

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO:

# DECORATING FACE MASKS WITH A HEAT PRESS



## In this eBook you'll learn:

- What to look for in a heat press for printing masks
- Best heat transfer types for masks
- Styles of masks & where to buy blanks
- Creating artwork for masks
- Best practices for each mask type
- How to make a profit with face masks—ROI



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- dark blue underlined text links to more information found on the Internet

# Introduction



92% of Americans wear masks.

## WHY DECORATE FACE MASKS?

Masks are the promo item of the moment and people prefer them customized. According to an industry survey from August 2020, 63% of consumers wear masks all the time in public, 80% wear masks all or most of the time, and 92% say they wear a mask at least some of the time.

These statistics confirm what we all know and are seeing with our own eyes—printed face masks are a hot commodity and great branding opportunity. Your potential customers, whether in sports, schools, businesses, or retail, have a need for face masks, often many different ones.

## START PRINTING MASKS TODAY!

If you want to start offering the service of custom printed face masks, you can get started today.

*All you need is a heat press.*

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# Why Use a Heat Press to Print Masks?



## HERE'S WHY:



**Spread a Message**



**Share a Logo**



**Boost Sales**



**Easy to Use**



**Print Any Type of Mask**



**Small Investment**



**Little Space Required**



**Very Profitable**



**Print Any Quantity**



**Many Print Styles**

# Choosing the Right Heat Press for Masks

You can use any type of commercial heat press to print masks. You can even use a home iron if you don't own a heat press. But a commercial heat press will be more reliable and consistent in the long run. A heat press is also necessary if you're planning on printing more efficiently to make masks for a profit.

The good news is, there's a wide variety of commercial heat presses available perfect for any budget.

## MOST POPULAR PRESSES ON THE MARKET



**\$310**

### 1. Pink Craft Heat Press — GOOD

Known as a [Craft Heat Press](#), this affordable and compact machine is ideal for printing masks. It features a 9" x 12" print area which fits two masks at a time. It's lightweight and features a digital time and temperature readout. It also has an easy learning curve and can be used to print a variety of other items.



**\$699**

### 2. A2Z™ Swing Away Heat Press — BETTER

For a larger start-up press, the [A2Z Swing Away Heat Press](#) is a top quality, reliable, USA made press. It has a 15" x 15" print area and the upper heater swings away for easy loading allowing you to position masks on the lower platen quickly and easily without the heat from the upper platen in the way. You can print up to 6-8 masks at a time on the platen, depending on how you arrange them. This machine is also one of our most popular sizes for start-up businesses who want to print T-shirts, and is very affordable for a press of this quality.



**\$2,250**

### 3. Hotronix® Heat Presses — BEST

When you're ready to expand your business, choose from a wide variety of [Hotronix Heat Presses](#). The Hotronix 16" x 20" Auto Clam and the Hotronix 16" x 20" Fusion are the two most popular styles. Hotronix is the world's largest and most trusted brand of heat presses, offering 24/7 customer service and a lifetime warranty on the heating platen. Large commercial printers and garment manufacturers around the world count on Hotronix for reliable and accurate heat printing. For a complete guide on choosing the right Hotronix Heat Press for your business, check out this [comprehensive buying guide](#).

# Styles of Masks



There are a wide variety of masks and face covers on the market. These generic descriptions are important to know before printing because seams and pleats will affect print results.

## BASIC STYLES OF FACE MASKS (see masks above)

- |                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Lay flat masks without seams | 4. Center seam masks |
| 2. Lay flat masks with seams    | 5. Gaiters           |
| 3. Pleated masks                |                      |

## Fabric Content

In addition to the styles, the other important consideration for printing is fabric content. Many transfer styles can adhere to cotton, polyester, and blended masks. If you want to use a print technique such as sublimation, your mask will need to be 65% polyester or more and be white or a light color. You'll achieve the best results on 100% polyester.

While there are wide ranging discussions and debates about the number of fabric layers in the mask for protection, the number of layers is not a key consideration for heat pressing.

