



Wicked Printing Stuff

Buyers Guide

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Where do I begin?

Welcome to the Wicked Printing Stuff Buyers Guide. The aim of this guide is to provide you with some key product information to help you determine what kit, equipment and products suit your needs. We also have a 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs) section on our website which includes in depth fact sheets/ help and answers regarding many other popular questions

Screen printing can seem confusing and complex to the beginner, however, with the right guidance, products and equipment, screen printing can be made easy!

So, 'where do I begin?' we hear people ask.

Below is a list of key questions you will need to think about before you get started, which is documented in further detail in the guide.

As you read on, you will need to make a note of your requirements in order for you to select the correct products.

- 1. What is your budget?*
- 2. Which materials or substrate are you printing onto?*
- 3. How many colours are in your designs?*
- 4. What is the size of your design?*
- 5. How much space do you have to work in?*
- 6. Are you working in a well ventilated area, or are there any health & safety issues that need to be considered?*
- 7. How much ink will you need?*
- 8. Which ink will you need?*
- 9. What is the cleaning down process of the ink?*
- 10. How do you ensure full wash fastness of the ink?*
- 11. Which mesh count should you choose for your screens?*
- 12. Drying and curing your ink*

1. What is your budget?

Your budget and screen printing needs will determine what type of kit or carousel is right for you. Obviously, the higher your budget, the more diverse you can be in your printing.

The WPS kit range starts at around £50.00, ideal for beginners and hobbyists, they go up to a mega 6 colour kit range for the more experienced professional printer with complex multi colour designs.

If you have a very limited budget of around £50.00, we recommend you take a look at our screen printing kit for beginners:

http://www.wickedprintingstuff.com/kits_presses/kits_for_beginners_C152.html

The beginner kits are suitable for simple text designs ideal for a hobby. A limited budget means you will be limited to the amount of colours you can have in your design, the detail you can produce and also the equipment that you can buy. The low budget kits are not for producing photo sensitive stencils, but are the 'craft hand cut out' stencils method.

As your budget increases so does the ability of the equipment to enable you to do more complex designs when printing. We sell a variety of complete kit packages, which includes everything you will need to start printing professional screen printed garments. The main options are listed below:

- 1 Colour Kits from - £199.00
- 2 Colour Kits from - £390.00
- 4 Colour Kits from - £600.00
- 6 Colour Kits from - £900.00

As you read through the guide you will be able to determine which type of package is for you.

2. Which materials or substrate are you printing onto?

T-SHIRTS/SWEATSHIRTS/HOODED POCKET TOPS/VESTS:

All of our kits/carousels/presses (except the paper & board kit) are sold with an Adult sized T-Shirt printing platen for printing onto t-shirts, sweatshirts and hooded tops. Please read on further for alternative platen sizes and which ink/meshes to choose.

PAPER, BOARD, CARD, BOXES (FLAT), CANVAS, CAPS (Transfers), TRANSFERS:

As long as you are printing onto flat objects, we recommend our vacuum board for printing onto these products. The vacuum board has a suction attachment to hold the substrate in place whilst printing multi colours. It is required because these types of substrates cannot be held in place with Hi Tak spray adhesive as it will damage them.

The vacuum board can be purchased as an additional item in conjunction with one of our printing presses under the 'platens' section on the website.

We also sell paper & board kits which include a vacuum board

For printing onto caps, you will need to produce plastisol transfers and have a cap press for transferring the transfer onto the cap (we do not sell the cap press).

3. How many colours are in your designs?

Whether you are printing onto t-shirts, sweatshirts, paper or board, the number of colours will determine whether or not you will require a :

- 1 Colour printing press
- 2 Colour printing press
- 4 Colour printing press
- 6 Colour printing press

If you are unsure how many colours you want to print in your design and want to keep to a low budget to begin. We recommend our upgradeable printing kits, where you can add additional arms (to print extra colours) later on.

4. What is the size of your design?

Depending on the size of your print, this will determine the following:

- The size of the printing platen required
- The size of the screen required
- The size of the squeegee required
- The size of the coating trough required

For an A4 Size image:

Print size approx: 8.27 x 11.69 inches. You will need 16" x 20" Screen, 12 inch squeegee, Child size platen, 12 inch coating trough.

For an A3 Size image:

Print size approx: 16.5 x 11.7 inches. You will need 20" x 24" Screen, 15 inch squeegee, Adult size platen, 15 inch coating trough.

For an A2 Size image:

Print size approx: 23.4 x 16.5 inches. You will need 23" x 31" Screen, 18 inch squeegee, 'All-Over' size platen, 18 inch coating trough.

5. How much space do you have to work in?

WPS carousels and printing presses are tabletop, they are designed to be space saving and suitable for those with limited space, small workshops, shops, schools and colleges where multiple printing presses are required and those working from home.

The exposure unit can also be sat on a table and depending on the size of the screen you are exposing takes up only 1 meter square of space.

The dimension you will need to measure when producing multicolour prints using our largest 23" x 31" screens is a comfortable spinning circle of 6 foot. Smaller screens require a smaller spinning circle.

The table size required for the printing press base must be big enough to cover the base size of our presses:

*We recommend a table of no less than 130 cm in length/ 65 cm width.
The following are the measurements for our 2, 4, and 6 colour presses:*

Without platen = length 120cm/47, Width 46cm/18"

With Platen fully extended = length 140cm/55.5"

6. Are you working in a well ventilated area, or are there any health & safety issues that need to be considered?

It is important to consider the environment that you are working in, in order for you to select the correct type of ink to use. If working in a well ventilated garage or workshop environment, then plastisol inks or solvent based inks are fine to use. They contain an odour and require a solvent screenwash to remove them from your screens.

