

FRAMING INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXHIBITION SUBMISSION

Congratulations on finishing your artwork. This guide explains how to prepare, frame, and hang your work so it is safe, secure, and ready for exhibition. It is mainly for works on paper, including pastel, watercolour, drawings, photographs, and prints. Block canvases do not need to be framed, but all other works must meet the presentation and hanging requirements below.

The guide is written for artists who may be framing their own work. You do not need specialist knowledge, but you do need to follow the steps carefully. If you are unsure, ask a picture framer, or the exhibition team before submitting your work. There are professional framers but sometimes it is very pricey. So, this is a self-help guide for DIY.

1. QUICK CHECK BEFORE YOU START

Before framing, make sure your artwork is ready to handle.

Check this

- Artwork is fully dry.
- Artwork is flat and not buckled, bubbled, or damp.
- Glass, mat, and frame are clean.
- There is no dust, fingerprints, loose pastel, loose charcoal, or debris inside the frame.

What to buy

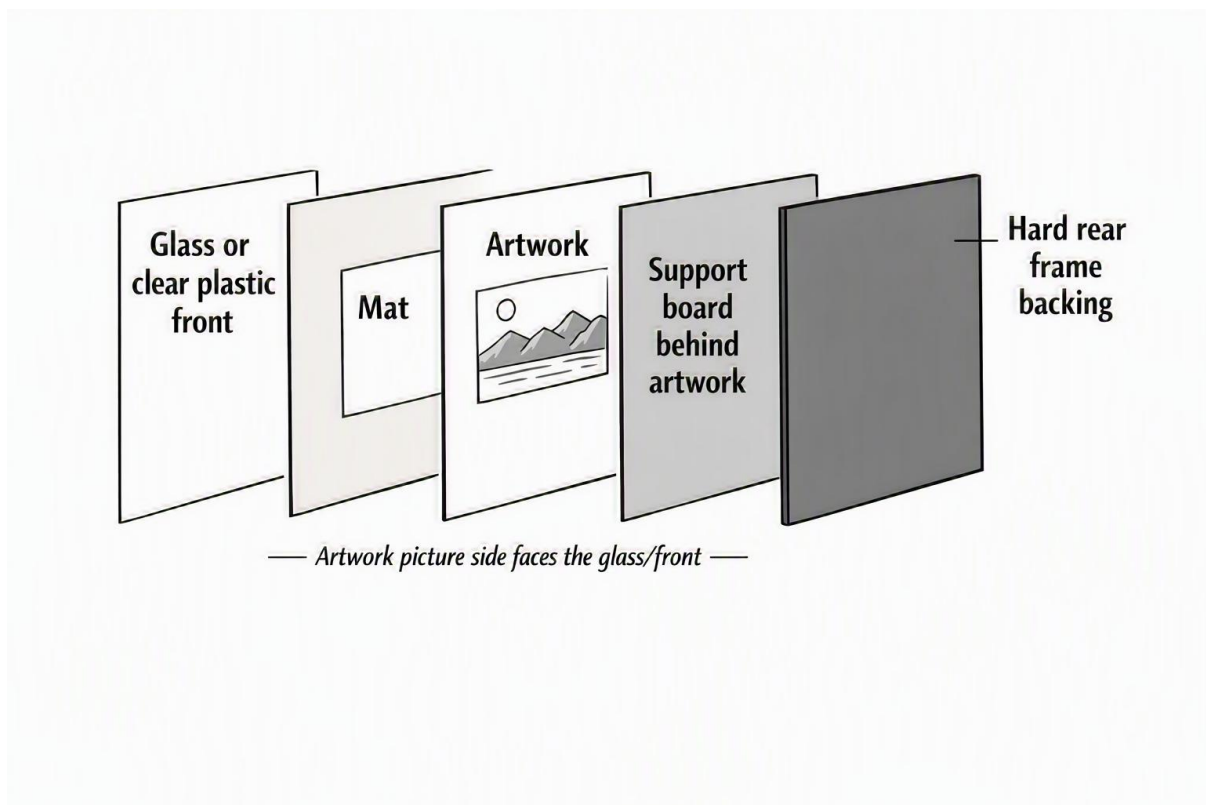
- Clean microfibre cloth — Gordon Harris, Mitre 10, or supermarket.
- Cotton gloves if you want extra protection — Gordon Harris or an art-supply store.

Do not use

- Household sprays directly on the artwork, mat, or frame contents.
- Paper towels on the artwork surface.
- Any tape, glue, or adhesive on the front of the artwork.

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2. UNDERSTAND THE FRAME PARTS



These parts are easy to mix up. Please check them before you assemble the frame.

