

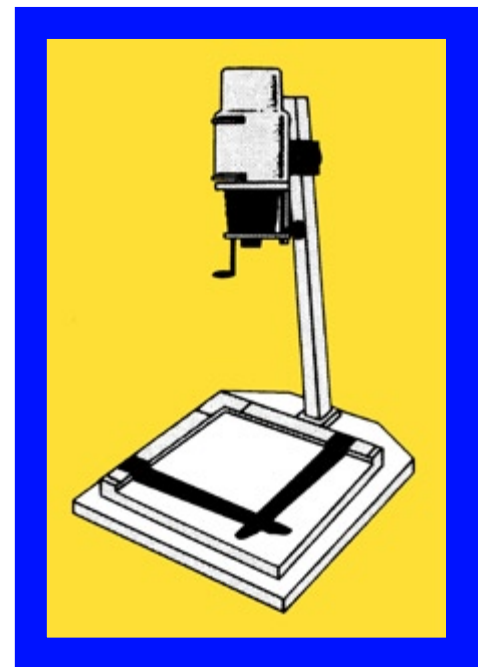


4-H Photography Member Manual

Experimenting With Your Enlarger

Pathway to Success in Your Experimentation

1. Follow directions on any materials you use.
2. Keep notes, including the date of your experiments, on everything you do. A stenographic notebook works well. Use permanent-ink, felt-tip marking pens to note lens opening, exposure time, and filtration on the back of your prints (preferably near the edges).
3. If you are working in black-and-white, use variable-contrast paper together with the set of filters required to change the contrast. In black-and-white or color, choose a resin-coated paper to cut down on washing time and eliminate the No. 1 mistake in printing: inappropriate or insufficient washing time.
4. Be sure you can make a good straight print before you start experimenting. Always determine the proper exposure for the lightest significant area of the image first. Then, in black-and-white enlarging, adjust the contrast to hold the detail in the darkest significant area. In color, adjust for color balance.
5. Always make test strips or test prints to aid you in your enlarging and to guide you in your experimenting. If you are reluctant to devote a whole piece of paper to a test print, make a mask from a black, opaque piece of paper that will allow you to expose just one quadrant of your paper at a time. Tear a piece off the corner of your photographic paper to help you reorient your paper in relationship to your mask for each of your four exposures.



6. Make all tests at the same magnification as you plan to make your print—even if that means seeing just one-quarter of your image in your economy-minded test print.
7. If you have a diffusion-type enlarger, try this method of economizing on your testing: Make a good 8 x 10 print from one negative. Then, group that negative with others you would like to print. Use the kind of plastic negative file that also protects against fingerprints and scratches.

With the enlarger light off and the empty negative carrier in the enlarger, place the negative file over a piece of photographic paper. Cover the whole thing with a piece of glass, and expose it exactly as you did for the one good 8 x 10 print. You will end up with a contact sheet that will provide you with starting points and, perhaps, even the proper exposure settings and filtration for all the negatives in the file at a magnification of 8 x 10 inches.

8. Always keep a washcloth and a towel close at hand for cleaning fingers or tongs after processing one print and before handling the unprocessed paper for the next print. Every time you take a piece of paper out of its package, close the package again and put the package in its box to avoid fogging the rest of the paper.
9. Try not to process more than one print at a time so that you won't mix them up or scratch the paper emulsion. Always maintain a secure darkroom, and never turn the room light on for any reason until all your prints are in the wash. Make sure your safelight is right for the photographic paper you are using.
10. Don't get discouraged if something doesn't work out the first time. The key to creativity in the darkroom is experimentation—learning what works and what doesn't, and then using what you have learned to help you come up with new and exciting tricks of your own.

Some Tricks You Can Try

Tilt the enlarger easel

Try tilting the enlarger easel in different directions and to different heights. You will find you can make a human subject look taller and slimmer. You can straighten out the lines of a tall building that has been pictured from below. You can even emphasize one part of a picture like an extended hand or foot.

Use a board, book, brick, or just about anything else that is close at hand to prop your easel to achieve the effect you want. Use a small lens opening on your enlarger to help you keep your image in focus over the entire area.

