

Matting & Framing

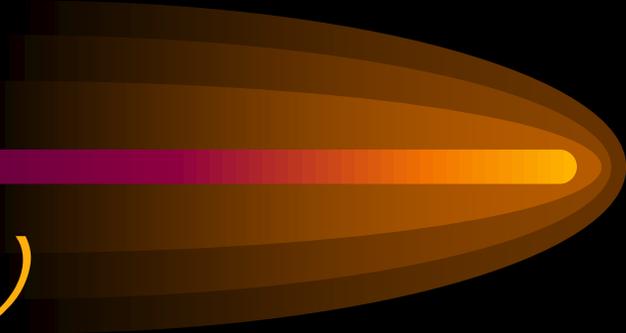
Objectives:

- 1. Give you an 'overall' view of the process and the choices that need be made.*
- 2. Provide you with three alternatives (two of which are 'do-it-yourself').*

Starting Out

- 1. Frames can be made of wood or metal, simple or ornate and are available in almost infinite colors and styles.*
- 2. Mats can be of varying thickness, and are also available in almost infinite colors and styles.*
- 3. 'Gallery' or 'Show' framing is most often done with a comparatively simple black frame and a white mat. The advantage is that this simple combinations will work in any room with any décor.*
- 4. We'll focus on the simple alternative.*

The Components

- 1. The Print*
 - 2. The Mat*
 - 3. Backing (foam core)*
 - 4. The Frame*
 - 5. Glazing*
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The Print (1)

- 1. You can print for yourself on an inkjet printer. You probably want a printer which can print at least 13" wide. This makes it easy to fill an 11x14" board or either an 11x14' or 18x24" frame (both of these are standard sizes and readily available). On Windows, store profiles at:
`windows/system32/spool/drivers/color.`*
- 2. There are many commercial sources for good quality prints: Costco and Target are two readily available alternatives.*
- 3. There are many paper alternatives. I generally recommend either a gloss or semigloss paper; it delivers richer, deeper blacks.*

The Print (2)

- 4. Be careful handling prints. It's all too easy to inadvertently bend glossy and semi-gloss papers, which often produces an unsightly 'ding' where the bend occurred ... and it cannot be removed.*
- 5. Because it's so easy to scratch prints, I recommend you store your prints individually in plastic bags, such as those available from 'www.clearbags.com'.*

The Backing

- 1. Typically this is either 1/8" or 3/16" foam core; I generally use the latter. It is either 'Acid Free' or 'Regular'. I buy 'in bulk' so the 3/16" Acid Free. Assuming you're using 'Regular' matting, there's no reason to buy use Acid Free form core.*
- 2. Foam core is available locally (Dick Blick or Hobby Lobby stores) in 32x40" sheets. It is easy to cut to size with a utility knife.*

The Mat (1)

- 1. Mats can be 2, 4, 6, or 8-ply; the latter generally used for museum mounting. I recommend 4-ply mats for most work.*
- 2. Mats can be 'Regular' or 'Acid Free'. 'Acid free' mats do not release acid as they age which can produce discoloring in the print. However this problem takes something like 20 years to emerge and so is often ignored, which significant cost savings.*
- 3. Mats can be 'single', 'double', or even more. Most commonly the upper mat (the one you see most of) will be white. We'll stick to 'single' white mats.*

The Mat (2)

- 4. The mat 'opening' is the hole in the middle through which you see the print. A mat has 4 'borders': top and bottom and two sides. Most often all 4 borders are the same width; we'll stick with that.*
- 5. Precut mats are available from locally (Hobby Lobby or Dick Blick stores are an inexpensive alternative). Standard sizes include: 11x14 (7½x9½ opening), 12x16 (8½x11½ opening), 16x20 (10½x13½ opening), and 18x24 (11¾x17¾ opening). Precut mats are also available 'on-line'.*
- 6. Your DSLR delivers images with a 3:2 aspect ratio. The aspect ratio of the Precut mats is generally NOT 3:2.*

The Mat (3)

- 7. Making your own mats provides has some advantages. You can build mats to non-standard dimensions. You can learn to do double mats. But it does require you to invest in a mat cutter and to learn the craft. An excellent source for equipment, supplies, training videos, and even framing classes is: 'www.framing4yourself.com'*

Print Cropping

- 1. The aspect mismatch referred to in the previous slide means that when you work with Precut mats (and stock frames), you need to be prepared to crop your image to fit the chosen mat.*
- 2. Sometimes a combination of cropping and (minor) distorting works well.*
- 3. If you're not prepared to crop the image to match the aspect ratio of Precut mats and stock frames, then you may want to consider a custom frame. If so, you'll find the cost will be greater by a factor of from 2 to 3.*

The Frame

- 1. Stock frames are available from locally (Hobby Lobby or Dick Blick stores are an inexpensive alternative). Note that an 11x14 frame is actually has outside dimensions greater than 11x14 size. An actual 11x14 mat fits into an 11x14 frame.*
- 2. Stock frames can be purchased 'on-line' from a variety of suppliers. One excellent choice is: 'www.framesusa.com' which offers a wide selection of frames in standard size (custom sizes available as well).*
- 3. As mentioned earlier, I think sticking the best frame choice for gallery or show is a simple, basic and black.*

