

HOW TO SELECT MATS, FRAMES, AND GLASS

- Everyone has different taste, so these are general guidelines. You should make your own rules.
- How will the photo be used? Galleries and competitions may need different mats than a photo to be hung in your living room. Mats and frames can influence a competition judge, either favorably or unfavorably. Will photos be grouped together? If so, try to use similar mats and frames.
Examples: Yellow flowers with a yellow mat may be too bright for your living room, but may be OK at the fair. Galleries almost always want a white mat.
- Neutral colors - black, white or gray.
 1. Sometimes works well with color.
Examples: White for a photo that has mostly a single color with light highlights.
Black for photos taken in low light.
 2. Always appropriate for black and white photos.
Examples: White for a photo that doesn't have much black.
Black for a photo that doesn't have much white.
Gray for a photo with matching tones.
 3. Black mats can increase impact for color or black and white photos.
- Colored mats
 1. Often look good with color photos, but remember to consider where they are to be hung.
Try to match the mat color with a similar tone in the photo.
 2. Rarely work well for black and white photos.
- Frames
 1. Simple metal frames are inexpensive, easy to assemble, and don't overpower the photo.
These are often preferred or required by galleries.
 2. Wood frames can be coordinated with the furnishings in the room where the photo is to be displayed.
 3. Barn wood frames look good with photos of old buildings, wildlife, etc.
 4. Very ornate frames rarely look good with photos.
- Other information
 1. Photos can be double matted.
 2. Precut mats are available, but sizes are limited.
 3. Some frame shops have computerized equipment that can cut fancy corners.
 4. Some glass and acrylic offers UV protection against fading.
 5. Acrylic is lighter than glass but scratches more easily.
 6. Non-glare glass offers reduced glare but reduces sharpness.
- Where can you get supplies?
 1. Cushman's (Pocatello).
 2. Al's Trophies and Frames (Logan).
 3. Star Valley Drug (Afton)
 4. Limited supplies at Walmart, Kmart, etc.
 5. John's Paint and Glass will cut glass to size (Montpelier)
 6. Catalogs – a. Graphic Dimensions – specialize in frames.
b. Porters – general photo supplies.
c. Light Impressions – specialize in archival supplies.
d. Archival Image – specialize in archival supplies.
e. Blick – art supplies.

HOW TO MOUNT A PHOTO AND CUT A MAT

- MATERIALS NEEDED

Print

Cutting board or scrap mat board

Hobby knife, such as Exacto

Rulers

Mat board (2)

Mounting tissue, spray adhesive, or glue applicator

Pencil

Mat cutter

Lighter fluid and Q Tips

Frame

Screwdriver

Glass cleaner and paper towels

Glass or acrylic

STEP 1 – Crop the print. In other words, cut it to the size and shape desired. Use a hobby knife, ruler, and a cutting board or piece of scrap mat board.

STEP 2 – Mount the print on a piece of mat board the same size as the frame to be used. Stick it to the mat board with mounting adhesive, or if a temporary mount is desired, use linen tape.

STEP 3 – Clean glue smudges from the print with lighter fluid and a Q tip. This is not recommended for ink jet prints.

STEP 4 – Cut the mat using a special mat cutter, measuring the mounted print to determine where to make the cut. Or, select a precut mat with the appropriate opening and frame size. Note that if a pre-cut mat is used, the photo needs to be mounted in precisely the right location in step 2.

- There are two basic kinds of mat cutters. A hand held cutter must be held against a ruler, while other cutters have built in guide rails. The ones with rails are easier to use and more accurate, but can not be used for very large mats.

STEP 5 – Clean a piece of glass the same size as the frame.

STEP 6 – Assemble the frame and insert the glass, mat, and mounted photo. There is no need to attach the window mat to the mounted photo.