

Washing and transferring between steps

In general, have an empty tray handy, and after every step, before the wash, pick up the film as a mass and hold it over the bucket you're taking it out of, so that most of the chemical drips back into its container, then put the film down into the tray. Shake the tray gently so that even more of the residual chemical drips into the tray, THEN put the film in the water to rinse. This saves a surprisingly large amount of chemistry from going down the drain, which you'll see if you turn on the light. Then, pour this remnant back into its container, so that it can be reused.

The wash should be a running wash, with water coming up from the bottom, at room temperature (unless you're after a special effect like reticulation)

Developer

With color developing, temperature is crucial. There are three layers of light sensitivity, one for each color, and if the temperature is off they will develop at different rates and not produce colors that are true. This might be your desire, of course, and it certainly begs playing with, but if you want it to turn out "right" adhere as strictly as you can to the prescribed temperature. Put the developer into a 12-16 quart stainless steel pot, and heat it up to 1°C above the correct temperature as the last step before you actually turn out the lights, then put it in the sink on top of an insulative substance, like styrofoam (good because it's also non-absorbant) or wood (bad because it will absorb any chemistry in the sink). Then turn out the lights and proceed.

Stop

After dripping back into the developer and draining into the tray, put the film in the stop bath, and make sure it's completely immersed. As soon as you can feel that all of the film is immersed, you can turn on the the white lights.

Bleach

The ferricyanide bleach works by converting the developed silver metal back into silver halide (bromide) so that the fixer can remove it and you are left, in the end, with just a dye image. If you skip this step -- "skip bleach" or "bleach by0ass" or "silver retention," either completely or partially, then the fixer won't remove either all or part of the developed silver image, and you'll be left with both a dye color image and a black and white image of the same thing. This results in higher density and more muted colors.

IMPORTANT: wash well after the bleach step, as if any gets carried over into the fix, you can get beautiful blue deposits of Prussian Blue -- which would be fine, except that it's opaque!

Fix

This fixer is NOT the same as the fixer one ordinarily uses for B+W. It is thiosulphate, like any other standard fixer, but in a non-acid, non-hardening solution. It's pH must be nearly neutral, around 6, and not 4.25 as the F-5 fixer for B+W is. Mix up a fixer just for color, and use it only for that. Otherwise, you'll get the dreaded blue stains described above.

Final Steps: