

Mounting artwork is both a craft and a safeguard. Done well, it elevates presentation, protects the piece, and meets gallery or client expectations. Whether you're preparing for a juried show, assembling a portfolio, or shipping work to a collector, having a reliable mounting kit saves time, reduces errors, and helps you maintain professional standards. This guide outlines what to include, how to choose materials, and how to put your kit to work—especially if you're sourcing from local art exhibition supplies Beacon Falls vendors or similar professional shops.

Building a Mounting Kit: The Essentials

- Cutting tools:
 - Precision craft knife with extra blades: Clean, burr-free cuts are essential for clean edges on archival quality mounting board and acid-free foam board.
 - 24–36" metal ruler with cork backing: Prevents slipping and ensures straight cuts.
 - Self-healing cutting mat: Protects work surfaces and keeps blades sharp longer.
- Adhesives and fasteners:
 - Acid-free, archival mounting tape (hinging tape, linen tape): Ideal for hinge mounts that don't damage the art.
 - Neutral pH adhesive or conservation-grade paste: For mounting photo prints to foam core for photography where appropriate.
 - Photo corners: Non-invasive option for valuable or fragile pieces.
 - ATG (adhesive transfer gun) and acid-free ATG tape: Efficient for building mats and attaching photo presentation boards.
- Boards and substrates:
 - Archival quality mounting board: The foundation for conservation-grade mounting; choose museum or rag board for fine art and vintage prints.
 - Acid-free foam board: Lightweight support, excellent for temporary exhibits and framed displays.
 - Foam core for photography: Calibrated for photo mounting; minimizes warping and maintains flatness.
 - Art preservation boards: Specialty boards for long-term stability and colorfastness.
 - Gallery display boards and photo presentation boards: Pre-finished or specialty surfaces for clean, professional displays.
 - Beacon Falls CT art boards (or your local equivalent): If you're in the region, you'll find a variety of professional framing materials sized for common frame standards.
- Matting components:
 - Pre-cut or custom-cut mats (archival): For window-mounting and spacing art from glazing.
 - Spacers: Keep artwork from touching glass in frames.
- Framing and hardware:
 - Professional framing materials: Frame mouldings, glazing (UV-filter acrylic or glass), backing boards, and dust covers.
 - Hanging hardware: D-rings, wire, cleats, and bumpers for wall protection.
- Cleanliness and handling:
 - Cotton or nitrile gloves: Prevent oils from transferring to prints or boards.
 - Anti-static brush or microfiber cloth: Removes dust before sealing.

- Compressed air (photo-safe): For stubborn debris without touching the surface.

Selecting the Right Materials

- Match the substrate to the medium:
- Watercolor, ink, and delicate papers: Favor archival quality mounting board with hinged attachments to allow natural expansion and contraction.
- Photographs and digital prints: Foam core for photography or acid-free foam board for lightweight stability. For large prints, choose heavier-density foam to reduce bowing.
- Mixed media or heavier pieces: Consider rigid art preservation boards or layered boards for added stiffness.
- Consider longevity:
 - If the work is for sale, museum-grade boards and archival adhesives are a selling point and a safeguard.
 - For short-term shows, gallery display boards can offer a cost-effective solution while maintaining a professional look.
- Be mindful of acidity and off-gassing:
 - Use acid-free foam board and neutral pH adhesives to prevent discoloration over time.
 - Avoid spray adhesives unless labeled archival; even then, test on scraps.

Core Mounting Methods

- Hinge mounting:
 - Ideal for conservation framing. Use archival tape to hinge the artwork to the mat or backing, allowing the piece to “float” and breathe.
- Dry mounting:
 - A heated press and dry-mount tissue create a flat, permanent bond—commonly used for photo presentation boards and large prints. Not recommended for valuable originals.
- Cold mounting with pressure-sensitive adhesive:
 - Useful when you lack a press. Ensure adhesives are archival and use a roller to remove bubbles.
- Float mounting:
 - Attach the back of the artwork with hidden hinges to showcase deckled edges. Pair with archival quality mounting board and spacers for a high-end look.

Step-by-Step: Assembling a Mount

1. Plan your margin and window sizes:
 - [plastic boards wholesale](#)
- Measure the artwork and decide on mat borders. Standard is 2–4 inches, with a slightly heavier bottom border for visual balance.
1. Cut boards precisely:
 - Use a sharp blade and a metal ruler. Replace blades frequently when cutting art preservation boards or dense foam.
1. Test-fit:
 - Dry-fit the artwork on the mounting board or foam core for photography to ensure alignment before applying any adhesive.

1. Attach with the least invasive method:

- Use hinges or photo corners first. Reserve permanent methods for reproductions or when specified by the client.

1. Clean and close:

- Wipe dust from the art and boards. If framing, assemble with professional framing materials: UV glazing, the mounted piece, backing, and a dust cover.

1. Add hardware:

- Install D-rings about one-third down the frame sides, add wire, and place bumpers at the bottom corners.

Field Tips for Consistent Results

- Climate control: Humidity causes warping. Store acid-free foam board and gallery display boards flat in a temperate, dry room.
- Blade discipline: A dull blade tears paper fibers and compresses foam edges. Change blades often.
- Sample first: Always test adhesives on offcuts of photo presentation boards or foam core before committing to a final piece.
- Labeling: Note materials used on the backing (e.g., "Mounted on archival quality mounting board with hinge tape; UV acrylic glazing")—useful for galleries and clients.
- Sourcing locally: If you're near Beacon Falls, look for art exhibition supplies Beacon Falls retailers who stock Beacon Falls CT art boards and professional framing materials—hands-on inspection can prevent mismatches in color tone and thickness.

Building a Portable Mounting Kit

- Small tool roll or case for knives, rulers, tape, and pencils.
- Flat portfolio or rigid case for boards: Keep a selection of archival quality mounting board, acid-free foam board, and foam core for photography in popular sizes.
- Adhesive set: Hinging tape, ATG, photo corners, and a small bottle of neutral pH adhesive.
- Cleaning pouch: Gloves, microfiber cloth, anti-static brush.
- Emergency extras: Spare blades, small square, blue painter's tape for temporary positioning, and a mini roller for cold mounting.

Quality Control Checklist Before Delivery

- Are edges clean and square?
- Is the artwork flat without ripples or trapped debris?
- Are materials consistent with archival standards where promised?
- Is hanging hardware secure and centered?
- Is documentation included for buyers or galleries?

FAQs

Q: What's the difference between archival quality mounting board and standard mat board? A: Archival boards are acid-free, often 100% cotton rag or alpha-cellulose, and buffered to resist deterioration. Standard boards may contain lignin and acids that can discolor artwork over time.

Q: When should I use acid-free foam board versus foam core for photography? A: Both are lightweight and stable, but foam core for photography is engineered for photo mounting with tighter flatness tolerances. Use it for prints where surface uniformity is critical; use general acid-free foam board for broader applications or as backing.

Q: Are gallery display boards suitable for long-term preservation? A: They're excellent for presentation and short-to mid-term display. For long-term conservation, choose art preservation boards and pair them with museum-grade mats and UV glazing.

Q: Can I dry mount fine art originals? A: It's not recommended. Dry mounting is permanent and can affect value. Use hinge mounts on archival quality mounting board for conservation framing.

Q: Where can I find professional framing materials and Beacon Falls CT art boards? A: Check local art exhibition supplies Beacon Falls retailers, pro framing shops, or specialized online suppliers. Look for clear labeling indicating acid-free, archival, and UV-protective specifications.