BUSINESS **OPTIMIZER**
The Best Tips for Office Life

How to Choose the Best Paper for Printing?

NAVIGATOR
Office Paper Solutions

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How to Choose the Best Paper to Print from Home: A Quick Guide (1/4)

Did you know that choosing the right paper can solve many of the challenges of home printing? Business Optimizer shows you how to avoid those niggling problems and what to look out for when purchasing paper for your home printer.

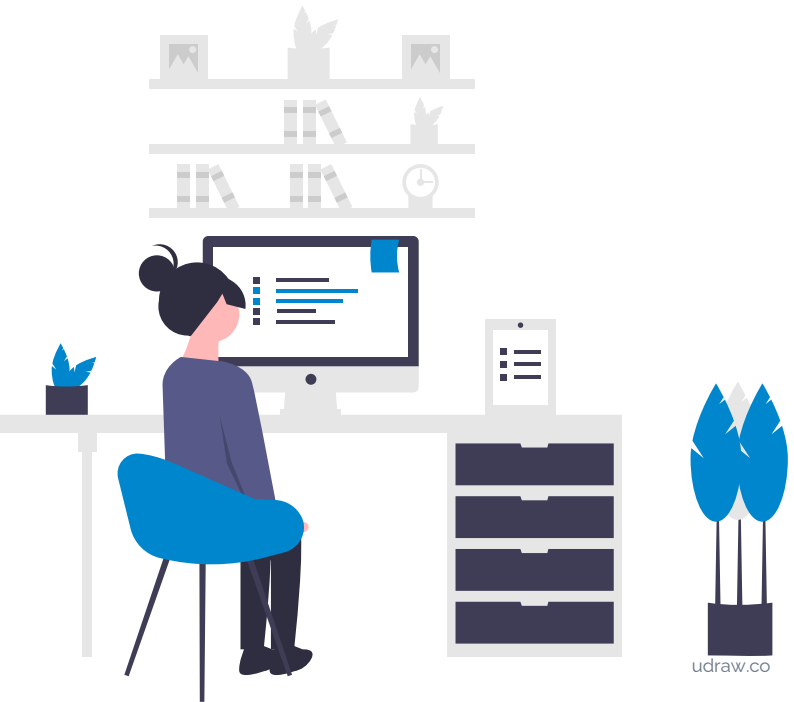
For those of us lucky enough to be able to work from home during the current pandemic, we've found ourselves grappling with many different aspects of office life. For some of us, it's been quite a learning curve!

Working from home brings with it many opportunities: the chance for more focused work, time with family, greater flexibility over schedules, safety. But it also brings with it just as many challenges: productivity, time management, managing work-life balance…

Then there are all those little things we normally take for granted: having all the right stationery, letterheads, printer paper, and inks; keeping equipment in good working order, dealing with day-to-day maintenance tasks such as paper jams or computer updates.

The challenges of printing at home

If you need to print at home, you'll know the frustration of running out of ink halfway through a print job or having to take the printer apart to extract shreds of ripped paper that has somehow got itself jammed inside.



Choosing the right printer and stocking up on the right inks for it will help to alleviate many home printing problems. But there's another – often-overlooked – home printing decision that can have major ramifications for your home printing success.

Did you know that choosing the right paper for your home printer can help with many home-printing challenges?

Paper jams

Paper jams are probably the most common printing problem home printers will encounter. They can be very frustrating, especially if paper is getting jammed repeatedly and it isn't easy to open up the printer and extract the jammed paper.

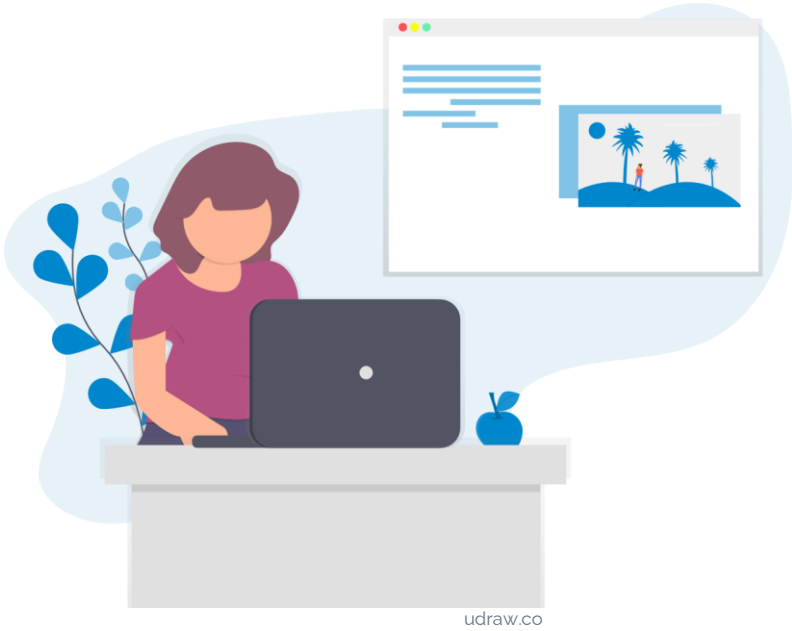
Paper jams are often caused by buying poor-quality paper. The sheets of poor-quality paper will often stick together, causing jams.

