Hi CNC Enthusiast,

I wanted to thank you again for signing up for our Free CNC For Beginners Course.

Today, I want to answer one of the most common questions that I get, ***"How do I make my idea into a real part with a CNC?"***

Having been doing this for many years, I often take it for granted that everyone must know the workflow process for making stuff on a CNC. But then I go to a trade show and someone asks, "If I just put a part on the bed of the machine, what button do I press to make a copy of it?"

The first time someone asked me that, it made me laugh, but after being asked many questions like that, it made me realize that, in general, this industry is not doing a great job of explaining this. So after doing a lot of research, I realized that there are a lot of videos, blogs, etc. that explain CNC, but most offer a mid to high level technical explanation. Well, not today! Today I am going to do my best to explain this process in a way that hopefully anyone can understand.

While it is not as simple as treating the CNC like a photocopier, it is also not rocket science... so let's dive in.

5 Easy Steps

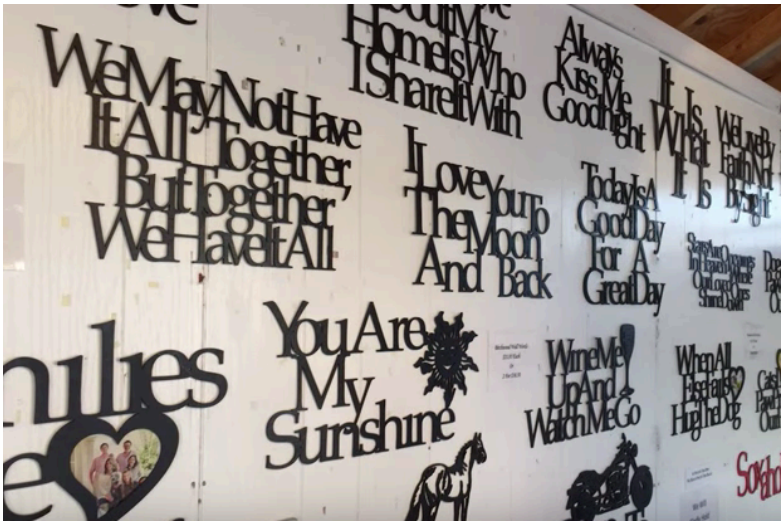
Step 1 - Think It!
Step 2 - Design It!
Step 3 - Decide How To Cut or Carve It!
Step 4 - Set It Up!
Step 5 - Make It!

It's really that easy!

Think It!

Do you have a hobby that you think a CNC can help you with? Or perhaps you would like to make items that you can sell at fairs or online? A STEPCRAFT CNC can help make this a reality. Ideas can come from anywhere. Two of my favorite places are Pinterest and Etsy.

Search for "CNC Projects" and you will get tens of thousands of ideas to get your mind going.

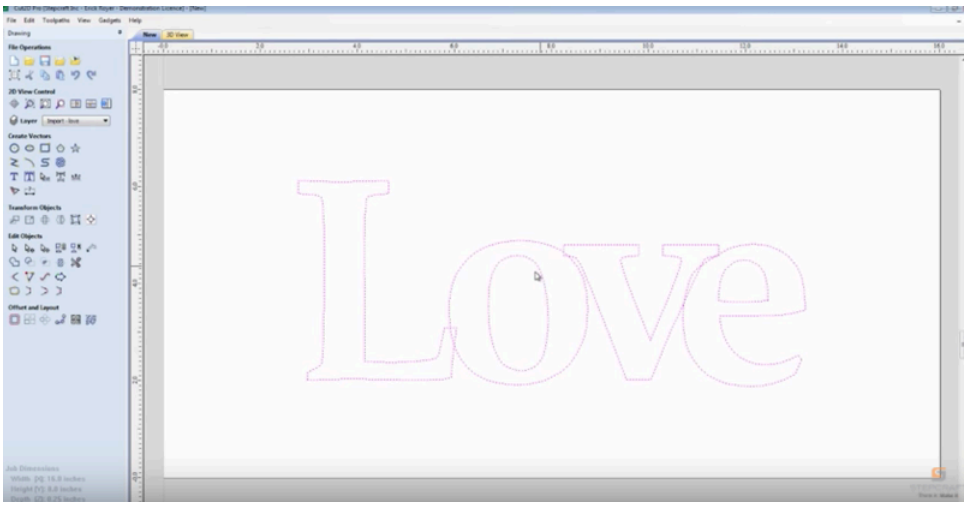


One example that I give to a lot of our customers about what they can make came from my wife and I attending a large fair here in New England. As we walked around we saw many booths that sold these black silhouette wall signs of many different sayings. One that we saw, simply said, "Love You More". They looked really cool and many people were buying them as their booth's were very busy. And get this ... they were selling for over $20 each. So when I got home I wanted to make my own "Love You More" sign. I was able to go from design to finished item in about 10 minutes, and the best part - it cost less than $2.00 in material.

