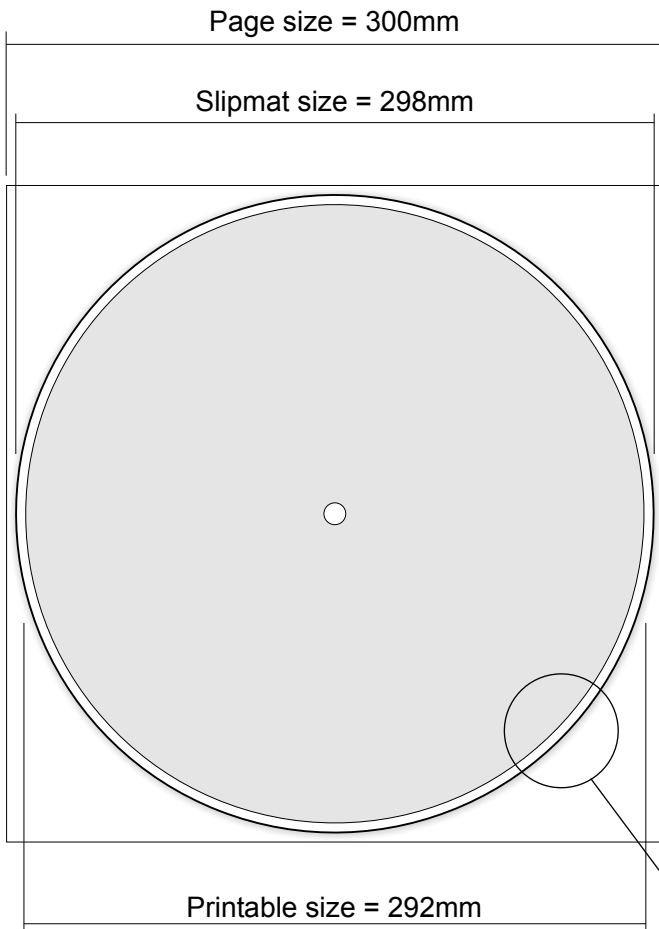




Custom Slipmat Design Guidelines

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Design Specifications - Page Setup

Create a new canvas in your drawing \ paint program with a page size of 300mm x 300mm with a resolution of 300 ppi (pixels per inch). This equates to a very large file some 3600 x 3600 pixels and a file size of approx 45Mb - you can reduce the memory overhead on your PC by lowering the resolution to 150 ppi - approx 1800 x 1800 pixels, giving a file size of approx 8Mb.

As we're creating an image to print on Slipmat fabric we can get away with lower resolutions than would be required for high definition photo printing onto paper media. Conversely, if your image is too small it will pixelate badly when we enlarge it to Slipmat size - We use a little magic when enlarging low resolution images but we can't quite work miracles! - 100k web images are not an ideal choice - they may look ok on your monitor at 96 dpi, but they will not work on your custom slipmats at 300 dpi resolution.

Set your colour space \ mode to RGB rather than the conventional CMYK print bureau requirements - this will produce a more vibrant and accurate colour match.

Slipmat Printable Area

Our slipmat blanks measure approx 298mm diameter, however the maximum printable area is 292mm.

It is possible to print edge to edge but we have very good reasons for not doing so. Our slipmats are printed using high temperature and pressure which causes the inks to "gas out" and penetrate deep into the slipmat fibres.

Overprinting the edge of the slipmats causes stray gasses to permeate unevenly down the outside of the cut edge and also onto the print equipment itself, thereby possibly contaminating the next print - the cut edge can look ugly too, with an uneven bleed.

The best way to finish of your design is to adopt one of the methods to the right. This gives a very clean finish to your artwork and looks really good when the slipmats are placed on your turntable platter - The small white border essentially frames your design and you can see this in our [Slipmat Gallery](#), or you can of course, devise your own border effect.

Solid Edge

Border Edge

Edge Fade

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Photographs and Scans

Many of our customers utilise photographs or scans in their slipmat designs and again image resolution plays a big part here. Depending upon how much of the photograph is to appear on the slipmat will dictate how large (resolution) the original image needs to be.

Full Area photographs

This generally means starting out with a high quality photograph (3600 pixels wide) or an image scan at 300 ppi.

A circle will be cropped from the rectangular photograph that contains the desired portion of the image. If the cropping circle removes important parts of the image you will need to consider some of the options shown in the next section, such as partial cropping or no cropping..

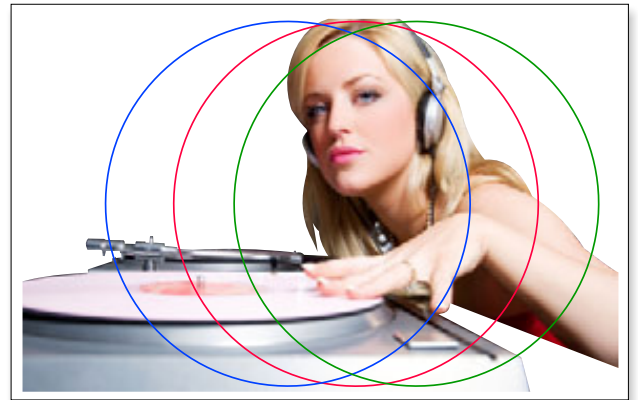
Now we have a nice image which we can use as the basis for some further effects or we could merely add some text to it.