Glazing Alternatives

- 1. There are two choices: Glass and Plexiglas. I do not recommend Plexiglas because of its tendency to (easily) scratch.*
- 2. Glass is the most common choice. It is available in many 'grades' the most significant (UV Protections) of which are: Premium Clear (45%), Conservation Clear (97%), and Museum (97%).*
- 3. Museum provides Reflection Control but is extremely expensive. I'd suggest either of the first two options; and recommend Conservation Clear if your using Acid Free mat and backing.*

Miscellaneous Supplies

Here's a list of miscellaneous supplies you'll need to complete the framing process:

- 1. A can of 'Air' to keep the work area 'dust clear'.*
- 2. Clear mounting tape (to mount the print).*
- 3. Glass cleaner and microfiber cloth.*
- 4. Glazers points to secure the mat/print/backing package inside the frame.*
- 5. Double-sided tape to secure a dust-cover (black or brown paper) to the back of the frame.*
- 6. 'Bump-ons' to offset the frame from its wall.*
- 7. Wire and 'eyes' to build a 'wall-hanger'.*

The Framing Process (1)

- 1. Let's start with the framing area. I want a brightly lit area which is as free of dust as possible. My table is 4x8ft, covered with commercial carpet (easy to clean) and lit by 2- 4ft 5500K fluorescent fixtures.*
- 2. I start by assembling the framing components (frame, mat, backing, glazing, and print) along with necessary miscellaneous supplies and tools on the framing table.*
- 3. Before you begin the actual assembly process, be sure to check the backing, mat and glazing all will fit into the frame.*

The Framing Process (2)

- 4. The first step is to mount the print to the backing using clear tape. I carefully position the print on the backing, using the mat to make sure the position of the print is appropriate.*
- 5. Next, I tape the print to the backing, taking care that the tape will NOT appear in the mat window.*
- 6. Then I position the mat on top of the print.*
- 7. The glass should be cleaned (both sides) and then carefully inspected for residual dust (this is where having strong lighting above the framing table is especially important).*

The Framing Process (3)

- 8. Place the glass on top of the mat/print/backing sandwich, then place the frame on top of the glass and sandwich.*
- 9. Holding the 'package' carefully, and using the best available light check for dust beneath the glass, and correct as necessary.*
- 10. Invert the package and insert a few glazers points (or whatever you're using to secure the package to the frame) ... I generally use one point on each side.*
- 11. Invert the package and repeat step #9.*

The Framing Process (4)

- 12. Once you're sure they're no dust (or other extraneous material trapped beneath the glass) finish inserting the balance of the glazing points.*
- 13. Apply double sided tape to the rear edge of the frame. Then carefully lay the dust cover material on top of the rear of the frame (I prefer black paper, but brown is certainly acceptable).*
- 14. Use a utility knife to trim the paper about 1/8" in from the edge of the frame. With a little practice you can do this either 'by eye' or by using one finger placed on the outside edge of the frame to act as a 'knife guide'.*

The Framing Process (5)

- 15. Add the 'bump-ons' to the rear lower corners of the frame.*
- 16. Insert 'eyes' to the rear sides of the frame approximately 1/3 of the way from top to bottom. Thread the hanging wire through the eyes and secure appropriately ... I use a clove hitch knot and a 10-loop wrap around the wire to secure it. You can view a 'clove hitch' video at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aewgmUeHpuE>*

Comparative Costs (11x14)

Description: Print for 7½x9½ mat opening, Regular (not Acid Free) 11x14 single white mat, Regular backing (if req'd), simple black frame (11x14).

- 1. Lowest Cost Option: Total \$37: Print - \$6, Mat - \$4 (Dick Blick), Frame - \$16 (Dick Blick), Glass (with Backing) - \$6 (Dick Blick), Supplies - \$5.*
- 2. Alternative: Total \$57: Print - \$6, Mat - \$16 (Hobby Lobby), Backing - \$2 (cut from 32x40), Frame - \$14 (Hobby Lobby), Glass (UV Clear) - \$14 (Hobby Lobby), Supplies - \$5.*
- 3. Custom (Markland Imaging-Acid Free): Total ~\$90*

Comparative Costs (18x24)

Description: Print for 11³/₄x17³/₄ mat opening, Regular (not Acid Free) 18x24 single white mat, Regular backing (if req'd), simple black frame (18x24).

- 1. Lowest Cost Option: Total \$88: Print - \$17, Mat - \$7 (Dick Blick), Frame - \$32 (Dick Blick), Backing - \$3 (cut from 32x40), Glass (Conservation Clear) - \$24 (Hobby Lobby), Supplies - \$5.*
- 2. Alternative: Total \$119: Print - \$17, Mat - \$27 (Hobby Lobby), Backing - \$3 (cut from 32x40), Frame - \$43 (Hobby Lobby), Glass (Conservation Clear) - \$24 (Hobby Lobby), Supplies - \$5.*
- 3. Custom (Markland Imaging-Acid Free): Total ~\$170*