



BioARTX X1 3D

Inkjet Printer

Calibration Manual

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1. Calibration Process

Calibration processing is a critical step in ensuring that a 3D printer, such as the BioARTX X1, operates at its highest performance and precision levels. It involves a series of adjustments to various printer components, including the print bed, extruder, motion systems, and stepper motors, to guarantee that all elements are correctly aligned and function together smoothly. The process begins with automatic procedures, such as auto-bed leveling and extruder flow rate calibration, which adjust for surface inconsistencies and material flow accuracy. Manual checks, such as Z-axis alignment and bed surface verification, further fine-tune these settings. Proper calibration ensures that the print bed is level, the extruder dispenses material accurately, and the printhead moves precisely across all axes. Calibration processing also includes regular maintenance, like cleaning and firmware updates, to maintain accuracy over time. A well-calibrated printer minimizes errors, enhances print quality, and prolongs the printer's lifespan by ensuring that all components function optimally and work in harmony.

2. Automatic Calibration Procedures

Automatic calibration is an essential feature in modern 3D printers like the BioARTX X1, which streamlines the process of achieving precise and accurate prints. These procedures use advanced sensors, software algorithms, and mechanical systems to adjust the printer components automatically, minimizing the need for manual intervention while ensuring optimal print quality. The automatic calibration procedures can be broadly divided into auto-bed leveling, extruder calibration, and print head offset adjustments.

2.1. Auto bed leveling

To ensure that the print bed is aligned correctly with the printhead, compensate for any surface irregularities or tilting of the bed, which can negatively affect print quality.

2.1.1 Procedure

- The printer uses a specialized sensor (often an inductive or capacitive probe) mounted near the printhead to measure the height at various points on the print bed.
- The system automatically moves the printhead to different locations on the bed to detect any unevenness or warping.
- The measurements are fed into the printer's software, which calculates the required adjustments for accurate printhead positioning.

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- Any detected variations in bed height are compensated for during printing, ensuring uniform print layer deposition across the entire print surface.

2.2 Extruder Flow Rate Calibration

To ensure that the printer extrudes the correct amount of material (filament or bioink), avoiding under-extrusion (too little material) or over-extrusion (too much material), both of which can lead to print defects.

2.2.1 Procedure

- The printer runs a test print, and the software measures the amount of material extruded during the process.
- The flow rate is then automatically adjusted based on the measurements. If the extruder dispenses too much or too little material, the software recalculates the correct flow rate.
- This process can also adjust extrusion factors such as pressure, speed, and temperature to fine-tune the material flow for various filaments or bioinks.

2.3 Print Head Offset Calibration

This ensures that the printhead is correctly positioned relative to the print bed. This prevents issues such as nozzle-to-bed distance errors, which can lead to poor adhesion or damage to the print bed.

2.3.1 Procedure

- The system measures the distance between the printhead and the bed using a built-in sensor or by lowering the printhead to the bed and monitoring contact.
- If the printhead is too high or too low, the software automatically adjusts the Z-axis settings, or the printhead position, to achieve the optimal distance, ensuring the first layer adheres appropriately without causing damage to the print surface.
- This step typically involves adjusting the Z-offset, the gap between the nozzle and the print bed, and optimizing the distance for different materials or print designs.

2.3.2 Additional Features of Automatic Calibration

- Precision Monitoring: Many 3D printers like the BioARTX X1 have real-time monitoring features that continuously check calibration during printing. The printer can automatically adjust if it detects a deviation in the alignment of the printhead or other components.
- Multi-Point Measurement: Automatic calibration typically involves measuring multiple points on the print bed and even on the extruder's path, ensuring that the printer can handle any surface inconsistencies or complex geometries.

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- **User Interface Integration:** The Mainsail interface allows users to initiate calibration procedures at the touch of a button. The interface offers visual feedback, including live monitoring, alerts, and real-time data on calibration status, making it user-friendly and easy to operate.