Mat

The mat is the card border you see around the artwork at the front of the frame. It can be white, cream, black, grey, or another suitable colour. You can use the mat that comes with a shop-bought frame or ask a picture framer to cut one to size.

Support board behind the artwork

This is the board the artwork is lightly taped to. It sits directly behind the artwork. Use acid-free mount board, mat board, conservation board, or foamboard where possible. Gordon Harris is the best place to buy this.

Hard rear frame backing

This is the hard board at the very back of the frame. It usually comes with the frame. It closes the frame, but the artwork must not be taped directly to it.

Simple rule

The artwork is taped to the support board behind the artwork — not to the hard rear frame backing.

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3. CHOOSE A SUITABLE SHOP-BOUGHT FRAME

Shop-bought frames from Briscoes, The Warehouse, Kmart, Warehouse Stationery, or similar stores are acceptable only if they are strong, clean, and can be fitted with proper screw-in D-rings or strap hangers and picture cord or wire.

Before you buy, check this

- The frame body is solid timber or strong composite material. Not metal and not plastic
- The frame body is wide enough for two screw-in D-rings or strap hangers.
- The corners feel firm and do not twist, flex, or open.
- There is somewhere solid to screw the hardware into the frame body.
- The front is clean, clear, and flat.

Glass or plastic front

Glass is preferred. A plastic or acrylic front is acceptable only if it is clean, clear, flat, firm, and free from scratches, cloudiness, cracks, bowing, and protective film. If it looks marked in the shop, it will look worse under exhibition lighting. If inside use a torch.

Avoid buying

- Metal frames, unless a picture framer confirms proper gallery hanging hardware can be fitted safely.
- Very thin plastic or very flimsy frames.
- Frames that bend, twist, crack, split, or crumble when handled or screwed into.
- Frames with narrow edges that are too small for screw-in D-rings or strap hangers.
- Frames where the only hanging option is a sawtooth hanger, clip, stand, adhesive strip, or the removable backing board.
- Frames with scratched, cloudy, bowed, cracked, loose, or very flexible plastic fronts.

Simple test

If you cannot safely screw two D-rings or strap hangers into the solid frame body, the frame is not suitable for this exhibition.

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4. BUY THE RIGHT MATERIALS

Gordon Harris is best for

- Mat board, mount board, conservation board, or foamboard.
- Framing tape, artist tape, gummed paper tape, or proper hinging tape.
- A mat, if you need a different size or colour.
- Screw-in D-rings or strap hangers, picture cord, or picture wire if available.

You can also buy online but make sure it's a reputable supplier.

Mitre 10/Bunnings best for

- Basic tools, such as a ruler, craft knife, screwdriver, or small screws.
- Thin MDF or hardboard if the rear frame backing is weak and needs strengthening.
- Screw-in D-rings or strap hangers, picture wire, or a picture hanging kit.

Do not buy for attaching artwork

- Sellotape or ordinary clear tape.
- Masking tape.
- Packing tape or duct tape.
- Double-sided office tape.
- Glue sticks, spray adhesive, Blu Tack, or Command strips.
- Self-adhesive foamboard placed directly against the artwork.