Instead, invest in good-quality paper, make the sheets are not damaged before you load them (keep them in the ream until you're ready to use them so they stay perfect) and make sure they are lined up correctly.

You're getting through inks too fast!

If you seem to be spending a fortune on ink cartridges, don't be tempted to cut costs by investing in low-grade printer-ink refills. Cheap inks can contain impurities that will block up the nozzles of your print heads. You should continue to use the manufacturer's inks because it will help to extend the life of your printer and ensure good print quality.

How to Choose the Best Paper to Print from Home: A Quick Guide (2/4)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Instead, consider whether you should be changing your paper. Look for a paper with a smooth surface – this will help to improve toner adhesion and ink absorption, so you can print more sheets from the same ink cartridge.

Quality of print

Print quality is a major bugbear with home printing. Home printers aren't designed to be as hardworking as the printers you have in the office, but there's no reason for the quality of output to be comprised.

One of the best ways to improve quality is to consider the opacity of the paper you are using. In addition, a smooth paper surface will lead to better print results, not just ink economy.

Environmental concerns

We all want to do our bit for the environment. And when you print from home, you can become all too aware of the sheer number of paper sheets you are printing.

It's worth remembering that paper is one of the most successful closed-loop processes in our economies. More than 65% of paper in the USA recovered for recycling. And the figure is even higher in Europe.

You might want to support this closed loop process by choosing a paper with some recycled paper content. If you do decide to do this, remember to choose a paper that has got a smooth quality surface Recycled stock can lead to poor quality print results and the overuse of ink.

Instead, a better option might be to consider whether you can help the closed-loop process in another way. Switch to recycled paper for other products, such as toilet paper, tissue, kitchen paper, etc. And instead look out for home printing paper than comes from sustainably managed forests.

This way, you can balance environmental concerns without compromising on print quality.

Printing double-sided

Another way to help the environment is to print double-sided where possible. If your printer supports double-sided printing, the next step is to choose the right paper.

Anyone who has tried this at home will know that your ability to print double-sided depends entirely on the quality of the paper you use. Poor quality paper can get saturated with inks resulting in poor quality printing and frequent paper jams.

Instead, look for a paper with a smooth finish and a high opacity. As well as helping to reduce the amount of ink used, and thereby reduce paper jams, you'll also be assured of a much better-quality print result.

A higher opacity paper will also ensure that whatever is printed on the opposite side of the paper doesn't show through.

How to Choose the Best Paper to Print from Home: A Quick Guide (3/4)

pexels.com

How to choose the right paper

Choosing the right printer paper can have significant impacts on your home printing success. So how should you choose which paper is the one for you? There are a number of characteristics you should look out for when choosing a paper for home printing.

#1 Consistent high quality

As we've discussed, a good quality paper will help to minimize jams as well as delivering better quality print results.

Look for a paper that has a paper-jam-free guarantee. This way, you know you are getting a good quality paper.

#2 Smooth surface

A good quality paper will be treated with a specialist surface that helps to ensure higher printing quality at the same time as reducing ink consumption.

Look for a paper that is whiter, smoother and thicker as this will deliver more vivid colors and intense blacks without blurring and without wasting your valuable ink supply.

#3 Opacity

Quality of print depends on the opacity of the paper. If you choose a paper with high opacity, you can even print on both sides of the paper without any quality issues.

Opacity simply relates to the percentage reflection of a paper. A completely transparent paper will be rated 0% transparency and complete opacity would be rated 100% opacity.

The degree of opacity depends on the weight, ingredients, and absorbency of the paper, so if you look for a good quality paper, with a specialist smooth surface and a high opacity rating, you will get the very best results.

#4 Recycled or from managed forests

Most recycled paper stock will result in a lower quality finish and more intensive use of inks simply because it has a less smooth finish than other papers. If you choose a paper with recycled content, look for a smooth finish.

The other option is to look for paper that is produced from managed forests. This means looking for the FSC logo from the Forest Stewardship Council, PEFC environmental credentials from the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, or the EU Ecolabel. This way, you are guaranteed of a sustainable paper.

How to Choose the Best Paper to Print from Home: A Quick Guide (4/4)

Choosing the best paper for printing in your daily life

Let's take a look at some of the possibilities and which paper might be suited to them.

