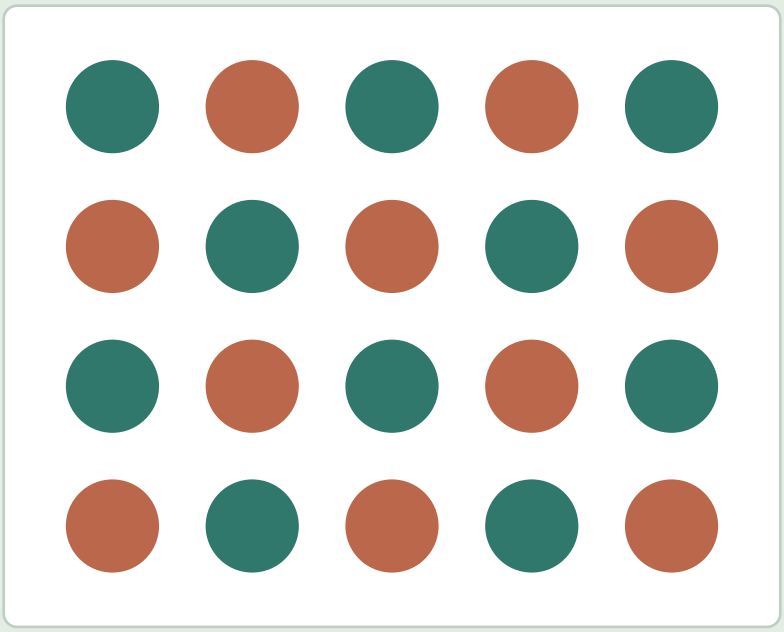
**STEADLEAF PRESS**
MAKE / PRINTING, STENCILS & COLOR

# Make a Two-Color Potato Stamp Print



**20 IMPRESSIONS / TWO COLOURS**

## 14 practical steps · Prepare · alternate · print

Original diagrams and two printable maker records

Illustrative plans — not physical test results

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# Before you start

Two contrasting colours and a few simple impressions can make a quiet geometric print. The characteristic soft, uneven edge of a potato print is part of its charm. This exercise uses two uncarved, flat, pre-cut potato faces, one for each colour, rather than sculpting a relief with a knife. A full-face print is a genuine potato stamp; it does not need an elaborate silhouette. Make a small paper print for display, not edible packaging or a food-contact object.

Materials: two firm raw potato pieces with flat faces about 25–30 mm across, prepared separately by an adult comfortable with ordinary kitchen preparation or bought pre-cut; 250 x 200 mm plain paper and matching offcuts; two contrasting water-based craft paints explicitly suitable for paper; separate brushes and non-food trays; absorbent paper, ruler, pencil and a protected work surface. If pre-cut potatoes are not available, choose a pre-made craft stamp rather than handling a knife. Keep paint, tools and used potatoes separate from food, children and pets.

# Plan the project

Use a landscape 250 x 200 mm sheet. Arrange five columns and four rows at 45 mm pitch. The centre x positions are 35, 80, 125, 170 and 215 mm; y positions are 32.5, 77.5, 122.5 and 167.5 mm from the upper-left corner. With a 30 mm maximum illustrative footprint, the edge clearances are at least 20 mm left/right and 17.5 mm top/bottom. Adjacent footprints have about 15 mm clear space along the axes. Adjust the grid for actual potato shape and paper size.

Row 1 alternates A B A B A; row 2 starts B and alternates B A B A B; repeat those two rows. Twenty impressions give ten A and ten B. Keep a separate potato and brush for each colour. Use the whole flat cut face; test the moisture, paint film and contact on scrap before transferring. Compare a thin film with one modest adjustment as allowed by the paint directions. Do not use a knife, sharp-edged cutter or carving tool at the printing station.

# Steps 01–02

## 1. Choose a knife-alternative stamp

Obtain two sound flat-faced potato pieces. Ask for ordinary kitchen preparation by a competent adult, or use bought pre-cut pieces. The printing exercise itself does not require cutting or carving. If no suitable piece is available, substitute a purpose-made craft stamp of similar size and record that substitution rather than trying to cut a slippery potato while painting. Never handle a blade near the printing materials.