Bend the enlarging paper

Try bending the enlarging paper away from or toward your enlarging lens before you make your exposure. Bend the paper toward its back or base side, and you'll stretch out your image. Bend it toward its front or emulsion side, and you'll condense or shorten the image. Experiment with different ways of holding the paper in place and focusing for an "amusement park" effect.

Drown your enlarging paper

Try taping your enlarging paper to the inside of an enlarging tray, filling the tray with water, and exposing the paper through the water. Gently tap the tray just before you make your exposure.

Move your enlarging easel

Put round pencils or wooden dowels under your easel to serve as "wheels." Start moving the easel after your exposure is half over, and you should get a sharp image with horizontal streaks that make it look as if your subject is moving very fast.

Try this trick on a picture of a racecar or a runner. Move the easel in the direction you would like the subject to be going.

Move a slot across your enlarging paper

Start by cutting a slot in a piece of blank cardboard. Try making the slot the height of your enlarged image and perhaps 1 inch wide. Make a series of full exposures, moving the slot across the paper one slot width at a time between exposures. Each time you move the slot, you also can move the easel alternately slightly up or slightly down to create a ripple effect.

Experiment with a slot that is less than enlargement height to print just a portion of your picture.

Use a vignetting tool

Create a vignetting tool by cutting a hole in a piece of black cardboard. The hole should be the shape of the area you want to print and big enough so that you can hold your tool halfway between the enlarger lens and the paper during printing. The edges of the hole should have a jagged, sawtooth pattern so that the image will fade gradually into the plain background you create. Keep your vignetting tool in continuous motion during your exposure.

Try this trick to eliminate a distracting and unwanted background from an otherwise good portrait. Or use it to select part of a photograph that will receive what looks like an old-time portrait treatment.

Vignette from several photos

You can excerpt “portraits” from several different photos and group them all on a single piece of enlarging paper. Use a plain sheet of white paper to plan your arrangement. Draw circles to indicate where each image should be placed. Carefully focus each image on plain paper before making each vignetted exposure. Protect your enlarging paper in a lighttight box or drawer between exposures.

Put a little X on the corner of the back of the enlarging paper so that you always position your paper the same way in the easel.

Use a diffusion tool

Smear a very thin layer of petroleum jelly over all but the very center of a piece of glass. Feather the jelly around the clear spot so that the background blur you create will blend nicely with the sharp part of the image. Center the clear spot over the part of the picture you want to feature. Hold the glass about halfway between the enlarger lens and the paper, and move it slightly up and down during exposure.

To create a subtler effect, paint clear nail polish over all but the center of a piece of glass. When the nail polish dries, you’ll have a less messy, much more permanent, blur-the-background tool.

Try this trick on pictures of flowers, people, anything that might benefit from an artistically blurred background.

Fasten something over your enlarger lens

Pantyhose make a great fog-effect, softening filter. Just paint a circle of nail polish around a runless area large enough to fit over your enlarger lens. The dried nail polish should keep the hose from running when you cut along the outside of the circle. Use a rubber band to hold the piece of hose over the enlarger lens. Experiment with effects created by different shades and textures of stockings.

Try other materials like a single layer of cheesecloth, a piece of crinkled cellophane, or just about anything translucent. Try fastening a prism to your enlarger lens to see what kind of effect you will get.

Use a color slide to add texture

Take a close-up color slide of anything that forms a continuous pattern: a concrete wall, weathered barn wood, sand, gravel, whatever strikes your fancy. Tray a normal exposure and bracket more toward overexposure. Sandwich the processed slide film with another piece of slide film or a black-and-white or color negative to which you would like to add texture.

Expose two slides together

Keep the slides right in their slide mounts so you won't have to remount them when you are done. Put the slides in your negative carrier with the one you want to feature on the bottom. Focus on the bottom slide and let the top slide go slightly out of focus. The featured image will be sharp while the second image will provide a soft, recognizable background.

Expose on the wrong paper

Print a color slide on black-and-white paper or color negative paper. Sandwich an unexposed but processed piece of color negative film with a black-and-white negative and print on color negative paper.

