silhouette

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Handbook

Everything you need to know about
creating with your Silhouette

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SILHOUETTE EDUCATION TEAM

Hi! Here at Silhouette, we love our machines! We know there is huge amount of information about Silhouette products and software out there. If you are new to Silhouette, you may not be sure where to start. And, for those of you who are more seasoned Silhouette users, maybe there are things you don't know how to do or things you did not even realize your machine could do. This is why we have developed this all-encompassing handbook that is your first stop to learning everything about Silhouette. You can learn how to use our specialty media, how to create basic or advanced designs in the software, or even which machine is right for your project. We have compiled as much information as possible to give you the skills and knowledge to create your own awesome projects. Use this handbook as a tool to help you whenever you have a question. We made this electronic handbook as easy as possible to navigate through including clickable cross references, hyperlinks to videos, a glossary, and an index. So start clicking and find what you are looking for! Because this is an electronic document, we will continually push out updates as they are available, ensuring you access to the most up-to-date information. We hope this book will not only answer your questions, but will spark your creativity so you can begin making projects of your own!

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Chapter Two
Quick Start Guide

You have your Silhouette in hand and you are ready to get designing, creating, and making. But before we turn you loose on the creative world, there are a few things that we want to cover. This crash course will walk you through everything from unpacking your Silhouette to making a basic cut. In subsequent chapters, we will elaborate on everything we talk about in here, but this is a short and sweet Silhouette rundown. Are you ready?

What You Need to Get Started

So you have your machine? You only need a few more things to get creating! Your machine comes with everything you need to get going, minus a material to cut. You will need a blade and a mat, but both of these are included with your machine.

Some other important things to have are basic Silhouette tools like a scraper and a hook. Depending on the material you use, you will use them more or less, but they are helpful to weed and to clear extra material off your mat. If you are using vinyl, you will need transfer paper or transfer tape. If you are using heat transfer, you will need an iron. If you are using fabric, you will need a fabric stabilizer.

Then, it's the fun part. You get to decide what you are actually going to DO with your machine. This will lead to what material you will need. Pick an easy project to get started with and go from there.

Okay, so you have an idea in mind. You have a vision of what you want to do. What now? Our biggest recommendation is to start using your machine as soon as possible. Don't be intimidated. It is easier than you think! Using this handbook, you can learn the basics

in no time. Then, once you get familiar with that, dive into the more advanced features. Here at Silhouette, we want you to love your machine as much as we do. So, if you prefer to find and purchase designs and cut them right out, do it! If you want to hand-design intricate files, do that! Our software is built for every type of user, so start exploring all the possibilities!

UNPACKING YOUR SILHOUETTE FROM THE BOX

We pack our Silhouette machines securely to protect them during transit. Our number one packaging goal is that your machine makes it safely to your arms. In order to achieve this, we secure all moving parts of the Silhouette machine. It's important to make sure that you've removed all packaging, otherwise your machine won't work properly. Check all the nooks and crannies of your machine to remove any plastic or foam. The quick instruction manual provided in the box will detail where any tape and foam may be.

INSTALLING SILHOUETTE SOFTWARE

This handbook was written for Silhouette Studio® Software Version 4. V4 will look a little different to those of you used to working with V3, but it still has all of the same capabilities. One of the changes between the two is the expanding the Cut Settings into an easier-to-use Send panel. V4 has made selecting your media and sending your design to your Silhouette easier than ever.

There are two ways you can install Silhouette Studio® on your computer:

▶ Downloading it at silhouetteamerica.com/software.

▶ Using the installation CD included in the box.

Download the software file or, if included with your machine, insert the installation CD into your computer's drive and follow the prompts on your screen. Make sure when you install the Silhouette software, your computer's operating system supports the program you are downloading. If your computer's operating system does not meet the minimal requirements for installation, the Silhouette software will not install.

New *versions* of Silhouette Studio® are released periodically. There are also three paid *editions* of Silhouette Studio® available for purchase— Designer Edition, Designer Edition Plus, and Business Edition. Turn to page 24 to learn more about which edition of the software is right for you.

