



Cover a Picture Frame Mat



Materials List:

- An old or damaged mat or mat board (cut to shape with the help of an adult)
- Decorative paper/wall paper
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue stick

Mat board is a paper or fabric-covered cardboard which is available in many colors. The material is used to make picture frame mats for photographs, calligraphy, or other artwork. Mats are usually cut in a round, oval, or rectangular shape. Placing art in a mat makes it look more attractive, and it helps to keep the glass from resting directly on the work.

After awhile, a mat's covering can fade or the color becomes outdated, so work must be re-matted and the old mat is discarded. In addition, sometimes the framer makes a mistake while cutting a mat, so it must be thrown away. You can make old or imperfectly cut mats look as good as new, however, by covering them with paper. Since picture frame mats are made of many layers of paper glued together, they're not recyclable. Covering old or flawed mats helps saves natural resources and landfill space.

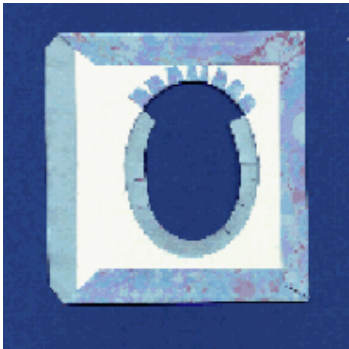
How to: For a rectangular opening, place the paper face down, and then center the mat, face down, on top of the paper. Trace the mat opening and cut as shown, removing a small, rectangular shape from the center. Apply glue to the front of the mat and smooth on the paper. Cut the paper remaining inside the opening at an angle, as shown. Glue these tabs to the back of the mat.

Cut the outside corners of the paper at an angle, staying about .25" from the mat corners. Apply glue to the top and bottom tabs, fold over, and smooth. Tuck in the edges, apply glue to the remaining tabs, fold over, and smooth, as before. For a more professional look, glue a plain scrap of paper over the mat back, minus the opening.

To cover a round or oval opening, place the paper face down. Center the mat, face down, on top of the decorative paper. Trace the opening onto the paper, and draw a smaller round or oval shape inside, allowing at least .50" margin all the way around. Cut out the smaller shape.

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How To Continued: Glue the paper to the front of the mat, and smooth out. Snip the margin, as shown, to make tabs. Glue each tab to the back of the mat. Cut off the outside corners at an angle, and glue the tabs to the back, as before. If you wish, cover the mat back with a plain scrap of paper.

Tips and Tricks: This is a great way to save mats which are old, soiled, or flawed. Ask your framer for rejects or mats he or she replaces when re-matting artwork and photographs.

Use wallpaper samples, gift wrap scraps, or decorate paper yourself by using rubber stamps, drawing an overall design with markers or pens, painting a wet into wet watercolor, or marbling.

Recycle old mats by covering them with cloth remnants. Rather than adhering the fabric to the mat with a glue stick, however, brush on PVA adhesive for a better bond. If you prefer, use a self-adhesive material which you can purchase at a craft or fabric store.

You can save money on framing if you cover mats which fit standard size picture frames. In the United States, some of the frames measure 5"x7", 8"x10", 9"x12", and 11"x14", and they're easy to find at discount and department stores, thrift shops, and garage sales.

Learn more about framing and matting at the [Alto's EZ Mat Board Cutters site](#).