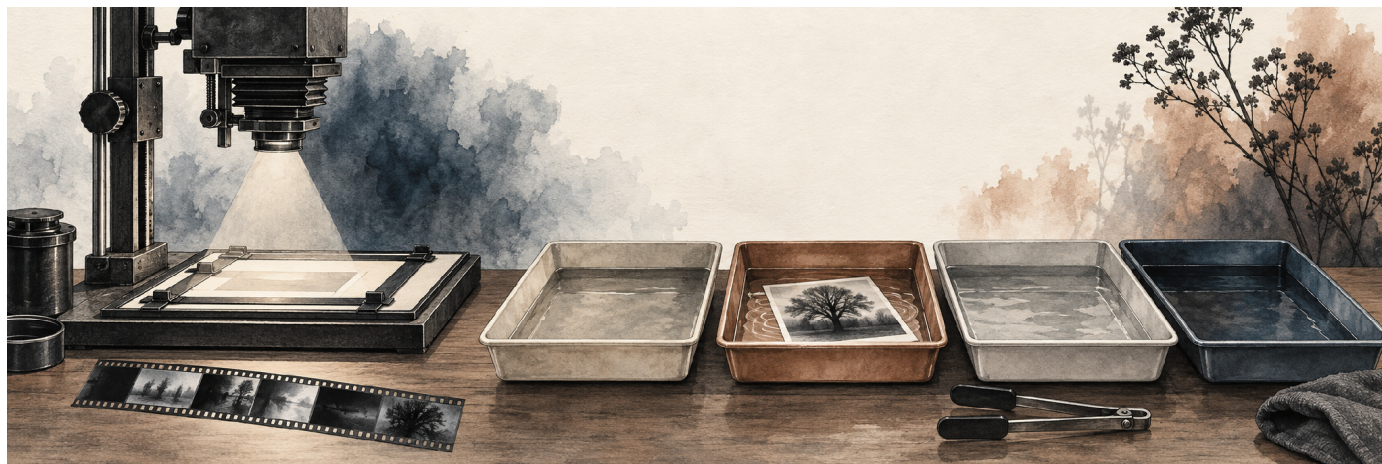


Black and white printing

A practical guide from negative to finished print



Set up the enlarger

- 01 Set the easel.** Adjust the blades to your desired print size and borders.
- 02 Add focusing paper.** Use a sacrificial sheet of the same RC or fiber paper you will print on, emulsion up. Once exposed to focusing light, keep it only for focusing.
- 03 Load the negative.** Handle edges; gently use a clean photographic antistatic cloth if needed. Place in the carrier with emulsion down and rotate a horizontal image 180 degrees. The image top toward you as needed for the easel orientation.
- 04 Compose wide open.** Open the enlarger lens fully, switch on the enlarger, and adjust height and focus to compose the image.
- 05 Check the grain.** Use a grain focuser on the focusing paper. Focus the grain, not just the apparent image detail. (This can be difficult at first!)
- 06 Set the printing aperture.** Stop down to f/5.6 or f/8. Switch the enlarger off and set the timer to 5 seconds.
- 07 Fit the filter and fresh paper.** Insert an ILFORD MULTIGRADE grade 2 or 2½ filter in its holder or under the lens. With the enlarger off, replace the focusing sheet with unexposed paper, emulsion up. Close the paper box.

Safelight rule: Use a tested safelight compatible with your paper. Keep unused paper sealed and the enlarger off whenever loading it.

Find your exposure

08 Build three exposures. Give the whole sheet 5 seconds. Cover the left third with an opaque card; expose 5 more seconds. Cover the left two-thirds; expose 5 more seconds. You can use a 2-3 second intervals once you learn your enlarger.



5 SECONDS TOTAL

Cover after pass 1

10 SECONDS TOTAL

Cover after pass 2

15 SECONDS TOTAL

Uncovered for all 3 passes

Schematic test sheet: more exposure produces a darker print. Each band shows a different area of the negative; include important highlights and shadows.

Process the test sheet

09 Process the test sheet. Develop, stop, and fix with gentle tray agitation. Use separate tongs for each bath. Fully fix before evaluating under normal white light.

