

A Simple Guide to Cropping and Resizing Digital Images of Your Artwork

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This guide will help you adjust digital images of your artwork for use on websites, social media, or for submission to galleries or exhibitions, using the basic photo editing tools that come on all PCs and Macs. Edits and adjustments covered include cropping the edges, changing image resolution, changing image size, and changing the file type/format. NOTE: This handout was created incorporating advice and suggestions from the photographers in the Chatham Artists Guild.

General Guidelines

- **Effective photos of artwork for the above-mentioned applications should be square or rectangular.**
- **Smartphones photo editing apps generally don't allow most of the edits you need** – Better to download your images to your Mac or PC and do the editing there.
- **Limit your editing to cropping and adjusting lighting.** For this kind of photography, don't use editing in an attempt to make your work look better than it appears with the naked eye.
- **Always crop the image before adjusting size and resolution.**
- **When cropping an image of a 2-D artwork**, crop right to the edge of the artwork unless there is a reason to leave the edge visible, as with an image that is not rectilinear.
- **When cropping an image of a 3-D artwork**, don't crop right to the object. Leave some space visible around the object.
- Aside from backgrounds mentioned in the handout **A Simple Guide to Photographing Your Artwork**, nothing should be visible in your submitted image except your artwork and any necessary fixtures to support or display the work, such as a stand for plates or plaques, or a mannequin for wearable art. The objective is to represent the artwork clearly and honestly with no distractions.

Editing and Adjusting Images on a PC

The Microsoft Photo Editor software that comes on any PC allows most needed edits like cropping or adjusting brightness and contrast. It does not offer the option to change image resolution, but there's instructions below for an online app that will do that. If you are unfamiliar with the options in Microsoft Photo Editor, make a few copies of the original image and play around with it in order to learn the possibilities. NOTE: for any of you who want to do all your editing and resizing in one program but don't want to purchase Photoshop, **Gimp** is free editing software that will do almost everything Photoshop does, and there are lots of **Gimp** photo editing tutorials on YouTube.

To Crop an Image on a PC

1. Always crop the image before doing any of the adjustments mentioned below.
2. Double click on the image file to open it in **Photo Editor**.
3. Click on **Edit and Create** in the toolbar.
4. Click on **Edit** in the drop-down menu.

5. Hover your cursor over the corner dots or the middle of the side lines and drag them inwards to define the area you wish to preserve. Don't crop right to the edge of the object. Leave some space around the object.
6. When satisfied with the defined area, click **Save a Copy** to open the folder the image came from.
7. Rename the image so that you don't replace the original, and click **Save**.

To Change the Image Size on a PC

1. Double-click on the image file to open it in Photo Editor.
2. Click **File** (or there may be an **Options** choice or a row of dots that you must click), and in the drop-down menu, click **Resize**.
3. In the **Resize Image** window, click **Define Custom Dimensions**.
4. In the new **Resize Image** window, enter the size in pixels that you wish in either **Width** or **Height**, whichever is the longest dimension of your image. Leave the **Maintain Aspect Ratio** box checked. The other dimension will change proportionally. Publication and print generally asks for images at 300 PPI resolution, and an image at that resolution that is 4" on the longest side will be about 1MB, appropriate for a small image in a print publication. For websites or social media, 72 PPI resolution is appropriate, and an image 16" on the longest side will be about 1 MB, which will look good on a large screen. In either case, adjust appropriately.
5. Click **Save Resized Copy** to open the same folder the image came from.
6. Rename the image file so that you don't replace the original, and click **Save**.

To Change the Image File Type/Format to JPEG on a PC

1. The most common image format for the applications mentioned above is the **JPEG**, but some situations may specify high-resolution **TIFF** or other formats. To change the image file type/format, double-click on the image file to open it in **Photo Editor**.
2. Click **File** (or there may be an **Options** choice or a row of dots that you must click), and in the drop-down menu, click **Save As**.
3. In the **Save As** window, click **Save as Type** and select the desired file type/format.
4. In the same window, you can change the file name and folder location if you wish.
5. Click **Save**.

To Change the Image Resolution on a PC

Microsoft Photo Editor does not allow you to change the resolution of your photos, but you can easily do it with a free online app.

1. Go to <https://convert.town/image-dpi>
2. Click the desired image resolution on the app.
3. Click the green **Choose Image** button. This will open File Explorer.
4. Double-click on the image file.
5. Give the program a minute or two to convert the image.
6. You'll find the converted image in your **Downloads** folder.

Editing and Adjusting Images on a Mac

All the simple editing and adjusting mentioned below can be done in **Preview**, the software that opens any image when you double-click on the file.

To Crop an Image in Preview on a Mac

1. Always crop the image before doing any of the other adjustments mentioned below.
2. Double-click on the image to open it in **Preview**.
3. Click the **Show Markup Toolbar** button (the toolbox icon).
4. Click, hold, and drag on the image to define the area you wish to preserve.
5. Drag any of the blue dots to resize your crop, if needed.
6. In the menu at the top, click **Tools**, and in the drop-down menu, click **Crop**.
7. **Save** your cropped image with a new file name so that you don't replace the original.

To Adjust the Size and Resolution in Preview on a Mac:

1. Double-click on your image to open it in **Preview**.
2. Click **Tools** in the menu at the top and click **Adjust Size**.
3. Make sure the box for **Scale Proportionally** is checked in order to retain the aspect ratio (proportional relationship of height and width).
4. Enter the desired size for the longest side (either width or height) in the boxes provided. The other dimension will automatically adjust proportionally. Publication and print generally asks for images at 300 PPI resolution, and an image at that resolution that is 4" on the longest side will be about 1MB, appropriate for a small image in a print publication. For websites or social media, 72 PPI resolution is appropriate, and an image 16" on the longest side will be about 1 MB, which will look good on a large screen. In either case, adjust appropriately.
5. Make sure that **pixels/inch** is selected in the dropdown box for resolution and enter the desired resolution, generally **300 PPI** for print publication and **72 PPI** for websites and social media.
6. Hit **OK** when you finish if you want to replace the original file, or save as a file with a new name.

To Change the Image Type/Format to JPEG on a Mac:

1. Double-click on the image to open in **Preview**.
2. Once the image is open on your desktop, click **File** in the top toolbar, and click **Save As** or **Export**, depending on your version of **Preview**.
3. In the window that opens, click the box that says **Format** and select the file type/format you want.
4. In that window you can also change the file name and folder location.
5. When you've made the desired changes, click **Save**.