Heat Tape Alternatives

A printable selection checklist for sublimation transfers

First ask: what must keep the paper from moving? Silicone pads support pressure; shrink sleeves press against curved blanks. Neither automatically anchors a loose transfer sheet.

CHOOSE BY BLANK AND EQUIPMENT

BLANK / METHOD	TRANSFER-HOLDING CHOICE	CHECK BEFORE PRESSING
Polyester shirt & fabric panel	Sublimation-rated **repositionable spray** on suitable fabric; heat tape only where the transfer system allows. [1]	Confirm the spray is intended for sublimation; follow its drying, ventilation and fabric instructions.
Flat hard blank (coated metal, MDF, tile)	**Heat-resistant sublimation tape** on non-image edges when specified. [1]	A silicone pad can assist pressure but **does not secure paper**. Magnets are not a general solution.
Ceramic mug in a mug press	**Heat tape** to anchor the paper; use the maker-approved mug press element. [1, 3]	Confirm the blank, tape placement, mug diameter and press instructions. Avoid unapproved clips.
Coated tumbler in a convection oven	**Heat tape + fitted shrink sleeve**, or a compatible reusable silicone wrap if the blank permits. [2, 3]	Sleeves/wraps provide contact pressure; **tape the transfer first** as directed by the supplier.
Tapered / unusual drinkware	Use the **blank-approved wrap or sleeve** plus the supplier-specified paper anchoring. [2, 3]	Check fit, diameter, heat tolerance and oven suitability. Do not force a blank into the wrong press.

TOOLS THAT ARE NOT DIRECT SUBSTITUTES

Silicone pad / pillow: changes contact or pressure, not paper position. **Magnet / clip:** may fail on nonmagnetic blanks or interfere with the press. **Household tape / glue:** do not use without heat- and process-specific approval. [4]

BEFORE YOU PRESS: 6-POINT CHECK

- [ ] Exact blank, coating and equipment verified
- [ ] Tape, wrap or spray is rated for the method
- [ ] Heat, time, pressure and fit follow supplier
- [ ] Contact / paper-holding method is clear
- [ ] No tape or clip over image unless allowed
- [ ] Ventilation, gloves and cooling plan ready

SOURCES (clickable)

[1] HeatPressNation - Sublimation Tutorial

[2] JPPlus - Sublimation FAQ / Shrink Wrap

[3] JPPlus - Silicone Mug Wraps

[4] STAHLS - Silicone Heat Press Pads

Important: This is a holding-method selector, not a universal temperature or pressure chart. Check current blank and equipment instructions before every new product. No hands-on performance claims or specific press results are implied.