Makersplayce Machine Manuals

Cricut Maker 3



Introduction

This is the user guide of the Cricut Maker 3 in Makersplayce. Cricut Maker 3 is a precision cutting machine capable of handling a variety of materials like sticker paper, vinyl, and fabric. The designs can be made using the Cricut Design Space which can be downloaded from Cricut's official website. If you do not understand any part of the manual you can google the issue, as Cricut is a very commonly used machine in the DIY world.

This manual provides step-by-step guidance on how to safely and effectively use the Cricut Maker 3 and its accessories, including Smart Materials and specialized blades. The user is **strongly encouraged to read this guide fully before using the machine**, especially if they've never worked with digital cutting tools, as misuse can lead to material waste or damage to the machine.

Overview

Below is an overview of each Cricut supply present in Makersplayce and what they can be used for, and the overview of the machine itself:

- **Cricut Maker 3**: To cut materials to the desired shape. The Cricut can only cut, and can't print anything. You can also try to write with it if you have the Cricut pens (which we do not at Makersplayce) by placing a pen in the first housing next to the cutting blade.
- **Power Adapter + USB Type B cable:** To power the Cricut and connect it to your computer. It is also an option to not use the USB cable and instead connect to the Cricut via Bluetooth.
- **Cricut Roll Holder**: An external accessory that helps manage and feed rolls of Smart Vinyl or Smart Iron-On into the machine. It keeps long materials aligned and organized during cutting.
- **Cricut Standard Grip Cutting Mat**: A mat used to place the material onto, to hold it in place and secure while cutting.
- **Smart Vinyl (in black and white)**: Adhesive vinyl that doesn't require a cutting mat. It's used to create decals, labels, or designs that stick to surfaces like glass, plastic, or walls.
- **Smart Paper Sticker Cardstock**: Sticker-like paper that can be cut into shapes or labels. It's thick paper with a sticky back, for making custom stickers or labels directly from the machine.
- **Smart Iron-On**: A heat-transfer material used to apply designs to fabric. Like Smart Vinyl, it doesn't require a cutting mat and is compatible with heat presses or irons.
- **Rotary Blade + Drive Housing**: This blade is used with the Cricut Maker 3 to cut soft, delicate, or stretchy materials like fabric, felt, or crepe paper. The rotary blade rolls across materials instead of dragging like a traditional blade.

Some of the material require a cutting mat, the green Cricut Standard grip cutting mat can be used for this. It is recommended to use the cutting mat if you have a design that's big enough to fit on the cutting mat to keep the material in place while cutting. **Do not forget to stick the transparent cover back on the cutting mat when you're done using it.**

But the smart vinyl's are better used with the Cricut roll holder since they are quite big rolls with a lot of material.

Starting up

To start up, open Cricut design space and make a new account. To make a new account, click sign in and a new window will pop up in your browser. If you already have an account, fill in your information in sign in, if you don't go the create Cricut ID section and fill in new information to make a new account.



Figure 1 Cricut Maker 3 buttons

Connect the power cable to the Cricut and turn it on by pressing the 1 (on/off) button. In Cricut Design Space, click on your account name/logo on the top right corner, then go to Settings > Machines > New Product Setup. Follow the steps to setting up the Cricut Maker 3, but skip the calibration step (because we do not have the calibration material), the machine has been already calibrated by using other calibration methods. If you selected to connect via Bluetooth, the on off button will also turn blue when you're connected

The buttons shown in figure 1 are for:

1. Turn on/off the machine
2. Load/unload material
3. Continue
4. Pause

To open the Cricut, gently lift up the top gray part of the machine, it will open up automatically by itself.

How to use

To use Cricut, you first need to come up with a design in Cricut Design Space. When you open the software, you will see the Discover tab. Here you can find example projects that other people made, or ready to cut images and shapes.

Designing

To make your own design or continue a design that you were working on, click on My Stuff on the left selection tab with the box icon. Then on the top right corner, click on + New Project. You will see an empty grid with + New, Templates, Projects, Shapes, Images, Text, Monogram and lastly Upload on the left selection tab. To start with a design, you can insert one of those selections on the left. Templates are guides that are not going to be cut, but meant to help you design on the canvas. Projects are example projects that other Cricut users have made just like on the Discover tab.

