

Mountboard Cutting

It is possible to buy pre-cut mountboard which is undoubtedly the easiest way to avoid the need to go to the expense of purchasing the special cutting kit needed to prepare custom mounts. The big disadvantage is that all of your images will have to be printed to the exact shape and size of the pre-cut board.

- For this example, we will assume that we are going to mount a landscape format print with a width of 372mm and a height of 251mm. To account for a margin of error in cutting reduce each measurement by 3mm making the print size 369 * 248mm

If you wish you can round the numbers to the nearest mm but be careful not to lose too much of the displayed print area because you might find that essential edge elements of the print are masked by the mount and the judge is likely to quickly see that and mark the score down.

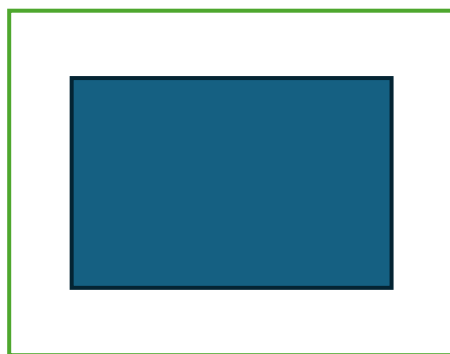
- The mountboard size is nominally 500mm * 400mm however it is good practice to measure it as the size can vary by a few mm and knowing the exact size can be vital to ensure your aperture is cut to the exact required size.

Many people (Me included) like to cut the mount with a 60:40 offset vertically so that there is a smaller border at the top of the mounted print and larger at the bottom. However, some prefer the print to sit centrally in the mount. Both methods are described here.

To make the print exactly central on the mountboard follow instruction (1)

To offset the image vertically by a ratio of 60:40 (My preference), follow instruction (2)

(1) To cut an aperture for a symmetrical (Centrally mounted) print



- a. Calculate the aperture position Horizontally - Board width minus required aperture width = 500mm minus 369mm = 131mm total. Divide 131 by 2 to find width of each border = 65.5mm
- b. Calculate the aperture position Vertically - Board height minus required aperture height = 400mm minus 248mm = 152mm total. Divide 152 by 2 to find width of each border = 76mm
- c.

(2) To cut an aperture for a 60:40 offset aperture vertically



- a. Calculate the aperture position Horizontally - Board width minus required aperture width = 500mm minus 369mm = 131mm total - Divide 131 by 2 to find width of each border = 65.5mm
- b. Calculate the aperture position Vertically- Board height minus required aperture height = 400mm minus 248mm = 152mm total
multiply 152 by .4 to find top border size = 60.8mm
Multiply 152 by .6 to find bottom border size = 91.2mm

Now you know the border sizes, carefully draw these in pencil on the reverse side of the mountboard as guides for your cutting

The mount cutter cuts with a 45 degree angle which exposes the inside colour of the mountboard. For white mountboard there is no difference in colour but for coloured mountboard, the colour is on one side only with the rest being white. So, for example black mountboard when prepared will feature a nice white border around the print. This can be extremely effective for mono images.

- Set the mount cutter to the required horizontal border size and cut the lines very carefully to exactly the limit of the aperture
- Set the mount cutter to the required top border size and cut the line very carefully to exactly the limit of the aperture
- Set the mount cutter to the required bottom border size and cut the line very carefully to exactly the limit of the aperture

If your cutting has been precise the cut out should now fall out with neat precise corners.

Finishing the mounted print

NOTE: Please use proper mounting tape (**DON'T USE MASKING TAPE**) There are several strong reasons why masking tape should not be used.

- **Acidic adhesive:** conventional masking tape can contain acids that may eventually discolour the print or mountboard.
 - **Adhesive deterioration:** it can dry out, become brittle or leave a sticky resid
 - **Tape bleed-through:** over time the adhesive can migrate through the paper, particularly with thinner photographic papers.
 - **Removal:** ordinary masking tape can tear the print or remove fibres from the back when removed.
 - **Mountboard damage:** the tape can pull the surface of the board away when the print is repositioned.
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- Use small amounts of mounting tape to nicely secure the corners and sides of the image to the mount board
 - Cover the rear of the mounted panel with thin white card using 12mm wide double sided sellotape around the edge. (The wider 24mm tape is overkill and very much more difficult to remove if you re-use the mountboard in future)
 - I use an oversized backing and then carefully trim to exact size. This results in a nicely finished panel that will not only look good, but it is also considerate to other photographers submitting images. If you use thick white card as a backing and cut it to only cover the print it is possible that it can damage other prints in transit. If you leave mounting tape exposed, it can cause damage to other prints. Masking tape can leak acid onto other panels. That extra couple of minute finishing your panel with care and consideration and using the method I have described not only gives your work the maximum finished quality. It is safe and the panel is easily dismantled so that it can be taken apart and reused many times over.
 - Label the print with your name and a Title together with any other required information for the competition in question. Be very careful to let Ink dry fully before stacking the panels. Better still cover the label with translucent sticky tape.
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- Mountboards come in various colours. It is well worth selecting a mountboard colour to compliment the image being presented.

Instructions for print mounting

This describes a method for print mounting, other methods are possible but this one works for me.

