

FREE RESOURCE

DTF Transfer Placement Guide

Size ranges, positioning standards, and common mistakes
— for operators pressing their own transfers.

Every existing placement guide is written by transfer resellers and optimised to sell pre-made transfers. This guide is built for the operator running the press. We focus on production-floor reality: why these measurements exist, what goes wrong when you deviate, and how garment construction variables change the correct answer. The goal is simple: reduced variability and improved consistency.

printingtldr.tools

DTF TRANSFER PLACEMENT GUIDE

Professional placement standards for consistent, high-quality results every time.



CONSISTENT
PLACEMENT
Every time

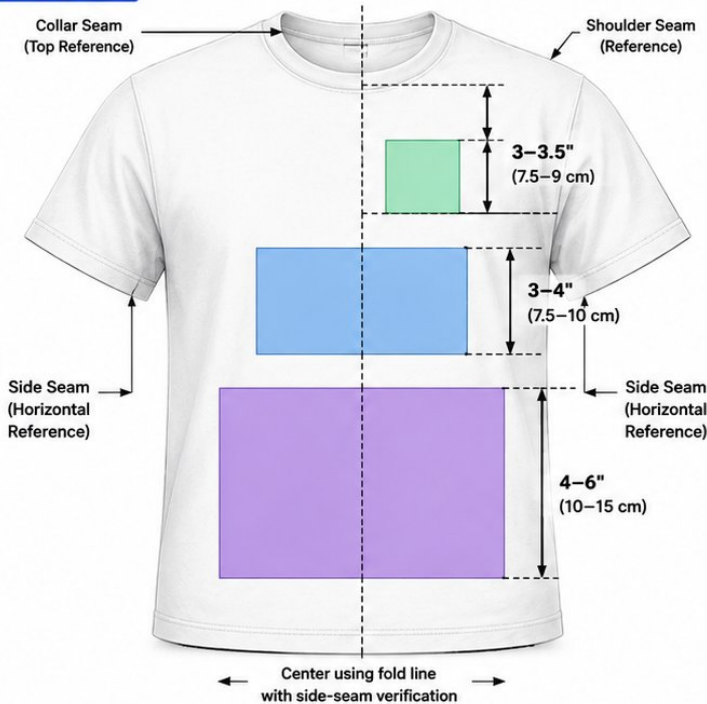


MEASURE
ACCURATELY
Follow references



BETTER RESULTS
Happier customers

FRONT T-SHIRT



LEFT CHEST

PLACEMENT:
3–3.5" (7.5–9 cm)
below collar seam
to top of design
Use side seam as
horizontal reference.

ARTWORK WIDTH:
ADULT: 3–4" (7.5–10 cm)
YOUTH: 2–3" (5–7.5 cm)



CENTER CHEST

PLACEMENT:
3–4" (7.5–10 cm)
below collar seam
Center using fold line
with side-seam
verification.

ARTWORK WIDTH:
ADULT: 8–10" (20–25 cm)
YOUTH: 6–8" (15–20 cm)



FULL FRONT

PLACEMENT:
4–6" (10–15 cm)
below collar seam
Center using fold line
with side-seam
verification.

ARTWORK WIDTH:
ADULT: 10–12" (25–30 cm)
YOUTH: 8–9" (20–23 cm)



NOTE: Use pressing pillow when needed.



PRODUCTION NOTE

Pocket edge is primary reference.
Collar-drop measurements are unreliable.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ❌ Measuring from collar point
- ❌ Centering stretched garments
- ❌ Ignoring platen-height differences

BEST PRACTICES

- ✅ Measure from collar seam
- ✅ Verify center using side seams
- ✅ Scale artwork for larger garments



ACCURATE MEASUREMENTS. CONSISTENT PLACEMENT. PROFESSIONAL RESULTS.



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FULL BACK

PLACEMENT:
4–6" (10–15 cm)
below collar seam
Center using fold line
with side-seam
verification.