Black and white drafts

For drafts and other documents that will be used for internal use only, you can use a lightweight paper. Something around 70gsm or 80gsm will be fine.

Remember to adjust the print settings on your computer as well to ensure the best results. Using the "draft" option will help conserve ink too.

High volumes of presentations/handouts

If you are going to be printing a high-volume print job for distribution to colleagues, event delegates, or potential customers it is better to go for a slightly heavier weight paper.

A 100gsm paper helps to make paper jams less likely when you are using a "standard", "better" or "best" ink coverage setting.

Colour flyers

For color flyers or business cards, you'll need to move up to a thicker paper, ideally, a weight of 150gsm or 160gsm.

This will help to ensure the paper retains its integrity even when coated with a lot of ink, which is especially important if you are printing on both sides. A heavier weight paper will also avoid problems of show-through.

CV or resume

To make the right impression on a potential employer, thicker papers with a high degree of opacity are a good choice.

You may also want to consider special texture effects (ripple or velum) which can help your CV stand out.

When applying to an organization with strong sustainability goals, choose a paper with a high degree of recycled content.

Color handouts

For full color handouts, then as well as choosing a 100gsm paper, look for an "ultra high definition" paper. This paper has a special finish that helps make whites brighter and colors more defined.

Aim to get a very smooth paper if you can, as this will help to reduce the amount of ink absorbed.

Photo printing

For photo printing, it is advisable to go to a specialist photo paper for the very best results. It is best to follow the manufacturers instructions to adjust the print settings for optimum results, which you can tweak slightly until you get the result you want.

You can also achieve good results with a thicker weight of UHD paper, 110gsm or above.

Double-sided black and white printing

It can be difficult to find a good paper for double-sided printing, as you need to be sure there won't be any show-through from one side to the other.

To achieve this, you can look for an 80gsm or 90gsm paper with high opacity. The opacity of the paper will ensure there is no show through, even with lighter weight papers.

What's the best paper for your printing needs?

Your job can often determine the types of printing challenges you face – and the type of paper you should choose to overcome those challenges.

DESIGNER

When you are working to tight timescales on behalf of your clients, paper quality is key.

For high-quality double-sided printing, look for a paper with high-quality fibers that allow for good cutting quality.

The surface properties of the paper should be suitable for high volume print jobs to eliminate the problem of ink runs for faster printing when working to tight deadlines.

Color documents can use a paper with a weight of 120gsm. For handouts and promotional printing jobs an office card with a weight of 160gsm might be more suitable.

CONSULTANT

If you are working in a busy office with high volumes of office printing for internal use, economy is key.

However, you can't economize to the extent that poor quality fibers are used.

Choosing a good quality but lighter weight paper helps to balance the need for economy with the need for quality results – 75gsm to 80gsm should be fine for general office printing.

Opt for an ecological alternative using recycled sources where possible: do your bit for the environment and enhance your company's green credentials.

ENTREPRENEUR

If your challenge is building a brand, you have the freedom to opt for a thicker, higher-quality paper.

Aim for a paper that offers a high-quality tactile sensation – look for papers with special engineered smooth finishes.

Good quality fibers and optimized stiffness will help to ensure efficient printing and eliminate post-printing curl – even for duplex printing jobs where both sides are printed.

Most documents will be fine using 90gsm or 100gsm weight paper.

For high-quality personalized printouts, business cards, invitations, and postcards, choose a 120gsm weight paper.

EDITOR

Printing a magazine run – even when segmented into different print runs tailored to different market segments – requires a high-volume approach to printing.

Economy is important – without the false economy of poor quality paper that can result in wastage, botched jobs, or poor-quality finishes.

The ideal paper weight for a publication or magazine is 80gsm or 90gsm.

For a thicker more tactile sensation, ideal for high-end sectors, opt instead for a 100gsm weight paper.

Look for a paper with a finish that has been optimized for the new digital presses.

Professionals and companies are working at a much faster pace, always looking for more efficiency and greater competitiveness. Knowing the best paper suitable for your needs, undoubtedly, will make your work stand out.

How to Choose a Paper for Color Printing (1/2)

Research shows that marketers and other decision makers prioritize print quality when it comes to color printing. Business Optimizer considers the important role your choice of paper plays in print quality and how to choose the best paper for a color print job.