Inserting Objects:

- To insert an image, click upload on the left, and click upload image. Select the image you want to upload with the correct format and select apply and continue. Then the program will ask you how you want to import it. If you do not care about the content of the image, select single layer. If you want to actually use the image to perform print then cut, select flat graphic and continue, upload. It is important that you select the correct layers to be printed, Flat Layer makes sure that all the elements in the picture are ignored, and only the outline is cut. If you want, you can add a border “offset” from the top bar.
- Shapes gives you a bunch of ready to cut forms that you can customize to your liking.
- With Text , you can type in something and customize the font or colour.
- Monogram will insert a customized initials that are typed in, just like a logo. Figure below shows how the canvas can look like with different objects inserted.

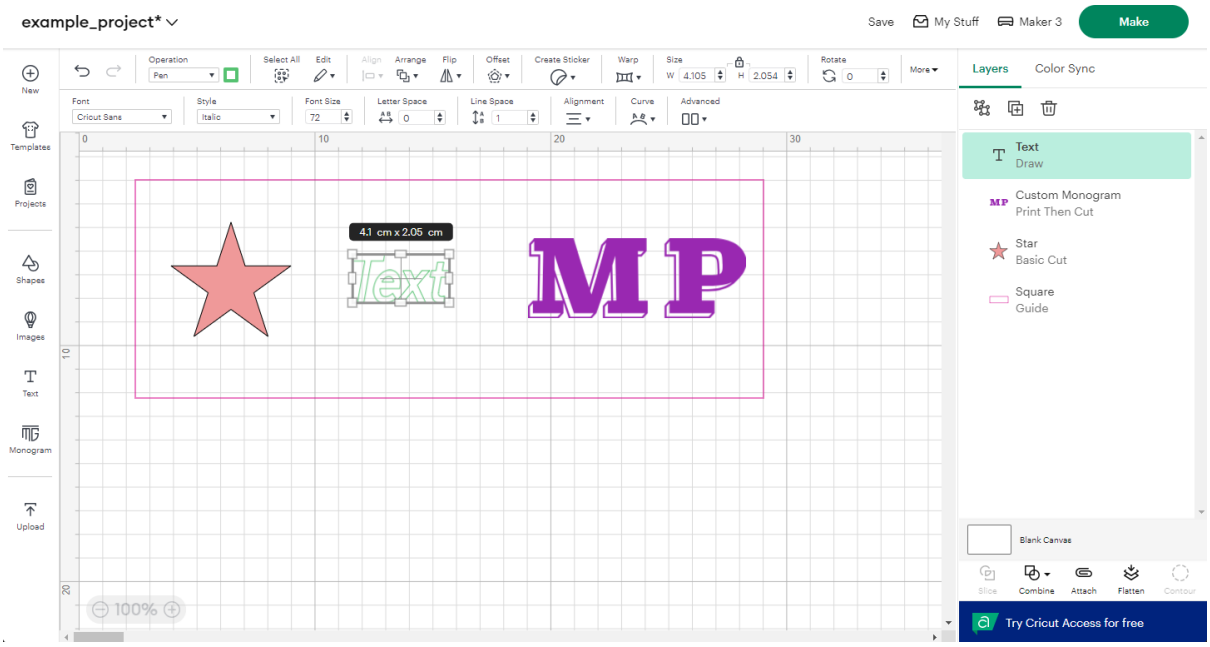


Figure 2: Cricut Design Space canvas overview with 3 different objects inserted

Operation:

There are 3 actions that the Cricut Maker 3 can perform. Print then cut, basic cut, and draw. These can be selected for the selected image/text by the Operation drop down menu on the top bar. The operations are selected differently in the example project above to show the differences. For each object, the operation can be seen from the right tab.

Guide: The rectangle box outside of all the designs is a guide, it will not be printed or cut. It is only intended for the comfort of the user, since the material is a limited size. You can set it to a specific size as outline. To make a guide, select a shape or text and select Guide from the Operations from the top bar.

