

Iron Maidens

by Steven Dodds

Most of what we spend on clothing goes to the label. Why pay extra to follow the herd when you can follow us instead? Papermaker Avery's transfer kits (get 'em at office supply stores) let you put custom graphics on any cotton or cotton-poly fabric. Kit #3271 has a transparent carrier sheet designed for light fabrics; kit #3279 has an opaque carrier best for bright colors on dark fabrics. The colors look subdued right off the printer, but they become more vivid once they're ironed on.

The transfer process is different for each of the two types, so read the instructions carefully. The real creativity comes in dreaming up your designs. Everything from scanned drawings to digital snapshots will work. If the graphics are small, print several on a sheet. Remember that text and images will read backward, so reverse them before printing. We walk you through a few ideas to get you started. All you need is an inkjet and a dream.



IRON-ONS



\$25+



INGREDIENTS:

- T-shirt, sack, mouse pad, apron, pillowcase, or other cotton giveaway
- Digital image files
- Iron-on transfers
- Towel

TOOLS:

- Computer
- Ink-jet printer
- X-acto knife
- Straightedge
- Iron

T-Shirts 1

For an antique look, we like American Apparel's cream-colored organic cotton line (www.americanapparel.com). Or pick up garden-variety white tees in bulk, available at sporting goods stores. Once the transfers are printed, use an X-acto knife to trim the unused portion.

Little Sacks 2

These generic "tea bags" bought at a restaurant supply store are always useful. Besides carrying your stash, they make great wrapping for small gifts like CDs (see *Wrap it Up*, page 38, for other bright ideas).

Aprons 3

Aprons of all kinds are available at craft and restaurant-supply stores. Always personalize the image: a recipe for "Teriyaki Chuck Roast" for your friend Chuck. You know.

Mouse Pads

Inexpensive precut blanks are available online. Use a light-colored pad with transfers made for dark-colored fabric for best results. To cut your own, buy a large sheet of neoprene from a rubber supplier but beware: Neoprene is tricky to slice with a clean edge. Supersharp scissors work best. Go geeks!