Use the image as a background image in your art program and place separate layers above for effects and text.



Partially Cropped Hi-Res Images

If we decided that we absolutely had to have more of the image contained within our crop, then the following is a neat trick which makes for a better result than just dropping the entire rectangular photograph onto the slipmat background - what we'll do is partially crop it, once with a circular crop and then with a rectangular crop.



Full Crop - Requires Hi-Res Image

Using the above image we have to decide whether the "cropped" area reveals enough picture information to use on our slipmats. We are restricted vertically due to the height of the photograph, but we could move our crop left or right a little.

Lets opt for the central "red" crop as this gives a reasonably balanced section.



Partial Crop - First Stage

This time we can take a much larger crop area, capturing almost all of the image - just tweak the crop size to surround as much or as little of the image as you need.

This method also works well for Med-Res images as the final crop doesn't need much enlarging to fill the slipmat area.

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Partial Crop - Second Stage

Now we'll apply a second rectangular crop to the image to remove the white space at the top and bottom of the photograph. Important: centralise this crop vertically with the photograph and you'll get perfect symmetrical alignment when placed on the slipmat background.

Here's the finished crop below, scaled to the same size as the "full crop" in the previous section.



Partial Crop - Backgrounds

Now that we have our partially cropped image we need to consider a background to place it on, or perhaps not if you prefer a white background.

Important Note: Our slipmats are manufactured from a white base material and all coloured backgrounds are produced by printing - and **NOT** from the slipmat material itself.

Ok, for this example lets go with a black background to make the image really jump out. We can either make the background to fit the width of the image or just slightly larger for an additional framing effect.



Partial Crop

Full Crop

Partial Crop - Finishing Off

With a partial crop you conveniently finish up with a blank area above and below the cropped image, which is a useful area to enter some text, or maybe a company logo etc.

If you're not planning on adding any text then maybe add some additional graphic effects



Low Resolution Images

If you really can't find a suitable image in a Hi-Res format, maybe it's a web graphic or a mobile phone image, and you really, really want to use it in your slipmat design, you will have to forego the full size options.

In such instances you should merely crop the image to remove unwanted parts - enlarge it slightly if necessary (not too much or it will pixelate badly) and then play around with some interesting backgrounds to pad out the area.

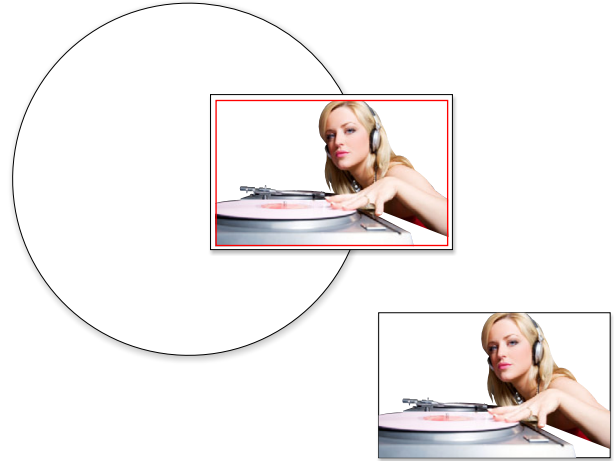
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Cropping Lo-Res Images

Check the image to the right - way too small for a full or partial crop. Artificially increasing its physical size will cause the image to pixelate badly. Note: All graphics programs have the ability to "resample" an image to a larger size - try it first as it may work ok with your image, but if not, you'll have to make a compromise.

In this example we'll crop the image slightly just to remove the white space.



Not the best design, is it!



5 minutes playtime later!



Free Background Templates

Visit our Free **Slipmat Templates** pages where you can download some pretty cool Hi-Res background image to use in your designs. Again, experimentation is the key - don't be frightened to mess around and see what happens.

Lo-Res Images - Backgrounds

With a Lo-Res image you'll need to pay attention to the backgrounds or text layers and make these stand out well, taking the focus off the image.

There are no rules as to what will work - just experiment a little - perhaps make multiple copies of the image at different sizes and layer them over each other.

Experimentation is the fun aspect of designing - you never know what you'll end up with and sometimes you may surprise yourself!



1 Free Template & Another 5 minutes hard graft!

A small selection from our Free Templates

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Adding Text to a Slipmat Image

When you order "**Personalized Slipmats**" from our store, you are basically purchasing a standard product, to which we will add your personal text - A DJ Name, Tag or Slogan for example. The font used for our stock designs is shown on the relevant product images.

