

HOW TO WINDOW-MOUNT PRINTS

Equipment.

1. A good mat-cutter is essential. While there are a number of makes available, it is well worth investing in a LOGAN cutter as it is easy to use and will last a lifetime. The usual one consists simply of a special metal ruler and a cutter which slides in a groove on the ruler. This costs about £50 from Pinders.

One minor point to consider is that it is designed for a right-handed user. If you are severely left-handed, then a LONGRIDGE cutter is an option. This is very similar but is designed for either right- or left-handed use. The only disadvantage is that it costs about £80. Longridge usually have a stand at the Great Sheffield Art Show at the University Crucible Centre.

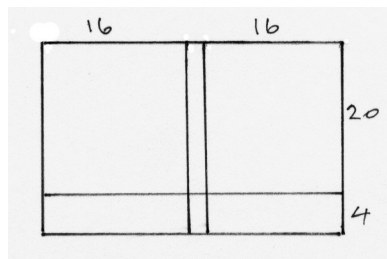
2. A Stanley knife.
3. Scissors.
4. A sharp pencil.
5. A cutting mat (A1 size) is useful but not essential..

Materials

1. Mount board. Daler-Rowney board comes in sheets 33x24 inches from which you can cut two 20x16 mounts.
2. Masking tape. It is best to get good quality tape (1 inch wide) such as Scotch or Sellotape.

How to proceed.

First cut your 20x16 mount from the A1 sheet of board.



Use a Stanley knife and use the grooved side of the Logan ruler with the front surface of the board uppermost for the cleanest cut. Use a cutting mat if you value your table. Retain the 4-inch off-cuts for later use.

Second measure your print accurately. For ease of explanation, I will assume that your print is 13 inches wide by 9 inches high.

Third calculate the size of the mount margins as follows:-

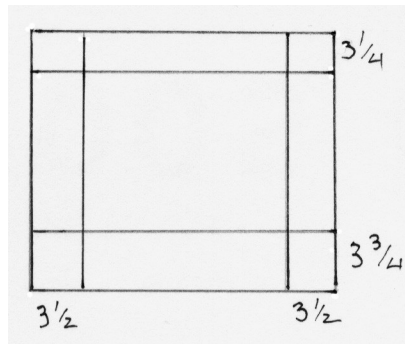
(i) The side margins :
Subtract the print width from the mount width and divide by two.
e.g. $20 - 13 = 7$ $7 / 2 = 3.5$ inches at each side.

(ii) The top and bottom margins :
Subtract the print height from the mount height
e.g. $16 - 9 = 7$

Now while you could have a 3.5 inch margin at top and bottom, it is usual, but not essential, to have the bottom margin a little (say half an

inch) wider than the top margin so that our 7 inches would be divided into $3\frac{1}{4}$ and $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches, top and bottom.

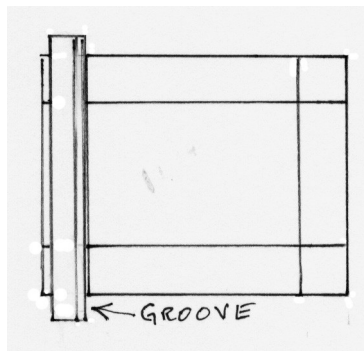
Fourth mark the mount for cutting. Turn the mount face down on the cutting mat and, using a sharp pencil, mark the borders. Continue the lines right to the edge of the mount, see Note 1.



Fifth make the first cut. Put one of the 4-inch off-cuts under the line you are going to cut. **THIS IS IMPORTANT.** (If you just cut straight on the cutting mat you will not

only ruin the cutting mat but will not get a true cut as the stiffness of the mat will cause the blade of the cutter to waver. This only matters for angled cuts).

Place the ruler on the mount so that the grooved edge faces the centre of the mount and line it up accurately with your first pencil line.



Then holding the ruler firmly in position, place the cutter so that its lugs fit over the edge of the groove in the ruler. Check that the cutter will run smoothly in the groove.

Set the cutter so that the fiducial mark is aligned with the nearest horizontal pencil line and then press the blade firmly into the mount (using the shiny thumb knob). While holding the blade down, slide the cutter smoothly away from you until the fiducial mark is aligned with the other horizontal pencil line. Pull the blade out of the mount and lift off the cutter. See Note 2.

Sixth make the second cut. Turn the mount round 90 degrees anticlockwise so that the cut you have just made is nearest to you. Remember to also move the off-cut piece under the new cut. Place the ruler as before and make the second cut.

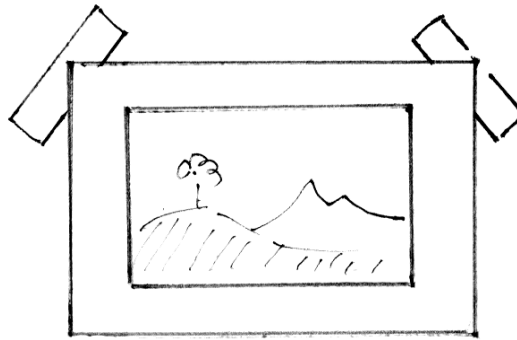
Seventh and eighth, make the two final cuts in the same way.

The centre of the window should now drop cleanly out.

FIXING THE PRINT TO THE BACK OF THE WINDOW

It is best if you have made your print with about an inch border all round.

Put your print face up on the cutting mat. Cut two 2-inch lengths of masking tape and insert them sticky side up beneath the corners of the print:-



Now lower the window over the print and check its alignment - when satisfied that it is correctly placed, press the corners firmly against the masking tape. This will hold the print in place while you turn over the mount to fix the print permanently in place with masking tape all round.. DO NOT use brown packing tape as it will in time ooze brown gum at its edges and ruin any mount or picture it is stored against.

A piece of thin (cheaper) card can be fixed over the back of the print as protection. If white, it will also enhance the highlights if the print was made on thin paper.

Note 1. Continuing the pencil lines to the edges of the mount is useful if you intend to make a double window.

Note 2. When aligning the cutter, make sure that your eye is directly above the fiducial mark. If your cuts do not quite meet at the corners, cut carefully with the Stanley knife to avoid tearing the mount.

Note 3. If your picture occupies the whole of the print paper, you can fix it to a piece of card using either double-sided sticky tape or Photo spray mount.

Note 4. I always cut my windows large enough to leave a half-inch border all round the picture area as this makes it easier to place the window accurately - or more truthfully, it disguises any slight errors.

Gerry Sweetman Feb. '06