

Print Care Guide

FOR PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS



How to clean, handle, store, and educate clients about every print surface - from MetalPrints to Fine Art.

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Why Print Care Is Part of Your Professional Standard

When a client walks away with a finished print, your job isn't entirely done. That print will live on their wall, sit in their home, and they will reflect on the memories every time they look at it.

A MetalPrint that gets wiped down with the wrong cloth. A Fine Art Print handled without gloves. A Canvas Wrap hung in a bathroom. These aren't hypothetical scenarios - they happen regularly, and the results show up as damage that clients often attribute to the print itself, not the handling.

Your reputation is embedded in every product you deliver. That means your responsibility extends past the order confirmation to how you package, handle, store, and educate. This guide is a practical reference for all of it.

SECTION 1: UNIVERSAL PRINT CARE PRINCIPLES

KEEP OUT OF DIRECT SUNLIGHT

UV exposure degrades color over time, even on UV-coated surfaces. Indirect or diffused light is always preferable for long-term display.

CONTROL THE ENVIRONMENT

Humidity swings and temperature extremes cause warping, bubbling, and adhesion failure. Ideal display conditions are stable: 35–55% relative humidity, 60–75°F.

HANDLE WITH CLEAN, DRY HANDS

Skin oils are one of the leading causes of surface damage, particularly on uncoated papers and Acrylic. When possible, handle by the edges only. Use cotton gloves for Fine Art.

NEVER LEAN PRINTS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS

Leaving unframed prints leaned against a wall or surface can cause cold-forming, the print gradually takes the shape of whatever it's resting against.

SECTION 1: UNIVERSAL PRINT CARE PRINCIPLES

USE THE RIGHT CLEANING MATERIALS

Microfiber cloths are the standard. Paper towels, rough cloths, and abrasive pads scratch surfaces that appear durable. When in doubt, use less -- not more.

NEVER SPRAY CLEANERS DIRECTLY ON A PRINT

Always apply cleaner to the cloth first. Liquid migration behind frames or into porous surfaces causes irreversible damage.

STORE IN ARCHIVAL CONDITIONS WHEN NOT DISPLAYED

Acid-free sleeves, folders, and boxes protect prints from oxidation, moisture, and contamination during long-term storage.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

METALPRINTS

Dye infused directly into specially coated aluminum. Non-porous, hard-surface, and among the most durable products available. Suitable for high-traffic and high-humidity environments.

CLEANING

- Wipe with a soft microfiber cloth, not paper towels.
- Use water or a non-ammonia glass cleaner for fingerprints and smudges.
- Non-abrasive household cleaners work for tougher marks.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Remove packaging tape carefully before extracting the print.
- For Framed MetalPrints, lift straight up from two edges, no single-corner pressure.
- Protect edges and corners from drops and impacts; dents in aluminum are permanent.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

ACRYLIC PRINTS

Exceptional color depth and a glass-like finish. The face is scratch-sensitive and requires gentler care than metal, but properly maintained, an Acrylic Print should need only occasional dusting over time.

CLEANING

- Use a soft, non-abrasive microfiber cloth
- For streaks or dirt: mild soap and water, light pressure, follow with a damp cloth, then blot dry.
- Novus #1 Plastic Clean & Shine is a safe, purpose-made product for acrylic surfaces.
- Never use ammonia or alcohol-based cleaners

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store flat until ready to hang. Extended leaning causes bowing and edge curl.
- Never get the back of the print wet, moisture can damage the face mount adhesion.
- Handle by the edges; use both hands for larger pieces.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

CANVAS WRAPS

Textured surface with warmth and depth that clients love. Canvas should be treated as the most delicate wall display product, dust accumulates in the texture, and the face dents under even minor pressure.