2.4 Benefits of Automatic Calibration

- **Accuracy and Consistency:** Automatic calibration minimizes human error and ensures that every print starts with accurate settings. This consistency is crucial for high-precision applications like bioprinting, where slight deviations can compromise the results.
- **Timesaving:** With automatic calibration, users save time compared to manual calibration, allowing for faster setup and reduced downtime. It makes the printer more manageable to use, especially for users without deep technical knowledge.
- **Improved Print Quality:** By ensuring the correct bed leveling, extruder flow, and printhead positioning, automatic calibration significantly improves the overall print quality, preventing issues like warping, poor adhesion, and misalignment.
- **Adaptability:** Automatic calibration makes it easier to switch between different print materials (bioinks, filaments, hydrogels, etc.) without manually adjusting settings each time, increasing the versatility of the 3D printer.

3. Manual Calibration Procedures

Manual calibration is an essential step in the 3D printing process that requires the operator's direct involvement to ensure the printer components are functioning optimally. While automatic calibration features are valuable for initial setup and routine operations, manual calibration provides finer control over the printer's performance, especially when dealing with material changes, precision adjustments, or complex printing tasks. The manual calibration process primarily involves the print bed leveling, extruder calibration, stepper motor adjustment, and fine-tuning of the Z-offset and printhead alignment. Below are the detailed steps for manual calibration procedures for the BioARTX X1 3D Inkjet Printer:

3.1. Print Bed Surface Check and Leveling

Objective: To ensure that the print bed is perfectly level and aligned with the printhead for even and consistent layer adhesion during the print process.

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3.1. Procedure

- Clean the Bed: Start by cleaning the print bed thoroughly to remove any debris, dust, or remnants from previous prints. Use a soft cloth or a specialized cleaning solution to wipe the surface clean.
- Perform Initial Homing: Use the Mainsail interface or the printer's control panel to home the printhead and ensure that it returns to its starting position at the origin (usually the center of the bed).
 - The print bed typically has manual leveling screws at each corner. These screws control the height of the bed in relation to the printhead.
 - Use a piece of standard printer paper (or feeler gauge) and place it between the printhead and the bed at each corner of the bed. Move the printhead to each corner of the bed using the controls and adjust the screws until the paper slides easily but with slight resistance when the nozzle is near the bed.
 - After adjusting the four corners, check the center of the bed for any discrepancy. Adjust the center screw or use the leveling screws to fine-tune the height.
 - Re-check all points (the four corners and the center) and make small adjustments as necessary. Ensure that the bed is evenly aligned with the printhead at all points.
 - Once the bed is leveled, initiate a test print with a low, flat object or a single layer. Watch the first layer closely to ensure that it adheres evenly across the entire print bed. If needed, fine-tune the leveling again based on the results.

3.2. Extruder Calibration

Objective: To calibrate the extruder, ensuring that the correct amount of material is being fed into the print area, avoiding issues like under-extrusion or over-extrusion.

3.2.1. Procedure

- Unload Filament: If the filament is already loaded in the extruder, unload it before beginning the calibration process.
- Measure a specific filament length (e.g., 100mm) and mark it carefully.
- Feed this filament length manually through the extruder and into the printhead.
- Using the Mainsail interface, set the extruder to extrude a specific amount of filament (e.g., 100 mm) and monitor the extrusion.
- Measure how much filament has been extruded by measuring the distance from the marked point on the filament.

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- If the extruder has dispensed more or less than the intended amount, adjust the extrusion multiplier or steps per mm in the printer's firmware or settings.
- Fine-tune the settings and repeat the extrusion test until the extruder dispenses the correct amount of filament.
- Different materials (e.g., PLA, ABS, bio-inks) may require slight adjustments to the extrusion settings due to viscosity and flow rate variations. Be sure to adjust the flow rate for each material type.

3.3. Print Head Offset Calibration

To adjust the distance between the printhead and the print bed, ensuring proper nozzle-to-bed alignment for consistent first-layer adhesion.

3.3.1. Procedure

- Move the Printhead: Use the controls in the Mainsail interface or manually move the printhead to a safe location above the bed.
- Lower the printhead toward the bed using the Z-axis controls. Ensure that it is just above the print bed, with a small gap (typically 0.1mm-0.2mm) between the nozzle and the surface.
- At this point, a piece of paper can be used to measure the gap. You should feel slight resistance when the paper is moved between the nozzle and the bed.
- If the nozzle is too close or too far from the bed, adjust the Z-offset in the printer's settings to bring it into the correct position. The Z-offset is the vertical distance between the nozzle and the bed when the printer is homed.
- After setting the Z-offset, initiate a test print. Pay close attention to the first layer's adhesion. If it is too thin or not adhering well, adjust the offset slightly and re-test.
- Correct printhead offset ensures that the print material adheres to the bed correctly and that the first layer is consistent. A misaligned printhead can result in poor adhesion, warping, or nozzle clogs.