Cut: The star is an inserted shape, and Basic Cut is selected for it. This means that the rotary blade will travel along the outline and make a cut. The color selected in this case is not relevant, the outcome will be the same as the material color used. You can select from basic, wavy, and perforate cut. Basic and wavy will basically cut along the outline, and perfature will make small evenly spaced cuts. This can be used to cut specific letters, shapes or logos designed. It can be done without a mat, if you're using a Smart material but using a mat is preferred if you want a better outcome.

Draw: The text is selected to the drawn, however the specific pens needed to do this are not available in Makersplayce, so this can not be made unless the user brings their own Cricut pens. **You are not allowed to use pens other then Cricut branded pens intended specifically to draw with the machine, it can damage the machine and you will be held responsible for it.** But the draw function will draw along the specified region, in this case each outline of each letter in Text. It can be done without a mat, if you're using a Smart material but using a mat is preferred if you want a better outcome.

Print then Cut: With this function depending on the materials you choose, you can make stickers or cut out custom images. You have to take the material into account, because when you are about to make it, the material has to be put on the cutting mat (even if it is smart), it should be printable (in standard A4 or A3 size). Keep in mind that Vinyl materials can't be printed onto, so only smart paper sticker cardstock can be used if you want to make stickers. After you've selected the material and cut it to the right size to print, you can go to the designer.

With print and cut it is important that you select the correct layers to be cut and printed. If the image has different elements that are not directly connected, they will be cut individually.



To prevent this from happening, you can add a border and combine the border with the image by adding an offset, then selecting the border (offset) and the image you want to combine it with, then click flatten on the bottom right corner.

Figure 3: Image with/without border (offset)

This will make sure that there will only be one cut made, and that will be on the outline. The figure above shows two cases of the same image, one with border and one without. The one

without the border will be cut out letter by letter. And the one with the border will be cut with the border outline, because it was flattened with the image.

Extra selections you can make:

- **Slice:** Subtract two objects from each other and produce two separate ones.
- **Combine:** Weld, unite, subtract, intersect or exclude two objects.
- **Attach:** Saves the current order of the objects. When you click Make, Cricut will change the place and orientation of each object before putting them on the material/mat, but if you want to save the setup you can select all and click attach.
- **Contour:** This will let you see each cut the Cricut will make when you're doing the Cut operation. You can unclick some layers if you don't want them to be cut here.

Making

This procedure may be different depending on the material you're using, or the operation that is chosen. But below is an example made with print then cut, to make stickers out of an imported image with borders. All objects have been flattened and the whole sheet is attached so that the setup is saved.

After you're done with your design, you can click on make on the top right corner of the canvas. You will be greeted with the following:

