



Making a Print

To begin printing your monochrome film you will need a room, which can be blacked out and made safe of any light sources that will fog your paper. In the absence of a permanent darkroom set up many photographers use the bathroom as a temporary darkroom sometimes much to the annoyance of the rest of the family. Temporary workbench can be erected over the bath for equipment and will also give you the advantage of running water, which is very useful but by no means essential. My own permanent darkroom has operated very successfully for many years without a water supply, the prints simply put into a large tray of water and washed at the end of the printing session.

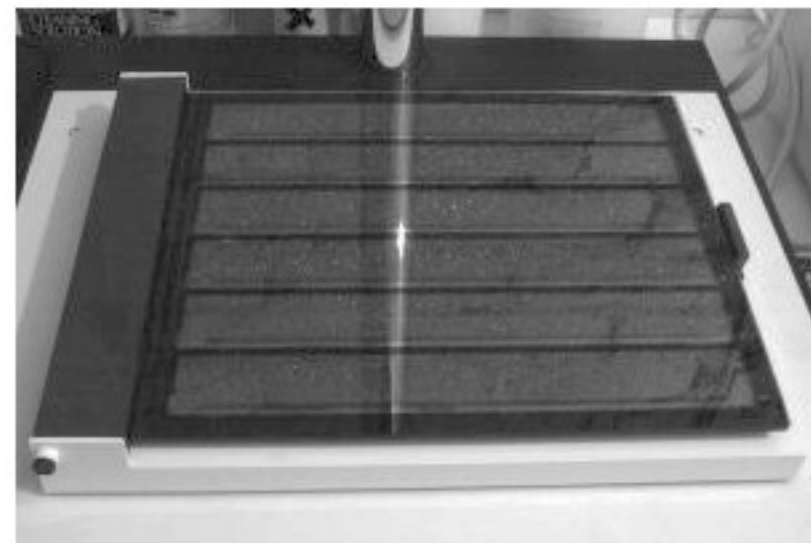
Equipment wise your main expense will be your enlarger. There are several good makes around, look for one that is solidly built and therefore less likely to vibrate during use. Have a look at the used equipment market you will find adverts in the back of most photographic publications either private sellers or from dealers who sell used photographic items. Remember that you will need an enlarging lens 50mm is required for 35mm film but if you enlarger can be used with other film formats you also require a different lens for each film format size.

To process the prints you will need shallow dishes for the chemicals, the graduated measure you already have along with the thermometer and stopwatch. There are a number of timers on the market, which allows you to make accurately exposed prints by automatically switching on/off the enlarger with more control. Very useful if you making a number of prints from the same negative where consistent results are required. Although you can get by without an elaborate timer you should consider a good quality safe light, good illumination in the darkroom is essential, the brighter the better for your own safety reasons. Care must be used in sighting the safe light follow the guide lines and the minimum distance from paper must be kept to avoid fogging the paper at any stage of its processing.

Your choice of photographic paper is something down to you own personal taste, to begin with I would recommend a resin coated paper as it is easy to handle, as you become a more experienced printer you might like to try some of the wonderful fibre based papers the exist which can deliver some outstanding results.

For this article I have used Ilford Multi grade RC paper, with multi grade paper you need only carry one type of paper which you can change the grades by the use of filters, if your enlarger has a colour head you can simply dial in the contrast grade required or use special printing filters that can be used above or below the lens.

To process your prints you will a new type of developer designed for papers, the stop bath and fixer used for developing the film can be used but it is wise to check the dilution rates are safe to use with papers at this strength.



Many photographers find it very useful to contact print each roll of film and file it with the negatives. To do this cut up the film into strips of six negatives and lie them face down on a sheet of 10 x 8 photographic paper, set the enlarger to its maximum height and stop the lens down three or four stops and expose for 20 seconds, then process the paper through the developer for 1½ minutes, stop bath 30 seconds and fixer 2 minutes. What you should have is 36 little prints which will give you an idea of what is on the negative. You can adjust the time to suit if the print is too dark or too light.

To make a print set the enlarger to the correct height for the size of the print required, dust the negative carrier of the enlarger and place in your chosen negative, focus the image on the baseboard with the lens fully open ,stop down the lens two or three stops (f8 or f11) set the timer for 5 seconds and expose all of the paper. Cover up one quarter of the paper then expose for another 5 seconds. Cover up half the paper,reset the timer to 10 seconds then expose for the 10 seconds. Cover up three quarters and reset timer for 20 seconds and expose. Place print into developer and process as per the contact print.



You will now have a test print with a corresponding light and dark bands for the following times below

5 SECONDS - 10 SECONDS - 20 SECONDS - 40 SECONDS

One of the bands will be your correct printing exposure time, you may fall between bands and simply just make the adjustment in time values (see example)select the time and make a full sized print. You will see in the final print I went for an exposure of 30 seconds which is between the 20 and 40 second band in the test strip. I wanted more detail in the highlights with just a hint of detail in the shadows.



After fixing prints should be washed in running water for a few minutes. Fibre based papers are more complex as the paper absorbs more chemicals and require longer washing times although there are wash aids which do cut down the wash times considerably. After washing resin papers can be left to air dry or speeded up with a hairdryer.

I do hope you find this brief guide to processing a film and printing a negative useful it covers the basics of what is required to get you started in a part of photography which I find very rewarding and satisfying. I still remember seeing my first print beginning to appear in the developing tray and still get a thrill of seeing a good image appear in the developer even to this day after twenty years of printing and developing.



Final Image

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Photographs By P. Dunn and M. Lovell.© 2000.

COLOUR HEAD MULTIGRADE FILTER GUIDE (DURST SINGLE VALUES)

00	0	½	1	1½	2	2½	3	3½	4	4½	5
120Y	70Y	50Y	40Y	25Y	0	10M	30M	50M	75M	120M	130M

= YELLOW M = MAGENTA

NOTE SOME COLOUR HEADS GRADE FIVE MIGHT BE OBTAINABLE

0	½	1	1½	2	2½	3	3½	4	4½	5	
120Y	80Y	60Y	30Y	10Y	30M	40M	50M	60M	165M	165M+CP120	