CLEANING

- Dust with a dry microfiber cloth using light, gentle strokes.
- Never apply liquid cleaners directly to the surface.
- Moisture causes fabric warping and ink lift.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Unpackage from the edges, never grip around to the face.
- Store in a cool, dry space away from humidity and temperature extremes.
- Never stack Canvas Prints face-to-face or place heavy objects on top.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

FRAMED PRINTS

A complete presentation product — image, mat, acrylic face, frame, and finished backing. Each component has its own care needs, and the acrylic face requires the same attention as an Acrylic Print.

CLEANING

- Apply glass cleaner to a cloth first, never directly onto the surface.
- Wipe the acrylic face gently with a microfiber cloth.
- Clean the frame with a dry or lightly damp cloth; keep liquid away.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Handle by the sides of the frame, never by the acrylic face.
- Take extra care with corners; corner damage on frames is usually permanent.
- Store upright or flat in a padded position. Never lean frames against each other without padding between them.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

EPIC PRINTS

Hard-surface appearance similar to MetalPrints, but constructed differently: a mounted Fujiflex Photographic Print with protective laminate.

CLEANING

- Wipe gently with a clean, dry microfiber cloth.
- Avoid water and all cleaning solutions.
- No harsh chemicals, abrasive scrubbers, or rough materials.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Handle by the edges, avoid placing face-down on rough surfaces.
- Store flat or hang, avoid extended leaning to prevent cold-forming.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS

The classic standard of the industry -- Lustre, Glossy, Deep Matte Velvet, and other silver halide surfaces. Beautiful and versatile, but sensitive to fingerprints and moisture without adequate protection.

CLEANING

- Dust lightly with a dry microfiber cloth only.
- Minimal contact and light pressure on uncoated surfaces.
- UV Coating and Laminates add protection, but still avoid liquid cleaners.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store flat to prevent curl and edge warping.
- Handle by the edges only, fingerprints on uncoated surfaces may be permanent.
- Store in archival-quality sleeves or boxes if not framing right away.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

FINE ART PRINTS

The most delicate product in the lineup. Uncoated by design, which preserves archival character and surface texture, but provides no barrier between the image and the environment.

CLEANING

- Minimal contact is the goal. If dusting is necessary: lightest possible pass with a clean, dry microfiber cloth.
- Never use liquid cleaners of any kind.
- For dust: a can of compressed air at a reasonable distance, with the print flat on a hard surface.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Always handle with clean cotton gloves or by the outermost edges.
- Store flat in acid-free archival folders or boxes.
- Never roll or fold. Never stack without archival interleaving paper between prints.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

WOOD PRINTS

UV-cured inks printed on natural wood panels. The wood grain becomes part of the composition. Without a surface coating, Wood Prints require consistent protection from moisture.

CLEANING

- Dust with a dry microfiber cloth using light strokes.
- Never use liquid cleaners, moisture penetrates wood and causes warping, grain lifting, or finish damage.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store in a dry, temperature-stable environment.
- Handle by the edges and avoid touching the face directly.
- Protect corners during transport, they are the most vulnerable area.

SECTION 2: SURFACE-BY- SURFACE CARE GUIDANCE

ALBUMS

Heirloom products designed to be passed down. Both cover materials and interior spreads require appropriate handling and long-term storage care.

CLEANING

- Clean the cover with a lightly damp cloth. Always test a small, inconspicuous area first, cover materials vary.
- For interior spreads: avoid liquid entirely. A soft, dry cloth if needed.

STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store laid flat in a cool, dry environment: the best position for preventing warping and cover deformation.
- If upright storage is necessary, keep the spine fully supported.
- When turning pages: use fingertips at the edge, open to natural resistance, and never force a spread flat.

SECTION 3: COMMON MISTAKES THAT DAMAGE PRINTS

USING THE WRONG CLEANING PRODUCT

Ammonia-based cleaners (many common glass cleaners) cloud Acrylic surfaces permanently. Paper towels scratch surfaces that appear hard. Always match the cleaner to the substrate.

SPRAYING LIQUID DIRECTLY ONTO PRINTS OR FRAMES

Liquid migrates. On framed prints, it seeps behind the acrylic and reaches the image. Always apply to cloth first.

