

FAQs Frequently Asked Questions

Basics

What is a Modello pattern?

Modello® patterns are also commonly referred to as “decorative masking patterns” or “decorative masking stencils”. A Modello® pattern is cut from one-time-use adhesive-backed vinyl materials. These materials consist of a layer of adhesive-backed vinyl that is placed on a thick, waxy-type Backing Paper to protect the adhesive side. The pattern is cut on a machine using a computer program. The design areas are removed (weeded out) by our Production Department and a specially selected Transfer Tape is placed over the weeded pattern. This tape holds the pattern together until the backing paper has been removed to expose the adhesive side of the vinyl. Once the Modello pattern is safely secured and burnished onto the surface, the Transfer Tape is removed and the fun begins!

Where does the Modello name come from?

The Modello® name is a registered trademark of Modello Designs. It loosely translates from Italian to mean, “pattern” or “I model”, making it the ideal name to represent both the product and techniques that Modello® patterns have become known for.

How is a Modello pattern different from a traditional stencil?

Both traditional stencils and Modello® patterns provide for a fast and easy way to transfer a decorative pattern onto a surface. Stencils are traditionally cut from a rigid plastic material called mylar. The design elements will be separated by breaks in the design known as bridges, or uncut areas. This is what hold the stencil together and makes it res-usable. Modellos, on the other hand, can only be used one time.

Advantages

What are some other advantages of using Modello patterns over traditional mylar stencils?

Modello patterns can utilize designs that have very intricate and continuous lines. There is no need to insert breaks or “bridges” into the design. Also, Modello patterns can be scaled up to almost unlimited sizes and they offer the ability

work in either the positive design area or the negative space surrounding it, depending on how they are “weeded”.

What are the disadvantages of using Modello patterns over traditional mylar stencils?

Due to the fact that they are one-time-use, Modello patterns may not be the most cost-effective choice for repeating the same pattern over a large area. In that case, a stencil will probably remain the best option. Other disadvantages include: they cannot be repositioned once they are affixed to a surface and they cannot be replaced back over a pattern for adding in additional color details, etc.

What types of surfaces are Modello patterns used on?

Modello patterns can be used on many smooth, hard surfaces, including walls, ceilings, wood, tile, cabinetry, concrete and glass. In some cases, it can also be used on fabric or canvas if the surface is smooth enough.

What types of decorative mediums can be used with Modello patterns?

There are many different types of mediums that can be used with Modello patterns and many exciting decorative techniques that Modello Designs has exclusively created to be used with them. You can use Modello patterns with acrylic and latex paint, spray paint, glazes, gel stains, metallic and stone-texture plasters, metal leaf and metal paint, patinating solutions, waxes, concrete overlays, solvent-based dyes, glass etching crème and sandblasting media.

Do Modello patterns make some of these mediums easier to use?

Absolutely! The adhesive quality of the patterns and the way in which they bond tightly to smooth surfaces allows you to apply many different mediums and techniques without the concern of product seepage under the pattern that is so common with stencils. With Modello patterns, you can achieve cleaner, crisper edges for all of the above-listed mediums than you can with a traditional stencil.

Pricing and Ordering

How is the price/cost of my Modello pattern determined?

Modello patterns from our Design Library are priced by the square foot according to the Design Level (AAA-E) that has been assigned to them. A higher level of detail in the pattern corresponds to a higher design level. Likewise, our materials have different pricing structures. Our 4mil White Mask, 4mil Blue Mask and 4mil DecoBlue Mask are the least expensive materials we cut from and are priced the same. Our 10mil and 25mil Green Mask are thicker materials and offered at a higher price. Our new EtchLook and Vinyl Applique materials are offered at a 25% markup over other 4mil material prices.

How long will it take for my Modello pattern order to process?

It is always our goal to turn your Modello pattern order around as quickly as possible! Generally speaking, most orders of Standard sized or prepackaged patterns (Modello Pronto, Sample Sets) will ship within 1 business day. Patterns ordered from our Design Library that simply require custom-sizing will ship within 2 business days. Patterns that require customization (changes) will take longer due to necessary artwork changes and the approval process. Completely new, custom designs may take anywhere from days to weeks depending on the complexity of the designs, number of changes and the approval process.

