

¹Wishblade 202

46 Tips and Tricks

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Cleaning Your Mat and Rollers

- (1) There are a variety of tools that work well for lifting delicate pieces from the mat. Creative Memories sells their multi-purpose tool. Also, there's a useful tool in the Cricut kit (sold separately). The flat side of an Xacto knife can also be used if you're careful!
- (2) Use a Pampered Chef brown scraper or other plastic scraper to remove small residual pieces of cardstock on your mat. Using one of the lint rollers with the sticky peel-off sheets will also help remove the tiniest of paper fibers stuck to the mat. I find that peeling off a sheet first and laying the sheet on the mat and pulling up and repeating is a lot easier than trying to roll the lint roller across the mat.
- (3) Mats can be safely cleaned with warm water, dish soap, and a soft brush. Allow to dry thoroughly. If more stickiness is needed, then spray with Krylon 7020 (Easy Tack) or use a Xyron 900 with a repositionable adhesive cartridge.
- (4) If you suspect that the rollers on your Wishblade have become dirty or have adhesive stuck to them, clean carefully with a Q-Tip and Undo.

Making Your Own Mat

- (5) Mats can be made from heavy duty quilting template plastic (available at craft store that sell quilting supplies). Simply cut to the desired size. Again, to make the mats sticky, either spray with Krylon 7020 (Easy Tack) or use a Xyron 900 with a repositionable adhesive cartridge.

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(6) Before spraying a new mat, you may want to apply masking tape along both long edges of the mat in the same way the yellow strips cover the regular mat. This will prevent adhesive from getting onto the white rollers.

(7) One inch grid lines (or half inch) can be drawn on the bottom of these clear mats or the top with a ruler and permanent black Sharpie pen. These can be used to determine where objects will cut.

(8) I find that an extra O Ring works better with these quilting mats, as they are just slightly thicker. You can cut your own O Ring's from cardstock and glue two together to equal one of the standard ones. The .gsd file for the O Ring can be downloaded from the Handy Files subfolder at: www.ilovecraftrobo.com/Tutorials

Sharpening the Blade

(9) Blades can be sharpened with heavy duty aluminum foil. Simply cover your mat with the foil. Create a file with several straight lines, a couple of circles, and a few squares. Set the speed to slow or medium in case the foil comes loose from the mat and you need to quickly abort. Set the thickness to 1. Repeat with all three blade caps.

(10) When a blade is slightly dull or you have a thick cardstock and need to cut twice, try copying/pasting the image on the screen on top of itself. The cutter will then automatically cut it twice.

(11) Also, pieces of lint can occasionally get caught up in the blade. Remove the cap and check the blade under a magnifying glass to see if any fibers are present.

Buying a New Blade, Mat, etc.

(12) The following web site sells a complete line of accessories for the Wishblade and other cutters. Accugraphics has an alternative blade holder that you buy once and then the replacement blades are much cheaper. They also (with caps) there. This is the same set you get when you buy a new cutter:

<http://www.scrapbookdiecutter.com/>

Using Xyroned-Backed Cardstock or Paper

(13) Method 1- Taping:

Use blue painter's tape to adhere the Xyroned piece to the mat. Make sure the tape is stuck down securely.

(14) Method 2- Xyron Upside Down Method:

In the Wishblade program: Select the image or text and right click on it. Choose Mirror/Horizontal Mirror.

When you load the Xyroned paper onto the mat, put it with the slippery backing side up. (Paper side down on the sticky part of the mat)

Then when you send it to cut, you are cutting out the mirror image, and when you flip it over you get it just the way it needs to be.

(15) Method 3 – Dedicating a mat for Xyron Use:

The first method doesn't work if you need to print something first, so you need to create a mat that will actually hold the Xyron backing without slipping.

Take an old mat, and run it through the Xyron 900 with the PERMANENT adhesive cartridge. This makes a mat that is sticky enough to actually hold the pre-Xyroned backing paper without slipping at all. (And you can still remove the items when you are finished.)

Make sure you label the special mat as the Xyron mat, because it will tear non-Xyroned paper.

