Matting with a "floating photo"
(ie, print smaller than window mat)

My most common size is a 16x20-inch mat with a standard-cut 14x11-inch window (it actually measures 13.5 x 10.5 inches).

Here is my printing/matting workflow.

1) If at all possible, in Photoshop, I crop my photo to be 13x10 inches (very close to 8.5 x 11, which is a standard crop size in Aperture). This allows me to use a standard-cut 14x11-inch mat.

2) I print it out on 13x19-inch paper, which is the largest paper for my printer. Then I cut off the white edges to make it to 13x10 size, using my Dahle 18-inch paper cutter. It's fine if the photo turns out to be slightly smaller than 13x10.

3) Using the Dotto Herma repositionable adhesive dots in a dispenser (a scrapbooking supply), I attach the window mat to the backboard, both of which need to be the same color. I run the adhesive continuously around the outer edges of the mat board and in dabs along the window edge.

   If you should run the dots over a place where you don't want them, you can just rub off the dots.

   Warning: the dots are deadly on the print itself—impossible to remove without leaving a mark—so be careful where you lay down the face of the print that there are no dots or dot remnants.

4) Then I apply the dots to the back of my photo close to the edges and with one swipe diagonally across. Then I position it on the backboard, centered in the window. If the centering is accurate (I eyeball it), I press the photo down, using a clean paper over the photo to protect it. If the photo is not centered, I can gently pick up the photo and reposition it.

   In fact, the repositionable dots let you remove the photo (carefully) months or even years afterwards. You may not be able to reuse the photo, but you can reuse the mat.

5) The end result is a photo with a 1/4-inch border of the backboard within the window mat.

6) If appropriate, I title and sign with a mechanical pencil on the window mat.

Notes: Another standard size of 16x20-inch mat is 12x16, for which I crop my photo to 11 x 15 inches.

If the photo doesn't work with either the 13x10 or 11x15-inch crop, I cut my own mat so that the window will leave a 1/4 border of backboard showing.

In an exhibit, you might want to have all your mats the same or compatible colors.

Equipment:

Paper Cutter: Dahle cutter that holds up to 18-inch paper. Purchased from Keeble and Shuchat.

Mats from Redimat: I now order them online at Redimat with matching color window mat and back board. $100 minimum per order. I find that the White Wash color is close to the color Arctic White available at stores and also the color of the cut-it-yourself mat boards available at Keeble and Shuchat.

Printer and Paper: I have a Canon Pro 9000 printer and use Canon inks and Canon papers, usually Plus Glossy II or Semi-Gloss.

Dots: I order the Herma Dotto adhesive repositionable refills (and dispenser) from Scrapbook Pal, with free shipping for orders over $25 http://www.scrapbookpal.com.

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Jan 25, 2012