key and THE most important factors when working with HTV. Additionally, and equally important is whether you are doing a cool or hot peel on your carrier sheet.

- Pressing or ironing for too short a time can cause HTV not to stick
- Pressing or ironing for too long can have the same effect.

It is vitally important that you check the instructions for the vinyl you are using and make sure all of your settings are exact and that you peel the carrier sheet according to manufacturer directions (hot or cool - more on this below).

HTV works by using a heat activated adhesive so too little time and it won't heat enough to stick. Too long and it can actually burn the adhesive off.

Temperature

Not all vinyl applies at the same temperature. Check instructions to see the recommended temperature. If you work with a lot of HTV, your best bet would be to invest in a heat press. Unlike a hand-held iron, with a heat press you are able to adjust your time and temperature to the proper setting. If you plan on making a lot of projects using HTV, I highly recommend investing in a heat press.

Pressure

This usually becomes an issue when you're using an iron vs an actual heat press. It's difficult to press down hard enough with a regular iron, particularly if it's a large design. Additionally, you want to avoid using stone-type surfaces (ex: granite) to press on because stone tends to absorb heat from the iron causing your vinyl to not get the proper amount of heat.

2. What fabric are you applying the vinyl to?

Always check the tags. See what your material is made of (cotton, polyester, lycra, etc. etc.) Check to make sure the HTV that you are using is compatible with that material. (for more information on this, see chart below)

3. Does your fabric have buttons, seams, zippers?

You lose a lot of pressure when there are raised areas on the fabric. This will take away the pressure that it hitting your design. The best way to avoid this is to use a heat pressing pillow. Heat pressing pillows **go inside shirts or under surfaces that you are heat applying vinyl onto.** They allow thick seams, zippers, buttons, pockets, collars, and other raised items to be absorbed into the pillow so that you can get an even pressure to apply your vinyl.

4. Are you peeling your carrier hot or cold?

As mentioned above, this is one of the most important steps in preventing your vinyl from peeling. Some types of HTV may need the carrier to be peeled off right after you have pressed it. Others might need to cool off completely before you remove the plastic carrier sheet. Again, vitally important to read the manufacturer's instructions to see which method is appropriate for the HTV that you are using.

If you've tried all of the above and are still having issues with your HTV peeling,

- Is your heat press working properly? Sometimes the heating elements in a heat press can go bad causing the press not to heat up to the temperature that you set it to. It could also have hot and cold spots throughout the platen (the plate that gets hot).
- Is there a fire retardant or waterproof coating on the material? These coatings cause the HTV not to stick properly to the fabric.
- Did you pre-wash the shirt and use fabric softener? Fabric softener sticks in between the fibers of the material and sometimes doesn't allow for good adhesion with the HTV.

**BELOW IS A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR HTV -
 AGAIN, AND I CAN'T STRESS THIS ENOUGH, READ
 THE VINYL MANUFACTURERS INSTRUCTIONS
 FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS**

VINYL	USE ON	TEMP	PRESSURE	TIME (SECS)	PEEL
Standard HTV	Cotton, Polyester, Poly-cotton blends	305°F/151°C	Medium	10-15	Hot/Cold
Glitter HTV	Cotton, Polyester, Poly-cotton blends	320°F/160°C	Firm	10-15	Hot
Stretchable/Sportflex HTV	Lycra/Spandex, Cotton/Polycotton blends	305°F/151°C	Medium/Firm	15	Hot/Cold
Holographic HTV	Cotton, Polyester, Poly-cotton blends	320°F/160°C	Firm	10-15	Cold
Flocked HTV	Cotton, Polyester, Poly-cotton blends	320°F/160°C	Medium	15-20	Cold
Metallic/Glossy HTV	Cotton, Polyester, Poly-cotton blends	305°F/151°C	Medium	10-15	Cold