5. ASSEMBLE THE FRAME IN THE RIGHT ORDER

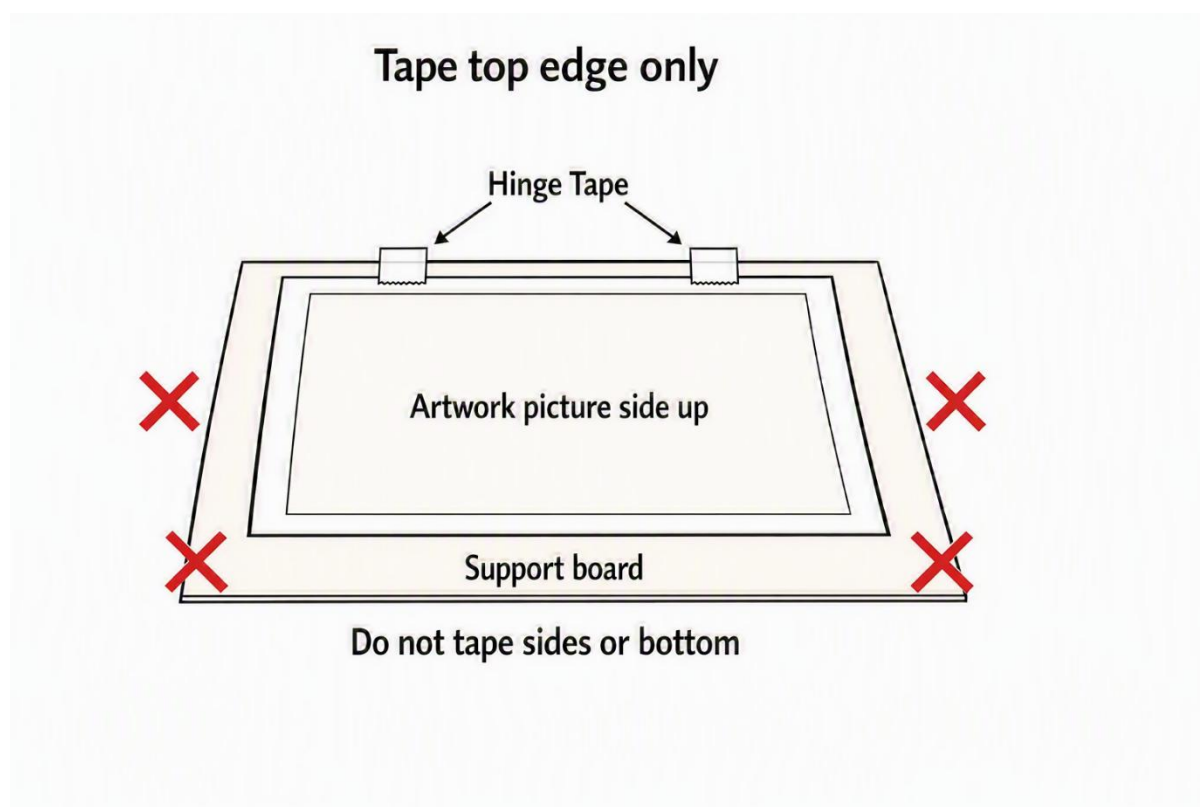
From front to back, the correct order is:

Glass or clear plastic/acrylic front → Mat → Artwork → Support board behind the artwork → Hard rear frame backing.

The picture side of the artwork must face forward toward the glass or clear plastic front.

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6. ATTACH THE ARTWORK TO THE SUPPORT BOARD



Step 1: Lay the support board flat

Place the support board on a clean table. This is the board the artwork will attach to. It is not the hard rear backing board that came with the frame.

Step 2: Place the artwork picture side up

Place the artwork on top of the support board with the picture side facing up toward you.

Step 3: Align the artwork

Check that the artwork is straight and centred behind the mat opening before taping.

Step 4: Tape only the top edge

Use two or three small pieces of acid-free framer's tape, artist tape, or gummed paper tape along the top edge only. This creates a hinge so the artwork hangs from the top.

Step 5: Leave the other edges free

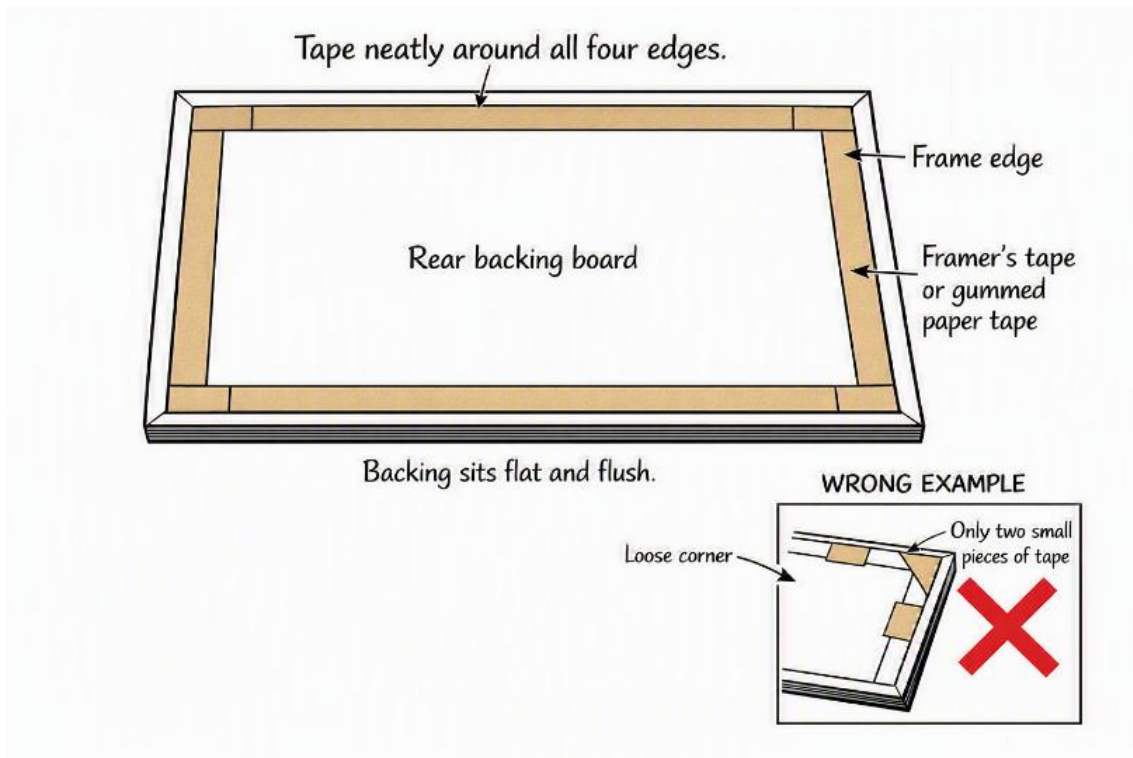
Do not tape the sides or bottom edge. Do not tape all the way around the artwork.