# Styles of Masks

Here are some brands and sources for various masks:



[Stahls'](#)



[Port Authority](#)



[District V.I.T.](#)



[LAT Apparel](#)



[S&S Activewear](#)



[Vapor Apparel](#)



[Badger](#)

# Types of Heat Transfers for Masks



If you own a heat press, you can apply many different types of heat transfers. The most popular to consider using for masks are as follows:



## CHECKLIST

- ✓ Transfer Sheet
- ✓ Blank Mask
- ✓ Heat Press
- ✓ Cover Sheet

### 1. Custom Screen Printed Transfers

**Best for:** 20+ masks in an order with designs that include 1 or 2 colors

#### WHAT IS IT?

Screen printing with a heat press. A screen printed transfer is when a design is printed in reverse using plastisol inks on a piece of release paper and cured with a thermal adhesive.

#### HOW IT WORKS:

To apply to a mask, you simply position and press. You can order custom transfers in low quantities. The most popular type is the [GOOF-PROOF® Screen Printed Transfer](#) from Stahl's Transfer Express. The inks used are CPSIA compliant (safety certificate) so they're perfect for use on masks and safe for children. You can fit many different face mask size logos on a transfer sheet. This means you can order logos for more than one job and save lots of money.



# Types of Heat Transfers for Masks



## CHECKLIST

- ✓ Vinyl Cutter
- ✓ Vinyl
- ✓ Blank Mask
- ✓ Heat Press
- ✓ Cover Sheet

## 2. CAD-CUT® Heat Transfer Vinyl

**Best for:** Less than 20 masks in an order with designs that include 1 or 2 colors

### WHAT IS IT?

If you want to add individual names to masks, perhaps for students, [CAD-CUT® Heat Transfer Vinyl](#) is the way to go.

### HOW IT WORKS:

You'll need a vinyl cutter, such as a Cricut® or Silhouette® craft cutter. You can also use a commercial vinyl cutter. Heat transfer vinyl is excellent for adding logos, names, or even phone numbers to masks. Choose from a wide variety of special effects, including [glitter](#), [foils](#) and [metallic](#) heat transfer vinyl. If you don't own a cutter, Stahls' offers the service of cutting [custom logos](#) and names for you. All you need is your heat press.



# Types of Heat Transfers for Masks



## CHECKLIST

- ✓ Transfer Sheet
- ✓ Blank Mask
- ✓ Heat Press
- ✓ Cover Sheet

### 3. UltraColor™ Soft Digital Screen Printed Transfers

Best for: 20 or more masks in an order with the same design in 3+ colors

#### WHAT IS IT?

[UltraColor™ Soft](#) is the ideal method for printing full color logos on masks. It's especially affordable if you have many jobs combined on one transfer sheet. With UltraColor Soft, there's no limit on the number of colors. You can also have complicated artwork with free-floating text, gradients, and even photos.

#### HOW IT WORKS:

Decorate 8 face coverings at a time with the [Hotronix® Dual Air Fusion IQ®](#).

#### STEP-BY-STEP USING ULTRACOLOR SOFT ON MASKS:

1. Remove moisture with pre-heat.
2. Set at 300°.
3. Position designs in place.
4. Great for 100% cotton or poly/cotton.
5. Press for 15 seconds.
6. Cold peel. Move masks to side.



# Types of Heat Transfers for Masks



## CHECKLIST

- ✓ Sublimation Printer
- ✓ Blank Mask
- ✓ Sublimation Paper with Pattern
- ✓ Heat Press

## 4. Sublimation Transfers on Polyester Masks

**Best for:** Any quantity of masks as long as the mask is a light color and ideally 100% polyester

### WHAT IS IT?

Sublimation is a method of printing that creates a seamless blend of ink and fabric. Sublimation dyes are used to print your image on a paper. When the paper is printed using heat and pressure, the dyes “sublimate” or turn into a gas and enter the fibers of the fabric. Sublimation only works on white, 100% polyester. The benefit is you can create an all over or “repeat” design or pattern.

