

Tips for using ITS™ Image Transfer Solution



ITS (Image Transfer Solution) is a heat-setting medium that allows you to transfer laser/toner (but not ink jet) images onto metal, sea glass, unglazed tile and other non-porous surfaces.

Safety

- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions and safety precautions. Work in a clean and well-ventilated area.

Test first

- Make one or two pieces as a test. Document your procedure and results. Make adjustments accordingly.

Tools & supplies: ITS Image Transfer Solution (#86-910), various grits (600 – 1200) of polishing papers such as 3M™ Wetordry™ polishing paper assortment (#69-257-0000), Renaissance® micro-crystalline wax polish (#86-915), etching solution such as etchall® (#86-216), fiber blanket (#69-181), fine-point scissors, container for water, paintbrushes, burnishing tool, oven or toaster oven (with accurate temperature gauge), heat gun (found in scrapbooking section of craft store), mica pigments

1. Preparing the surface

- Images will adhere better if the surface is roughened up. Sand surfaces with 600-grit sandpaper. There's no need to sand beach glass, but smooth glass surfaces will need to be etched. Sand shell under water, as particles are not healthy to breathe.
- Rinse off the dust after sanding and wash with soap and water, and let dry.
- Clean metal with alcohol or acetone.

2. Preparing the image

- Print copyright-free images with a **toner** printer, not an ink-jet printer. Most inexpensive home printers are ink-jet printers. Copy centers will have toner printers.
- A semi-glossy paper works well for image transfer. Matte (non-glossy) paper works too, but it takes more effort to remove the paper fibers.
- Your paper images should be a mirror image of what you want as an end result. Flip family photos, famous artwork, or anything that has words, or they will end up backwards on your finished piece. Exception: when you place the image on the backside of a clear piece of glass, you don't need a mirror image.
- Cutting must be precise. For best results, use quality fine-point scissors. Don't try to cut the paper more thoroughly after you adhere it.
- Cover the surface edge to edge, with no overhang or indentations. If your image is smaller than the piece you are putting it on, you will have a visible edge. This will look like a decal unless you find a way (paint, careful oxidizing, etc.) to finish the edges in an artful way.
- Dark images look best on a lighter background (brass vs. copper).

3. Applying ITS onto the image

- Paint the Image Transfer Solution onto your piece with a fine paintbrush. Try to get it on fairly evenly, then lay your piece of paper over it (image down).
- Using too much ITS and getting it smeared on top of the paper makes it more difficult to remove the paper later. You want to use enough to adhere the image completely to the surface, but no more.
- If item has a lip or bezel, be especially careful of using too much ITS.
- Burnish your piece of paper with your fingers, formal burnishing tool, or the butt end of a Sharpie® marking pen. Work from the center out to remove air pockets.
- You have one chance to place your image -- you can't lift it, scoot it, etc. There is no wiggle -- it grabs immediately.
- Don't get lint and other particles onto your piece when painting or they'll be on it forever.
- If extra ITS gets on the paper or item, clean it off immediately with alcohol.
- Rinse your paintbrush quickly or the ITS will dry hard on it.

4. Heat setting

- Heat according to package instructions. For best results, apply only to items that can be heated to 325 F for 30 minutes.
- A transfer on a prebaked polymer surface needs to bake at a lower temperature and for less time.
- We don't recommend a toaster oven, as they heat inconsistently. If you do use a toaster oven, set it to 25-100 degrees cooler than the recommended temperature.
- Since ovens vary, watch and smell closely. Remove items promptly if they begin to singe. Adjust oven temperature accordingly.
- If using a heat gun, heat your items on a firing block or fiber blanket.

5. Cooling and finishing

- Allow items to cool to room temperature. This is especially important with glass!
- After cooling, let items soak for 10 minutes in a dish of water. Do not soak more items than you can realistically clean off quickly (1 or 2 items at a time, per person cleaning them). If you soak them for too long, then part of the image can come off.
- Gently remove the paper backing according to package instructions. Calloused fingers are perfect. Gentle dish scrubbies such as the green side of those yellow & green kitchen sponges can also be carefully used.
- Use 1200-grit Wetordry polishing paper to remove fine paper lint.
- Different qualities of paper remove easier and faster than others.
- Don't rub hard or you can remove the transferred image. Be gradual and patient in your sanding process. Rinse and check the image as you go.
- Use Renaissance wax as sealer. Apply with a soft lint-free cloth, like an old cotton T-shirt. Be gentle. Too much rubbing and the image will begin to lift off.

ETC.

- Patina metal surface after transferring the image. DON'T patina first or else you'll have to sand and clean all the patina off the spot where you want to put an image.
- Use a cotton swab or paintbrush to patina surface. Don't dunk piece into antiquing solution.
- ITS can be colored with mica pigments and used to paint color onto metals.