If you would like to see a video explaining how to design this "Love You More", you can visit: https://youtu.be/r8aCUFFZ5jI

Design It!

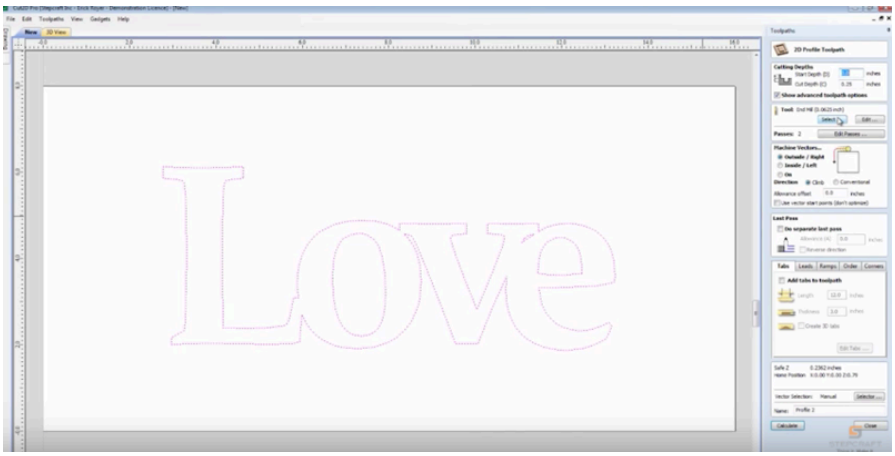
You might be thinking, "I am not a graphic designer". Thats okay, you don't need to be and if you are ... Great! STEPCRAFT CNC systems can work with designs from a countless number of programs so if you like to design digitally, chances are that your program will work with our machine. This stage of the process can also be referred to as computer aided design (CAD).



If you don't currently have a design program ... no problem! Our software lets you design projects quickly and easily. If you want to draw something from scratch, we make it very easy. If you don't want to draw, but you simply want to take an existing design, such as your favorite automobile's logo, and cut that out for the "man cave", it is as easy as opening the file and using Vectric's Image Trace feature, you can turn that logo into vectors that the CNC can produce.

Decide How To Cut/Carve It!

Once you have your project designed, you need to tell the CNC what size cutting bit you are using and how fast you want to cut. This is referred to as computer aided manufacturing (CAM). CAM is a very technical way of saying that you also need to tell the CNC where and how to cut. For instance, say you are cutting a letter "A" to hang on your wall - perhaps it's the first letter of your last name. You will simply type the letter "A", tell the software how big to make it and then select it and tell the program what size bit you are using. It can really be that simple, and we have videos and supporting training materials that help you every step of the way.



The best part is that while the software is very easy to learn how to use, it also has powerful, advanced features to grow with you for years to come - you will never be stuck with "beginner software".

Set It Up!

Now that your design is done, let's get to the best part ... The CNC machine!

Next, you fasten a piece of your favorite material, such as wood, plastic or metal, to the machine bed of the CNC. Then you load the cutting bit into the spindle and using the arrow keys on your keyboard, move the bit to the starting point on your material. You will now just have to zero the machine. This is done by pressing the "Zero All" button within UCCNC. This tells the machine that you defined the starting location - much like when you use a GPS in your car ... it all starts at point zero!

Make It!

The last step, which is also the most fun, is pressing the "Start" button. The first time you press it, you will feel the rush of excitement and nervousness, but within minutes you will start to see your design appear in front of your eyes. Before you know it, the machine will shut off and you can remove your project. After some light sanding prep work, you can apply the finish of your choice! Voilà! Your first CNC project is complete!

If you are using the STEPCRAFT machine for business use, think about how every time you press that "Start" button, you are making money! A few simple steps turn your ideas into reality! Now you need to simply accept the fact that you have just become addicted to CNC ... Let the ideas flow!

In Tomorrow's Email...

My next email in this course will discuss the different type of bits, or end mills, that you can use on the CNC to make different projects. I will show you the most common five bits that you should have and what they are best used for. I know this may sound a little bit technical, but I promise it will all make perfect sense tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Erick Royer
Director
www.Stepcraft.us