If it's just one-time-use isn't it very expensive?

Generally not! Most of our single patterns in average sizes will run under \$100. The REAL value of Modello pattern, however, is that they allow you to do things that were previously impossible. They allow you to scale up to ANY size, incorporate designs not possible with a traditional stencil medium, and create pattern and texture within the design. You can now utilize advanced techniques, and apply a wide variety of decorative finishes and mediums with a speed and ease that makes them a very cost effective choice.

Do you offer "Trade" discounts?

Yes, we offer an attractive Trade Only Discount of 20% off of our published retail prices to qualifying professional applicators and specifiers. Please see our website or request a Trade Customer Application and Registration form. You must be qualified and registered to receive a discount.

Why are there different material choices?

We offer Modello patterns in a range of material choices so that you can select the best option for your surface and technique. With so many different surfaces to cover and such a wide variety of paint and decorative products available, there is simply no one material that will work for every possible surface or situation.

How do I choose a material?

Please consult the page on our website or in our Design Library Binder on Modello Material Options for detailed descriptions of the performance of our different materials. For most applications our 4mil White Mask will be the material of choice. It has a relatively low-tack, allowing it to remove easily. It comes on 48" wide rolls, allowing us to cut designs up to approximately 45" x 72" in one piece. It also has the ability to bond to surfaces that range from smooth to lightly textured. All of our Standard patterns, Concrete Carpets™ Modello Prontos™, and Sample Sets are cut from this material.

What is the main difference between a "positive weed" and a "negative weed"?

The Modello medium (adhesive-backed vinyl that is transferred to a surface) allows for the option of using the pattern in two distinct ways. We can "weed out" (remove) the vinyl in design area itself. This is what we term a Positive Weed. We can alternately "weed out" remove the vinyl surrounding the design. This is what we term a Negative Weed. The most common option used is the Positive Weed, and this will give an effect similar to a traditional stencil. In cases where you want the design itself to be the "mask", you will choose a Negative Weed.

How large can a Modello pattern be cut in one piece?

The largest design size that can be cut from our 4mil White Mask, DecoMask Blue and Applique material in one tile is approximately 45.5" x 72". Our regular 4mil BlueMask and Green Mask materials are only available on 30" wide rolls, so our maximum design size for these materials to cut in one piece is 27" x 72".

What if I need a really large pattern that exceeds your single tile cutting size?

In that case we will set your design up in a process called "tiling". This is where we cut the larger design over different pieces of vinyl or "tiles". In this case, you will receive a detailed Pattern Key that shows how the design tiles will go together and each tile is clearly labeled with a number or letter.

Storing and Installing

How long can I keep or store my Modello pattern before using?

Both your Modello pattern and the Transfer Tape that secures it are cut from adhesive-backed materials. Adhesive materials are adversely affected by both light and heat. As long as you keep your Modello loosely rolled or lying flat in a cool, dark and dry place you should be able to keep it up to 6 months or more.

What type of environmental conditions should I be concerned about?

Even if you plan to use your Modello pattern in a matter of days you should avoid exposing your Modello to direct sunlight and heat. For instance, don't leave it lying on the back seat of your car or in your trunk in hot, sunny weather. Extreme atmospheric heat and humidity can also affect your Modello application. Heat and humidity will make the adhesive more "sticky". Try to work with your Modello in a cool environment or early in the day in hot, summer months. You can also "chill" your Modello in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes before applying.

Why must I burnish the Modello before applying it to my surface?

The Modello pattern is cut from an adhesive material that is sandwiched between the Transfer Tape on top and the Backing Paper behind. In order for the design to release cleanly and easily from the Backing Paper, the Transfer Tape needs to be securely bonded to the Modello pattern in the middle. Laying your pattern out flat on a hard surface and giving it a firm burnish with the Modello squeegee (provided in your order) will aid in a successful transfer of the Modello pattern to your surface.

