

Processing film at home

Processing film at home can help students who have limited time for darkroom work. If your film is done at home, you can come to the darkroom ready to print and work more efficiently. You will need to consider the following:

1. Drying

This is the single most important aspect of processing at home. If you do not have a safe, clean place to dry, it is useless to process at home. This could be a closet, cleaned out and dedicated to film drying or a second bathroom that all other family members will not use for the 5-8 hours it will take to air dry your film. In a pinch, a box plastic garment bag could be used, but drying will take longer in such a sealed environment. It is imperative that you have a dust free location for this step.

2. Bottles

If you have located a dust free locale for drying, now you can begin to collect bottles for the chemical. You will need a minimum of 2 one-gallon size bottles (one for fixer and one for wash aid.) Photo bottles are expensive, but the darkness of their opaque plastic is good for chemicals. If you use water jugs or other food containers use permanent markers and clearly mark what the contents are so no one drinks them. I recommend that you use liquid chemicals whenever possible. If you do this, you will buy the developer in a gallon container and use it from its original container.

3. Location

Choose a location to process that is not a food preparation surface. Photochemicals and dinner do not mix. If you must mix usages, cover all areas with plastic and wipe up carefully after processing.

4. Materials

Go to your photographic store and buy D-76 developer, fixer, wash aid, wet agent, a two reel plastic Paterson tank and a changing bag. The changing bag will allow you to safely load your film. Few closets are dark enough to load film! Consider also plastic gloves, a thermometer, plastic pages, clothes pins or film clips. Follow the directions on the chemicals exactly and date all bottles as mixed. Mix and discard developer and wet agent each time.

5. Go for it

Process your film and come to lab, one step ahead of everyone! You have the freedom to process when you want, see the results and shoot some more!