# 4-Week Short Course: Professional Framing For Photographers With Instructor John Siskin

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## Lesson #4: Putting It All Together

So this week we're going to put it all together. We will go step-by-step through the whole process, spending extra time on the parts we haven't done yet. Lots and lots of pictures to help this make sense!


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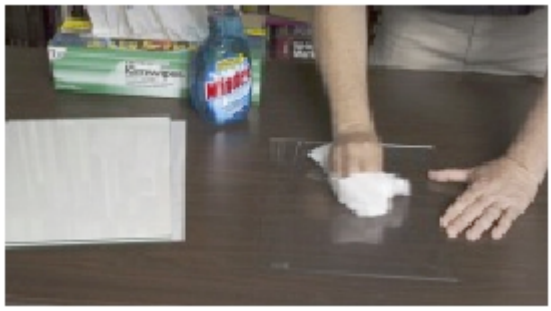
First clean your workspace; dirt inside a frame is there forever. I use Kimwipes for most framing tasks, they don't leave lint.

Clean the glass. I use Windex for this task. It will take about an hour for all of the Windex to evaporate, so I do this first. Once again I use the Kimwipes. There are other good products for this, however paper towels leave lint. Be careful when you handle glass!



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The glass needs to dry somewhere air can get to both sides. This dish drainer is good for small to medium pieces of glass.

I am using my larger mat cutter to cut the boards down for this project. This mat cutter is a little beat-up; I got it used. I use another cutter to actually cut mats.

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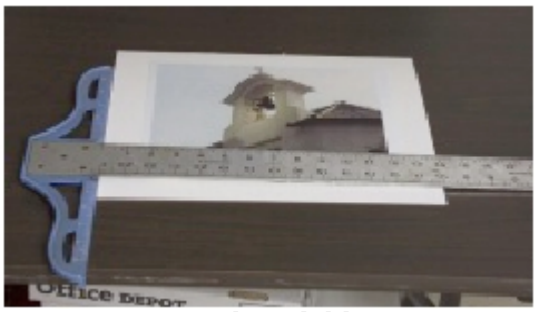
I am cutting down the buffered backing board. It looks a lot like cutting down mat board.

I use the T-square to get the image properly centered. Since this is a client job I will follow the client's plan, which is to put the image a little above center. I also write down the size of the mat. I do this when I am doing several mats or trying to photograph myself

framing.



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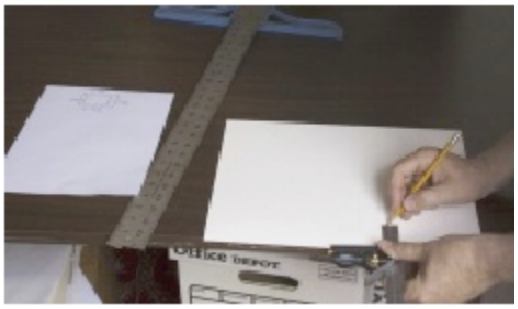

I am using the combination square to transfer the measurements onto the over mat.

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I will draw the lines with the T-square. Please notice that I have turned the T-square over so it will lay flat. A long straight edge would also work well.

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I always check the lines on the board with the print. In the past I cut in the wrong place too often.

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I am finally ready to cut the over mat. This is an important place to pay attention. I hope you have had a chance to practice this. The first thing I do is line the cutting edge up with the pencil line.

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The next picture shows me cutting the mat. Slow and easy is the way. Try not to over cut.

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The line in the center of the back of the cutting head should line up with your pencil line when you start cutting and when you stop.

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I use artists tape to hinge the over mat to the under mat. This makes it easier to center the photograph.

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Be very careful when you position the art. I wash my hands before this. It would also be a good idea to use white cotton gloves. It's terrible to ruin something you meant to frame.

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I am using the pre-made corners in this job. They are very easy to work with!

The next step is to clean the things that will be in your frame. If you are careful you can use compressed gas. I am sure most of you have inadvertently shot freezing liquid out of one of these cans, so you know why you need to be careful. Alternatively you can use an anti-static brush. I like both methods. Please note that my anti-static brush is not a current model.

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A quick review of the layers of your package:

1. bottom, buffered corrugated board,
2. Rag mat support for the art,
3. Art,

4. Rag mat over mat, and
5. Glass. Of course we could use more window mats or coated glass as alternatives.

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Next I am going to seal the package with framer's tape. This is an acid free product. I bought the 2 inch wide product. I wanted this because I want to have a lot of area for the tape to adhere to in back. This creates a better seal. I will leave a thin line of tape on the front; don't want to cover up the art!