Pen Holder

(16) Place a pencil in the pen holder and computer paper on your mat to draw where your image is going to cut, if in doubt. Hopefully, future versions of the pen holders will allow the use of a vanishing ink pen (like the Journaling Genie one) and you can simply draw your image right onto your cardstock or paper, if needed.

(17) Place a gel pen (American Crafts is the only size known to fit) in the pen holder to "print" on dark cardstock. The cutter can only draw

“outlines” of letters, but it’s usually pretty quick to fill in the letters by hand afterwards.

(18) Place water color pencils in the pen holder and sketch out your images. Then use a blender pen to create a beautiful water color picture.

(19) Place a black pen in the pen holder and make outline marks just inside your cutting for an out-lined look.

Where Will Things Cut?

(20) Knowing exactly where images will cut allows you to use up scraps of paper or cardstock that are not large enough to fill the mat. One useful tip I learned even before I bought my cutter was to always place your image on the screen in the lower left hand corner. Then you know that in Portrait mode, the image will begin cutting at the top right and the top of the screen will be at the bottom of the mat. In Landscape mode, the image will begin cutting at the top left and be oriented sideways, thus the top of the screen will be at the right side of the mat.

(21) Create a placement guide by drawing a grid of 1” inch squares and printing onto the rough side of a transparency file (designed specifically for inkjet printers). Determine your base point on the mat by having a specific place you always load the cardstock and the mat and then noting where on a scrap of cardstock it will cut a certain item relative to the location on the screen.

Auto-Tracing and Welded Lettering

(22) Try the free Inkscape program before investing in an expensive tracing program like Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, or WinPC Sign. It will auto-trace, create welded letter titles, and even make mats easily. Join the Wishblade forum at www.paperthreads.com to get the latest information on where to download the correct version and to get free tutorials and help.

(23) Another way to mat letters is to simply cut out the letters in two colors and offset them slightly at the same angle (e.g. move the top letter slightly down and to the right). School teachers have been using this technique for years for their bulletin boards!

Hand Tracing

(24) I cannot emphasize enough how useful it is to learn to trace within the Wishblade software itself. Start with simple designs and remember that it only takes practice to become quick and accurate with it. The advantages to hand-tracing are (a) it usually works much better when you have an image with low resolution (b) it's easy to modify the image later (c) it allows you to draw precise lengths, which can be important in template projects, such as a fold-up boxes or gift bags.

(25) For symmetrical designs or repeated patterns learn to copy/paste and then rotate, invert, etc. to get perfect designs.

Efficiency with Paper and Cardstock

(26) When doing paper piecing, learn where things cut on the mat so that you can place several colors on the mat at one time and cut all the pieces in one cutting.

(27) Images can be moved VERY close to one another to save on space. Look for "waste areas" (even the insides of images or letters that won't be needed) to fit small items.

(28) Multiple items can be cut at once and rotating the images can often help to get them to all fit on one sheet of cardstock. Click on Select, click on the item and then click on a corner. A circle arrow should appear and the item can now be rotated.

(29) Use up extra space on your sheet of cardstock by cutting out some flowers or letters or anything you know you might need for a future project.

Cut and Print Tips

(30) Remember the following 5 things to get Print and Cuts to work:

- Make sure the room is dimly lit when the optic eye is searching for the registration marks.
- Don't roll the media in very far. When the optic eye begins its search, it will roll the mat forward on its own.

- Make sure the registration marks are not being covered by the rollers.
- If the automatic search fails, unclick the box next to Search Registration Mark and position the blade in the area with the black circle. Then click on the Registration Mark Reading button.
- Use a black marker to darken the registration marks if the above tips fail.

(31) If you need to cut from the front of a pre-made card and want to make sure everything is centered, then do a Print and Cut. Draw the shape of your card onto the screen and then add the shape to be cut in a different color. Print onto regular computer paper so that you see the outside shape of the card, the inside shape to be cut, and the registration marks. Now, tape your pre-made card onto the computer paper and feed into the Wishblade. Turn off the cut color of the outside shape and leave the inside shape color checked. Use the registration marks for precise cutting.

