

FIXING SCREEN PROBLEMS

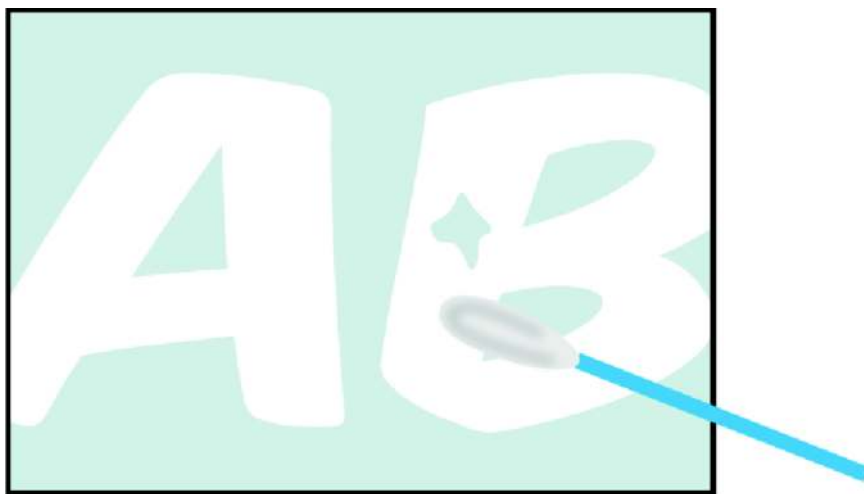
Many times you will inspect a newly burned screen and find blemishes, unwanted emulsion clogs, rough edges on stencils etc. that will detract from the quality of your prints. This will become more prevalent as you reuse mesh over and over until finally you will decide to remesh your screen frame or buy a new screen.

When you encounter one of these screen defects, your inclination may be to reclaim it and start over with new emulsion. But keep in mind that you make your money by printing, not by doing things twice. Before you reclaim a screen consider how you might fix the problem and get on with your project.

There are several ways you can fix problems with screens.

REMOVE UNWANTED EMULSION FROM OPEN AREAS OF A STENCIL

If the spot of emulsion is in a fairly large open area, you can get rid of it with emulsion remover and a Q-Tip. Dip the Q-Tip into your emulsion remover and dab it on the spot on both sides of the screen, taking care not to get any on the emulsion you want to keep. When the spot of emulsion dissolves, rinse the screen with plenty of water.



METHOD #2: SPOT GUN

If your unwanted emulsion is in a tight area or on the edge, use your spot cleaning gun to blast it away. (Go for it! You were going to reclaim the screen anyway...) Widen the stream a little bit to lower the force of the jet. Hold your screen up to a bright light so you can clearly see the area you need to work on.

Carefully gun out the unwanted emulsion from the back (shirt) side of the screen. Use short bursts and as few as possible to get rid of it. If you're careful you may not damage any of the surrounding emulsion, but if you do don't worry. There are a few ways you can fix it.

Many cleaning fluids, if allowed to dry in the mesh will leave a residue that will be very difficult to clean off. To prevent this, while the fluid is still wet immediately rinse it with isopropyl alcohol (available at most stores) and then rinse that off with water.

Now gently wipe the screen with an old T-shirt to remove excess water and set the screen in front of a fan to dry.

Inspect the area you worked on by once again holding the screen up to the bright light. Confirm that you removed all the unwanted emulsion and check to see if you damaged any of the emulsion that is supposed to be there. If you did, you can fix it in several ways.

FIXING DAMAGED EMULSION AND HOLES

Examine the area and determine the best way to repair it. in the E-Lesson "Shortcuts, Tips & Tricks you can read about how to use Elmers School Glue to repair holes and damaged stencil areas. Put your screen on a light table or over a bright light source and carefully apply the glue with a toothpick to the unwanted open areas of the stencil. If you're careful, take your time and have a steady hand you will be amazed at how accurately you can repair the damage.

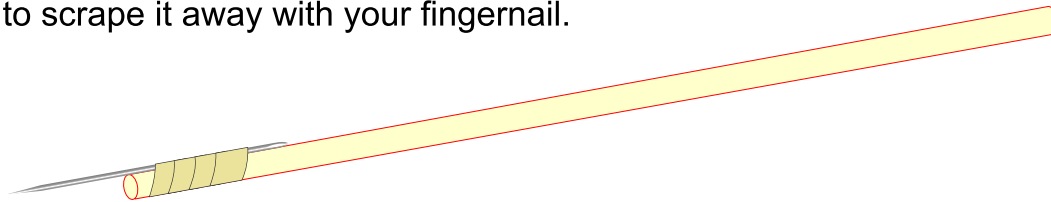


Take your time and use one hand to steady the other if it's a really tight area.