3.4. Stepper Motor Calibration

Ensure that the stepper motors are correctly calibrated to ensure smooth and precise movement of the printhead and bed during printing.

3.4.1. Procedure

- Move the Printhead and Bed: Using the Mainsail interface, move the printhead and bed to all positions across the X, Y, and Z axes. Listen to any unusual sounds or vibrations during movement.

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- Check that the motors move smoothly and precisely without skipping steps or excessive noise.
- If the motors are noisy or jerky, adjust the current settings or motor driver parameters to fine-tune their performance.
- Perform a test print and check for any missed steps or inaccuracies in movement. If issues arise, increase the current sent to the motors or adjust the stepper motor settings via the Mainsail interface.
- Fine-tune the velocity and acceleration settings to prevent jerky or unstable movements. This is especially important for smooth multi-material printing where precise movement is required.

3.5. Troubleshooting Calibration Issues

3.5.1. Print Bed Adhesion Issues

- Symptoms: First layer not adhering to the bed, warping, or curling edges.
- Possible Solutions:
 - Recheck bed leveling.
 - Adjust bed temperature or material-specific settings.
 - Clean the bed surface.

3.5.2. Extruder Problems (Clogs or Under-Extrusion)

- Symptoms: Inconsistent extrusion, clogs, or under-extrusion.
- Possible Solutions:
 - Clean the extruder and nozzle.
 - Recalibrate the extruder flow rate.
 - Check for filament jams or tangles.

3.5.3. Z-Axis Misalignment

- Symptoms: Uneven first layer or layers not adhering properly.
- Possible Solutions:
 - Adjust the Z-offset.
 - Manually level the bed and ensure the printhead is aligned with the bed.

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4. Ongoing Calibration Maintenance

Ongoing calibration maintenance is vital to ensuring that the BioARTX X1 3D Inkjet Printer continues to deliver high-quality prints consistently over time. As with any complex machinery, regular maintenance and calibration checks help prevent performance degradation, mechanical failures, and print defects. This section outlines the necessary tasks to maintain optimal calibration and performance, including regular checks, cleaning procedures, software updates, and hardware inspections. By following these maintenance steps, users can extend the life of the printer, minimize downtime, and ensure reliable operation for a wide range of printing applications.

4.1. Regular Print Bed Maintenance and Leveling

To maintain consistent bed adhesion and prevent issues like print failure, warping, and improper layer adhesion.

4.1.1. Procedure

- After each print, it is essential to clean the print bed. Residue from previously printed layers or materials can cause uneven surfaces that affect print quality.
- Use a non-abrasive cloth and a suitable cleaning solution (e.g., isopropyl alcohol or a designated print bed cleaner) to wipe down the surface.
- Ensure no dust or debris remains on the bed surface to avoid adhesion problems during the next print.
- Although automatic bed leveling can handle most of the leveling process, periodic checks are still necessary, especially after heavy usage or switching materials.
- Manually check the bed's alignment using paper to gauge the distance between the printhead and the bed. This ensures that no unevenness or misalignment could affect print quality.
- If you notice any issues with the first layer adhesion or print distortion, it may be due to a misaligned bed. Use the Mainsail interface to recheck and perform the auto-bed leveling procedure. Adjust the screws manually if required for finer alignment.

4.2. Regular Extruder and Nozzle Maintenance

To ensure consistent and accurate extrusion of material, preventing under-extrusion, over-extrusion, and clogs.