## 2. Set out the two colour stations

Mark separate trays A and B and dedicate one brush to each. Read both paint labels for use, ventilation, cleanup and drying. Use paper-compatible water-based craft paint; do not add improvised thinners or mix incompatible products. Keep the kitchen area, food and eating utensils separate. Cover a level table and set up a flat drying area where the sheet will not be disturbed.

# Steps 03–04

## 3. Inspect the flat potato faces

Select firm pieces that sit comfortably in the hand and have a flat contact face. Exclude soft, spoiled or mouldy pieces. Trace the approximate contact outline on scrap without compressing the potato. If the footprint is wider than 30 mm, change the spacing or choose a smaller prepared piece. Do not attempt to reshape it with a knife at the worktable.

## 4. Blot surface moisture

Place each cut face on clean absorbent paper briefly, then lift. Blot visible moisture without rubbing away the surface or squeezing the piece. A wet face can dilute the paint and leave puddles. If it continues releasing water, exchange the piece or repeat blotting before a new trial. Keep each colour station dry and replace wet blotting sheets.

# Steps 05–06

## 5. Sketch the five-by-four grid

Draw the 250 x 200 mm outline and plot the five x and four y positions from the plan. Label alternating A and B positions, starting the next row with the opposite letter. Check your actual stamp outline against its neighbouring cells. The 45 mm pitch is a planning example, not a rule for every potato. Make sure all twenty footprints remain within the paper.

## 6. Trial colour A on matching scrap

Brush a thin, even layer of A onto the entire blotted face. Press it straight down onto an offcut with modest even contact, then lift vertically without sliding. Examine the edge and centre after the stated drying period. If the print is too wet or faint, change one factor such as blotting or film amount and repeat on a fresh area. Record what actually happened.

# Steps 07–08

## 7. Trial colour B separately

Repeat the same method using the separate B potato and brush. A different potato face can transfer differently. Compare its dry result with A without adding more paint to a wet impression. If colour B pools, use a thinner film of compatible paint on scrap. Decide whether the two colours and shapes provide enough contrast; record both settings.

## 8. Transfer the centre references

Mark the grid lightly with pencil dots or use a separate guide beneath translucent paper. For opaque paper, a ruler and tiny visible corner references are enough. Keep marks small and out of the painted area where possible. Place each stamp by its approximate face centre. Check orientation and all four rows before beginning; there is no need to outline every stamp.

# Steps 09–10

## 9. Print the first row

Start at (35,32.5) with A and alternate B, A, B, A through x = 215 mm. Recoat each potato as needed using its own brush. Lower it straight down and lift straight up. Move your arm around wet areas, not across them. If one print misses an edge, leave it as a deliberate variation rather than pressing onto wet paint again.

## 10. Print the remaining rows

Row 2 starts with B at y = 77.5 mm; row 3 starts A at y = 122.5 mm; row 4 starts B at y = 167.5 mm. Allow a row to dry if you would otherwise touch it. Replace a deteriorating potato with a similar prepared face and make another scrap impression. Keep track of each completed position.

# Steps 11–12

## 11. Review the repeat and colour balance

Compare the sheet to the plan: five columns, four rows, ten positions of each colour. Count missing or deliberately changed impressions separately. A handmade edge does not need to be identical across the grid. If a blank position is undesirable, add a single print only after the neighbouring paint is dry. Avoid overprinting a wet smudge.

## 12. Let the paper dry flat

Follow the paint maker’s drying conditions; keep the paper flat on a protected surface with ventilation. Do not put it under books while wet or use a heater to accelerate drying. If paint transfers or stays tacky, hold the sheet and consult the maker. Test folding or ordinary handling on an offcut only if needed for the intended decorative use.

# Steps 13–14

## 13. Discard used potato and clean tools

Treat painted potatoes as craft waste, not food or animal feed. Follow the paint label and local waste guidance, including whether plant material with paint may be composted; do not assume it can. Clean non-food tools as directed, wash hands, and wipe the workspace. The wet stamps are single-session materials; do not store them among food or paper prints.

