

Trouble Shooting

Why did my stamp turn out solid?

There are two causes: 1) too much light present when making the stamp or 2) the black parts of your artwork are letting light through. Find out which problem you have by making a stamp using the artwork supplied in the kit first.

If your stamp is solid with both artwork supplied and your artwork: Check that you are not making stamps in front of a window, sunshine makes stamp making much faster and the controller doesn't register sunlight fully. If you are in a normally lit room check that you are using a standard pearl, clear or daylight 60W bulb. Check that the center of the light is over the centre of the clamp. Raise your lamp as the higher your light, the more the light distribution. You should now make perfect stamps using the artwork in the kit. If you are still making a solid stamp using your artwork read on.

If your stamp is perfect with the artwork supplied, but solid with yours:

White flecks in the black of your artwork will let the light get through and you will not get enough depth to your stamp. If you created your artwork with the imagepac program it will automatically ensure that the black is dark enough to stop light. If you did it using another software program ensure that you increased the contrast on scanned or downloaded images and left a black border around the edge. If you have used the imagepac program or you are happy that your blacks are stopping light and you still get a solid stamp, then your printer is not set to the correct settings. Check that it is printing in Black not Color. Increase the black ink density in your printer properties, by for instance increasing blackness, increasing contrast, increasing saturation etc. Check you are using a reasonably full, manufacturer's own make ink cartridge, which doesn't have blocked ink jet heads. Select a paper setting that delivers more black ink, a lot of printers will work best when set to Photo Paper Matte or an absorbent paper like Cardstock. If you are using a laser printer then consult our Printing Artwork Instructions.

Why is my stamp liquid?

There is only one cause for this, not enough light has reached the packet during the first hardening cycle. Extend your 1st hardening cycle. It may well be that either the clamp and the packets are cold, just increase the time by 1 minute or so and the support or floor to your stamps will be higher.

What software do I need to make stamps from photographs?

You can use any artwork modifying program (such as *Photoshop* or *Photoshop Elements*) to make photograph stamps, but it is easier to start with the imagepac program supplied with the Clear Stamp Making Kit. Note that Imagebox Professional does not come with software and you must use your own. If you do use a proprietary software package then you have many creative possibilities by using different filters (consult our file Creating Artwork) to give your photographs a variety of effects from making them look sketched or painted to making them into dots! In the imagepac program find your photograph on your computer with Browse. Click Photograph and then click OK as it will have already optimized the brightness and contrast. You will then see a dotted image, it will actually look better in print! You can make very fine photograph stamps with the Text and Image function, but they will require manual adjustment of the Brightness and Contrast and they are variable in quality. Choose interesting objects like faces with contrasting light backgrounds for maximum effect or alternatively remove the background with a software package before editing. To print photograph stamps perfectly, bray the ink onto shiny paper.

Can I make a stamp with more or less relief?

Yes, just reduce the first cycle for more relief, increase it for less. Alternatively remove the black card and

use a white sheet of paper to get less relief.

Can I make the back of my stamp less sticky?

Yes, just reduce the first cycle for more relief, increase it for less. Alternatively remove the black card and use a white sheet of paper to get less relief.

Can I use sunlight to harden my sachets?

No, not for making your stamps, however, you can de-tack the stamp under water in sunlight instead of using a tray of water and the light inside.

Can I use a daylight bulb instead of a normal bulb?

Yes, but only use a 60W daylight, 60W clear or 60W pearl bulb. No halogen!

Can I use any ink jet printer?

Virtually all ink jet printers will give you artwork that is black enough to stop light getting through. All modern ones will definitely print with a high enough resolution to work. Just follow the instructions in 'Printing Artwork'.

Why does my photocopier or laser printer print the black areas of the artwork with white specs in them, and is this a problem?

Photocopiers and most old laser printers are only capable of printing up to 600 dpi resolution. At this resolution there will be flecks of white in the black. This will allow light to get through the artwork and will not give you a deep enough relief. Recently, high definition laser printers have been marketed mainly to attack the lucrative home photo printing market, these should be able to print the black areas dark enough. If you are using an old or low resolution laser printer or a photocopier then use our Laser Black Processing Solution. This solution is a laser black toner enhancer that actually makes the negative blacker. Not all laser printers will work, or can be enhanced in this manner. If you want to use a cheap mono laser printer to print artwork use the HP1020 costing under \$200.

Can I use refilled ink jet cartridges?

Possibly, but the quality may not be as good as the manufacturer's brand. Check the quality of the own brand first and then see if you get the same quality with refilled ones.

Can I use a cheaper ink jet film?

Possibly, it depends upon your printer. imageblack ink jet film is a very high quality film that uses a sophisticated system to enhance the black and improve your image. You may be able to use OHP film with success.

Can I make a plate from a photograph?

Yes, but it helps if you have the photograph digitally. Use our program and click 'photographs' or apply a filter from your computer software.

Do I have to use a printer to make my artwork?

No, you can photocopy objects to make your artwork or you can draw them with permanent ink pen onto imageblack vellum or ink jet film, just draw black on the areas where you want your stamp not to ink up.

Can I use just part of my polymer pouch and save the rest?

No, it is not really practical to shield part of the packet to keep it liquid. You should use the polymer packet of the correct size. We make small, medium and large sized packets, just pick the one right for your artwork.

Can I use scissors to cut open the polymer packet?

Yes, but we recommend using a craft knife because it keeps the stamp supported by the plastic sides of the sachet during the washing process. This makes it less likely that you will damage or rip the stamp when washing it out. If the edges have been cut off then water can get round the back of the stamp, which will swell it. The stamp will swell after a long immersion in water, but when completely dry (maybe a few hours) it should return to its original shape. If water does get the back of the stamp it is advised to

completely remove the rear plastic as the stamp may swell and permanently distort if only a small part of the stamp is left in contact with the water. Stamps can be stretched and it will return to their original position. Remember that your stamp will not gain full strength until after you've hardened it finally under water under the lights.

Can I use soap instead of detergent to wash out my plate after exposure?

Yes, we recommend dishwashing liquid as it is quicker.

Can I use cold water to wash out my plate after exposure?

Yes, but it will wash out faster in warm water.