

CROPPING PHOTOS

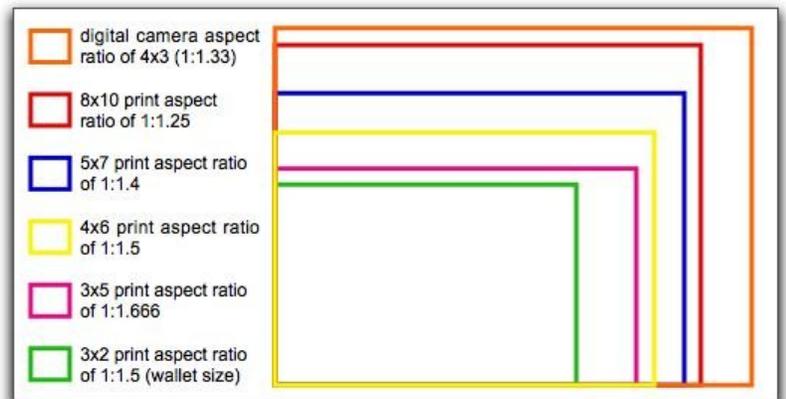
Cropping is the act of cutting away unnecessary or unwanted portions of an image to help focus the viewer's attention and help tell a story. It is an important part of the artistic process in photography.

Generally, it is better to crop in the camera first to avoid later cropping work:

- Zoom in or out to help frame the picture.
- Look for distractions and remove them physically or through camera position, orientation, or zoom.
- Apply composition suggestions such as rule of thirds.
- Rotate the camera vertically to see if the picture looks better.
- Don't get stuck shooting at eye level. Change height to crop distractions or improve composition.

PROBLEMS THAT MAY FORCE YOU TO CROP YOUR PHOTOS

- You work with different shapes all through the photographic process and there is little chance that your picture will always fit properly. This is shown by inconsistent aspect ratios (height : width).
 1. Film: 35mm = 1:1.5
110 = 1:1.333 126 = 1:1
sheet film = 1:1.25 panoramic = 1:3
 2. Digital cameras:
most = 1:1.333 full frame = 1:1.5
 3. Print size: wallet, 4x6, 8x12 = 1:1.5
3x5 = 1:1.666 5x7 = 1:1.4
8x10 = 1:1.25 11x14 = 1:1.27
 4. Computer monitors: most = 1:1.333
wide screen = 1:1.777
- Viewfinders are inaccurate, especially digital point and shoot.
- Slide mounts cover part of the photo, printers often cut off part of a photo, and mat board will cover part of a photo during framing. So, include a little extra in the original photo and crop later if needed.



ARTISTIC REASONS TO CROP YOUR PHOTOS

1. Remove distracting elements from edges.
2. Recompose an image to improve composition, such as the rule of thirds
3. Change the shape to make it more appropriate for the subject.
4. Change the shape for dynamic effect
5. Make the image fit a frame or a page layout such as a scrapbook.
6. Crop to emphasize context and history.



Original

Cropped to remove a distraction



Shape changed to fit the subject





Original

Cropped to improve composition



Original



Cropped and enlarged to isolate people



Cropped to emphasize context and history



Original

Shape changed for dynamic effect



HOW ARE PHOTOS CROPPED?

- Digital photos can be cropped in the computer using software such as PhotoShop.
 1. After opening your photo, save a copy in case you mess up the original.
 2. Click on the crop tool. 
 3. Drag it across the photo from corner to corner. This will create a box of “marching ants” with tiny squares on the corners and edges.
 4. Drag a square into the photo to select the area to be kept. The area to be cropped turns gray.
 5. Click the green arrow to crop the image.
- Paper photos can be cropped with a paper cutter or with a ruler and an exacto knife. Other helpful tools are self-healing cutting mats and a set of “L’s”. Just cut mat board into two L shapes which can be laid over the photo and moved to frame different shapes (or buy a set from B&H for \$43.50). This helps you visualize how the image should be cropped. Always leave a little extra if the photo is to be covered around the edges by a mat or a frame.