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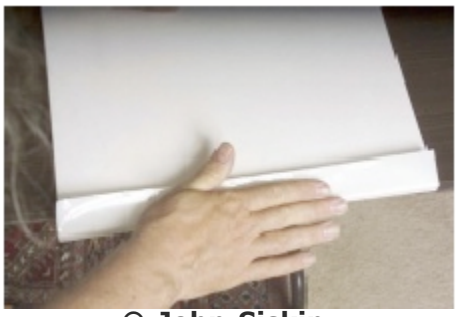

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If you do a nice job with this you can show it as is. This is called a Passe Partout (pronounced like pass partu). You can to a 45? cut on the corner to make this look a little fancier! First the cut.

Then remove the extra tape.

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**The finished Passe Partout, nice but not my work.**

This next shot shows all the hardware for a metal frame. They are easy to assemble!

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This shot shows the cross section of a frame leg. The hardware to attach the frame legs goes into the slot at the top of this shot.

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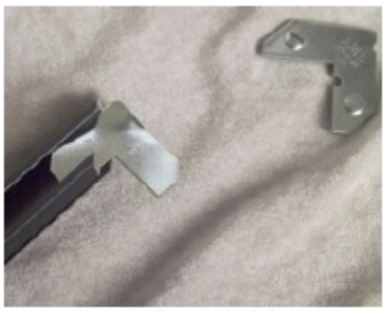
Next I will attach two of the frame legs into a corner. I put fabric down on the table before I do this. The fabric keeps me from scratching the front of the frame. Two corner pieces from the hardware used for this. The one that will be closest to you, while you are assembling the frame, has two screws in it. The top of this piece has the slotted ends of the screws on it. The piece with the screws will push against the other corner piece. This second piece is sometimes designed in different ways. If this second corner piece is flat it really doesn't matter which side is up. However, if it is curved you will want to look for the manufacturer's name and face that towards the first piece, with the screws.



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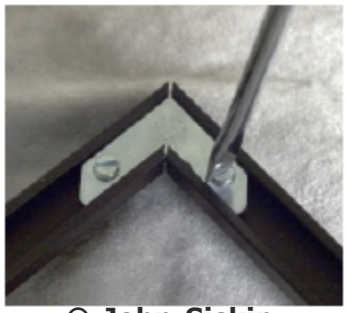
Next hold the frame legs in a tight corner and then tighten the screws with a flat blade screwdriver. I do not like to use a power screwdriver for this. It's too easy for the power tool to cause problems, here.



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**The finished corner!**

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When I have done 2 corners I generally

install the hardware that holds the wire. You do not have to do it when the frame is half built, but if you don't you will generally need to back the screws out of the hardware in order to fit these wire holders into the tracks. Whatever process is easiest for you!

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These wire holders should be set about 1/3 from the top of the frame.

So now your frame has 3 sides attached and the wire holders are installed. It should look like this.

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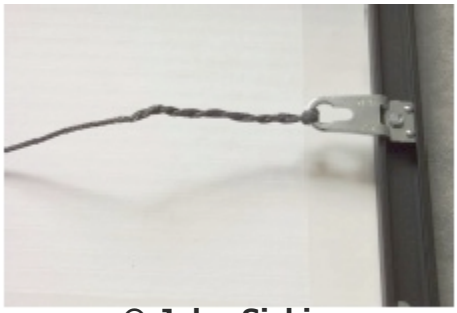

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The next step is to attach the wire. You should run the wire through the hole twice. A little extra safety. Having the frame fall off the wall is a crisis. You will also want to twist the wire to keep it from slipping!

The back of the frame in the next picture is almost done. Notice that the wire has some slack. If it is too tight it will be harder to mount on the wall. If it is too slack the wire will extend over the top of the frame. We don't want that. There is only one thing left to install!

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We can't forget the bumpers. Small white pieces of foam tape that we place in the corners. These have two functions **1)** they reduce the chance of scraping the wall, and **2)** the bumpers allow a little air circulation behind the frame. The air circulation reduces the chance of mould forming or bad gasses being trapped behind the frame.

This is one of my images installed in the same metal frame.

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This next shot is the corner hardware for a wood frame you assemble yourself.

You may be able to see that the front edge is beveled in this photograph. It will probably be easier to see in this shot that on the piece of plastic. It is important to remember that this beveled side will go into the frame first. It is much harder to do use this part to hold your frame together if you put it in wrong side first.

The first step with the wood frame that

uses the plastic hardware is to put a little color on the cut edge of the wood. This is cosmetic, it means the frame will look good even if the frame legs don't meet perfectly. You can use a dauber, a product designed for framing or a sharpie pen, in a pinch. This next shot shows me trying to use the dauber and the camera at the same time. You can also see the design of the wood frame.