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4.2.1. Procedure

- The nozzle should be cleaned after every print to prevent material buildup, which can lead to clogs and inconsistencies in extrusion. Use a needle or nozzle cleaning tool to clear any debris or filament residue from the nozzle tip.
- If the nozzle is clogged, heat the extruder to the appropriate temperature for the filament being used and gently push filament through to clear the blockage.
- Perform Regular Extruder Flow Rate Calibration:
- Over time, the flow rate may drift due to wear or changes in material properties. To keep the extruder flowing properly, periodically recalibrate the flow rate.
- Perform the extruder calibration process by extruding a known length of filament and adjusting the flow multiplier in the Mainsail interface until the correct amount of material is being extruded.
- Regularly check the filament spool and path for any jams or tangles. Filament tangling can cause uneven feeding into the extruder, leading to extrusion issues.
- Ensure the filament feeds smoothly into the extruder without excessive tension, which can cause the material to snag or break.
- Periodically inspect the extruder gear for any wear or damage. Clean it to ensure that it can grip and feed the filament correctly. Replace the gear if it shows signs of excessive wear.
- Proper extruder maintenance ensures the printer maintains consistent material flow, preventing print defects caused by clogs, under-extrusion, or irregular extrusion patterns.

4.3. Stepper Motor and Motion System Checks

To maintain the accuracy of the printer's movements, preventing misalignment and ensuring smooth motion.

4.3.1. Procedure

- Check for Smooth Motion Across Axes
- Periodically move the printhead across all axes (X, Y, and Z) using the Mainsail interface. Listen for any unusual sounds, vibrations, or jerky movements that could indicate issues with the stepper motors, belts, or other mechanical components.
- Check that the motors are moving the printhead and bed smoothly without skipping steps or hesitation. Any irregularities should be addressed immediately.
- Lubricate Moving Parts
- The motion system, including rails, bearings, and lead screws, requires periodic lubrication to ensure smooth operation. Use a suitable lubricant for the printer's components and apply it sparingly to avoid attracting dust and debris.

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- Regular lubrication helps reduce friction, prolong the lifespan of mechanical components, and maintain precise movement.
- Inspect the Belts and Pulleys
- Inspect the belts for any signs of wear or looseness. If belts are too loose, they may cause issues with print accuracy. If they are too tight, they may cause unnecessary strain on the motors.
- Adjust the tension of the belts as necessary to ensure they are tight enough to move the printhead accurately but not so tight that they cause excessive strain on the motors.
- Check for Stepper Motor Noise and Vibration
- If the stepper motors produce unusual noise or vibration, check the motor drivers and adjust the current settings to fine-tune the motor performance.
- Excessive noise or vibration can lead to inaccuracies in the print and cause artifacts in the final print result.
- Proper motion system maintenance ensures that the printhead and bed move precisely, minimizing prints' errors and inaccuracies. Smooth motion is vital for maintaining print quality and consistency.

4.4. Firmware and Software Updates

To keep the printer's software up to date, ensure it runs the latest features, fixes, and optimizations.

4.4.1. Procedure

- Check for Firmware Updates:
- The firmware of the BioARTX X1 should be periodically updated to ensure the printer is running with the latest features and improvements. Check the official repository for firmware releases and apply any necessary updates.
- Firmware updates often include bug fixes, performance improvements, and new features that enhance the printer's functionality.
- Update Mainsail Interface
- Regularly check for updates to the Mainsail interface, which controls the printer's settings and operations. Updates to the Mainsail interface may include new calibration options, enhanced user interface features, and better compatibility with newer materials.
- Backup and Restore Settings
- It is good practice to back up your printer settings, including calibration and print profiles, before applying any significant updates. This ensures that you can quickly restore settings if necessary.
- After an update, verify that the settings are still adequately configured and that the printer operates as expected.

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- Importance: Software and firmware updates enhance the printer's capabilities, improve reliability, and introduce new features. Keeping the software up to date ensures that the printer runs efficiently and is compatible with new technologies.

4.5. Regular System Inspections

Ensure that all parts of the 3D printer, including electrical components and structural elements, function optimally.

4.5.1. Procedure

- Inspect the Power Supply
- Check the power supply for any signs of damage, overheating, or wear. The power supply should be securely connected and free from dust or debris. If any issues are detected, address them immediately to prevent electrical failure.
- Check Cables and Wiring
- Inspect the cables and wiring for signs of fraying, loose connections, or wear. Loose or damaged wires can cause electrical issues, miscommunication between components, or even short circuits.
- Ensure that all wires are properly secured and replace any damaged cables.
- Inspect Mechanical Parts for Wear
- Regularly check components like the print bed, extruder gears, and rails for signs of wear and tear. These parts may need to be replaced after extended use to maintain performance.
- Regular system inspections help identify potential issues before they cause significant problems. Early detection of mechanical or electrical faults can prevent costly repairs and downtime.