## 14. Record the finished print

Complete both records with actual face dimensions, paint products, trial observations, counts, variation and dry status. Mark READY, CHANGE/REMAKE or HOLD. Store the dry print flat in a suitable folder, away from moisture and strong sunlight. Keep the pattern sketch if you want to repeat the layout later using newly prepared stamps. No colour permanence, food-contact or safety certification is implied.

# Fix, care and preserve

**Blurred edge.** Lift vertically, use a thinner film and avoid sliding.

**Watery print.** Blot the face and repeat on scrap; replace a persistently wet piece.

**Mixed colours.** Use separate trays and brushes; replace the contaminated stamp.

**Missing repeat.** Fill an empty position only when surrounding prints are dry.

**Tacky paint.** Follow the product drying instructions; hold the sheet.

# Source & evidence boundary

Original Steadleaf English prose, calculations, vector artwork, diagrams and maker records. The following sources provide factual context, not certification of this design. Follow actual product instructions and local disposal guidance.

**Ontario Potato Board, Potato Stamp**

https://www.ontariopotatoes.ca/potato-stamp

**Health Canada, Arts and crafts safety**

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-garden-safety/use-arts-crafts-materials-safely.html

**Canadian Conservation Institute, Caring for paper objects**

https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/paper-objects.html

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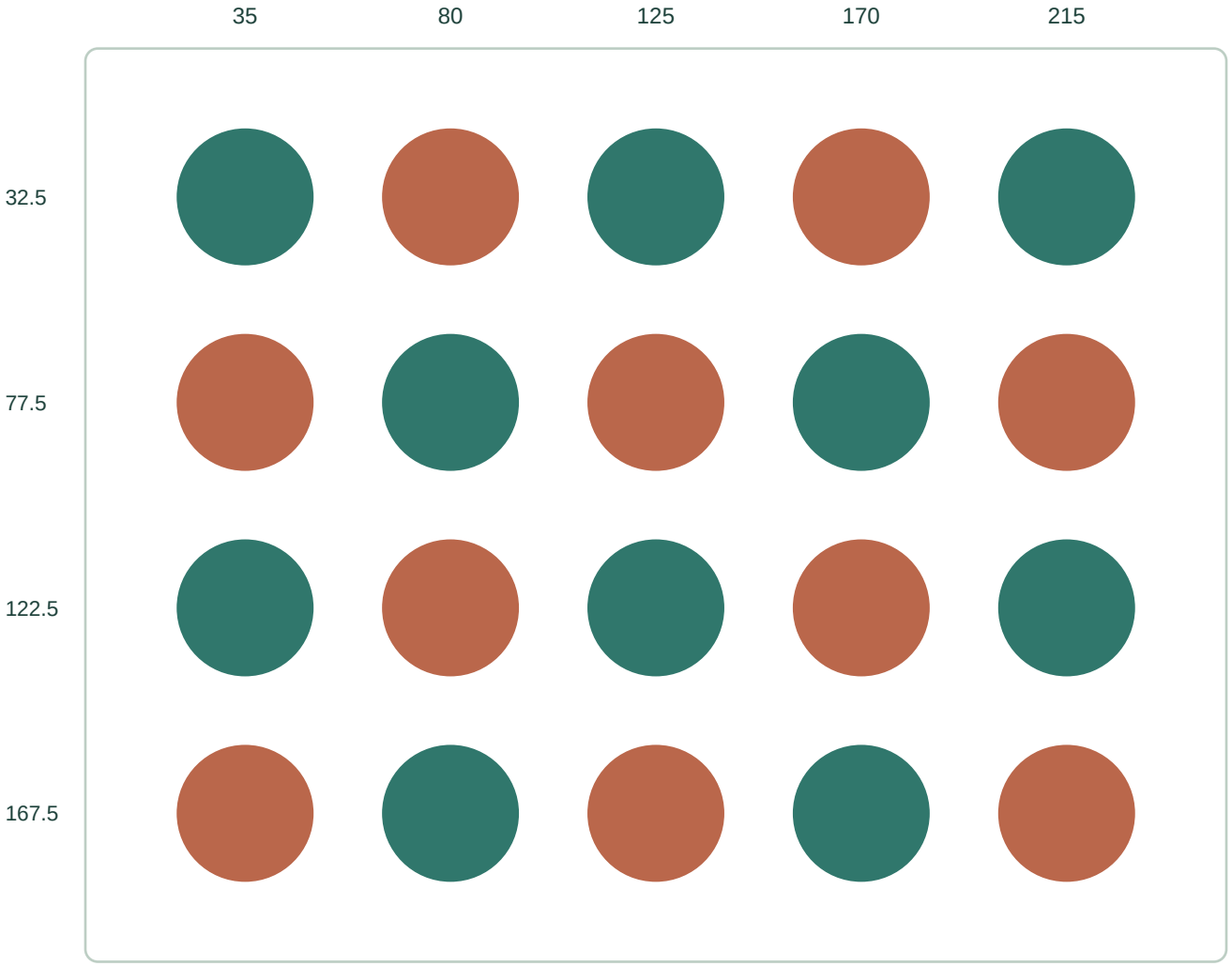
# Five-by-four alternating grid