(32) Sometimes, a reverse Cut and Print will be more efficient than the regular Print and Cut OR it's a great alternative when the registration marks can't be read on the media (e.g. vellum). To do this, turn off the registration marks. Print your image onto computer paper (check the Print Cut Lines box). Cut your items from your chosen media. Adhere your cut items to the computer paper with temporary adhesive. Uncheck the Print Cut Lines box and then feed the paper through the printer again in the same orientation so that it will print on top of your cut items. If you have more cut items to print, simply remove the first batch, add the next set and repeat as many times as necessary.

Transferring Cut Letters

One of the toughest challenges for a scrapbooker is lining up cut letters onto a layout so that they look even and correctly spaced. Below are three methods that I've seen posted by members.

(33) Method 1 - Using Application Tape

You can purchase two widths of application tape to use to move letters. Basically, you lay the tape across the letters while they are still on the mat and lift

them up, apply the adhesive, and then press the letters to your layout. Then remove the tape. Here's a link to buy this tape:

<http://stickystuff.biz/catalog/index.php>

Alternatively, you can use blue painter's tape or regular masking tape to pick up the letters and apply onto your layout.

(34) Method 2 – Mirror Image Cut

In this method you do a mirror image of the letters before cutting. After the cut is completed, the excess cardstock or paper is removed from the mat. Adhesive is applied to the backs of the letters (which are facing upwards). Then the layout is pressed down onto the letters and the mat is then peeled away.

(35) Method 3 – Using the Negative Image for Alignment

After cutting the letters, everything is removed from the mat. The negative is placed onto the layout and used as a guide for placing the letters after adhesive is applied.

Cutting Other Materials

(36) You can cut light fabrics by Xyroning first or using Wonder Under.

(37) If you wish to cut something from foil, it's a good idea to Xyron it to cardstock first to help prevent tearing.

(38) Craft foam can be cut with a Wishblade and can simulate chipboard, which cannot be cut. Some scrapbookers simply cut several of the same shape from cardstock and adhere the layers to each other to simulate chipboard.

Using Your Resources

(39) Yahoo Groups and Messages Boards dedicated to discussing Yahoo are THE way to learn the most about using a Wishblade. Here are links to some of the best ones to join to learn:

<http://www.paperthreads.com/forum/>

<http://www.ukscrappers.co.uk/boards/forumdisplay.php?f=201>

(while this forum is for the Craft Robo, both cutters are identical in operation and have only slight differences in their software)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WishbladeVenting/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CRFun/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wishblade/>

(40) The Wishblade class tutorials (Wishblade 101, 102, 103, 201, etc) can be downloaded from my web site. You can also grab some other useful ones there:

www.ilovecraftrobo.com

(41) Many Wishblade and Craft Robo owners share their own tracings and designs (.gsd files). You can again join Yahoo groups and message boards to download these. Just go to the main Yahoo group site and search on the words "Wishblade" or "Craft Robo" and many choices will pop up!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/>

(42) There are lots of web sites that provide free True Type fonts (.ttf), which can then be used with your Wishblade for cutting letters.

<http://www.scrapvillage.com/fonts.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/freescrapbookfonts1/>

<http://www.abstractfonts.com/>

<http://www.typhenow.net/themed.htm>

<http://www.fonts101.com/>

<http://www.fontseek.com/fonts/>

<http://www.coffeecup.com/freestuff/fonts/>

Font Management

(43) Understanding fonts and font management is very important if you plan to collect a lot of fonts. Avoid installing too many fonts into your Windows\Fonts folder. Instead, save them to a separate subfolder.

(44) When you need to use a particular font, simply locate the font using Explorer or My Computer and double click on the font name. A preview of the font should appear. This font is now temporarily installed and will show up in your Windows applications, such as Word and Wishblade Advance. When you're finished using that font, then simply close the font window.

(45) When using TTF fonts in Wishblade, click on the first font in the dropdown menu to highlight it. Now you can use the up and down arrow keys to scroll through the list of fonts and see samples of each in the "ABC abc" window.

(46) The Font Thing is a great little utility program for viewing samples of fonts on your computer, installed or not installed. It's free and you can google it, download, and install.

Credits

Thank you to all the wonderful Yahoo group members who experiment and then share their discoveries with everyone. The ideas presented here came from those members.