If working in your home or in schools and colleges, you will need to select a solvent free ink such as a waterbased ink in order for there to be no fumes emitted and also for ease of cleaning down. E.g. if using a bath or shower and only water to remove the ink from your screen. It is not advisable to use, keep or store any inks and chemicals in an area where there are persons under 18 years of age.

7. How much ink will you need?

This depends on the size of your print and how many prints you need to produce per colour. As an approximate example, a 1 Litre size tub of ink will produce 200-300 prints A4 Size, depending on how heavy the deposit of ink is on your garment. This should help you calculate your requirement.

8. Which ink will you need?

9. What is the cleaning down process of the ink?

10. How do you ensure full wash fastness of the ink?

We have grouped the three questions above together in order for you to choose which inks you will need. Only you will know what sort of design work, images (large/small) you will be printing and the substrate you will be printing onto, which will determine the ink to use. We sell two types of ink for printing onto t-shirts and similar fabrics.

- *Plastisol inks*
- *Waterbased inks*

PLASTISOL INKS

Plastisol inks are most commonly used in screen printing because they are not 'air-dry' inks and when producing longer print runs they will not dry up on the screen. There is more choice when choosing your plastisol inks, more colours, plus additives can be added to your plastisol ink to produce special effects such as puffer/raised effect, suede effect, Lycra additive, glitters and metallics.

Plastisol inks MUST be fully heat cured before washing to avoid the print coming off in the wash. Plastisol inks wrap around the fibres in the fabric, sitting on top of the fabric producing a more 'dense' appearance and have a rubbery feel to them. You can change the appearance and feel of the plastisol ink by using an extender base or a super smooth base so as it feels and looks like the water based ink or sublimation ink.

Plastisol inks cannot be ironed directly over, due to the plastisizer in the ink. Plastisol inks must be cured at a temperature of 150 °C. Plastisol inks require screenwash to clean them off your screen.

For further information on plastisol inks please read our factsheet which also has information on curing plastisol inks.

http://www.wickedprintingstuff.com/site/download/WPS_Plastisol_Ink_Factsheet.pdf

We have also put together a set of guidelines for using additives with Plastisol ink:-

http://www.wickedprintingstuff.com/site/download/WPS_Plastisol_Additives.pdf

WATERBASED INKS

Waterbased ink is an air dry ink and with the use of an air dry catalyst the drying can be accelerated in order to achieve a quicker drying reaction/bond with the fabric. Various factors can determine a 'fully cure' of the print and so WPS always recommends the use of heat curing equipment in order to fully cure the print and guarantee wash fastness.

The waterbased ink is like a dye that changes the colour of the fabric and has a sublimation appearance. Waterbased inks have a softer feel as the ink dyes the fabric as opposed to 'sitting on top' of the fibres; it has an almost non-existent feel to it.

Waterbased inks are widely used in schools, colleges and on babies clothing. If you are printing an all-over print on to a garment that needs to be ironed such as a cotton shirt then a waterbased ink would be more suitable as you can iron over the print. Waterbased inks require water when cleaning them off your screen.

Waterbased inks come in standard colours (except the opaque white) and are not ideal for printing onto dark garments, unless a white under base is printed first, flash dried and then overprinted with the required colour. This is one of the many reasons plastisol inks in the maxopake range are widely used and are the first choice when printing onto black garments.

When printing breast size logos (9cm x 9cm approx), waterbased or plastisols can be used but you cannot iron directly over a plastisol print as it will re-melt the plastisol and smudge. For information on Plastisol inks & curing please read our guides on the FAQ section.

<http://www.wickedprintingstuff.com/faqs.html>

We have listed below the type of ink that should be used when printing onto other types of materials:

PAPER/BOARD/CARD: *This type of print requires an **AIR DRY** ink.*

You can use either a solvent free waterbased ink, or for a permanent outdoor ink you will need paper & board solvent based ink (there are health and safety regulations that come with using this type of ink). Solvent based inks require screenwash to remove them when cleaning them off your screen.

- **TRANSFERS:** PLASTISOL INK
- **NYLON BAGS:** NYLOBAG INK (Solvent Based)
- **VINYL PRODUCTS:** VINYL INK (Solvent Base)
- **CORREX/PLASTIC:** POLYPLAST INK or CORREX INK (Solvent Based)

11. Which mesh count should you choose for your screens?

Our kits are sold with 32T and 43T mesh counts on the screens, these are best for general textile designs with no halftones, shadows or very fine detail. If producing finer detailed or glitter print, halftones or photographic work, you will need to read the following guide in order to select the correct mesh count. We can alter the mesh on the screens for you (there may be a small fee to pay for the difference in cost) or, you can order additional screens alongside your kit.

For further information please check out the MESH guide on the FAQs

<http://www.wickedprintingstuff.com/faqs.html#thick>

12. Drying and curing your ink

All plastisol inks are not air dry and will therefore need to be dried by heat equipment. Plastisol inks will also need to be fully cured, which is drying them to the correct temperature and length of time, in order for the ink to not come off in the wash. A flash dryer will dry and cure the inks in 60 seconds and for longer print runs or larger set ups, a tunnel dryer is recommended. We sell Flash dryers and Tunnel dryers separately and our Mega kits include a Flash dryer..

Waterbased inks are air dry but we do recommend to all customers printing with waterbased and plan to sell their products for retail, that curing with a flash dryer or tunnel dryer will 100% guarantee that the ink will not wash out.