Software updates and the most recent version of Silhouette Studio® are always available online.

Don't confuse a software edition with a version of software. When we talk about an *edition* of Silhouette Studio® software, we are talking about the four different levels of Silhouette Studio® that are available—Basic Edition, Designer Edition, Designer Edition Plus, and Business Edition. Each edition adds features to the previous editions, giving you more tools and effects to work with.
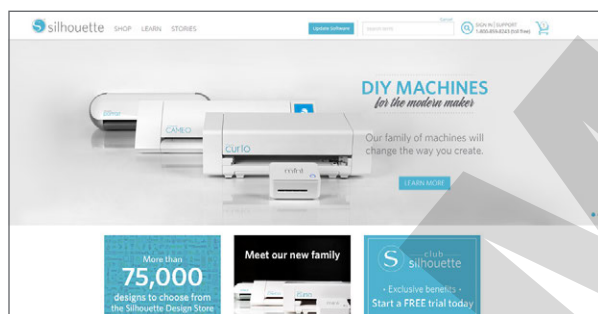
Different *versions* of the Silhouette Studio® editions are released periodically. New software versions are released to keep the program up-to-date.

UPDATING YOUR SILHOUETTE SOFTWARE

If you used the installation CD to install your Silhouette software, you may need to update to the newest version. There are two ways for you to update your software.

▶ Online at silhouetteamerica.com.

▶ Automatically in Silhouette Studio®.

If you are updating your software online, at the top of the website there is a blue button that says "Update Software". Silhouette Studio® will prompt you when a new update is released. The software automatically checks for program updates every week, but you can change these settings if you would like.

CONNECTING YOUR SILHOUETTE TO YOUR COMPUTER

Make sure to install Silhouette Studio® on your computer before you connect your Silhouette. This will make the connection process easier.

Each Silhouette comes with preselected, free designs. When you have your software installed and your Silhouette connected, these designs will download to the Library.
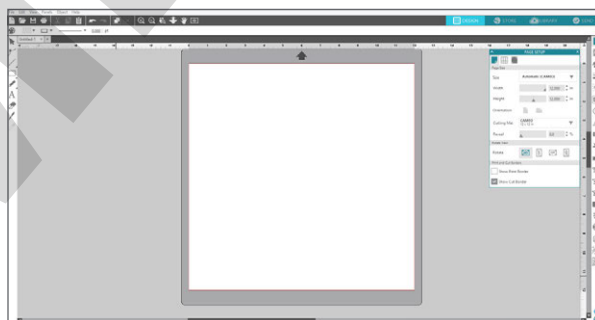
Once your Silhouette is connected to your computer and your software is installed, you are almost ready to design. All you need is a Silhouette account. For help on setting up an account, see page 117.

Designing with Silhouette Studio

Our Silhouette software is designed to be easy to use for both design beginners and design experts. If you've used any drawing program (even the most basic ones like Microsoft Paint) the layout in Silhouette Studio® and Mint Studio™ will be familiar to you.

In Basic Edition, there are four basic locations for your toolbars. To the left are your drawing tools, above are general document tools, above and to the left are your navigation tabs, and to the right are your studio tools.

There are a few ways to design in Silhouette Studio®. You can create your own designs using the drawing tools. You can purchase a ready-made design from the Silhouette Design Store. Or, you can do a little of each and take designs from the design store and edit them to make them your own.
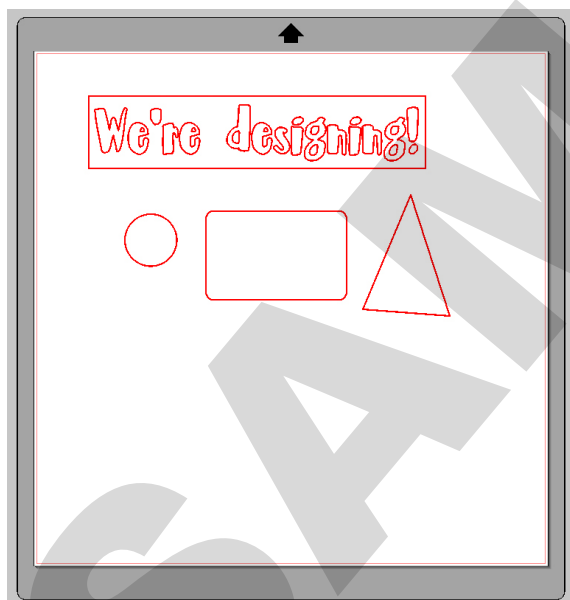
Open Silhouette Studio®. You'll see that a large part of the program is taken up by a grey and white window. This is your workspace. Think of

