



# PORCELAIN BLUE TONER

Read these instructions,

# 5 Litre ProPack

**PORCELAIN BLUE** is a new tonal hue to add to the monochrome worker's armoury. The more logical bleach then tone sequence gives much more artistic control than conventional single-bath toners.

This kit extends the trend-setting concept of 'just adding water', introduced by Speedibrews in the 1970s. The chemicals are powders for indefinite storage, guaranteeing consistency. Mixing is quick and simple for immediate or later use. No unpredictable deterioration or leakage as occurs with the alternative ready-mixed chemistries.

Just dissolve in plain tap water, without measuring the volume too accurately. That's all there is to it.

**BLEACH** Carefully add water to the contents of the pack labelled "BLEACH" and pour the sludge into a mixing vessel, refill the pack with more tap water and add it to the mixing vessel. Refill the pack twice more and add those washings to the mixture. The pack is now clean enough for immediate disposal or recycling. Make the solution in the mixing vessel up to 5 litres and stir until completely dissolved.

The bleach is now ready for use.

**TONER** The toning solution is mixed in the same way from the pack labelled "TONER", taking the larger inner pack first. Some of the chemicals take longer to dissolve than the rest, so ensure all has gone into solution.

## TONING

Fresh prints can be used straight from the final wash after fixing. Dried prints must be soaked in several changes of water before starting. This is an important process to stop unevenness or blotches. Unlike single-solution blue toners, **PORCELAIN BLUE** reduces image density. Print with plenty of density, not very "high key" images.

**BLEACHING** Immerse the print quickly, completely and evenly in the bleach solution, with a CONTINUOUS swirling action. Most papers go a pale yellow to brownish hue in 2 to 3 minutes at 20°C. The colour change is not that obvious in the yellow liquid so always use the same temperature and time for consistency between prints. Some papers are more awkward and show little or no obvious colour change and may mean a switch to a different paper type. See the suggestions for other ideas.

Wash the print thoroughly, at least 5-10 minutes, before toning.

**TONING** Immerse the print completely and evenly with a CONTINUOUS swirling action until the toning process is completed. Most papers quickly change to a greenish hue, darkening to a **PORCELAIN BLUE** in 5 minutes, which lightens with longer immersion. Expect the more awkward papers to take longer than 10 minutes to change colour; continue as long as possible. The longer the toning period, the more subtle and stable the final hue.

**FINISHING** Wash with 2 to 3 drops per litre of any acid stop (acetic acid) in the wash water. This is important in hard and alkaline water regions. Do not judge the final hue until the print is completely dried as the water sheen can alter the visual hue quite considerably during drying.

**PORCELAIN BLUE** is more light stable than the more familiar darker Prussian blue but it is still not a good idea to exhibit in full sunlight for extended periods.

## CAPACITY

Each litre of freshly mixed BLEACH & TONER processes at least the equivalent of 12 low key and up to 20 high key A4 prints. For precise consistency, use freshly mixed toner for the first or more important prints. Rebottle whenever not in use to stop dust and atmospheric contamination. When bleaching and toning slows, simply take longer per print until the times become intolerably long. **PORCELAIN BLUE TONER** is exhausted for normal toning, but it is still usable for experiments or to "cool" prints.

## STORAGE

KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN.  
NEVER RE-USE A FOOD CONTAINER. Use proper poisons bottles from a pharmacy.

DO NOT MIX THE BLEACH AND TONING SOLUTIONS.  
LABEL EACH STORAGE BOTTLE IN A DISTINCTIVE WAY.

Unused stock solutions in well stoppered bottles remain active for many weeks. Always run a test strip before toning anything important with long-stored solutions. Store stock solutions in a cool place, preferably in the dark. Both solutions may deposit a sludge, but this does not need to be removed. Decant the clear solution only for the most precise work.

## TROUBLE-SHOOTING

Read these instructions, and the hints overleaf before starting and keep them in a safe place. Set aside plenty of time.

Most troubles arise from incomplete fixing, and the use of the wrong type of paper. Always practice with each paper type before attempting anything important. Sometimes a 'matt' effect is seen with a resin paper which some love and others hate. It can only be prevented by using a different type or make of paper. It is usually due to excessive print density. See the hints overleaf for more information.

## SUGGESTIONS

Bleaching then toning is a robust system just like conventional sepia, allowing almost limitless artistic variations. Until you have gained experience, it is recommended that you stick with the basic instructions described earlier before exploring these alternatives.

**FIXING** Prints should not be fixed after toning. However, an acid fixer removes bleached but untoned material, leaving a cleaner hue. Only try after s trying the recommended method, or you may remove everything.

**SHORTER BLEACHING TIMES** By far the most rewarding artistic alternative as this leaves even more silver in the shadow detail, enhancing the depth. The effect is similar to split toning, but the final hue is not always reproducible nor stable. When it works, the effects with some papers are very dramatic indeed.

**LONGER BLEACHING TIMES** Rather surprisingly, the hue is much more muted, and often unstable on storage unless fixed. Fully investigate each paper's response before going down this route. Many papers are very rewarding when they behave.