1. Preparation



Make sure you have a large clean area to work in. A cutting mat is very useful but not essential, these are relatively inexpensive and available from Amazon.

2. Use the calculation instructions to determine the area and position to cut out of the mount board and carefully mark this on the reverse side of your mountboard



3. Trim the print so that you have a good but relatively small white border around the image area.



4. Prepare the mount cutter by using offcuts of mountboard to act as a base underneath the area you cut. This ensures a nice clean cut and helps maintain the blade sharpness



5. Double check your cutting guide markings on the mountboard visually by checking that the printed image area is slightly larger than the cutting guide lines you have drawn on the mount board.



6. Cut the aperture in the mountboard. Set the cut distance on the cut guide.
Note the Alignment line on the cutter which you should use as the reference point to start your cut by aligning with the cut guide markings on the mount board and then similarly at the point you need to stop the cut.



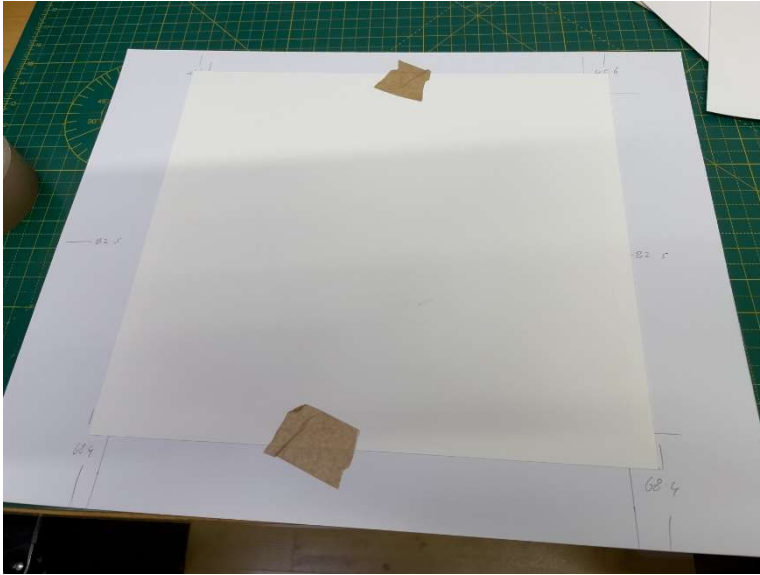
7. Once the aperture is cut, the image area will fall away cleanly from the mount and you can place the print as shown on the table with the mount card on top and when you have carefully aligned the print with the mount, slide both print and mount so that the bottom part is overhanging the table edge. Double check that everything is perfectly aligned.



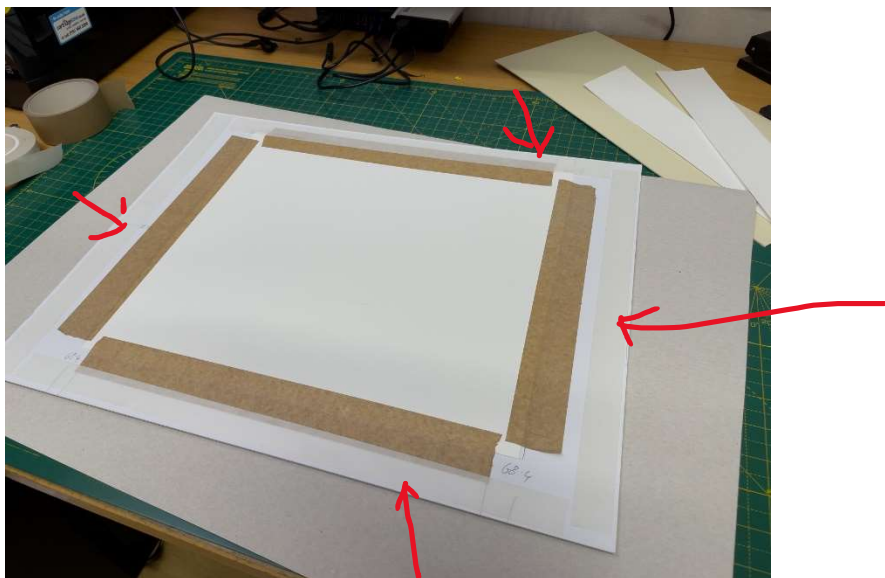
8. Using proper mounting tape (Not Masking Tape) tear off a small piece of tape and put it in place to temporarily tack the print to the board under the overhanging part of the mount.



9. Now that one edge is temporarily secured, rotate the mount card so that you can do the same on the opposite edge. Now you can freely turn the mount with print attached over.



10. Now use the mounting tape to first secure the two untacked edges, then remove the temporary pieces of tape and replace with tape as in the image here, Once you have done that, put ordinary double sided Sellotape close to the edge all the way round the mountboard as shown.



11. Use a piece of card a bit larger than the mountboard as the backing card for the mounted print. (£1 from Clover)

Remove the protection layer from the double sided Sellotape and with the backing card on the work surface place the mounted print down on the backing card. You only get one go at that so make sure it is well placed. It now looks like this with too much backing card.



12. Very carefully use a metal straight edge and a very sharp blade to trim away the backing card from the mount



13. You now have a perfectly mounted print.