

STAMPIN' BLENDS TIPS & TRICKS

Stampin' Blends are high quality, dual tip markers come in 12 exclusive colors with a light and dark shade for each. This will allow you to shade like a pro! I recommend buying your favorite colors for flowers (the most common images colored) and the Old Olive combo pack for leaves.

Ink:

Memento Tuxedo Black ink is recommended for use with the Stampin' Blends. Regular black ink or even Stazon will dissolve and run when used with these markers because of the alcohol base. Make sure the correct ink pad and ink refill are on your first order with Stampin' Blend Markers if you don't have them.

Cardstock:

You don't need any special cardstock to use Stampin' Blends properly. They are formulated to work best with Whisper White and Very Vanilla ultra smooth cardstocks, but know that they will bleed through to the back. Our Whisper White Thick cardstock is a great option to minimize the bleed through. To avoid any problems with this - just make sure you are coloring on a piece that will be layered so the back will not be an issue. You don't want anyone to see that unsightly mess!

Color Lifter:

The only other thing you need to get started with the Stampin' Blends is a Color Lifter Marker. While not required, I highly recommend it because it helps fix mistakes by "pushing" the color back inside the lines. Just like magic! You can also use it to blend and to add a little white back in if you neglected to leave white areas for highlights when you were laying down your base color.

Unique Qualities of Alcohol-Based Markers

Because Stampin' Blends are alcohol-based, they will dry out much faster than water-based markers when exposed to air. You may have noticed the caps are very tight and require a good pull to get them off - that is the reason! When re-capping your markers after use, press down until you hear the "click," which means the cap is completely closed. I press mine cap-end down on the table top so I can press hard without hurting my hands.

Another unique feature of the caps is that they have an interior well, also designed to keep the marker wet as long as possible. If you aren't careful to insert the marker into the cap straight on, you can mash the tip of the marker and blunt it, so take the time to make sure the cap and marker are not held at angles when closing it.

Stampin' Blends are not refillable, but can be ordered separately so you don't have to worry about using one shade more than the other.

Each Stampin' Blend marker comes with two ends - a brush tip and a fine nib (yep - that's the official term - I did not make it up). The white line on either end is wide or thin to denote which end is which so you can quickly uncap the correct one while creating. The tops are made of nylon, which is durable and superior to other polyester ones currently on the market, that tend to fray.

Storage

Stampin' Blends should be stored horizontally. The rectangular barrel design helps keep them from rolling away from you on your work surface too.

Learning to Shade Like a Pro

Alcohol-based markers require practice to master. Stamp your image several times on scratch Whisper White, Very Vanilla or Whisper White Thick cardstock so that you can get comfortable with coloring. Some people prefer to start with the light overall color and then go darker, and other like to start with the darker shadowed areas and then go light. You will soon discover which method works for you - there is not right or wrong here.

Coloring with alcohol-based markers is very different than a regular makers because of the shading that can be achieved without streaks or lines. It is best to work in small section, using both colors one after the other, before moving on to the next section. All you blending should be done right away rather than waiting until the end when the colors are set. Remember to fully cap your makers after each use to prolong their lifespan.

Use Grid Paper or throwaway paper to protect your work surface underneath the cardstock you are using with Stampin' Blends, because they will bleed through to the underside.

Advancing Your Abilities

Some images are easily shaded because of stippling or cross-hatching right on the stamp, but others will require that you decide where the light would hit the object. Remember learning about that in grade school art class? Time to dust off those skills!

Don't get discouraged if your first results are not spectacular. Alcohol-based markers are very different from other coloring methods, and practice will pay off in gorgeous results with intense and saturated tones unlike any other form of coloring medium.

Often the answer is just to keep blending. If you have streaks or it just isn't looking shaded, keep adding more color. Keep the colors wet. The Whisper White, Whisper White Thick and Very Vanilla cardstocks can take a lot of abuse.

If you need more help visualizing where to put the lights and darks, visit Stampin' Up! on YouTube, where you'll find a library of Stampin' Blends videos showcasing various stamped images being colored in real time. Each video is done by a different artist from Stampin' Up's home office, so you can see there is not one "right way" to use these markers. Have fun, and keep at it, and you'll soon be shading like an artist!

What Else Can I Color?

You can use these unique markers to add color to all sorts of things besides just stamped images. Rhinestones, pearls, buttons - even acetate window sheets and cellophane bags - and how about black and white photos - OH MY! All can be colored with any Stampin' Blend marker!