**SHORTER TONING TIMES** Some yellow/brown in the dark areas makes a greener hue. **PORCELAIN BLUE** is not a fast process which means that for most papers much more control is possible in finishing early without diluting the toner bath.

**SPLIT TONING** No toning at all gives a more or less stable yellow to brown hue seen at the end of bleaching. This can be used in that form or split toned. The effects are only limited by your imagination.

Each paper behaves differently. Start with a short sepia bath, and follow that with this **PORCELAIN BLUE TONER**. The other way round usually removes the blue in the alkaline sepia bath.

Treating the toned print to an alkaline wash can change the hue in a dramatic way, or remove it completely. You have been warned.

If you wish to explore this possibility, the safest bath to start with is a pinch of either borax or sodium bicarbonate per litre of wash water.

## CAUTION

All chemicals are toxic if abused. Never eat, drink or smoke whilst using chemicals and avoid contact with the eyes. You are particularly advised to wear rubber gloves. In the case of accidental eye contact or ingestion, immediate first aid is to give plenty of water, and seek immediate medical attention, giving the following information :

**BLEACH** Contains alkaline ferricyanide.

**TONER** Contains an acid iron(III) salt .

## DISPOSAL

The packs also anticipated recent Disposal & Recycling Legislation. It uses a minimum of materials for more efficient disposal or recycling.

A sense of proportion is needed in respecting the environment. This kit is not an industrial product and will only be used occasionally.

Flush down a sink with plenty of wash water. The biodegradable ingredients are less sewage load than the material you, as an individual, excrete and flush down the toilet each day !

Dispose of empty vessels responsibly.

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Made by Silverprint 12 Valentine Place, London, SE1 8QH

Tel +44 (0)20 7620 0844

[www.speedibrews.com](http://www.speedibrews.com)

## HINTS ON TONING

by Jim Cottrill, APAGB © 1995

Jim is a noted authority and print Judge and has the best information.

The key to success is in the initial print, long before we get to grips with toning. A lousy print is still lousy and toning should never be looked upon as a panacea to get you out of that hole.... Toning will always catch out bad printing techniques, shown up as blotches, uneven areas, unexpected lines, and, worst of all, stained whites. These effects can be traced back to poor printing techniques, the most common being under/over exposure/development (snatching) and/or working the fixer to death.

**GENERAL** Always read the instructions and follow them carefully. Wear rubber gloves to prevent skin irritation. Never mix chemicals from one kit with another. The tone obtained with any toning process is not always predictable. Not all toners work with all papers. Be sure to run a test before attempting to tone any important prints.

Prints may be toned straight from the final wash after processing. Older prints should be pre-soaked in plain water for a few minutes before toning.

Prints of unknown origin may benefit from first refixing in fresh fixer followed by thorough washing prior to toning.

**PAPERS** Most papers tone well, but best results are usually produced from fibre based papers. Tones vary considerably from one make of paper to another, indeed there can be variations between different batches of paper from the same manufacturer. Avoid the use of papers incorporating developing agents. Final tone quality is also dependent on the processing technique used for the original print. NOTE THE FOLLOWING :

**DEVELOPING** Always use fresh developer. Process the print at the specified temperature for the recommended time. Never under-develop the print or try to process more than the recommended amount of paper in the quantity of developer in use.

Avoid touching the print surface as far as possible to prevent any physical damage to the emulsion which may not show up until the print is toned.

**FIXING** Always use fresh fixer appropriate to the paper.

Fix at the specified temperature for the recommended time - extended fixing times can be a disadvantage. Do not allow prints to stack or overlap in the fixing bath as overlap lines can show in subsequent toning. Keep the prints moving during fixing. Never try to fix more than the recommended amount of paper in the quantity of fixer in use.

**WASHING** Thorough washing is essential. Any residual fixer left in a partially washed print can combine with the ferricyanide which is used in many bleaches for toners to produce Farmers Reducer. This will result in distorted tone and blotching. Always wash prints for the recommended times ensuring free movement of prints and regular changes of water. Extended washing can do no harm and can be beneficial.

**DRYING** Rapid drying of prints can produce uneven hardening of the emulsion particularly with contrasty prints. This will produce uneven or blotchy toning. If prints are dried flat, be sure to mop all water off the print surface with photographic blotting paper. Any puddles left could cause blotching when the print is toned.

**MOUNTING** Toned prints can be mounted by any of the usual means but more care is needed in the choice of suitable coloured mounting board.

**SUMMARY** Read all instructions and follow them carefully. Be consistent in your processing technique. Never use exhausted chemicals. If one make of paper does not yield the tone you want, try a different make. Always test new materials. **Have fun !**

So there you have it. Sound advice from the expert.

As a footnote, a curious phenomenon occurs sometimes. This manifests itself as blotches of a different hue, just like a foul disease, particularly when viewed at different angles. Expect this with some of the newer coated papers, when there can be a slight lifting of the waterproof coating, and variable access of the print developer. Light is reflected off the slightly different layers - just like oil on water effects, or Newton's rings.

If this occurs and you cannot switch paper types, the simplest cure is to tone to finality and allow the paper to soak until the gelatine has settled down, then squeegee flat and hope for the best when it dries. The merest dash of washing up liquid in the toning solutions is the final act of desperation.