

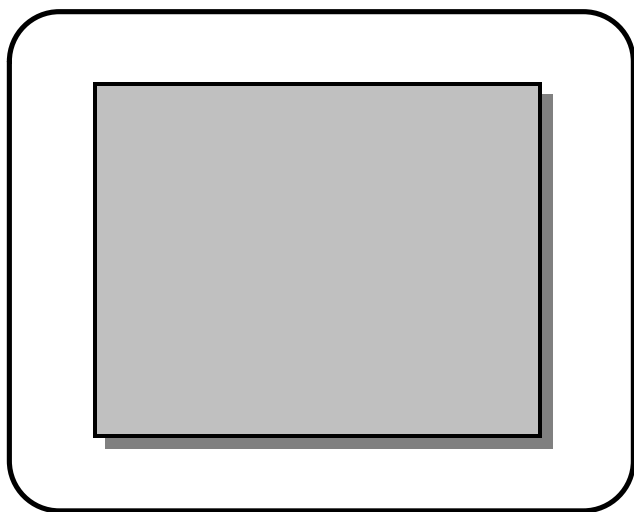
Why shoot a grey card?

The initial procedure the colorist must go through after loading your core onto the telecine is to adjust the system for the particular film stock you have used. This requires the calibrating and balancing of the Red, Green & Blue channels to reproduce the correct colors from your film. To do this we must adjust the gains of these three channels to produce a neutral (or lack of color) representation of some specified object. By rendering this one object as neutral grey we can be fairly certain all other objects will be rendered with correct color.

By photographing an 18% neutral grey card for 5-10 seconds under the same light source as the scene you are about to shoot you provide us with a wealth of technical information. First, assuming the exposure has been correctly set for the scene in question and that you have placed the card within this same illumination, we can now adjust the overall telecine light level. This is due to the fact that an 18% grey card will yield an IRE reading of 45 on an NTSC waveform monitor. Second, because the card is a neutral grey and, as such, is lacking in color we can also now balance the RGB channels to the point where there is a nulling of all chroma. Your grey card should now appear truly grey!

Finally, if you have also provided 5-10 seconds of a matte black card we can adjust the black level (pedestal) and also null out the chroma in the blacks keeping the darker parts of the picture free of all unintentional residual color. By completing this procedure before each major scene change you do three things. First, you save valuable telecine time because we can make these adjustments quickly. Second, you save wear and tear on your valuable film because we do not have to run your material back and forth looking for something we can reference. Third, you will be assured of getting the proper color correction applied to your film because of the precise accuracy of this process.

Kodak offers a set of three grey cards for about \$15 available from most any photo or camera shop. Ask for their Cat. No. E152-7795. The set includes two 8 x 10" and one 4 x 5" cards.



Modify one of the 8x10" grey cards by affixing a matte black finish card, purchased from your local art supply store, to 1/2 of the back (white) side of the grey card. After you have provided 5-10 seconds of the grey side, flip the card over and do another 5-10 seconds with the back side.

Make certain to photograph the cards after you have set your exposure for the scene you are about to shoot and make certain to place each side under the very same illumination as will be used for your scene.

Frame up the card so it fills at least 50% or more of the screen area even if you have to zoom in to do it! The more card we have in the scene the easier it is to make the adjustments.