250 x 200 mm landscape; five columns and four rows at 45 mm pitch. Centres x = 35, 80, 125, 170, 215; y = 32.5, 77.5, 122.5, 167.5 mm. Twenty positions, ten A and ten B.

**A / FIVE COLUMNS × FOUR ROWS**

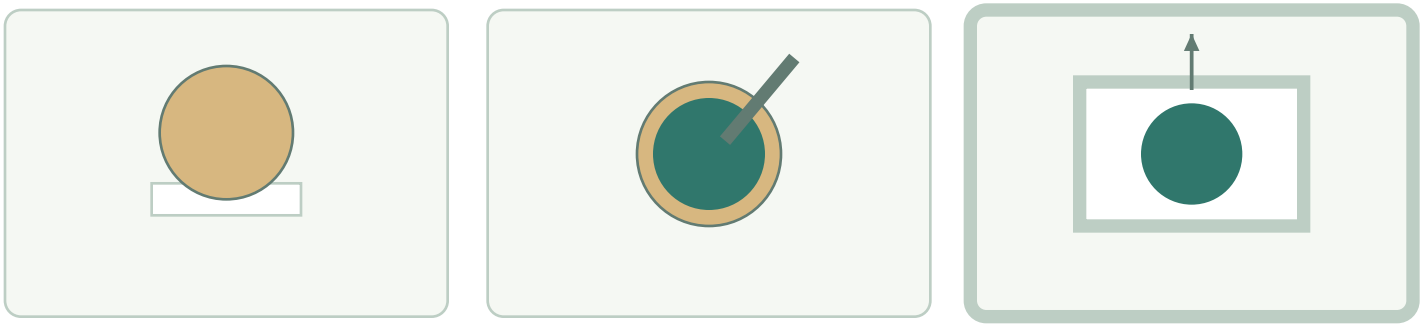



**250 × 200 mm · 45 mm pitch · 30 mm footprint**

# Flat-face stamp and transfer sequence

Use an uncarved prepared face, blot, coat, press and lift. Compare one thin film and one adjustment on real scrap; no physical trial is claimed.

**A / STAMP TRANSFER**



**BLOT** **COAT** **PRESS / LIFT**

Observe an actual scrap impression. Change only one factor if you repeat the trial. The illustrated sequence is not a physical test result.

# Potato and paint trial

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or performance certificate.

**Prepared potato A / face size / condition**

**Prepared potato B / face size / condition**

**Paper size / pitch / actual footprint**

**Paint A / label instructions**

**Paint B / label instructions**

**Trial A / actual result / adjustment**

**Trial B / actual result / adjustment**

**Decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD**

# Repeat and care

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or performance certificate.

**Rows / columns / A and B counts**

**Omitted or varied positions**

**Actual drying / date**

**Edge and coverage observations**

**Selected print / unresolved problem**

**Disposition: READY / CHANGE-REMAKE / HOLD**

**Painted potato disposal / cleanup**

**Storage / review date**