After being rolled up for shipping, my Modello pattern looks a little "wrinkly". Will this affect my installation?

It may not look pretty, but it really should not affect your Modello pattern installation. The wrinkles you see are generally only in the Transfer Tape, which gets removed and is not really part of the "pattern". Once you place your Modello

pattern on a hard surface and give it a good solid burnishing on both sides you should have no problems installing it and the wrinkle will all “go away”.

My Modello pattern is very large. Can I cut it down/apart before applying?

Certainly! Some people prefer to have their Modello pattern pieces as large as possible to eliminate the need for pattern matching along the seams. Others like to have smaller, more manageable pieces to work with, particularly if they are working alone. You can cut down your Modello patterns with scissors to any size you want. We recommend cutting as much as possible around the design though, so it will be easier for you to match the pieces back up on your surface.

When should I use the “pre-release” method outlined in the Basic Installation Instructions?

Pre-releasing the Backing Paper from your Modello is highly recommend when applying Modellos to ceiling areas or any other area where it might be awkward or impossible to flip the pattern back onto a solid surface while removing the Backing Paper. To pre-release, burnish both sides as usual. With the Transfer Tape side down, pull back the Backing Paper carefully to about the halfway point of the Modello. Roll it back down onto the adhesive surface of the vinyl but DON’T burnish it again. Now do the other half.

Will I be able to install my Modello pattern by myself?

That depends on your level of confidence, the size and number of Modello pieces make up your pattern, and the type of surface you will be working on. For larger Modellos it definitely helps to have an extra set of hands and you want to be very careful NOT to let the exposed adhesive side of the pattern fold in onto itself.

Which “hinge” method is best to use?

There are two basic application methods outlined in our Basic Application Instructions. The standard Tape Hinge method works very well for smaller Modellos (under 2 feet in width and height) The Tape Stabilizing Method basically cuts a large design in half, giving you a smaller area to deal with at one time, and is highly recommend for any larger Modello installation.

What happens if I “mess up” on my Modello installation?

If you carefully position your Modello pattern correctly on your surface, secure it well and follow the Basic Installation Instructions, you should not have any problems installing your Modello pattern successfully. “Stuff” happens, though. Most minor issues can be fixed (see below). If something major happens, such as putting the pattern on upside down, we can re-cut your pattern or a portion of it at a 30% discount.

What are “underlying surface bonding issues?”

This is generally more of an issue with new construction or newly painted surfaces. In new construction the main issue is that the wall and ceiling surfaces are not properly cleaned of dust and/or primed correctly prior to painting. This means that the paint has been applied over a layer of dust and that any adhesive material (Modello or tape) may pull off the finish and paint down to the drywall layer. The only way to know if this is an issue for your project is to apply tape or Modello material in several places over your project area and see what happens upon removal.

If you are working in new construction and have the ability to specify how the drywall will be treated, have them apply 1-2 coats of Gardz after cleaning and before priming and painting. This is a VERY effective penetrating sealer that will eliminate any delaminating risks if used correctly.

Is there any way to “fix” underlying surface bonding issues?

In the case of new construction where they have simply applied some sprayed layers of “Builders Flat” paint, you can actually apply the Gardz product OVER the flat paint and it will penetrate it to “lock down” the drywall below. Please follow manufacturer’s instructions.

Can Modellos be used on textured surfaces?

The primary vinyl materials that Modellos are cut from were originally designed to be applied to smooth surfaces such as glass, walls, signboard, etc. They all will work well over smooth painted and glazed surfaces and smooth plaster finishes, although we recommend that you **always** test your surface for compatibility. In the case of rougher, stone textured plasters (those with an aggregate in them) we have found that our Green Mask materials work best as they have a higher adhesive strength. Even so, the more highly textured surfaces such as broomed concrete finishes, rough “knock-down” type plasters, etc can be difficult to adhere **any** adhesive materials to. Please always test your surface and plan your project accordingly.

Embossing Techniques

What is embossing?