Expose through a texture

Try sandwiching something (for example, a piece of lens-cleaning tissue) with your slide or negative and enlarging its texture along with your image. Or, place texturing materials, flat side down, directly in contact with the photographic paper in your enlarging easel. Fabric stretched over a frame, textured plastic from a craft or hardware store, even Christmas tree tinsel arranged in a grid pattern, can be held in place with a piece of glass during exposure so your texture won't blur.

For a subtler effect, try breaking your exposure into segments and carefully removing your large texture screen (without disturbing your enlarging easel) after one-third or one-half of your exposure time.

Create photograms

Place opaque, translucent, and/or transparent items directly on your enlarging paper to create a pattern. Or, put some objects on the paper and some on the glass covering the paper so that some of the objects will be in focus and some will be out of focus in your finished design. Or, put small items like leaves in the negative carrier and enlarge them. Try making color photograms with a one-step print processor. Use colored balloons for filters and electronic flash for light. After peeling the first print from the film, try feeding the film back into the printmaker to create a lighter print. Or flash the film between printings to try for some reversal of tones.

Try combination printing

Imagine a tree growing out of a sidewalk, a city skyline growing out of a meadow, even your school with a sandy beach right outside its front door. Then take two images with strong horizontal lines and create what you have imagined by printing the top of one picture and the bottom of the other. Use your dodging skills to hold back the part of each image you do not want to print. If necessary, create a custom dodging tool by cutting the exact area you

want to dodge from a straight print. Keep your dodging tool moving during your exposures.

Plan your combination on plain paper. Protect your photographic paper in a lighttight drawer or box while you position and focus each image.

Cut up a straight print

Cut the face from a straight print of one friend, and use the cut-out to hold back the exposure from that portion of a same-size enlargement. Then use the cutout print to block everything but the face area while you print in another friend's face from a second negative. Experiment while slightly moving and not moving the cutouts to see which effect you prefer.

Keep both the cutout and cut-out print very close to your paper as you work. Even try putting the cutout right on the paper during your first exposure.

Alter the eyes in a close-up portrait

Cut out little disks of black cardboard just a bit smaller than your subjects' irises in a same-size enlargement. Put the disks over the irises during one-third of your exposure. Then, carefully reach in and take them away for the remainder of your exposure. Experiment to see what effects you can get by leaving the disks in place longer. Can you make your friend look like a creature from another planet?

Try printing lighter or darker than normal

Underexpose a side view of a face, and then print in the image of what the person is thinking about. Add a moon to a beach scene and then print the beach scene darker than normal for added drama. Make a color print darker and bluer for a "midnight" effect.

Add color to a print

Investigate toning black-and-white prints. You might tone a seascape bluish, for instance, or tone a woodland scene brownish. You also can add color to small areas of some black-and-white or color prints with watercolors, food coloring, or felt-tip marking pens. Or try gluing colored tissue paper over the surface of a print using colorless glue.

Turn a photo into a sketch

Outline the image on your black-and-white print with India ink. Sketch in as much detail as you want. Then soak the print in a solution of Farmer's Reducer. The photographic image will disappear gradually. All that will be left will be your line drawing.

Try selective processing

Instead of immersing your black-and-white print in the developer, try applying the developer just to certain portions of the exposed paper with a paintbrush or a ball of cotton. Or use a paint roller, a coarse sponge, or an atomizer to create an overall pattern of developer. Let the developer remain on the print for the full development time. Then, rinse the print in the stop bath; and fix, wash, and dry it.

Re-expose your print to light during development

One good way to experiment is to try breaking the rules. Instead of keeping white light away from your print until it is in the wash, try turning the room lights on while you are developing a print and see what happens. Or, better yet, remove the safelight filter from your safelight temporarily to give your print a short re-exposure before continuing with normal processing. Investigate this whole area of creativity further by finding out everything you can about the Sabattier effect.

Try high-contrast printing

Investigate the use of high-contrast films for creating dramatic, eye-catching images with no intermediate tones. Learn how you can eliminate unwanted background, print multiple images, and sandwich high-contrast negatives and positives with slides for outstanding results.

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