



The Ultimate Beginner's Guide To

SUBLIMATION PRINTING

Everything you need to start
pressing, creating, and
selling

PREPARED BY XPRES



The Ultimate Beginner's Guide To Sublimation Printing

Everything you need to start pressing, creating and selling.

Introduction: Welcome to the world of sublimation

If you've ever dreamed of creating personalised mugs, cushions, t-shirts or coasters that not only look great but sell well too, you're in the right place. Sublimation is one of the easiest and most accessible ways to start your own creative business or side hustle.

This guide will walk you through what sublimation is, what equipment you'll need, how to press your first product, and how to avoid the most common mistakes. Whether you want to sell on Etsy, at local markets or to friends and family, we'll help you go from curious to confident in just a few pages.

What is sublimation? (And why it's so popular)

Sublimation is a digital printing process where heat is used to transfer dye onto materials like polyester fabrics or specially coated blanks (e.g. mugs, bottles, coasters). Unlike vinyl or transfers that sit on the surface, sublimation ink becomes part of the material, resulting in a smooth, professional finish that won't peel or crack.

Why beginners love sublimation:

- No weeding or layering like HTV
- High-quality, full-colour results
- Works with a wide range of blanks
- Once set up, it's fast and repeatable



What You Need To Get Started

Here's your essential starter kit:

1



Sublimation Printer – A printer that uses sublimation ink.

2



Sublimation Ink & Paper – Special ink that turns into gas with heat, and paper that releases it cleanly.

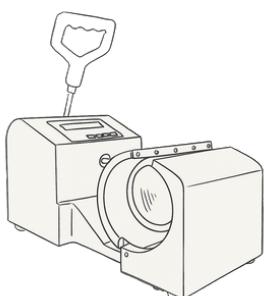
3



Design Software – Canva, Photoshop, CorelDraw.

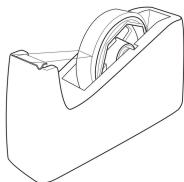


4



Heat Press – Flat press for garments, mug press for ceramics.

5



Essentials - heat tape to hold paper in place, and silicone sheets to keep your press protected.

6



Blanks – Products with a polyester coating or high polyester content.

Optional but helpful: Teflon pillows, a lint roller (for garments) and heat-resistant gloves.



Step-by-Step: Your First Sublimation Print

Design your artwork

- Keep it simple at first (e.g. name on a mug or a single graphic).
- Use high-resolution images (300 dpi recommended).

Print using your sublimation printer

- Mirror your print if required.
- Use sublimation paper.
- Use the correct print settings based on the substrate.

Prepare your blank

- Make sure it's clean and lint-free.
- Pre-press fabric blanks to remove moisture and creases.

Press it

- Use the correct time, temperature, and pressure (e.g. 190°C for 60 seconds).
- You can check the Xpres website for the exact settings.

Peel & admire!

- Let it cool slightly, then peel away the paper.
- Your first product is ready.



Avoiding Common Beginner Mistakes

- **Not mirroring your design before clicking print** – Eg, ceramics require a mirrored image, whereas acrylic and glass don't.
- **Wrong materials** – Must be polyester fabric with at least 65% polyester or polyester-coated.
- **Pressing for too long/too hot** leads to scorched or discoloured prints; however, **not pressing long enough or too cool** will result in blurred or faded prints.
- **Using low-res images** – Prints come out pixelated.
- **Not fixing paper in place** - without using heat tape to secure prints, this can cause ghosting or blurred prints.





Quick Tips to Build Confidence Fast

- Start with easy blanks like mugs or coasters
- Keep a log of time/temp/settings for each item
- Join Facebook groups or forums to learn from others
- Test your prints before offering for sale
- Mistakes will happen, it's part of the learning process!

What Next? Your First Sales

Once you've created 3–5 items you're proud of, try selling them!

- ✓ Start small: friends, family, Instagram, TikTok, Etsy.
- ✓ Take clear product photos in good lighting.
- ✓ Offer customisation (names, dates, quotes).
- ✓ Price fairly: cover materials, time, profit.
- ✓ Ask for reviews and build your confidence.



Why Xpres?

Xpres has been powering personalisation since 1980. We offer everything you need to get started – from printers and blanks to training and support.

Our team is here to help you grow. Whether you're creating for fun, for gifts, or for a growing business, we're proud to support the next generation of creators.

View our sublimation bundles and get everything you need from [Xpres.co.uk](https://www.xpres.co.uk).