

# Quick Tips

## Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

### Pre-make Wire Hangers to Speed Assembly

Putting wire hangers on a frame can be a frustrating obstacle to production framing. You can increase productivity and make use of idle time by producing sets of wire lengths with ring hangers attached. You can do this by making a rig for different set sizes of frames.

For a standard size frame, attach the base of the left hanger to a nail in the wood, then measure the correct length of wire and attach the right hanger to a nail in the wood. (Just make sure the length of the hanger base and width of the frame are taken into consideration so that the measurements are correct.) Then loop the wire through the right hanger and crimp. Cut the other end of the wire, loop it through the left side, crimp, and you're finished. Make a rig to drop the bases of hangers of the finished units into to avoid tangling. When the production line is going, a framer just needs to grab a piece of wire with two hangers already measured and attached. Crimping can be done with a pneumatic wire crimp tool.

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### Relaxing Canvas for Better Stretching

Production stretching is often easier when canvas is as flat and relaxed as possible. It is at its optimum when it is in temperature and humidity equilibrium with the workroom environment. Canvases often arrive stacked, rolled, or in interleaved bundles. These should be opened and set flat as soon as possible.

For canvases with serious roll pattern retention, suspend them in a properly ventilated, temperature- and humidity-controlled area. A canvas can be hung from the equivalent of a clothesline. Roll patterns should be parallel to the line and canvases attached with rustproof clothespins. They can be placed back-to-back to save space if ventilation is adequate.

Some common relaxing methods actually have a negative effect and create long-term damage. Using a hot or cold press to flatten or dry out canvas tends to trap moisture between the layers of the artwork, causing humidity blooms between the image and surface coating. Wetting the canvas back to relax it may also add excess moisture and make it harder to stretch due to uneven textile expansion and contraction.

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### Eliminating Lint on Dark Mats

There are several tricks to control the perennial problem of debris on dark suede and velvet mats.

- The "sandwich." After cleaning the glass (both sides), place the backing board on the fitting table and the mounted and matted item face up on top of it. Using compressed air (water and oil free), blow any debris off the matting, artwork, and glazing. (Never use compressed air on charcoals, pastels, or chalk art.) Place the cleaned glazing on top of the matted and mounted item. Remove any debris. Then cover 1/8" of the edge of the glazing with Framer's Tape. Fold it over to encase the entire mat and backing board. Do this all the way around until the item is completely encased. This prevents debris from entering the package. After that, fit the entire sandwich in the frame.
- Another method is to line the entire inside rabbet with Framer's Tape to prevent any gesso or metal leafing from becoming dislodged during the stapling process and falling between the glazing and the matted item. Some framers spray the inside of the rabbet with an acrylic lacquer to hold metal leaf and other particles in place. This makes sense only if the side of the moulding will be exposed when an item is fitted and finished, as in the case of a double-glazed shadowbox.
- Another method is to use a stacked frame with glazing between the two frames. This adds distance between the glazing and any debris, making it less noticeable. And if debris is not wedged between the glazing and the matting, it is more likely to fall to the bottom of the frame over time due to gravity.

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*Contributors to this column are industry members who have experience in production framing operations. If you have a tip of your own, please send it to Quick Tips, PFM Production, PO Box 102, Morganville, NJ 07751.*