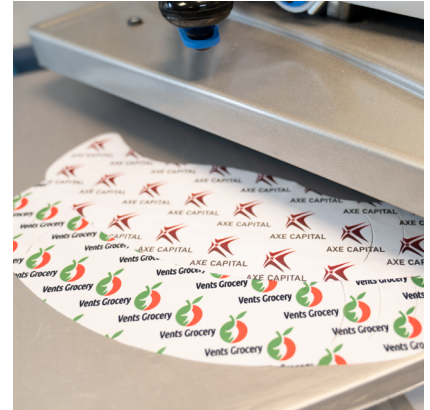
### HOW IT WORKS:

There are a few easy ways you can create custom face masks using sublimation without a printer:

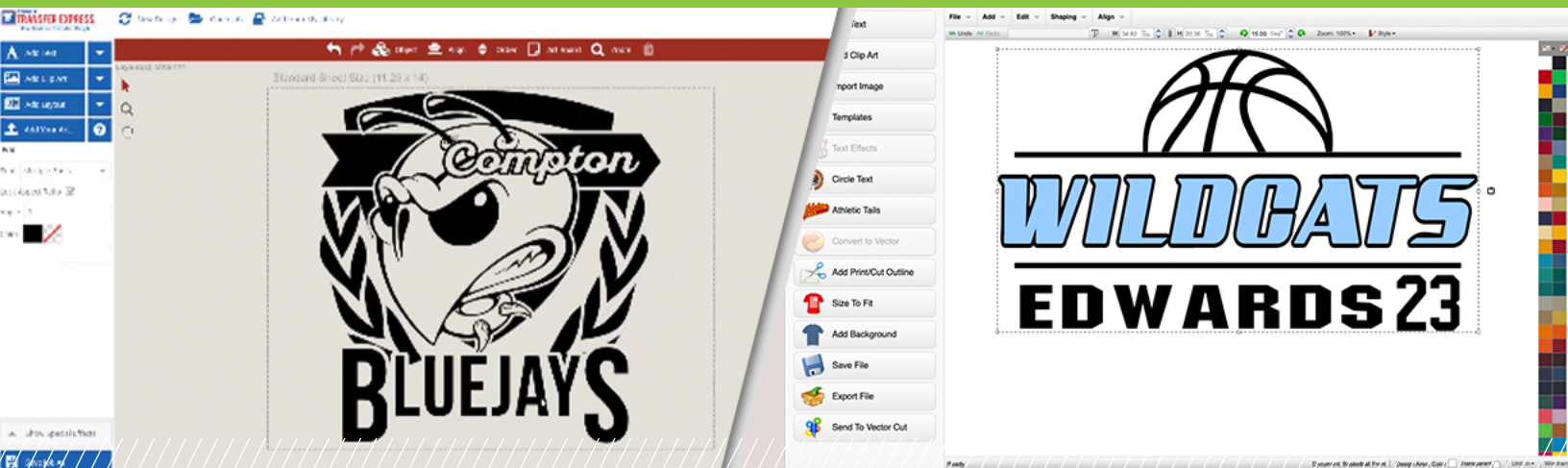
1. Order [custom sublimated masks](#) with your own logo in a repeating tiled pattern.
2. Upload your own artwork and get your design ready to heat apply with [CAD-PRINTZ® Sublimation Transfers](#).
3. Pick a design from our [CAD-CUT® Patterns HTV](#) collections and have it printed on Sublimation Transfer Sheets.

### STEP-BY-STEP USING SUBLIMATION TRANSFERS ON MASKS:

1. Cover lower heat press platen with paper.
2. Lay mask flat on heat press platen.
3. Position sublimation transfer.
4. Follow printing instructions.
5. Carefully open press to prevent ghosting.
6. Remove paper.



# How to Create Art for Masks



If you don't have artwork, Dane Clement just released [face mask artwork](#) sized perfectly for the Stahls' Premium Face Masks in adult and youth sizes. Purchase the art files, then send to Stahls' to order [custom sublimation transfers](#).

Stahls' Transfer Express has [Easy View](#), a free online designer that can be used to create artwork for masks and any other project. Choose from thousands of design templates, fonts and clip art.

You can use [CADWorxLIVE](#), a free online designer featuring templates, clip art and fonts, which can be easily output to your cutter or printer.



# Heat Pressing Different Mask Styles



## 1. Flat Masks Without Seams

These masks are very easy to decorate. They can be positioned flat against the lower platen of the heat press without any special accessories. You can position your transfer of choice and heat apply many masks at once. It's also possible to decorate nearly any location on the mask because of the lay flat design. If you're looking for an economy mask these are a great option.