it like an artist's canvas. This is where you will create all your designs.

In Silhouette Studio®, the initial set-up for the *page* will depend on the Silhouette you have connected to your computer. We are using a Silhouette CAMEO® for this overview, so the default setting is a 12 in. x 12 in. page mounted on the Cameo mat. You can change the page settings for different sized projects. To learn how, turn to page 57.

CREATING YOUR OWN DESIGN

The drawing tools are located to the left of your workspace. Try them out! Experiment with a few. Using the drawing tools, you can create both simple and complex designs. Try the Text tool to use any font you have installed on your computer.
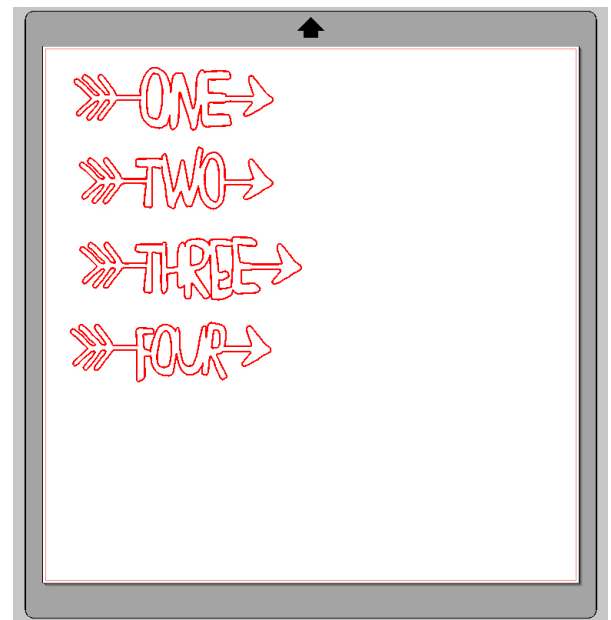

ZP Kahlua Cream Pie | by ScrapNfonts
Design ID: 136043

USING A DESIGN FROM THE STORE

There is a navigation tool bar at the top has four tabs: Design, Store, Library, and Send.

1. Click on the Store tab.

2. Search for something you like and select your design. We suggest something simple for your first project. Place it in your cart. Checkout.

3. After you have purchased a design, it will download into the Library under "Recent Downloads". Double-click the design. The design will open in your workspace.

4. Most designs will be red *cut lines* when you add them to your workspace. You can fill the shapes with color, scale them, rearrange them, and a million other things. Or, you can leave them just as they are.

Here is the design we chose to cut out first. We aren't going to worry about changing anything major. All we are going to do is click on the design, move it to the top left-hand corner by dragging it with your mouse, and make it a little bigger by pulling on the corners.

One-Four Arrows | by Simple Stories
Design ID: 76195

Wait! My design doesn't look like the cute one in the Design Store! Most cut files open as plain red cut lines. Don't worry! It's normal. You can fill your design with color and make it your own or make it look just like the example in the store. For a detailed explanation, see page 64.

Cutting Your Design

LOADING MEDIA INTO YOUR SILHOUETTE CUTTING MACHINES

One of the best things about Silhouette cutting machines is that they can cut so many different types of media. This versatility allows your creativity to run wild with cardstock, vinyl, canvas, and much more.

If you should or should not use your cutting mat will depend on what material you are using. Lined material does not require you to use a cutting mat. In this quick overview, we'll show you how to make a cut using a Cameo on adhesive-backed cardstock without a cutting mat.

