

Simple Jigs to Help Increase Production

Imagine all the time you could save in production if only you didn't have to tape off the remainder of your item with blasting tape...

...If you find yourself doing more and more production jobs these days, or if you find yourself doing smaller jobs of the same items over and over again, then these tips are for you. Imagine all the time you could save by not having to tape off the remainder of your items. The following ideas are easy to make and inexpensive ways of saving you some valuable time:

Cardboard Jig: For small production runs or frequent small jobs, make a jig out of cardboard and blasting tape. We will use a standard 15 oz mug for our example:

Tools Needed: cardboard, duct tape, sharp blade

1. Measure the height and width of the mug
2. Trace the outline of the article onto the cardboard
3. Cut the tracing out
4. Fold the cardboard around the mug and tape it together with blasting tape or a vinyl duct tape.
5. With a sharp blade, cut out a window large enough to expose the image area of your photomask.
6. Tape off the entire surface of the cardboard with blasting tape. This will lengthen the life of the jig and add durability.

Styrene Jig: For mid to large production runs (300-400 times) make a jig out of styrene.

Tools Needed: 1/16" abs styrene (obtained from a plastic supplier), heat gun or hair dryer, heavy-duty gloves

1. Place styrene over the face of the item to be blasted.
2. Heat styrene with a heat gun until it begins to melt and bend.
3. When the styrene is warm, use gloves to shape the plastic around your item in order to form the mold.
4. Allow the styrene and the item to cool.
5. With a sharp blade, cut out a window large enough to expose the image area of your photomask.
6. Apply your photomask and use the jig instead of taping off!

Clever Thinking...

Try these simple but effective ideas:

Flutes: Get a bicycle tube large enough to slide over the flute. Cut a window and go for it. The snug fit of the rubber won't allow the sand to creep in underneath during blasting.

Plates: If small enough, use a paper plate to cover the surface and cut a window.

Curved frames: UPS, FED EX, or other letter packs work well to cover the frame side of the item. Make a larger mask for the engraving side to avoid taping off.