

Adjusting Images for Printing on Uncoated Paper Stocks

This guide explains how to prepare images in Adobe Photoshop to achieve optimal results when printing on uncoated paper stocks. Uncoated papers absorb more ink and have a reduced colour gamut compared to coated stocks, which can cause images to appear dull, flat, and soft if not adjusted correctly.

Understanding Dot Gain & Colour Gamut

Dot Gain: Uncoated stocks can experience dot gain of up to 30%. This means a 50% tint may visually reproduce closer to 80%, making images darker than expected.

Colour Gamut: Uncoated papers cannot reproduce highly saturated colours as effectively as coated stocks. Using the correct ICC profile is critical.

Recommended Photoshop Workflow

- Start with an RGB or Camera RAW image to preserve maximum colour range.
- Set Working CMYK to: PSO Uncoated v3 (FOGRA52).
- Use View → Proof Setup → Custom and simulate paper colour.
- Adjust Levels, Curves, and Saturation to compensate for dulling.
- Convert to CMYK using Convert to Profile with the uncoated ICC profile.
- Save a copy and update links in InDesign.

Sharpening for Uncoated Stocks (Unsharp Mask)

Sharpening must be pushed further than expected. Halftoning reduces perceived sharpness during print.

Suggested Starting Points:

Amount: 200–250%

Radius: 2.5–3.0 pixels

Threshold: 0–3

The image should look slightly over-sharpened on screen before printing. Halos indicate you have pushed too far.

