

Cutting with Cricut – Tips & Tricks from Deb Larson

For the quilter, the ability to cut fabric shapes, paper shapes and template plastic would be of the most interest. Cricut can cut many materials, but I will address these 3 materials as that is what I have done so far!

TO START:

- ❑ You will download the “Cricut Design Space” app to your laptop, tablet or phone. It is free.
 - There is a special new feature that I will demonstrate called “snap mat”. Unfortunately, this feature only works on IOS (Apple) products.
- ❑ You will need some “Heat N Bond Lite” fusible interface to cut fabric shapes. I have had the best luck with this brand, but experiment with what you like best.
 - When you fuse the Heat N Bond to the back of your fabric, make sure it bonds well. I often leave the iron on for 4-5 seconds, rather than 2-3. I set the DRY iron heat at “low cotton” or “wool”.
 - After you fuse your fabric to the Heat N Bond, it’s important that you let the fabric cool COMPLETELY before placing it on the cutting mat.
 - I cut my Heat N Bond just a bit smaller (1/8” on each side) than the fabric I am putting on the mat to cut my shape.
- ❑ Cricut Model: The “Explore” series has been around a while (I got mine in 2016); the newer series is known as the “Maker” series. The Maker blades are totally different than the Explore/Air series, which I am using.
 - Both series of machines can communicate with your laptop, tablet or phone by Bluetooth. No internet is required for this. When your device-computer, tablet or phone – has Bluetooth active and the Cricut is turned on and “discovered”, the “on” button will turn blue .
 - If you are prompted for a factory pin, it’s “0000” for all models.
 - The Cricut Design Space DOES require internet access, and all of your designs are saved “in the cloud”.
 - If you are cutting bonded fabric, ONLY use the pink blade, in the pink housing, on the pink mat, which are designed for fabric. You can use the other mats and blades to cut paper, etc.
 - There are LOTS of great YouTube videos on how to do almost anything in Cricut. A lot of time their opinions conflict; there will be some trial & error involved!
- ❑ Loading your Images and Text into Cricut
 - When you pull up the app, there are many free things you can download. There are also many you can purchase for \$.99, etc. You can also sign up for Cricut Access for hundreds of thousands of images, fonts, etc. for \$9.99/month.
 - The following file types can be loaded into Cricut: .jpg, .gif, .png, .bmp, .svg, .dxf
- ❑ What you can do with your Image in Cricut
 - You can easily change the size of your image. If you are not sure what size you want, you could always cut it out in Cricut in paper to check! You can also rotate, mirror, copy and offset. You can “weld” multiple items together to eliminate individual smaller items. You can do the opposite and “slice” them to separate.
 - In an image, you may have more than one color. Each color item will be on it’s own “layer”. Each “layer” will be cut separately, so you can use different fabrics, etc. The exception to this is “Snap Mat”, a newer feature that allows you to use scraps of fabric to cut different fabrics on one mat, at the same time.

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- ❑ Snap Mat: (I will be demonstrating this new technique). Remember: Apple iPad or phone only (sorry!)
 - The first step is to change all the items to one layer. You do this in “Color Sync”, by dragging and dropping the layers to one layer.
 - You will prepare your mat with the “scraps”. The fusible web will be ironed on, and completely cool before you place them on the mat. NOTE: I have been having better results with leaving the paper on the fusible but in the past I was told to take off the paper. You’ll have to experiment.
 - Place the “scraps” on the mat – be sure they don’t touch/overlap. It’s a good idea to leave some space in between them.
 - Go back to your design screen and click on “Make It” in the upper right corner. In the lower left corner you will see a small “Snap Mat” square button. Once you click that button, your camera will activate and you will be prompted to focus all of the mat on the square that appears. When the app has the information (you don’t click on anything), it will show you a picture of your mat, with the scraps in place.
 - You can then drag the separate items (they are on the same layer, but still separate groups) to the respective fabrics that you would like them on.
 - Then the software will lead you through the steps to cut all of the items that are on the one mat!
- ❑ Clean Up Tips: Your mat will need to be cleaned periodically to keep it “sticky”. This will hold your fabric, paper, etc. for a clean cut. And of course, just like rotary cutters, a dull knife is easy to periodically replace.
 - Oddly enough, Cricut does not give cleaning techniques for mats, and the warranty for a new Cricut is supposedly voided if you clean your mat the first year.....your guess is as good as mine.
 - Here’s what I do when I need to clean/restore the “sticky” to my mat:
 - Use the white “scraper” or an old credit card. Scrap the mat – not too hard – in one direction. Sometimes some of the fusible web sticks to the mat; I try to get this off asap.
 - If that doesn’t do it, you can get some cleaner at the Dollar Store called “Krud Klutter”. Spray it on and scrap off. Let the mat dry on it’s own; don’t use a towel, micro cloth, etc. As the mat dries it will get stickier” – that’s when you know it worked.
 - I have heard good things about alcohol-free baby wipes, and also soaking the mat in warm (not hot) water with a little Dawn. Massage the mat with your fingers; DON’T use a sponge, etc. Don’t leave it in very long. Then rinse under the faucet & hang it to dry (put a hanger through the hole at the top of the mat.
 - I also try to cut off a lot of stray threads at the edge of my fabric scraps, so I’m not picking them off of the mat.