DEVELOPER	STOP BATH	FIXER	WASH
2 minutes*	30 seconds*	5 minutes*	RC or Fiber See page 3

*Lab timings above require approved chemistry, dilution, paper, and temperature. Develop consistently; do not pull a dark print early.

Read the result

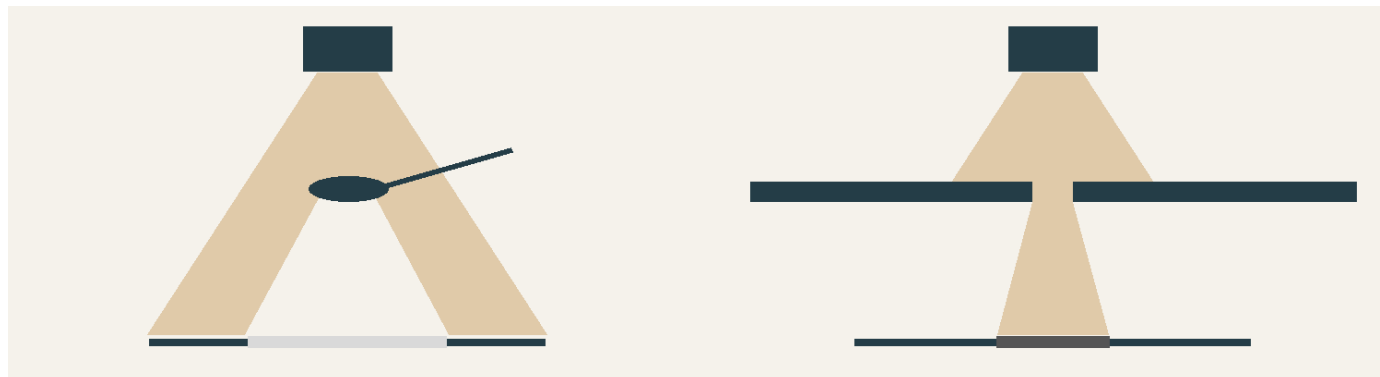
10 Choose exposure and contrast. Select the time that gives useful highlight detail, then judge the shadows. Retest if every band is too light or too dark.

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT TO CHANGE
Entire print too light / too dark	Increase / decrease enlarger exposure.
Flat tones / overly harsh tones	Raise / lower the contrast filter grade.
Only one area needs correction	Dodge to lighten; burn to darken.

11 Make the first full print. Set your chosen time and filter, expose fresh paper, then repeat the same developer–stop–fix sequence. Retest exposure after changing filters, or time. Keep a print record
Negative • paper • enlarger height • aperture • filter • base exposure • local adjustments

Shape the final print

12 Refine locally. Dodge by blocking some light during the base exposure. Burn by adding exposure through an opening after the base exposure. Keep the tool moving to soften edges. Record each area and its time; repeat until satisfied.



DODGE / LIGHTEN

Block some light during the base exposure.

BURN / DARKEN

Add light through an opening after the base exposure. I use my hands for this.

Schematic side view: the lens is above and the paper below. A small blocker reduces exposure; an opening allows extra exposure in a selected area.

Allow for dry-down

A dried print may look darker than the wet, fixed print, especially on fiber paper. Judge a dry proof before committing to the final exposure.

Wash for the paper you use

13 Match the wash to the paper. Use fresh flowing water with good circulation and no prints stuck together. RC and fiber do not share one wash schedule.

PAPER	FINAL WASH GUIDANCE
RC resin coated	5 minutes in running water above 41°F, 5°C after proper fixing. 1 minute Hypo clearing agent. Wash in water 5-10 minutes. Avoid prolonged soaking.
Fiber based	Use a validated paper/fixer/wash-aid sequence. Fix 5 minute in fresh Fixer; wash 1 hour; WASHAID 1+4 for 2 minutes; wash 1 hour, at 64-75°F, 18–24°C.

14 Tone if desired. After complete fixing, follow the specific toner's prewash, toning, wash-aid, and final-wash instructions. Do not assume the untuned wash sequence also applies to toned prints.

15 Remove water and dry. Gently squeegee on a clean surface with a clean, soft blade if appropriate for the paper. Hang RC prints or use a rack; dry fiber on clean screens or by the lab's approved hanging method, then flatten when dry.