TOUCHING FINE ART OR UNCOATED SURFACES WITH BARE HANDS

Skin oils on uncoated surfaces are nearly impossible to remove. It takes only one casual touch to leave a permanent mark.

STORING PRINTS LEANED AT AN ANGLE

Cold-forming is real. Prints stored leaning at an angle can gradually develop a bend that is difficult or impossible to reverse. Store flat or hang.

SECTION 3: COMMON MISTAKES THAT DAMAGE PRINTS

HANGING MOISTURE-SENSITIVE PRODUCTS IN HUMID ROOMS

Canvas Wraps and Wood Prints are particularly vulnerable. Kitchens and bathrooms are not appropriate display environments for these surfaces.

STACKING PRINTS WITHOUT INTERLEAVING

Prints stacked face-to-face without protective material between them can scratch and transfer over time. Use archival interleaving paper or sleeves.

APPLYING PRESSURE TO CANVAS OR FINE ART SURFACES

Canvas dents under fingertip pressure. Fine Art paper shows any contact. Always handle by edges and instruct clients to do the same.

ASSUMING ALL SURFACES CLEAN THE SAME WAY

What works on a MetalPrint will damage Acrylic. What works on Acrylic is too aggressive for Fine Art.

SECTION 4: CLIENT EDUCATION

Clients who understand how to care for their prints keep them looking better longer, and they're more likely to return for future orders.

DELIVERY CONVERSATION

When handing off a print, cover three things briefly: where to hang it, how to clean it, and what to avoid. Keep it to 60 seconds. The goal is to give them confidence, not overwhelm them.

INCLUDE A CARE CARD WITH EVERY ORDER

A printed care card tucked into packaging is one of the highest-value, lowest-cost things you can add to your delivery experience. It answers questions before clients ask them, and signals that you take your work seriously.

PLACEMENT GUIDANCE

Clients often don't think about where they're hanging something until after it's up. A short placement conversation at delivery prevents problems later.

SECTION 5: STORAGE & SHIPPING BEST PRACTICES

IN-STUDIO STORAGE

- Store all prints flat when possible. Use flat files or horizontal shelving.
- Keep storage areas climate-controlled: 60–75°F, 35–55% relative humidity.
- Use acid-free archival sleeves or boxes for Photographic and Fine Art Prints.
- Separate prints by surface type, stack only same-surface products together, with interleaving paper between them.
- Keep prints away from exterior walls in cold climates, as temperature differential creates condensation risk.
- Label storage clearly so prints can be retrieved without unnecessary handling.

SECTION 5: STORAGE & SHIPPING BEST PRACTICES

PACKAGING FOR CLIENT PICKUP

- Use the original packaging from the lab when possible, it's designed for the product.
- Add tissue or interleaving paper between any surfaces that may contact each other.
- For Acrylic and Fine Art, consider double-boxing for any transport beyond a short drive.
- Include a care card in every package.
- Tape should never contact the print face. Always remove all tape before unboxing.

SECTION 5: STORAGE & SHIPPING BEST PRACTICES

SHIPPING TO BUYERS

- Use rigid mailers for smaller Photographic Prints. Fold-resistant construction matters.
- For wall displays, use double-wall corrugated boxes with corner protection.
- Clearly mark packages FRAGILE and DO NOT BEND, it reduces mishandling.
- For high-value Fine Art, consider carrier-specific fine art packaging and signature-required delivery.
- If shipping Canvas or Wood, protect corners and face separately. Sandwich faces between foam or cardboard sheets.
- For international shipping, climate conditions vary significantly. Use moisture-resistant outer packaging.

Crafted to last. Cared for by you.

Every product Bay Photo makes is built with longevity in mind - the substrates, the process, the finishing. What happens after delivery is in your hands. And now, your clients' too.

EXPLORE PRODUCTS

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Canvas, Fine Art,
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