

Printmaking: Adjusting the Press. This shows you how to set your press to the pressure you choose for printing.

EQUIPMENT: What you will need



Handle on Press



Adjustment Marks



Printing Materials: felt blanket, lino tile, masonite backing board and paper

SAFETY: How to stay safe

Do not let children or animals near the press when operating it.
Make sure nobody is working near the press when the table rolls through from one end to the other.
Watch out for corners and trip points near the press.

GLOSSARY: Words you need to understand

Roller Adjustment

Means making a measurement to set the pressure of the roller. This is a screw system which makes the roller higher or lower.

Adjusting the Press

Use scrap paper.

Select a few scrap pieces of printing paper.

- Make sure it is the type of paper you will use to print onto.

Always keep some printing mistakes or unfinished work so the paper can be used to help set pressure.



Lino board.

Use your lino board.



Felt.

Make sure you also use the felt when you test the pressure through the press.



Check adjustment handles.

Look at the adjustment marks or numbers on the handles.

- Try to set the roller exactly the same at each side. Use your eyes and use the adjustment marks.



Set handles.

A handle like this one will turn around, moving each end of the roller up or down.

- You must have both ends the same or you will get an uneven print. One side will have more ink and the other will be lighter.



Place together on press.

Place your lino board, scrap paper and felt blanket on the press bed ready to roll through

- Do not put ink on your lino while you test the pressure.



Test pressure.

Gently roll the press – you should just feel it bump up onto the lino-board. If it is very hard to roll, it may be that the pressure is too strong.

- If you print under strong pressure, you will emboss your design onto the paper.

Emboss means to push and stretch the paper into the gaps where lino was carved. The paper will not be smooth when it is embossed, it will have a raised pattern where your design was carved.

This can be treated as a finished print if you like the effect.



Adjust pressure.

If you have any embossing on your paper after you roll it through, the pressure is too hard for relief printing lino.

- Lino prints do not usually have embossing. They have a sharp design formed by the paper taking ink away from the top surface of the lino tile.



Set press pressure.

Continue to adjust your handles until the lino block with paper on it passes through without any embossing. Just a firm, even contact across the paper and lino surface.

Now you are ready to make your test print with ink. Notice exactly where the adjustment marks are so you know how to re-set the pressure of the press if you need to work on your print again another day.

TIPS: Ideas that will help

- Keep a list of the pressure you use for different combinations of paper, lino, board and felt. If any of them change in thickness, you will need to set your pressure differently.
 - Always make tests when you set up the pressure and try different techniques and papers, like embossing, to get more exciting prints.
 - Always save scrap prints so you have paper handy to use when you need to set the pressure on the press.
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