Many workers find that their prints are darker than the image on the screen.

In one sense, this is inevitable as the screen is transmitting light whereas the print is viewed by reflected light. Also, it is quite likely that there will be some variation between different batches of "paper" and inks.

In order to address this problem. I simply take the darkroom workers approach – make a test print.

Here's how.

Duplicate the image	Having produced an image ready to print, make sure you have a "master copy" safely filed away. Then flatten the image
Adjust the brightness.	1. Choose Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Levels 2. Set the Mode to "Screen" and the Opacity to 60%. The image will now probably look far too bright. We'll take care of this in the next step.
Modify the Layer Mask	The new layer we've made comes complete with a mask which is filled with white. In the next stage we change this to a gradient which runs from black to white. 3. Make sure that the mask is selected by clicking on it. 4. Make sure that the foreground and background colours (in the tools palette) are black & white (just press D to get these default colours). 5. Choose the Gradient tool and make sure it's set to give a linear gradient. Holding down the Shift key, drag across the image. This will fill the layer mask with the gradient. The image will now have a range of brightness.
Optional extras	In the darkroom test-strip, we had definite steps across the print. We can do this with the digital test-strip too. 6. Hold down the Alt key and click on the mask. You should now see the gradient and not the image. 7. If you're using Photoshop, choose Image > Adjust > Posterise > 5 levels. If using Elements, choose Filter > Adjustments > Posterise > 5 levels. 8. Make sure you can see the rulers: View > Rulers. 9. Select the Move tool in the tools palette (shortcut V). 10. Click in the ruler area and drag across to put guides on the mask. 11. Add a new, blank layer at the top of the layers palette. 12. With the paint brush tool, draw lines along the guides.
Make the test print	The next stage is to print the test image with no further adjustments.
Make it match	1. Make sure that the layer mask is selected by clicking on it. 2. Choose the eye dropper tool and click on the area of the image that looks best on the test print. 3. Choose Edit > Fill > Foreground to change the gradient to the selected shade of grey. 4. Turn off the layer with the guide lines then make your final print.