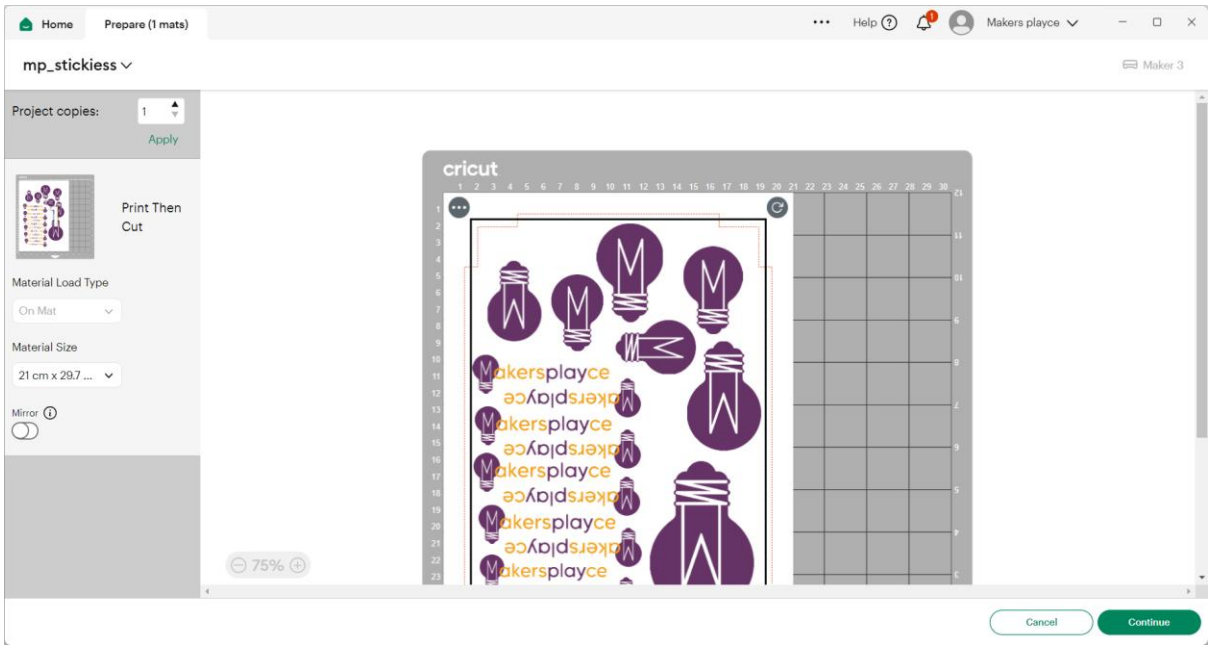


Figure 4: Make it tab of the design

The design is shown as it will be printed and cut on the mat. On the left tab there are a couple options to select from:

- Project Copies: How many of the same sheets do you want to cut.
- Material Load type (On Mat, Without Mat): This depends on the material you are using and the operation that is selected. For Print then Cut the On Mat selection is mandatory (which is why its gray in the image above showing it can't be changed). For Cut and Draw you can only select Without Mat for Smart materials.

- Material Size: Has to be 15 cm in length at least, but for Print then Cut you have to keep the mat size and the printer input size into account, A4 is recommended. It is important that the design made also fits in the specified size. To cut materials with straight edges, you can use the Cricut Rol Holder, insert the material with the lines that you drew in to indicate where you want to make the c
- Mirror: Will flip your design when it's on.

After that click Continue. If you chose Print then Cut, you will first have to print the design with a normal printer, to do this you can either directly connect to the printer or send the design as a .pdf to your computer.

The next step is to select the material. The official name of the material should be in the packaging, for making stickers above Smart Paper Sticker Cardstock is used.

Lastly, you have to load the material in the machine for it to perform the cut. If you have to put the material on a mat, make sure it is positioned correctly as shown in figure 4 (top left corner in the top left corner of the rectangle on the mat). Put the material on the mat and slightly press down so that it sticks and doesn't move during cutting.

Press down the load and unload button, press go, and it should start with calibrating and detecting the material, then perform the actual cut. Make sure there are no obstacles behind and in front of the machine, so that the mat can freely move while cutting.

Shutting down

When you are done, do not forget to save your project for future use. Before turning off the Cricut, make sure there are no materials or debris left inside it. Click the 1 (turn on/off button) to turn it off. Lift up the front blue part of the machine until you hear it click to the sides, then the gray part should also close by itself. Disconnect the power and USB cables.

As for the material you've used, if there are larger parts left that can be used in the future, put them back inside the folders where all the other materials are. Cean up any leftovers and ***return the cutting mat with the transparent sheet cover back on if you used it.***

Extra Resources

Cricut is a very popular DIY cutter/sticker maker so there is a lot of information to find online about it. Here are a few starter videos and websites:

Setting Up the Cricut: https://youtu.be/2PJXnxMBVqk?si=2oqpLVZUxRnIRB6C

Basic Cutting: https://youtu.be/XNnGkTR_89A?si=TpJS5k6Mp1r5G9lK

How the Print then Cut should be sized: https://help.cricut.com/hc/en-us/articles/360009429814-How-large-can-I-Print-Then-Cut

Sticker Making with Cricut: https://youtube.com/watch?v=awN57MP3zJM&t=246s

Print then Cut Stickers: https://youtu.be/hlUaAzvN-xI?si=JM12GsYVDBEr9ESP

Cricut for Sewing/Fabrics: https://youtu.be/Wco3zRaWOOE?si=-EBESNvRWm46HZR2