

Topic 37

Printing & Enlarging

Since the 1960s, 35mm film has been the most popular film size. While the quality of 35mm film cannot match that of larger film sizes, the ease of use and flexibility it offers is unmatched. As a result, a large majority of film cameras, including single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras, support the 35mm film size. And because 35mm film has the most support in the photography industry, is available at most retail outlets, and is typically much lower in price than the larger size film equipment, 35mm film is often the starting point for beginner photographers.

Printing with 35mm Film

Because of the smaller size of 35mm film, photographers are somewhat limited in the quality of print that can be achieved. Depending on the subject, film speed, lighting, and other factors, 35mm film can be enlarged up to 16×20 inches. Please note that 35mm film can be enlarged as much as you would like but most prints larger than 16×20 will show noticeable grain and suffer from a lower quality look. However, the personal preference or desired look the photographer wishes to achieve will play a role in how large the image can be printed. Some photographers using 35mm film may not go beyond a 5×7 print, while others may try to push beyond the 16×20 size. Photographers looking to make large sized prints will likely want to move up to a medium format or large format camera, which use negatives much larger than 35mm and allow for bigger prints.

What Are Contact Sheets?

Contact sheets are useful to show clients how their finished photographs will look. Contact sheets are sheets filled with all the photos from the shoot. Contact sheets are easy to produce and will make your photography business much more professional.

A contact sheet is similar to a negative but in positive colors. This contains thumbnail images of all the photos from the shoot. This makes it very easy for your clients to look at the photos that you have chosen and decide which ones they want to order. These are also sometimes known as an index sheet.

Digital Contact Sheets

When using software like Photoshop it's actually very easy to create contact sheets. This is simply a matter of selecting the images that you want to include and then allowing the wizard to add them in place. These can then be printed out on any photo printer. The photo contact sheets can be printed to a large sheet of paper or a much smaller 4"x6" photograph if you prefer.

Deciding Which to Order

The best advantage of a contact sheet is that it gives your clients an opportunity to look at the photos before they have ordered them. They can then decide exactly which photos they want to order and have printed larger.