

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN STAMP MOUNTS

By Stanley Christmas

Stamp mounts are an expensive part of stamp collecting and eat up a lot of money that could be better spent buying stamps. If you are a foreign stamp and cover collector like me, you often have an item that just will not fit snugly in a pre-sized commercial stamp mount. Lastly, commercial mounts cannot be easily moved, once glued to a page. So I have come up with a way to make my own mounts quickly and at a very low cost. These mounts give permanent, life time protection to the stamp or cover and have the flexibility of being able to be moved in and out of my album pages as many times as I want (I also make my own pages).

Items Needed:

1. Acid free/PCP free sheet protectors. For my junk and low value stamps I use clear 8 ½ by 11 sheet protectors. You can buy them in packages of 200 for about \$9.00 at Sam's. For my medium to high value stamps I use Ultra-Pro Platinum Series 8 ½ by 11 sheet protectors Item # 211D. You can buy them by the individual sheet in sports cards shops or a box of 100 for about \$20.00. For my high value items I use 2Buds 3 mil Mylar (polyester) 8 ½ by 11 sleeves item # M811-0025. Twenty-five sheets can be purchase for about \$11.00 at the web site www.THE2BUDS.com. These are used by the Library of Congress to protect documents.
2. About a two foot diameter round glass table top work area with edges protected with duct tape.
3. Thin cardboard with a ½ inch gridlines drawn on it. Tape the cardboard to the underside of the glass so you can see the gridlines.
4. Wood burning tool with interchangeable tips. I like a triangular tip. You can buy the tool at a craft store for around \$15.00. You will have to experiment with the various tips to come with the one you like best.
5. A rest or stand for wood burning tool.
6. Hobby knife with a #11 blade.
7. Sharpening stone.
8. Steel ruler at least 12 inches long.
9. Fan(s) for ventilation.
10. Seven inch pair of scissors.

Steps to make a mount

1. Warm up the wood burning tool. Keep the tool on its rest when it is not in use.
2. Turn on the fan so air blows over the work area. An additional window exhaust fan would be helpful to get rid of fumes.
3. Insert the stamp or cover inside the sheet protector.
4. Place the edge of the stamp that is inside the sheet protector about 1/16th to 3/32nd inches above one of the grid lines. This is enough space to keep the stamp from being burned or the perforations caught in the melted plastic.
5. Place the ruler carefully over the stamp and sheet protector, lining it up with the exposed grid line. Be sure everything is square and straight.
6. Press down on the stamp and ruler with the fingers and thumb of your left hand (right hand if left-handed) to hold everything snug.
7. Place the hot tip of the wood burning tool on the glass next to the ruler, just to the left of the sheet protector. Move the tip along the ruler edge and across

the exposed sheet protector from left to right. (Or right to left if you are left handed). How fast you move depends on how quickly the sheet protector melts and reseals. With a little practice you will get a "feel" for this.

8. Make additional passes if you think it is necessary.
9. If the new mount does not easily separate from the remaining sheet protector, run the hobby knife along the inside of the groove you created and cut the sheet protector away from the stamp holder. Use the ruler as a guide. Do not cut free hand. For short areas you can use your scissors.
10. Repeat steps 3 through 8 for as many sides as you want to seal.
11. The best item I found for securing my mounts in an album is Scotch Double Sided Adhesive Pens. The last place I found it was at Sam's where you could buy 4 for \$8.00. I also found them in Office Max for about \$4.95 each. An excellent alternative is Creative Memories Photo Tape which costs about \$8.00 a roll. You can buy it from your neighborhood Creative Memories dealer.

Helpful Hints:

- Practice first on junk stamps and covers.
- Leave one side of the stamp mounts open so the stamp or cover can "breathe."
- Save the all scrap for additional stamp mounts. Store the three grades of sheet protector scrap in separate boxes.
- Sharpen the #11 blade from time to time to insure a clean cut. Replace it as needed.
- For thicker items such as covers, tilt the steel ruler at a 45 degree angle and tuck it close to the edge of the cover instead of laying it flat over the cover. Now move the wood burning tool along the ruler's edge. This will take some practice, so be patient, but you will get a seal that will not easily tear.
- You can use a pair of scissors to trim the open end of the holder if desired. This especially true with the Mylar holders.

That's it. Have fun!