ARTWORK WIDTH:
ADULT: 10–12.5"
(25–32 cm)
YOUTH: 8–10"
(20–25 cm)

Collar Seam
(Top Reference)

Shoulder Seam
(Reference)

FULL BACK

4–6"
(10–15 cm)

Side Seam
(Reference)

Side Seam
(Reference)

Center using fold line
with side-seam verification

SLEEVE (UPPER ARM)

PLACEMENT:
1–2" (2.5–5 cm)
below shoulder seam

ARTWORK WIDTH:
ADULT: 3–4"
(7.5–10 cm)
YOUTH: 2–3"
(5–7.5 cm)

Shoulder Seam
(Top Reference)

1–2"
(2.5–5 cm)

NOTE:
Use pressing pillow
when needed.



PRODUCTION NOTE
Pocket edge is primary reference.
Collar-drop measurements are unreliable.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Measuring from collar point
- ✗ Centering stretched garments
- ✗ Ignoring platen-height differences

BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ Measure from collar seam
- ✓ Verify center using side seams
- ✓ Scale artwork for larger garments



ACCURATE MEASUREMENTS. CONSISTENT PLACEMENT. PROFESSIONAL RESULTS.



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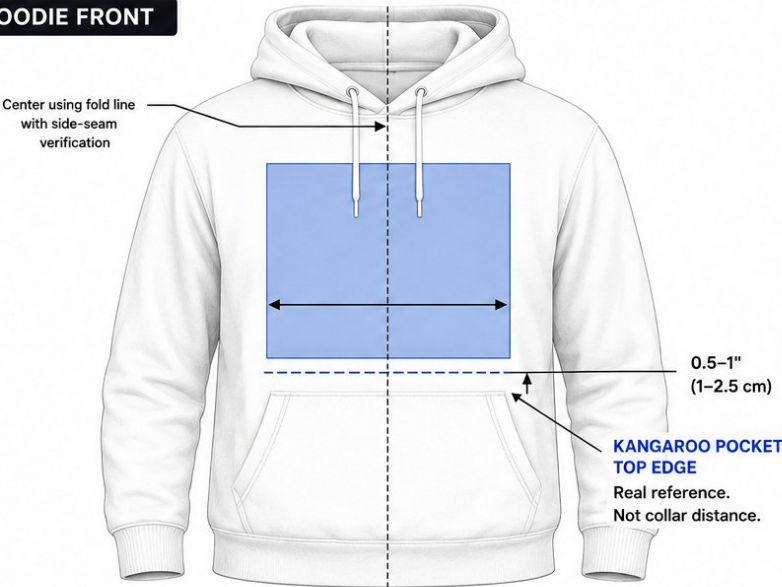
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HOODIE FRONT



COMMON MISTAKES	BEST PRACTICES
✗ Measuring from collar point ✗ Centering stretched garments ✗ Ignoring platen-height differences	✓ Measure from pocket top edge ✓ Verify center using side seams ✓ Scale artwork for larger garments

HOODIE FRONT PLACEMENT

PLACEMENT: 0.5-1" (1-2.5 cm) above kangaroo pocket top edge	ARTWORK WIDTH: ADULT: 10-12" (25-30 cm) YOUTH: 7-8.5" (18-22 cm)
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**PRODUCTION NOTE**
The kangaroo pocket top edge is the real reference — not collar distance.

WHY THIS MATTERS

USING COLLAR DISTANCE

Inconsistent results due to hood size, garment stretch, and platen height differences.

USING POCKET EDGE

Consistent, repeatable placement every time.

**PRODUCTION NOTE:**
The kangaroo pocket top edge is the real reference.

1. The Reference Table

Shop baselines, not rigid rules — collar height, garment construction, fabric thickness, and fit all affect visual balance and repeatability. **Always measure from the collar seam, not the collar point.**