Step 6: Check before closing the frame

Check that the artwork is secure, flat, straight, and facing the right way before you close the frame.

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7. SECURE OR STRENGTHEN THE REAR BACKING



The rear frame backing must be firm and secure. Many shop-bought frames have thin backing boards that bend, rattle, or fall out.

What to do

- Replace a weak rear backing board with a stronger board; or
- Add a second firm board over the original rear backing to strengthen it.
- Tape or secure the rear backing so it sits flat, flush, and firm inside the frame.

Sometimes the easiest option is to replace the shop-bought rear backing board with a plain firm board, such as thin MDF or hardboard. If there is enough room inside the frame, you can also place a plain firm board over the original backing board to strengthen it.

How to tape the backing board neatly

- Place the backing board into the frame so it sits flat and level with the back of the frame.
- Use framer's tape or gummed paper tape around the edge where the backing board meets the frame.
- Tape all four sides so the back looks tidy and sealed.
- Press the tape down firmly so there are no loose corners or lifting edges.
- The finished back should look flat, neat, and secure, not patched or messy.

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What to buy

- Thin MDF or hardboard from Mitre 10 or Bunnings if the rear backing is weak.
- Framer's tape or gummed paper tape from Gordon Harris or a picture-framing supplier to seal the back of the frame.

Do not use

- Corrugated cardboard from boxes.
- Thin poster board that bends easily.
- Tape that holds the backing in only one or two spots.
- Packing tape, duct tape, or Sellotape to seal the back of the frame.

Exhibition standard

Rear backing boards that move, bow, rattle, fall out, or sit unevenly will not be accepted.



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8. ADD THE D-RINGS OR STRAP HANGERS

All framed works must have proper hanging hardware. Use two screw-in D-rings or strap hangers, one on each side of the frame. These must be fixed into the solid frame body, not into the removable rear backing board.

How to attach them

- Turn the framed work over so you are looking at the back.
- Measure about one-third down from the top of the frame on both the left and right sides.
- Mark the same height on each side so the D-rings or strap hangers sit evenly.
- Screw one D-ring or strap hanger into the solid frame body on each side.
- Use screws that grip securely but are not so long that they come through the front of the frame.
- Tie or attach picture cord or picture wire securely between the two D-rings or strap hangers.
- The cord or wire should be firm, with only a small lift when pulled.

Important

If the frame cracks, splits, flexes, or crumbles when you add the screws, stop and replace the frame. Do not try to hang the work from a weak frame.

Do not use

- Sawtooth hangers.
- Command strips or adhesive hanging products.
- Stick-on hooks.
- Swivel clips or rotating clips on the back of the frame.
- String, wool, ribbon, fishing line, or garden wire.
- D-rings or strap hangers screwed into the removable rear backing board.

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9. FINAL CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING

Check your work against this list before bringing it in.

It must have

- Artwork that is dry, flat, secure, and picture side facing forward.
- Clean glass or clear plastic/acrylic front, with no scratches, cracks, cloudiness, bowing, or protective film.
- Clean, aligned mat.
- Artwork attached to the support board behind the artwork, not to the hard rear frame backing.
- Firm rear backing that does not move, bow, rattle, or fall out.
- Screw-in D-rings or strap hangers and cord or wire attached to the frame body, not the rear backing board.
- A frame body strong enough to hold screws without cracking, splitting, or flexing.

It must not have:

- Sawtooth hangers, Command strips, adhesive hangers, or stick-on hooks.
- Metal frames unless a picture framer has fitted proper gallery hanging hardware.
- Very flimsy plastic frames or frames that crack when screwed into.
- D-rings or strap hangers attached only to the removable rear backing board.
- Masking tape, Sellotape, packing tape, duct tape, or office double-sided tape touching the artwork.
- Loose cardboard box backing or loose rear backing boards.
- String, ribbon, wool, fishing line, or garden wire.
- Artwork taped directly to the hard rear frame backing.

Works that do not meet these standards will not be accepted for exhibition.