5. Troubleshooting Calibration Issues

Calibration issues can arise during the 3D printing process, causing problems such as poor print quality, material wastage, or print failure. Troubleshooting calibration issues requires a systematic diagnosis and resolution of the underlying causes. The following section provides detailed solutions for common calibration problems that may occur with the BioARTX X1 3D Inkjet Printer. By identifying and addressing these issues, users can restore their printers to optimal performance, ensuring consistent print quality and a smooth printing experience.

5.1. Print Bed Adhesion Problems

5.1.1. Symptoms

- The first layer does not adhere properly to the bed.

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- Warping or lifting at the edges of the print.
- Inconsistent adhesion across the print bed.

5.1.2. Possible Causes

- Uneven bed leveling.
- Incorrectly print bed temperature.
- Dirty or unprepared print bed surface.
- Incorrect Z-offset.

5.1.3. Troubleshooting Steps

Re-level the Bed

- Perform the auto-bed leveling procedure through the Mainsail interface to check if the bed is properly aligned with the printhead. If necessary, manually adjust the bed using the leveling screws and check the alignment with a piece of paper between the nozzle and the bed.

Check Print Bed Temperature

- Ensure the bed temperature is appropriate for the material being used. For example, PLA typically requires a bed temperature of 50-60°C, while ABS requires a higher temperature (90-110°C).

Clean the Print Bed

- Use isopropyl alcohol or a designated print bed cleaner to remove any dust, grease, or residual material on the bed. A clean bed surface is essential for proper adhesion.
- If using materials like PLA, applying a thin layer of glue stick or painter's tape can improve bed adhesion.

Adjust Z-Offset

- If the printhead is too far from or too close to the print bed, the first layer may fail to adhere. Adjust the Z-offset to achieve the ideal nozzle-to-bed distance, typically around 0.1mm to 0.2mm. Fine-tune the Z-offset through the Mainsail interface or by manually adjusting the bed height.

Test Print

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- After making adjustments, perform a test print with a simple flat object or calibration print. Ensure the first layer sticks well to the bed and that there are no warping or adhesion issues.

Proper adhesion is essential for successful 3D printing. A good first layer adhesion ensures subsequent layers build correctly, preventing issues such as warping and print failure.

5.2. Extruder Flow Problems (Under-Extrusion or Over-Extrusion)

5.2.1. Symptoms

- Under-extrusion: Gaps or holes in printed layers, weak prints, or material not flowing properly.
- Over-extrusion: Excessive material, blobs, stringing, or uneven surfaces.

5.2.2. Possible Causes

- Incorrect extrusion multiplier.
- Incorrect filament settings (diameter, material).
- Clogged or partially blocked nozzle.
- Incorrect temperature settings for material.

5.2.3. Troubleshooting Steps

Check Extrusion Multiplier

- In the Mainsail interface, adjust the extrusion multiplier or flow rate settings. If under-extrusion is happening, increase the multiplier slightly. If over-extrusion is occurring, reduce the multiplier.

Measure Filament Diameter

- Ensure the filament diameter setting in the software matches the actual diameter of the filament being used. Use calipers to measure the filament and update the settings accordingly.

Clean the Nozzle

- If the nozzle is clogged, extruding less material than required, or causing inconsistent flow, heat the extruder to the material's printing temperature and manually push filament through to clear the blockage. Use a needle or nozzle cleaning tool to remove any debris.

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Check Material Temperature

- Make sure the printing temperature for the material is set correctly. If the temperature is too low, the filament may not flow properly, causing under-extrusion. If the temperature is too high, over-extrusion, stringing, or other issues may occur. Refer to the filament manufacturer's recommended temperature settings.

Extruder Flow Test

- Perform a flow test by extruding a known length of filament (e.g., 100mm) and measure the actual extruded length. Adjust the extruder steps per mm if necessary to match the correct extrusion.