Placement	Vertical Reference	Horizontal Centering	Adult Width	Youth Width	Production Note
Left Chest	7.5–9 cm (3–3.5 in) from collar seam to top of design	Side seam reference	7.5–10 cm (3–4 in)	5–7.5 cm (2–3 in)	<i>Above 5 in wide, the design can compete with a pocket seam on structured workwear — test before a run.</i>
Center Chest	7.5–10 cm (3–4 in) from collar seam	Center fold with side-seam check	20–25 cm (8–10 in)	15–20 cm (6–8 in)	<i>Avoid dropping too low; narrow-fashion fits may need a narrower width spec.</i>
Full Front	10–15 cm (4–6 in) from collar seam	Center fold	25–30 cm (10–12 in)	20–23 cm (8–9 in)	<i>Standard workhorse placement; maintain consistent platen height.</i>
Full Back	10–15 cm (4–6 in) from collar seam	Center fold	25–32 cm (10–12.5 in)	20–25 cm (8–10 in)	<i>Measure from the collar seam, not the collar point.</i>
Sleeve (Upper)	2.5–5 cm (1–2 in) from shoulder seam	Crease line	7.5–10 cm (3–4 in)	5–7.5 cm (2–3 in)	<i>Use a pressing pillow when needed to elevate above the shoulder seam.</i>
Back Collar / Neck Label	2.5–5 cm (1–2 in) below collar seam	Center fold	5–7.5 cm (2–3 in)	3.5–5 cm (1.5–2 in)	<i>On youth sizes or tight collar constructions, stay at the lower end to avoid crowding the neckline.</i>
Hoodie Front	1–2.5 cm (0.5–1 in) above pocket top edge	Pocket center	25–30 cm (10–12 in)	18–22 cm (7–8.5 in)	<i>The kangaroo pocket top edge is the real reference — not collar distance.</i>

2. Placement Rules

Collar seam, not collar point — everywhere

Always measure from the collar seam for all chest and back placements. The collar point introduces visible variance between garments. This applies to every placement in the table, not just full back.

Left chest: vertical drop first, side seam second

Use the vertical collar-seam drop for placement position. The side seam is only a horizontal check — not the primary reference.

Hoodies: pocket edge overrides collar drop

For hoodies with kangaroo pockets, the pocket top edge is the primary reference. Collar-drop measurements create inconsistent gaps above the pocket across sizes and should not be used as the main reference on these garments.

3. Garment Construction Variables

Standard measurements assume a basic crew-neck jersey tee — they become less reliable on more complex garments.

Ring-Spun Cotton with Higher Collar Construction

The collar sits 5–8 mm higher than standard, making the design ride up if you use standard collar-drop measurements. Adjust your reference down to compensate.

Raglan Sleeves

The side seam reference is useless. Use the shoulder-to-shoulder measurement instead to find true centre. A raglan sleeve extends in one piece fully to the collar, leaving a diagonal seam from underarm to collarbone.

Kangaroo Pocket Hoodies

The pocket top edge is the real reference point, not the collar distance. Relying on collar drop will result in varying gaps above the pocket across different sizes.

Zip-Front Hoodies

The zipper centreline replaces the fold-pinch centre method. Use a pressing pillow to absorb the zipper's height and ensure even DTF adhesion.

Plus-Size Garments

Proportional scaling is required. A 25 cm design that works on a Large looks disproportionately small on a 3XL. Scale DTF artwork accordingly before printing.

4. Common Failure Modes

Cause-and-effect scenarios from the production floor, not generic warnings.

Mistake 1 — Collar point vs. collar seam

*Placing center-chest reference from the **collar point** rather than the **collar seam** adds ~1.5 cm variance depending on collar construction. Highly visible on a finished garment and ruins run consistency.*

Mistake 2 — Fold-pinch centering on a stretched garment

Using fold-pinch centering on a garment that has been hung or stretched during pre-press introduces horizontal drift. Always lay the garment flat and use the side seam reference as a definitive check.

Mistake 3 — Ignoring platen height variation

A thick hoodie raises the garment surface, changing the effective distance from your ruler reference point. Recalibrate pressure and reference tools when switching between thin tees and heavy fleece.

5. Heat Press Setup Quick-Reference

Seating the Garment

Thread the garment onto the platen when possible. Threadability separates front and back layers, eliminating interference from back seams or pockets. For premium or thick garments where threading is difficult, use a guard sheet or internal pad instead — don't force it.

Pressing Pillows

Mandatory for sleeve placements, over-seam pressing, and thick zipper areas to ensure flat platen contact. For thin single-layer garments a pillow may not be needed — use judgement.

Pressure Adjustments

DTF requires heavy, even pressure. When adding a pillow or switching to thicker garments, recalibrate pressure before the first press of each new run.

Ready to lock in your margins?

Pricing your transfers correctly requires the same precision as placing them.

DTF Printer Payback Calculator

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