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You can do this without a frame clamp, but it is easier and your frames will look better if you use a frame clamp. The frames hold everything together while the frame dries. Experiment with the clamps, you want to have four clamps, before you try to actually assemble a frame. One thing you will want to do is to protect the frame from the clamp. You can use a paper towel or put foam tape on your clamps.

The next step is to spread glue on the cut edge of the frame leg. Use wood glue. Do not put glue into the slot cut for the hardware piece. It is a really good idea to have a damp towel around, wood glue comes up easily if you get to it quick! A Q-Tip is a good applicator for glue. Try to cover all of the diagonal cut area without getting glue on the front to the frame leg. Glue both sides. Now you will need to get both sides into the frame, and even pretty quickly. Not only do the corners need to line up horizontally, you should also check that the top and bottom meet. Check the glue for instruction on how long it will take to dry.

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Next insert the plastic piece. This requires some pressure. I can't get the part to go all the way down without a pair of pliers

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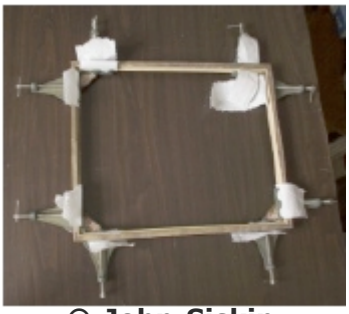
This is what the frame looks like with all the clamps holding it together.



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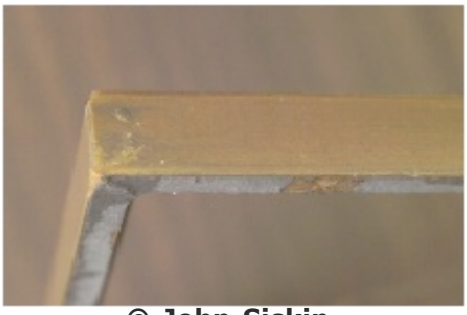
There are two other ways of attaching frame legs. The first shot shows a staple. This is done by a large commercial framing machine. If you order your frames chopped and joined they may come with this joint.

The other way to do this is with nails. If you choose to chop your own frames you may end up doing this. The key thing, besides practice, is to use another nail, probably a bigger one, to drive the nail down into the frame. You can use corner filler or wood filler to cover the nail heads. Then you can use a dauber or even shoe polish to match the holes to the surface of the frame.



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This next shot shows what it would have looked like if I had painted the inside frame with Acrylic Matte Medium. This would have sealed the frame and protected my artwork. If you choose to do this you should allow the acrylic a week to dry. Instead I am sealing the art as we did before. The framers tape will do a fine job of protecting the photograph. The framers tape saves me a week of waiting.

This shot shows what the frame looks like with the package, backing board, back mat window mat and glass. Because I don't want to wait a week for my frame to out gas, I have sealed the package with acid free framer's tape.

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The point gun, pictured here drives small metal points into the side of the frame to hold the package in place.

**Step Thirty-Seven:**In order to use the point gun pull the side opposite where you are using the gun into you mid section. You have to hold the frame very securely. The driver exerts some force, so if you do not hold it securely the point will not stay put. I put two points into each side of this frame, if it was a bigger frame I would use more points. This is another place where practice helps. I have also used a staple gun to secure the package, but they do not hold as well as the points.

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The next thing to do is apply a dust cover, a piece of acid free paper glued to the pack of the frame. This is protective and it also keeps insects out of the frame. I hate it when a bug dies in my frame. Start with a piece of paper larger than your frame. Trim the paper after it dries. You can glue the paper on with wood glue. I will use a Q-Tip to spread the glue.

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I let the dust cover and frame dry. I used books to hold the dust cover in contact with the frame. Next I trimmed the dust cover to the size of the frame with a single side razor

blade. Be careful when you do this.

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I did the bumpers next, for the same reason I did them on the metal frame. They do the same thing. These are more like Velcro than like foam tape.

The next step is to put on the wire holders or hangers. I do not like the screw eyes, they do not always stay put. The hangers I am using in this shot have two sides, the flat side should go against the frame. The problem here is that you need to drive a screw into the wood frame. It would be bad if either the hanger fell out or the wood split. A good tip to help with this is to cover the screw with bar soap before you drive it into the wood. This helps to keep wood from splitting.

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I do not use a power screwdriver with a wood frame for the same reasons that I don't use one with a metal frame; it is too easy to damage the frame. Once again I put the hanger (wire holder) 1/3 of the way from the top of the frame.

Take it easy when you do this, you don't want to split the wood. I test this connector by pulling on it, before I move on.

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The wire needs to go around twice, just like with a metal frame.

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**Congratulations! This is a wood frame!**

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## Your Assignment: Your Final Piece

Thanks for being part of this class!!!

John

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