## 2. Flat Masks With Seams

These masks will lay flat against the lower platen of the heat press, but often have a raised area on the pressing surface due to the outer seam. In order to apply accurately, you'll want to keep your logo as far away from the seam as possible, limiting the customizable area. If you'd like to reach a larger decoration area or more locations, consider using a [Heat Press Pillow](#) or [Heat Press Pad](#) to raise the decoration area above the seam. Trim your pad to size so the seam hangs off the edge. A Heat Press Pillow will allow the seams to sink in, but pillows are not recommended for screen printed transfers so this could present some challenges.



# Heat Pressing Different Mask Styles

## 3. Pleated Masks

Pleated masks are difficult to position onto a flat press due to the pleats. When decorating these masks you'll want to keep your logo size small to ensure it doesn't extend over any overlapped fabric. Many decorators have found success using a [Hat Press](#) for pleated masks. By stretching the mask over the lower curved surface of the press, you can open up the pleats and get a larger decoration area. The trade-off is you can only press one mask at a time on the Hat Press.



## 4. Center Seam Masks

Center seam masks often make it more challenging to decorate the nose, mouth, or chin area of a mask, however they provide ample decoration opportunity on the sides. Consider folding the mask in half to get it to lay flat on the press. By doing this you'll be able to fit more masks onto the machine at a time and solve any potential decoration challenges caused by the center seam.



## 5. Gaiters

While not necessarily a mask, the neck gaiter is being used widely as an alternative face cover. Most gaiters can be laid flat on the press and heat applied. They offer a very large branding area. Be sure to consider sourcing a stretchable transfer to allow the design to flex when the gaiter is pulled onto the face.



# Potential Return on Investment



Face masks are part of the new normal. It's a unique branding opportunity for many companies, schools, health care professionals, retail stores, and restaurants. Everyone needs masks, and there's more opportunity for profit if they're customized. Does it make sense for you to start offering custom printed masks?

Here's the math:

- 20 sheets of UltraColor™ Soft @ \$8.50/per sheet = \$170.
- 85 1" x 2" logos fit on the sheet.
- That's 1700 logos at a cost of \$0.10 cents per logo.
- Minimum order is 5 sheets.
- There's plenty of profit potential with [UltraColor Soft](#).

## TRUE STORY

Are you wondering if it's profitable to print masks? There are many variables involved and the amount you can charge may not be the same in every situation. However, we reached out to a customer who shared a real life story. Please keep in mind that income is not guaranteed and this is just an estimate.



# Potential Return on Investment



## Kelley Waltz of Sparkly Tees

*We initially had a mask order where the customer wanted a full color design. I saw that UltraColor Soft could print the full color, so I opted for the largest sheet and put that customer's logo on there. Since I still had space on the sheet, I realized this would be a good chance to show other customers what we could do for them. Our favorite breakfast place in Las Vegas is The Cracked Egg. They are a local chain and we go there every weekend. Even during the pandemic, we did takeout. I thought that this would be a good chance for me to make a few of their logos on the UltraColor gang sheet, so I did! I also added some local school logos, and a few other businesses. We ordered a case of the Port Authority Cotton Face Masks from SanMar. We knew the case contained 500 but felt it was worth the initial investment. When the UltraColor Soft arrived, the logos looked awesome! And the ones from the Cracked Egg looked amazing. When I printed the Cracked Egg logo on the mask, I took it to the restaurant the next time I went. The manager loved it and texted a picture to the owner. Before I even got home, the owner ordered 100 UltraColor printed masks. I was elated! To update the story, we delivered the 100 masks this past weekend and they ordered 100 more!*

## Kelley's Costs and ROI

The cost of each mask is \$1.75 and each logo cost \$0.40. So, my all in cost is \$2.15. I sold them for \$5 each on this order. If they purchase less than 100, I sell them for \$6 each printed. The money is good, the time is minimal, and it's worth it. I have about 20 other companies that I printed their logos as samples to print on masks and am hoping to get their business.

## [How Branding and Digital Screen Printing on Face Masks Can Equal Big Profit](#)

# Tips/Tricks From the Experts



Here are some tips to consider when creating custom face masks.