Embossing refers to the application of some sort of textural medium (plaster, metallic wax, etc) through/over the pattern to create a raised design image. Modello patterns, with their adhesive quality, make it easy to use embossing techniques. You can even layer colors and add texture into the design without fear of having your medium “seep under” the edges of the pattern.

Why are Modello patterns generally only used for “low relief” embossing?

Are there ways to fix installation “issues” such as wrinkling, bubbling and stretching of the material?

The Modello medium is actually very forgiving! If there are any trapped air bubbles under the vinyl they will not be a problem. Your main focus should be around the edges of the pattern as you will want a very tight bond here. Any small wrinkles around the edges of the pattern can usually be worked out with a fingernail or your squeegee. If any piece of the pattern has gotten caught under itself or kinked up, use the Weeding Tool to lift up the pattern from the surface, smooth out and reapply. Sometimes, areas of the vinyl may get “stretched”. In that case, use a craft knife or Exacto to splice the vinyl overlap the pieces a bit to get it to lie smoothly in place.

How do I get the individual “tiles” that make up my overall pattern to line up perfectly?

First, lay all of your individual Modello pieces out on the floor to make sure that you understand how it will all fit together, to check and make sure the pieces line up and that you have everything in the size you need. After installing the first piece, you will want to peel back the Transfer Tape along the edge where the next pattern piece will meet so it is easier to match up the design elements. The honest answer is that it is very difficult to get your pattern to line up perfectly each time. You will probably need to make some minor adjustments to get your designs to line up; small gaps between the sections of vinyl can be filled in with tape or you can use the Weeding Tool included with every order to lift the vinyl and “stretch” and/or move it slightly to meet up.

Surface Issues

How long can I leave my Modello pattern on my surface?

This will also depend on environmental conditions, the type of material you are using and the surface you are applying it to. A good general rule to follow is to simply remove your Modello as soon as possible after your technique or product application has had a chance to fully dry and bond to the surface.

What types of surfaces should Modello patterns NOT be used on?

Do not use Modello patterns on any surface that you cannot be sure is clean, dry and stable. If there is any moisture in the surface, the Modello will not adhere well. Likewise, they will not adhere well if the surface is dusty, perhaps from sanding or ongoing construction. Most latex paints take a full month to cure completely and at least 2 days to dry. Metallic paints seem to take 3-4 days to dry. Surfaces on which many layers of paint or plaster have been applied very quickly may have trapped moisture and bonding issues. ANY type of adhesive material placed on an uncured surface may lift off some or all of the layers. Be patient!

How can I test my surface?

We want you to be successful with your project and are very happy to send out complimentary material samples of our various masking materials upon request. Simply call or email us! We also include “test strips” of the material you have ordered in each Modello order.

The term “low relief embossing” implies that your textural material will be applied thinly. When embossing with a traditional stencil, the stencil is pulled away immediately after the embossing technique is applied. A Modello pattern must be left in place until the embossing medium has completely dried. Otherwise you run a great risk of ruining your embossed “print” while trying to peel out the vinyl material.

Another issue to be aware of when using a Modello pattern is that your embossing material must be applied thinly enough so that you can SEE the Modello pattern to remove it. In some cases, your Modello pattern will have a continuous connection, allowing you to remove it in one piece. This would allow you to apply the embossing a little thicker. Most Modello patterns have many small “inside” pieces to them, however. Think of these as “islands”. If you bury them into obscurity, they may be impossible to find later.

Why do I need to wait until my decorative technique (paint, plaster, gilding) is completely dry before removing my Modello pattern?

This is VERY important! If you try to remove your Modello pattern when your embossing material is in a half wet/half dry state, you will find that you get a ragged, uneven edge as you pull the vinyl off. Most materials that will be used for this purpose will dry from the top down, trapping moisture underneath. If they are not given the time to allow all the moisture to come back out, they will also not bond well to the surface you have applied them to. You CAN speed up this drying/curing process by using a hair dryer and applying thin, multiple layers of material.

What type of patterns can I use to apply a thicker embossing technique to?

If you wish to apply a very heavy embossed effect through a pattern your best option would be to use a traditional mylar stencil.