

Making Proper Proof Sheets with 4X5 Negatives

It is important to remember that in the proper proof we are not looking for a good looking print. Our purpose is to see what is in the negative, how well it is exposed and how well it is developed.

This may be the simplest thing you do with this film.

Before you begin making proofs, separate your negatives so that they are in groups of similar density. In other words, don't have a very thin negative and a very contrasty one in the same group of four, if possible.

1. Be sure the glass of the proof frame is clean.
2. Lay a negative emulsion up on the glass.
3. Lay part of a sheet of paper emulsion down on top of the negative with some paper outside the negative. After exposure, you are going to compare the density of the edge of the negative with the part of the paper not covered by the negative.
4. Close the frame.
5. Before turning the frame over, be sure the circle of light is larger than the proof frame. Give it a couple of inches to spare so that all negs will receive the same amount of light.
6. Place a Zero (0) filter in the filter drawer.
7. Turn the frame over and make a test strip along the edge of the negative.
8. Remove and process the test strip fully.
9. Place the test strip in a yellow tray and take into the light so you can examine it and find the first time at which the edge of the negative is as black as the part of the paper not covered by the negative.
10. RECORD THIS TIME, THE HEIGHT OF THE ENLARGER AND THE APERTURE. THIS IS A GOOD GUIDE TO FUTURE PROOF SHEET TIMES.
11. Place 4 negatives face up in the frame.
12. Place a full sheet of paper face down on the negatives.
13. Turn the frame over and expose for your chosen time.
14. Process the proof.
15. Place 4 more negatives in the frame and expose them for the same time.
16. Continue this process until all of your negatives are proofed.

Answer to the eternal question:

The reason for using the zero filter is that by utilizing this filter you can see everything in the negative. If you use a number 2 or 3 filter for proofs, the contrast may hide some important information in the shadows or highlights.