

# Faults on Black & White negatives

Reproduced from 'The Essential Darkroom Data Guide' by Peter Jones

The full text is available to purchase for £9.99

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<b>Fault</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Cure</b>	<b>Prevention</b>
No image formed. Edge numbers and manufacturers name missing	Film has been put in fixer first instead of developer	None	Make sure processing is carried out in correct order. Adopt methodical working practice.
Film completely black including edges.	Film completely fogged by light before or during development	None	Check that all loading and processing stages will not allow film to be fogged. Check that camera is loaded correctly and is light tight.
Film has black frame at beginning but rest of film is clear. Edge markings present. Sprocket holes may be torn.	Camera has not advanced film	None	Check camera for fault.
Film has overlapping double exposed images.	Exposed film has been run through the camera again.	None	Identify exposed films with label or marker pen.
Film is completely clear. Edge markings normal.	Film was unexposed. Edge markings indicate processing was incorrect.	None	As above.
Brands of uneven density (usually along complete length of film).	Insufficient quantities of developer used.	None	Make sure enough developer is used to completely cover film.
Clear or opal patches.	Film has come into contact with another surface and prevented development. Can be caused by film coils touching.	None	Make sure film is correctly loaded into spirals in tank.
Black bar right across film.	Fogging by light	None	Check camera back. Cassette may be faulty.
Pale or weak (thin) image. Very little shadow detail. Edge markings normal.	Film underexposed.	Can be printed but shadow areas may print solid black without any detail.	Check ISO setting on camera.
Negative very dense. Edge markings normal.	Film overexposed.	Can be printed but white areas may be lacking features.	As above.

<b>Fault</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Cure</b>	<b>Prevention</b>
Negative thin but more shadow detail than when film is underexposed.  Low contrast.  Edge markings may be weak.	Underdevelopment. 1. Development time too short. 2. Development temperature too low. 3. Insufficient agitation. 4. Developer too weak. 5. Developer exhausted or oxidised.	May be printed but shadow areas will show little detail.	For <b>1</b> and <b>2</b> : Check for correct development time.  For <b>3</b> and <b>4</b> : Check for correct temperature, agitation and dilution.  For <b>5</b> : Use fresh developer.
Image dense and contrasty.	Overdevelopment. 1. Development time too long. 2. Development temperature too high. 3. Excessive agitation. 4. Developer mixed too strong.	Can be printed on soft grade of paper, but grain may be more noticeable.	For <b>1</b> and <b>2</b> : Check for correct development time and temperature  For <b>3</b> and <b>4</b> : Check for correct agitation & dilution.
Film has partial or overall grey fog. Edge lines around sprocket holes.	Film fogged during development.	None.	Check development tank lid is secured and light tight.
Film underdeveloped with possible yellow stain.	Developer exhausted or contaminated.	None.	Do not over-use developer. Adopt clean methodical working procedure.
Areas around sprocket holes show uneven density.	Surge Marks. Film has been agitated too severely during development.	None.	Consult manufacturer's data for correct agitation procedure.
Film has a milky / yellow appearance.  Overall fogged effect.	Insufficient fixing. 1. Fixing time too short. 2. Fixing temperature too low. 3. Insufficient agitation. 4. Fixer mixed too weak. 5. Fixer exhausted 6. Fixer contaminated by developer.	Re-fix film in fresh fixer followed by final wash.	For <b>1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</b> : Check for correct fixing time, temperature, agitation and dilution.  For <b>5</b> : Use fresh fixer.  For <b>6</b> : Use stop bath after developing to avoid carry over of developer into fixer.

<b>Fault</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Cure</b>	<b>Prevention</b>
Edges of film fogged.	Film fogged by light. 1. Film cassette left in strong light before or after exposing. 2. Rollfilm wound too loosely on spool.	None.	1. Always keep cassette in film tub before and after exposing. 2. Wind rollfilm tightly on to spool and store away from light.
Film has an overall orange/brown stain.	Probably a colour film has been processed in B&W chemistry	Print on Panchromatic paper.	Make sure you always identify films before processing.
Negative shows part of image only.	Probably caused by setting too fast a speed on camera when using flash.	None.	When using flash, make sure you use the correct flash synch speed (or a slower speed).