REMOVE SMALL EMULSION SPECKS

A tiny speck of emulsion in a halftone screen or within fine detail can result in a noticeable blemish on the print. Obviously you can't use your spot gun on these, but often you can remove the speck with a needle. Take a large diameter needle and tape it to a stick as shown (a chopstick works well.)

For this fix I recommend using a magnifying glass to get a close view of the area you're working on. Position the screen over a bright light source and carefully poke the point of the needle on the speck. Use only the very point; don't force the needle through the mesh. Use numerous quick controlled strokes until you loosen the unwanted speck enough to scrape it away with your fingernail.

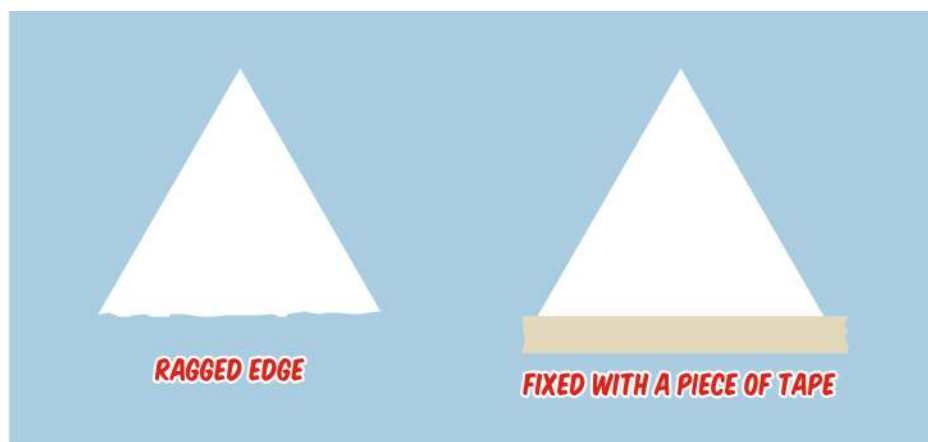


TAPE A LARGE NEEDLE TO A STICK

You can also use this needle tool with your school glue to repair holes in a halftone screen. Once again, use a magnifying glass and a bright light to get in close. Dip the point of the needle into the glue and apply it to the screen in short dabs exactly where it needs to be. Don't use too much glue here, just enough to fill in the unwanted hole.

FIX A RAGGED EDGE

When you have an edge that's supposed to be straight but comes out with a ragged look, you can fix it surprisingly well with a piece of tape. Use your spot gun if necessary to gun away unwanted emulsion and then carefully apply a piece of tape across the entire edge on the shirt side of the screen. Burnish it down with your fingernail. On longer runs you may find that from time to time you need to wipe this with a cloth to remove ink buildup.



FIXING A STENCIL USING YOUR VINYL CUTTER

Another way to fix damaged emulsion on the edge of an image is to use your vinyl cutter (if you have one.) Use sign vinyl (not T-shirt vinyl) and make a cut in the shape of the area you need to fix (see diagram.) Reverse the image first.

Now, peel the vinyl and stick it to a piece of wax paper. Because you can see through the wax paper, now you can position the vinyl exactly where you want it on the screen. Remove the wax paper and burnish the vinyl down with your fingernail.

This will work fine for a short run. For a medium run you may find that you need to wipe it off after printing a quantity of shirts. I did this fix on a run of 100 once and didn't have any trouble.

To make cleanup easier, remove the vinyl as soon as you're done printing. If you leave it on, the ink will gum up the vinyl adhesive and make a gooey mess of it.



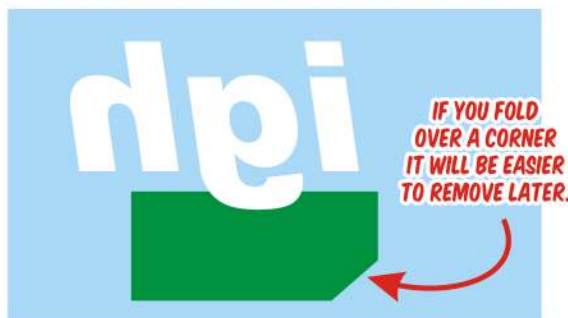
***THIS SCREEN IS FINE
EXCEPT FOR THAT "G"***



***MIRROR THE IMAGE AND USE IT TO
MAKE A FIX AS SHOWN. THEN
CUT IT OUT OF A PIECE OF SIGN VINYL.***



***BLAST AWAY THE UNWANTED
EMULSION WITH A SPOT GUN.***



***CAREFULLY APPLY CUT VINYL TO
THE BACK OF THE SCREEN. USE
WAX PAPER TO LINE IT UP
PERFECTLY. TIME TO PRINT!***