## Tip #1 Choose CPSIA Compliant Transfers

The last thing you want to do during a pandemic is apply a material that's harmful to breathe in. Stahls' has you covered. We offer a wide range of HTV that are [CPSIA compliant](#) to ensure the safety of our customers.

## Tip #2 You Can Print Any Logo

The sky is the limit! Stahls' offers a lot of HTV that can be layered or applied as mixed media. Additionally, [CAD-PRINTZ® Full Color Logos](#) is a great solution when adding a personalized logo to a mask. For large quantity jobs, we recommend using [screen printed transfers](#) from Transfer Express®.

## Tip #3 Use the Right Heat Press Accessories

For custom face masks, be sure to use a [Heat Press Pillow](#). Since face masks have lots of seams, this will ensure the seams can sink into the pillow while they're being heat applied. By doing this, you'll also have consistent pressure and ensure that the materials can't lift up or peel off your face mask.

## Tip #4 Wash Tested and Proven

Lastly, having a reusable face mask that is easy to launder and better for the environment is a win. [Stahls' Heat Transfer Vinyl](#) are all recommended to be laundered in a normal wash cycle so you can enjoy your mask for 50 washes without a worry.

# Conclusion



We hope this guide was informative and helped you learn more about printing face masks with your heat press. The techniques and transfers shown in this guide can also be used for printing T-shirts, sweatshirts, jerseys, and more. Owning a heat press means you can print almost any item, in any quantity, at a profit. Heat pressing is used by garment manufacturers, professional teams, and people all over the world looking for convenient, reliable, and high quality garment printing. Quality heat transfers will outlast the garments on which they are printed. The garment decoration experts at Stahls' and Stahls' Transfer Express are always available to answer any questions you may have. We're here to help you succeed.



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For more detailed information on how to print masks, watch these videos:

[How Branding and Digital Screen Printing on Face Masks Equal Big Profit](#)

[Customize Face Masks with a Heat Press](#)

## About Stahls'

Stahls' is the leading resource for business-to-business garment and product identity at every level. Stahls' creates solutions, technologies, products and services needed to start, run, and grow any garment imprint or personalization business.

# Different Mask Types



## 1. Flat Masks Without Seams

- Easy to decorate
- They can be positioned flat against the lower platen of the heat press without any special accessories
- You can position your transfer of choice and heat apply multiple masks at once
- Decorate nearly any location on the mask
- Economical



## 2. Flat Masks With Seams

- In order to apply accurately, you'll want to keep your logo as far away from the seam as possible, limiting the customizable area
- If you'd like to reach a larger decoration area or more locations, Heat Press Pillows or Heat Press Pads are ideal
- Trim your pad to size so the seam hangs off the edge
- A Heat Press Pillow will allow the seams to sink in, but pillows are **not recommended** for screen printed transfers, so this could present some challenges



## 3. Pleated Masks

- When decorating these masks you'll want to keep your logo size small to ensure it doesn't extend over any overlapped fabric
- Many decorators have found success using a Hat Press on pleated masks
- By stretching the mask over the lower curved surface of the press, you can open up the pleats and get a larger decoration area
- **Disclaimer:** You can only press one mask at a time on the Hat Press

# Different Mask Types



## 4. Center Seam Masks

- Perfect for side decoration opportunity
- Fold the mask in half to get it to lay flat on the press
- Frees up more real estate on the heat press to heat apply multiple masks at once



## 5. Gaiters

- An alternative to the the traditional face mask
- Most gaiters can be laid flat onto the press and heat applied.
- They offer a very large branding area.
- Make sure you choose a compatible material for the neck gaiter since there's a lot of stretchability

# The Best Transfer for Your Mask

## 1. Custom Screen Printed Transfers

Best for: 20+ masks in an order with designs that include 1 or 2 colors



## 2. CAD-CUT® Heat Transfer Vinyl

Best for: Less than 20 masks in an order with designs that include 1 or 2 colors



## 3. UltraColor™ Soft Digital Screen Printed Transfers

Best for: 20 or more masks in an order with the same design in 3+ colors.



## 4. Sublimation Transfers on Polyester Masks

Best for: Any quantity of masks as long as the mask is a light color and ideally 100% polyester

