

## Combine Machine Embroidery with Heat Transfer Vinyl

If you have an embroidery machine, you can create some impressive machine appliqué designs. It's one of my favorite ways to embellish sewing projects.

I recently added an appliqué design to an apron using heat transfer vinyl (HTV) instead of fabric. I am so pleased with how it turned out. My apron was a vinyl material, and I thought some shiny HTV would be the perfect complement, as well as being easy to wipe clean!



Heat transfer vinyl is a smooth, waterproof material that adheres to fabric when heat and pressure are applied. It is mostly used to decorate t-shirts, but it can be applied to almost any fabric or smooth surface. Typically, people choose either embroidery or HTV when they want to add designs to fabric, but combining HTV with machine appliqué or embroidery opens all sorts of fun possibilities.

I used some high quality [HTV from Madam Sew](#) for my appliqué project. It comes in colorful sheets that you can use with or without a cutting machine. I also purchased a machine appliqué design from a seller on Etsy and an apron for the project.



If you've ever worked with HTV before, you might be wondering if it would hold up well to stitching. With some trial and error, I was able to make it work. I've outlined the steps below on how to use heat transfer vinyl in machine appliqué without tearing. It's easy! I hope you'll give it a try.

## Step 1: Prepare Your Project for Appliqué

Prepare your apron, or whatever you're adding the applique to, by washing and ironing first. It's important to start with a clean and completely flat surface. Also, keep in mind that HTV will only attach to a smooth surface, so towels and any fabric with a nap will not work.

When using HTV in your appliqué, hoop your item like normal. The type of stabilizer you should use depends on your project. Tear-away stabilizer works well with woven fabrics, but it's better to use a cut-away stabilizer with knits to prevent your design from stretching.

After hooping your base fabric and stabilizer, load the appliqué design into your machine, insert a new needle, and thread your machine with the color you want to use.



## Step 2: Sew Your Placement Stitch and Tack Down Stitch

HTV comes in sheets or on a roll. You can simply substitute it for fabric in machine appliqué. However, the clear, plastic carrier sheet must be removed first. It can be a little tricky to peel off the plastic—start from a corner and go slowly to prevent the HTV from stretching. *This is the hardest part...*

Attach your hoop to your machine and stitch out the first placement stitch in your appliqué design. Then, remove your hoop and place the HTV down, completely covering the placement line that you just stitched. If you're worried about it moving, you can spray a small amount of basting adhesive to the back. Next, sew the tack down stitching.

**Note:** Remember that the right side of the HTV is the side touching the carrier sheet.

### Step 3: Trim Around the HTV

Trim the HTV around the tack down stitch as close as you can get to the stitches without cutting them. A pair of [small embroidery scissors](#) works best for this task. You may be able to rip or tear away the excess HTV instead of cutting it, but if you do, go slowly and be careful to prevent your fabric or stabilizer from shifting or pulling. Some HTV tears more easily than others. Madam Sew's HTV will tear, but it is better to cut it.



Before moving on to the satin stitch, press the HTV to permanently adhere it to your project.

**This is important!**

If you do not press the HTV, it can peel away from the satin stitch too easily. If you look closely at the following picture, you'll see that the HTV pulled away a little bit on the gold part but not on

the green part. This is because I forgot to press the gold HTV before doing the satin stitch. Luckily, it's not too bad, and you can only tell if you look closely...



It's best to press the HTV from the wrong side or use a pressing cloth. Use the heat setting recommended on your HTV, and do not unhoop your fabric before pressing. Just do the best you can without touching your hoop and accidentally melting it. A mini iron works great for this.

Continue this process for all additional layers in your appliqué design.



## **Step 4: Sew the Satin Stich**

Make sure the HTV is smooth with no puckering or bubbling and then sew the decorative satin stitch to finish your design. I think appliqués created with an embroidery machine look fabulous because the satin stitch prevents any fraying and they come out looking crisp and neat.





You can stitch directly on top of HTV, too! Just make sure that it is ironed on first. That really is the trick to using HTV in appliques or any other sewing embellishments. Using HTV for small applique projects is also a great way to use up HTV scraps from other projects.



Are you ready to give appliqué with HTV a go? Save this post and get some HTV from Madam Sew. When you're done, we'd love to see your projects. Post pics in Madam Sew's Facebook page.



You might also like to read [Madam Sew's Vinyl Manual](#).

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