LOADING YOUR SILHOUETTE

1. Turn on your Silhouette. The power button is located on the right side of the machine.

2. Lift the lid of your Silhouette. Inside you will see a metal bar with two rollers. Your media (or mat) will go under this bar.

3. Line up the left edge of your media with the blue line on the Silhouette CAMEO®'s deck. (Note that on a Portrait, the line is raised with an arrow pointing to it instead of blue.) Make sure the top of the media is a straight line.
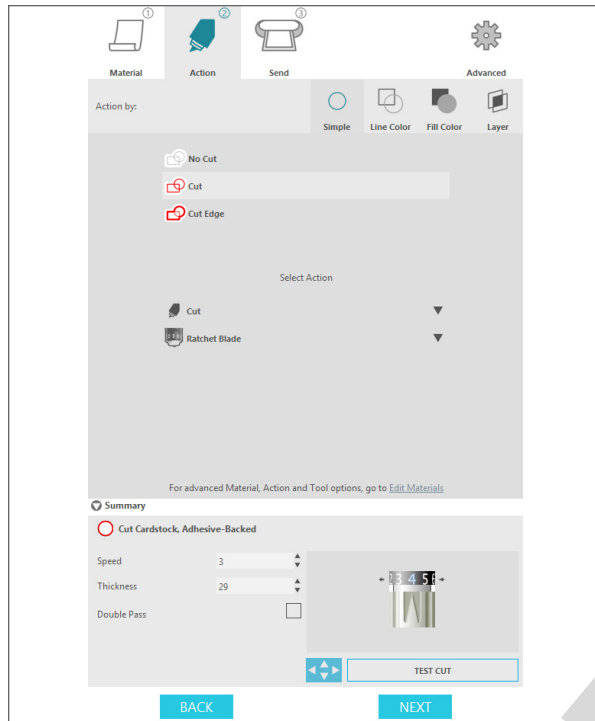
4. Choose the Load or "Load media" button on your LCD screen. (For a Portrait, the"Load media" is the bottom button.)

5. Your Silhouette will automatically load your media. You are ready to cut.

Brand new cutting mats are sometimes too sticky for thinner media, like copy paper. If you are using a new mat, try seasoning it first by rubbing it against your pants or even on the floor. This will stop your media from over-sticking.

SENDING YOUR DESIGN TO YOUR SILHOUETTE

Now that we've unpacked, connected, designed, and loaded all necessary parts, let's move on to the best part—making a cut. When we talk about making a cut in this handbook, it doesn't always mean we're talking about actually cutting through a piece of media. We use the word cut to describe the Silhouette's carriage making a pass over the media. Passes made with sketch pens or Curio tools are also referred to as cuts.

MAKING A BASIC CUT WITH YOUR SILHOUETTE

1. Make sure your Silhouette is turned on and ready with your media loaded. If you're not sure how to do this, look at the previous sections for a quick overview.

2. In Silhouette Studio®, click on the Send tab.

3. Under "Material" select your material, which is in this case "Cardstock (Adhesive-Backed)".

4. Silhouette Studio® will give you recommended cut settings. The only setting you will have to manually adjust is your ratchet blade.

5. Using the ratchet socket on your Silhouette, twist the little red line to match the recommended number in the software. If you are using an AutoBlade in your Cameo 3, you can skip this step.

6. Insert the ratchet blade into the carriage (the Tool 1 holder on Curio and the Cameo 3, farthest left) and twist or push the knob to secure the blade in place.

7. In Silhouette Studio®, click "Send".

8. Your Silhouette will begin the cut job.

You made a cut! That's all there is to it. Design something, load your media, and send your design to your machine. We hope your mind is racing with all the possibilities.

The next chapter is detailed instructions of every function in Silhouette Studio®. Now that you know how easy it is to use your machine, it's time to dive into the software. Silhouette Studio® is powerful and is designed to help you easily create your custom projects.

See Chapter Eleven for a more detailed set of instructions on how to make a basic cut, including how to adjust your rollers and blade.