NEHOC Australia Pty Ltd
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Screen Printing Technique

NEHOC's easy to use equipment and the provision of professional Long Life squeegee's and inks remove most of the common problems associated with screen printing, changing two basic elements of technique to provide increased quality, easier printing.

Too much pressure the age old mistake

It's NOT the pressure applied to the squeegee that pushes the ink through the screen and onto the item below . . . it's actually the sharp edge of the squeegee blade that pulls a fine layer of ink through the screen mesh, which is designed to regulate the amount of ink that passes. Excess pressure simply bleeds the ink and blurs your design to reduce quality.

If you have never screen printed before then you will normally receive a better print than a person who has used old techniques, as they must remove the old habits of excessive pressure which was required using the outdated equipment and inks.

Positive pressure is placed on the squeegee, simply to keep even pressure along that blade so one side does not print more than the other. You can screen print with 2 fingers holding the squeegee handle - let the squeegee & ink do the work for you.

1. The angle of the squeegee is held upright at about 60-70 degrees

☆ The higher angle lets the sharp edge of the blade do the work for you

☆ This provides a clear, sharp print - angles too low force the ink through the screen and bleeding will result

2. Less pressure is used with the squeegee when printing

☆ The blade on the squeegee should NOT flex or bend whilst printing

☆ You don't need to push the squeegee through the screen - the ink will naturally be drawn through onto the material

Step-By-Step Technique

With your screen imaged and mounted to a frame, place the screen over some paper ready for a test print

Important

Always perform a test print onto paper before using each screen - this will reveal any pinholes or problems with the screen which can be corrected before printing commences.

Dip an ink knife into the ink and laden the squeegee blade with the ink ready to commence printing

- Stir the ink well before use
- Laden by placing the ink knife against the blade and holding the squeegee still, pull the ink knife downwards - the blade of the squeegee will 'scrape' the ink off the ink knife
- You can also put the ink directly onto the screen, however the new generation inks are easier to use and will not drip off the squeegee

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With sufficient ink on the blade, about 7-10mm thick, place the squeegee onto the edge of the screen, then lower the blade and rock forward & back 2-3 times to transfer the new ink onto the screen and then bring the angle back up ready to print

- Rocking to transfer the ink is ONLY required on the 1st print - this is not required for every print.

Pull the squeegee across the screen at an angle of approx. 70 degrees

- You will hear the squeegee 'rip' over the mesh
- It is best to pull the squeegee towards you.
- Side to side motions may place uneven pressure on the squeegee.
- Do not change the angle of the squeegee with your wrist whilst printing

When complete, raise the squeegee angle back to vertical to 'pick up' the ink and remove from the squeegee from the screen

- Some excess ink will remain on the screen - part of this will be collected next print
- If too much ink was applied it will not be picked up by the squeegee - collect with your ink knife

Rest the squeegee on some paper beside the screen and lift the frame in a hinge motion to reveal the print below

- A hinge motion is used to avoid smudging/ blurring the print [hold the frame on one side]
- If the print is too light you can lower the frame and print again as the hinge effect holds it in place

When using a jig

When using a jig you can save valuable time by keeping the squeegee in the frame after printing!

After you have completed your print, lift the squeegee to pick up the ink as described above and return to the top of the screen as if you were ready to print again.

Now while holding the squeegee upright against the clamp [so it does not fall into the wet ink on the screen], raise the arm of the jig. When the jig clips into the up position you can release the squeegee which will rest against the clamp on the arm in an upright position.

It may sound complicated, however it's really a simple and fast process that will help you maximise the benefits of the jig and dramatically speed your printing by saving space and eliminating many steps in the overall print process.

Points to note

- Your squeegee should be at approx. 70 degrees and move freely across the screen
- If too much ink is flowing off the outside edges and the print is blurred or heavy, then you are pressing too hard
- Once you commence printing you will quickly determine the correct level of pressure and squeegee angle that suits - the prints will tell you what you are doing wrong
- Prints too dark, blurred, smudged or not a clear image = pressure too great and squeegee angle too low
- Prints too light, not a clear image = pressure too light, squeegee angle too high or not enough ink on the squeegee

Heat set your prints

Fabric screen printing inks are water based and require heat setting in order to cure/set the pigments to the fabric.

It is best to use brown paper over the design to ensure no marks are transferred onto the garment when heat setting [not all irons bases are clean]. Brown paper will also help to distribute the heat more evenly and reduce scorching.

Pass the iron over the design from one side to the other ensuring you do NOT hold it still in any area, or scorching may occur.

The length of time required to heat set the ink depends on the temperature of the iron [this is set by the garment you are setting] and the size of the print.

Full details of this process - **www.nehoc.com.au/go/heatset**