Proper extrusion is crucial for creating solid and well-formed prints. Both under-extrusion and over-extrusion can negatively affect print quality, resulting in weak structures or surface defects.

5.3. Z-Axis Misalignment

5.3.1. Symptoms

- The first layer is too high or too low on one side of the bed.
- Layer misalignment or uneven printing.
- Nozzle scraping or digging into the bed surface.

5.3.2. Possible Causes

- Incorrect Z-offset.
- Misaligned Z-axis or gantry.
- Defective stepper motor or lead screw.

5.3.3. Troubleshooting Steps

Check Z-Offset:

- A misconfigured Z-offset is one of the most common causes of Z-axis misalignment. Adjust the Z-offset in the Mainsail interface to ensure the printhead is at the correct height (0.1mm-0.2mm) above the print bed.

Inspect Z-Axis Components:

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- Check the Z-axis lead screw and the motors for any wear, damage, or misalignment. Ensure that the lead screw is clean and lubricated, and that the motor is functioning correctly.

Manually Adjust Z-Axis Height:

- Move the printhead to different points on the bed and use a feeler gauge or paper to check the height at various positions. If the printhead is too high or low at specific points, adjust the leveling screws or fine-tune the Z-axis height.

Re-level the Bed:

- If the Z-axis is misaligned across the bed, re-run the auto-bed leveling process to compensate for any height discrepancies.

Test Print:

- After making adjustments, perform a test print and check for uniformity in the first layer. Ensure that there are no inconsistencies or misalignments.

Proper Z-axis alignment is crucial for the first layer's adhesion and overall print quality. Misalignment can result in uneven prints, layer shifting, and print failures.

5.4. Stepper Motor Calibration Issues

5.4.1. Symptoms

- Irregular movements or print artifacts due to inaccurate motor control.
- Skipping steps, inconsistent positioning, or jerky motion.

5.4.2. Possible Causes

- Incorrect motor current settings.
- Loose or damaged stepper motor drivers or belts.
- Insufficient lubrication or wear on moving parts.

5.4.3. Troubleshooting Steps

Check Motor Current Settings:

- In the Mainsail interface, verify the motor current settings. If the current is too low, the motors may skip steps or fail to move smoothly. If the current is too high, it may cause excessive noise or overheating. Adjust the motor current to ensure proper operation.

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Inspect Belts and Pulleys:

- Check the belts for wear or looseness. Tighten or replace belts as necessary. Make sure pulleys are firmly attached to the motor shafts and that there is no slippage or misalignment.

Lubricate Moving Parts:

- Apply lubrication to moving parts like rails, lead screws, and bearings to ensure smooth motion. Dry or worn-out components can cause jerky movements or uneven prints.

Check Stepper Motor Drivers:

- Ensure that the stepper motor drivers are functioning properly and are not overheating or malfunctioning. Consider upgrading or replacing the drivers if they are faulty.

Perform a Test Print:

- After performing these checks, print a test object and observe the movements of the printhead and bed. Look for any skipping, jerking, or misalignment in the print process.

Proper stepper motor calibration is essential for precise movement and positioning of the printhead and bed. Any issues with the motors can lead to print defects, inaccuracies, or failures.

5.5. Temperature and Material Issues

5.5.1. Symptoms

- Inconsistent prints, warping, or poor layer adhesion.
- Stringing, blobs, or uneven extrusion.

5.5.2. Possible Causes

- Incorrect temperature settings for the material.
- Temperature fluctuations or unstable heating elements.

5.5.3. Troubleshooting Steps

Check Material Temperature:

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- Ensure that the printing temperature matches the recommended settings for the material being used. Refer to the filament manufacturer's guidelines for optimal print temperature.

Check Heated Bed and Extruder Temperature Stability:

- If the temperatures fluctuate, check the thermistors and heating elements for malfunction. Ensure they are functioning properly and maintaining a stable temperature.

Adjust Cooling Fan Settings:

- Adjust the cooling fan speed in the Mainsail interface to ensure proper print cooling during and after extrusion. Too much cooling can cause warping, while insufficient cooling can lead to stringing or poor adhesion.

Maintaining correct temperature settings is crucial for material flow and print quality. Fluctuations or incorrect temperatures can result in defects, poor adhesion, or inconsistent prints.

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