

SPLIT FILTRATION

Variable Contrast or Multi-Grade papers have the ability to alter their contrast range. They literally have two layers of emulsion, one sensitive to yellows light and the other sensitive to magenta light. The Contrast Filters are varying blends of yellow and magenta pigment that change the color of the light hitting the enlarging paper, changing its contrast. Handle these filters carefully because fingerprints could ruin the print. Handle them only by the edges, like a CD.

Expose for the Highlights / Filter for the Shadows

Contrast is defined as the difference between the highlights and shadows in a print. Highlights are controlled by the exposure time while shadow density is controlled by the filter. The lower the filter number, the lower the contrast. Filters #0 through 3 ½ all have the same density so they can be interchanged without altering the density in the highlights. Only the shadow density will change. Filters 4 through 5 all have the same density but they are 1 stop more dense than the other group, meaning that when you change from one group to the other you will have to open the lens up 1 stop or cut the exposure time in half.

It is possible to make two exposures onto the same sheet of paper, one with a low contrast filter and another with a high contrast filter. This will allow the expansion of the tonal range in a photograph, producing an intriguing effect in the midtones where the same visual information is being rendered in two different tonalities, overlapping! This technique works well with negatives that are relatively flat (not contrasty) with lots of texture and detail.

Expose #00 filter for the Highlights / Expose #5 filter for the Shadows

Using the Split Filtration Technique:

make a Test Strip _____ with a number #00 filter.
find the time slice that gives you the best highlights
ignore the shadows because they will probably be too thin
if you're not sure, pick the lighter exposure

This is the **Highlight Exposure time**. Write it down.

make _____ another Test Strip
expose the entire print first with the #00 Filter
use the Highlight Exposure time
then make _____ a typical Test Strip with the #5 filter on top of that
find the time slice that gives you the best shadows
if you're not sure, pick the lighter exposure

This time is the **Shadow Exposure time**. Write it down.

make the final print _____ with 2 exposures
make one exposure with the #00 filter at the Highlight Exposure time
and another exposure with the #5 filter at the Shadow Exposure time

write this information down on the back of the contact sheet
store the contact sheet in your negative box next to the negatives themselves

SPLIT FILTRATION

Using the Split Filtration Technique:

make a Test Strip _____ with a number #00 filter.



find the time slice that gives you the best highlights
ignore the shadows because they will probably be too thin
if you're not sure, pick the lighter exposure
e.g. the 2nd slice of 10 seconds has enough highlight density

This is the **Highlight Exposure time**. Write it down.

make _____ another Test Strip

expose the entire print first with the #00 Filter
use the Highlight Exposure time

then make _____ a typical Test Strip with the #5 filter on top of that

find the time slice that gives you the best shadows
if you're not sure, pick the lighter exposure
e.g. the 4th slice of 20 seconds has enough shadow density



This time is the **Shadow Exposure time**. Write it down.

SPLIT FILTRATION

make the final print _____ with 2 exposures
make one exposure with the #00 filter at the Highlight Exposure time
e.g. 10 second exposure with #00 filter, for reference



and another exposure with the #5 filter at the Shadow Exposure time
e.g. 20 second exposure with #5 filter, for reference



SPLIT FILTRATION

The combination of the two example prints combine to produce the following Split Filtered print.
e.g. 10 seconds with #00 filter + 20 seconds with #5 filter, for reference



Compare this to a straight print with a #2 filter:



SPLIT FILTRATION

write this information down on the back of the contact sheet
store the contact sheet in your negative box next to the negatives themselves

note: These times in this example are for this photograph only. The times for every other photograph will be different! Test strips have to be made for each and every photo to get a proper print.

note: The paper used in these prints is Foma Classic 133 warm tone paper, FBVC, cream base with velvet texture.

In general, the exposure times with the #5 filter tend to be about twice as long as the exposure times with the #00 filter. Remember, however, that the #5 filter is twice as dense as the #00 filter, meaning that the actual exposures are about equal.