

MAT CUTTING MADE EASY

1. First, determine your frame size and cut the outer portion of the mat to fit. For example, for a 16" x 20" frame, cut the mat 16" x 20".
2. Next, determine the size of your painting to be matted, for example, 12" x 16". You'll need to measure carefully if you paint on paper that is not a "regular" size. Remember that you'll have to measure about $\frac{1}{4}$ " smaller all around to make sure that the mat covers all of the edges of the painting.
3. This next step requires some math skills. YIKES!

a. Subtract as follows:

i. $16'' - 12'' = 4''$

ii. $20'' - 16'' = 4''$

b. Then divide as follows:

i. $4'' \div 2 = 2''$ (4" is the difference between 16" and 12", then divided by 2 equals the size of the mat on both sides of the painting)

ii. $4'' \div 2 = 2''$ (4" is the difference between 20" and 16", then divided by 2 equals the size of the mat on both sides of the painting)

4. Using a pencil, ON THE BACK OF THE MAT, draw out the frame size and set the painting over the lines to confirm your measurements. Make any measuring adjustments now. Make sure your lines go past the measurement lines going the other way; you'll use these lines as guides when cutting the mat.
5. Set the mat cutter to the correct size (in this case 2"). Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions and read the measuring device correctly. Slide a scrap piece of mat board under the rail which holds the cutter ("blade guide") to protect your mat.
6. Slide your mat RIGHT SIDE DOWN under the blade guide. Put a new blade in the cutter. Test the operation of the cutter by pressing the knob with your thumb to make sure it moves smoothly up and down.
7. Place the cutter on the blade guide, lining up the line on the cutter with the line you have drawn on your mat. Press the blade down and, holding the blade down, move the cutter smoothly from left to right. Stop when the line on the cutter lines up with the line you have drawn on the mat. Lift the cutter off the blade guide and repeat the operation to make sure the cut is complete.
8. Remove the cutter from the blade guide and turn the mat 180 degrees so that you are cutting the mat directly across from the cut you just made. Repeat the operation at 7. above.
9. If you need to adjust the measurement for the next two sides this is the time to do it, then repeat the operation at 7. above two more times.
10. You may have to do a little finessing of the corners with a straight blade to release the top paper of the mat. Go slowly and gently.

