

Quick Start Guide

From sign-up to your first clean DTF or DTG separation. Plan on five minutes.

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1 Open the Web App

In any modern browser, go to tonesmith.makerfoundryco.com.

Click **Sign in** at the top right (or **Start your 7-day free trial** if you haven't subscribed yet). The web app works on Mac, Windows, Linux, and even iPad — anywhere a recent Chrome, Safari, Firefox, or Edge runs.

Tip: bookmark the editor URL after signing in. You'll be back daily once it's part of your prep workflow.

2 Sign In or Create Your Account

Use the same email address you used at checkout. ToneSmith ties your subscription to that email automatically.

- **Email + password:** click **Need an account? Sign up**, fill in name, email, password.
- **Google:** click **Continue with Google** — fastest path, no password to remember.

If you signed up with email + password, check your inbox for a verification message titled *"Verify your email for ToneSmith"*. Don't see it? Check spam, search for "ToneSmith," or wait two minutes — large inbox providers occasionally delay.

3 Open the Editor & Prepare Your Image

Once verified, you land directly in the editor. Drop any artwork (PNG, JPG, or WEBP) onto the upload zone — or click it to browse. High-resolution source files give you cleaner halftones, but anything from a 1500×1500 PNG up to a 5000×7000 print master works.

You can also drop a previously-saved **.tone** project file here to pick up where you left off — see Step 7 below.

Got a busy or photographic background? Expand the **Background Removal** panel in the left sidebar and click **Remove Background (AI)**. The model runs entirely in your browser — no upload, no cost. After the first pass, fine-tune with the **edge cutoff** slider and the **clean up color spill** toggle for residual fringe color (the most common AI failure mode).

Solid-color background? Skip the AI step — set your knockout color in the next step instead. Knockout produces cleaner halftone edges than AI matting on flat backgrounds.

4 Set Up & Start ToneSmith

Two panels are unlocked before you start:

- **Image Size** — confirm dimensions at 300 DPI. Crop or resize directly on the canvas.
- **Shirt Color** — set the garment color and your knockout (the color in the artwork that should disappear behind the shirt). Use the eyedropper to pick straight from the canvas, or type a hex value. Toggle "Shirt Color Preview" to see how the design will sit on the shirt.

Hit **Start ToneSmith** at the bottom of the side panel. The remaining panels (Halftone, Levels, Cleanup, Underbase) unlock and the live preview kicks in.

5 Tune Live, Then Apply

Adjust any control and watch the canvas update in real time:

- **Halftone** — LPI 15–85, angle 0–45°, dot shape (round, ellipse, diamond, square, line).
- **Levels** — black point, white point, and gamma over a real histogram.
- **Cleanup** — removes orphan dots in shadows and stray micro-dots.
- **Underbase** — generate the white-base layer with a 0–5 px choke.

Use the preview tabs above the canvas (**Original**, **Separation**, **Slider**, **Mask**) to inspect each layer. When the preview looks right, click **Apply ToneSmith Separations**. The export options unlock.

Heads up: the preview renders fast at a working resolution while you tweak. After you stop adjusting for about a second, the canvas auto-upgrades to full-resolution so you can zoom in and inspect halftone dots crisply.

6 Export — or Send Straight to a Gang Sheet

Click **Export** to open the export dialog. Pick what you need:

- **Separation PNG** — the final color halftone, print-ready at 300 DPI.
- **White Underbase PNG** — the matching white-ink layer (only if Underbase is enabled).
- **Halftone Mask** — the binary halftone pattern alone.
- **All Three** — one click, every layer downloaded.

If your end goal is a multi-up DTF transfer, hit **Send to Gang Sheet** instead. The finished separation jumps straight into the Gang Sheet builder in a new tab, ready to be arranged with other designs and packed via Auto Nest. (See the *Gang Sheet Builder Quick Start* for the rest of that flow.)

Workflow tip: halftone several designs in this editor first, then send each to the gang sheet — they all land on the same sheet so you can lay out your full transfer order in one pass before exporting the printable PNG.

7 Save & Resume — the .tone Project File

The export dialog also has a **Save as .tone Project** button. Unique to ToneSmith, and the difference between "redo every setting next time" and "just resume."

What's a .tone file?

A single project file that bundles your *original* uploaded artwork together with every setting you used (halftone, levels, shirt color, knockout, cleanup, underbase, background removal). Save it. Share it with a teammate. Re-upload it next week to make a revision for a repeat customer.

To save: click **Save as .tone Project** in the export dialog, or use the **Save Project** button in the editor header. You'll get a file like `my-design.tone` downloaded to your computer — and the project also appears in your **Recent projects** list on the editor's upload screen.

To resume: three ways, all valid.

- From the same browser → click the project's thumbnail in **Recent projects**. Loads instantly.
- Switching browsers or devices → drag the downloaded `.tone` file onto the upload zone.
- Working with a teammate → email or share the `.tone` file and they drop it on their upload zone.

Important: the **Recent projects** list is browser-local — it lives in your browser's storage on this specific machine. If you clear browser data, switch to a different browser, or move to another computer, the recents list will be empty. **Always keep the downloaded `.tone` file** as your portable copy. The recents list is a convenience layer on top.

Watch the Walkthrough Videos

Sign in and head to tonesmith.makerfoundryco.com/editor. Step-by-step training videos for every major workflow appear right on the upload screen, alongside any saved projects.

Topics: knocking out tricky backgrounds, dialing in halftones for your specific printer, building underbases for tough shirt colors, recovering muddy gradients with the levels tool, and laying out gang sheets.

Join the Maker Foundry Community

Our community on Facebook covers DTF, DTG, laser engraving, embroidery, sublimation, and the rest of the maker stack — not just halftones. Real shops, real results, real questions, real answers.

facebook.com/groups/makerfoundry

If you get stuck on a separation or a gang sheet layout, posting your file and what you're trying to do gets you faster help than trying to figure it out alone.

That's it.

Cleaner artwork. Fewer reprints. More finished orders.

ToneSmith — by Maker Foundry

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