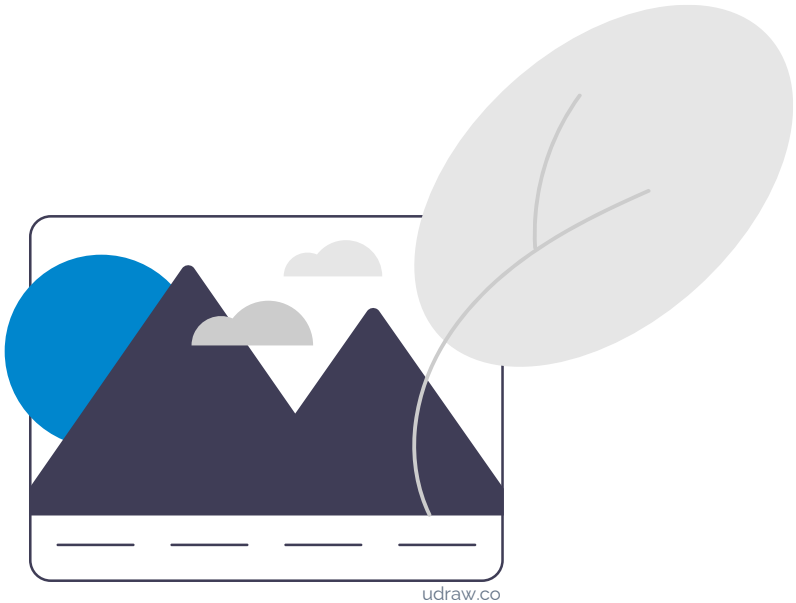
Paper isn't always the easiest item to specify. For a start, there are so many options from which to choose. But each is designed to meet the demands of a different job. So, with a little research, it is easy to find the right paper for you.

#1. Choose a quality product

Printer manufacturer HP recommends choosing a quality product. It says, "Paper that is too thin, too slick, or too stretchy can jam the [printer]. Paper that has a rough or fibrous texture or that does no accept ink can cause printouts to smear, bleed or not be filled in completely."

#2. Consider the weight

The greater the weight of the paper, the thicker and stiffer it will be. For posted marketing materials, a higher-weight paper is usually preferable – around 100gsm or even 120gsm.



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For newsletters, 90gsm is probably acceptable, whereas for normal office use papers tend to be around 80gsm.

FYI: the gsm measurement signifies the grammes per square metre.

Also worth bearing in mind: if you're going to be posting your printed items, the weight of the paper holds another significance: how it affects postage costs.

#3. Coated or uncoated?

Another important consideration is whether to opt for a coated or uncoated paper. If you want to write on the paper, an uncoated option is best.

However, if you are seeking to get a good color finish, a coated paper is usually better. You should also find that it should save on ink too.

#4. Will you want special print effects?

If you wish to add special print effects to your paper, this can affect your choice of paper. For example, if you wish to add perforations, a thin, stiff paper will work best. However, if you wish to add die-cut details, a thicker paper will deliver a cleaner cut.

How to Choose a Paper for Color Printing (2/2)

#5. When quality is paramount, choose UHD

We're all familiar with the notion of ultra-high definition, but it's new to the world of paper. Navigator Paper's new UHD coating turns colors more vivid, improves contrasts, and makes printouts more real.

If quality is your primary consideration for your color print job, choose a paper from the new range of ultra-high-definition papers from Navigator.

#6. Price

We all work to a budget and so, inevitably, price also has to be a consideration when deciding which paper to choose. However, choosing a basic product can be false economy; as we've noted, it can cause printer jams, and end up costing more on ink.

Navigator Paper now offers a cost-effective choice for color printing. Its range of UHD Formula papers has a special coating that improves color print quality without adding significantly to the price. Studies of color gamut area shows UHD Formula moves the Navigator range of papers from a 6000/6500 measurement to a 8000/8500 – in line with the best papers for color definition. So if you want to achieve great results at a competitive price, UHD Formula is the way to go.

What is the best paper to print....

FLYERS!

PRESENTATIONS!

Choose the best paper for printing!

What do you want to print?

Photo or Standard print?

- **Photo**
  - Specialist photo paper or 100gsm UHD paper
- **Standard print**
  - **One side or Double-sided?**
    - **One side**
      - **Black & white or Color?**
        - **B&W**
          - 70gsm to 80gsm standard paper
        - **Color**
          - **Low volume or High volume?**
            - **Low volume**
              - 80gsm UHD paper
            - **High volume**
              - 100gsm UHD paper
    - **Double-sided**
      - **Black & white or Color?**
        - **B&W**
          - **Drafts and handouts or Flyers?**
            - **Drafts and handouts**
              - 80gsm High opacity paper
            - **Flyers**
              - 120gsm High opacity paper
        - **Color**
          - **Brochures and flyers or Handouts?**
            - **Brochures and flyers**
              - 90gsm UHD high opacity paper
            - **Handouts**
              - 120gsm UHD high opacity paper

More tips on printing and paper:

- Did you know your printer could be hacked?
- How to protect your printer from being hacked
- Home school printing tips for busy parents
- Tips for Printing the Best Images
- How to prepare a document for a print shop
- Facts and numbers about paper and print
- What is paper smoothness?
- What is paper whiteness?
- The Evolution of Paper
- What's so good about paper?

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