What this is about

Adding a window mount or mat over your print can make a big difference to how it looks. It will also help to protect the surface of the print. Where the print is to be framed, the mat prevents the glass from contacting the image itself.

A well-cut mat will have an aperture with neat bevel edges. With a few basic tools and a little practice it's easy to produce your own.

What you need

The main requirement is a special cutter such as the Logan cutter illustrated. Such cutters are designed to be used with a straight edge. Better ones come with a grooved straightedge into which the cutter slots.

The only other items are a good ruler (ideally one showing 1/16 ths of an inch), a sharp pencil, and some scrap mounting board in addition to the board to be cut.

Procedure

1. Cut the mount to size – e.g. 20" x 16".

2. Determine the Size of the margins.

3. Put the board *face-down*, and then mark-out the aperture on the back using a sharp pencil.

   Overshoot the lines a little as shown opposite.

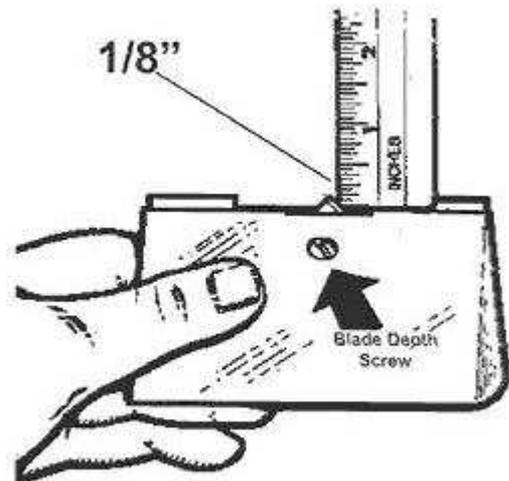*mark out on the BACK of the mount board*

4. Place the mat face-down on a larger piece of scrap mount board.

5. Put the straightedge on the outside of one of the lines.

6. Cut the first bevel.

7. Repeat for the other three sides, putting the ruler on the outside each time.

mark out on the BACK of the mount board

straight edge

When you lift the mat, the centre should fall out leaving a nice bevelled edge.

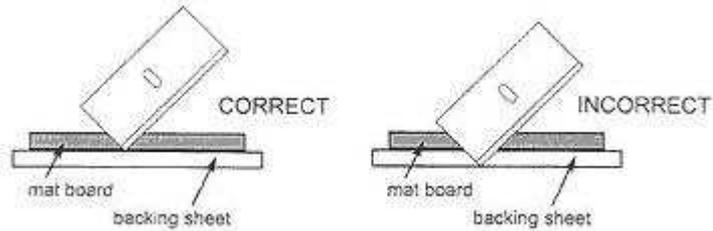If not, then you need to adjust the depth of the cutter blade.

For standard, 4-ply mat board, the depth should be $1/8^{th}$ inch.

1/8"

Blade Depth Screw

When the blade is at the correct setting, it should just score the backing sheet. Too much will lead to problems with the blade "bowing".

An excellent (and free) utility for the Windows operating system makes short work of calculating all the measurements needed for matting a print.

The utility, "Matworks", can be downloaded here:

http://www.gt-photography.com/matworks.html

Although it is quite straightforward to use, you will find a short tutorial on the Bishopthorpe Camera Club website.