The same applies for "**Custom Slipmats**" designs; If you cannot get along with graphic programs or wrapping text around curves, you can just supply the background image and we will add the text for you, free of charge.

Just enter your additional text requirements in the "further instructions" window on the product page.

Preferred File Formats

JPG - An ideal compromise between file size and quality. Use minimal compression settings for maximum image quality.

PNG Generally better than jpg but slightly larger file sizes

BMP Suited to full colour Hi-res photographic or complex line art. Very large file size.

TIF Similar to bmp - excellent quality but very large file size - supports alpha transparency.

GIF Only really suited to images containing a few solid colours - small file size.

File Naming

When naming your file, choose something meaningful, like "my-newlogo-slipmat" or anything that easily identifies your file.

Servers treat filenames differently than PC's so don't leave spaces in the filename or use odd characters - separate your filename with-spaces- or_underscores_like_this.

If you upload a file to our server which has the same filename as an existing file, then your new file will be automatically modified to prevent overwriting the original file.



File Formats and File Naming

Regardless of whatever software you use to create your design you will need to "export" or "save" your image in a supported graphics file format.

Maximum filesize for upload is 5Mb

See the table to the left for preferred formats. please do not create your designs in desktop publishing or presentation software, e.g, Powerpoint or Publisher.

Designs created in Vector Drawing packages such as **Illustrator** or **Coreldraw** will need to be exported in a bitmap format to prevent font mismatches, line stroke errors and gradient fill problems which can occur when rendering in different versions of software.

PDF Files are not a graphic file format - They are essentially a "wrapper" containing various files, which can include graphic files. Generally the image resolution is very low, unless the author specifies a particular resolution.

Image Content

We'll pretty much print anything on your slipmats, so don't be worried by what we'll think. Custom Slipmats are the "Slogan T Shirt" of the DJ world - We've seen it all before!

Please don't upload copyrighted material unless you are the original owner.

Slikmats Logo - Most of our stock designs include the Slikmats logo.

We **DO NOT** add our logo to your custom designs unless you specifically request so on the order form. If you would like to incorporate our logo within your design you can **Download it here**.

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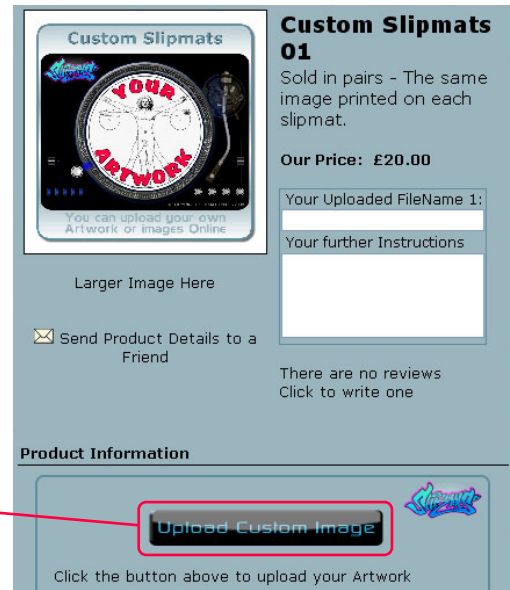
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Uploading your Slipmat Image

Browse to: **Custom Slipmats 01** - this is the custom slipmat product page if you are ordering a pair of slipmats, each with the same image.

If you require a pair of slipmats with a different image on each slipmat, browse to **Custom slipmats 02**.

The procedure is the same for either product - you just have to "upload" twice for product 02. Click on the large "Upload Custom Image" button - here



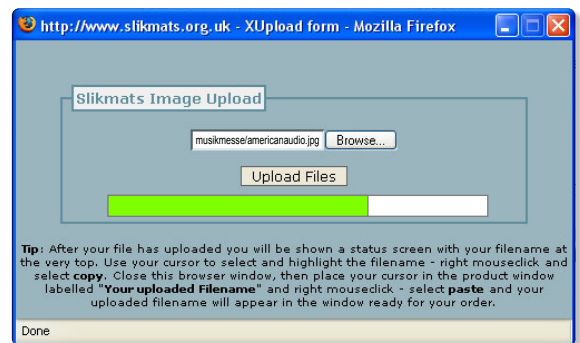
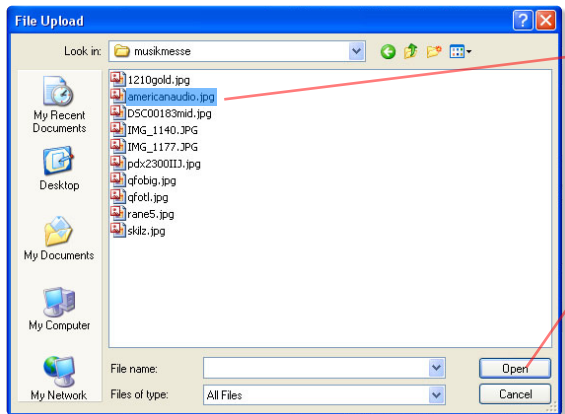
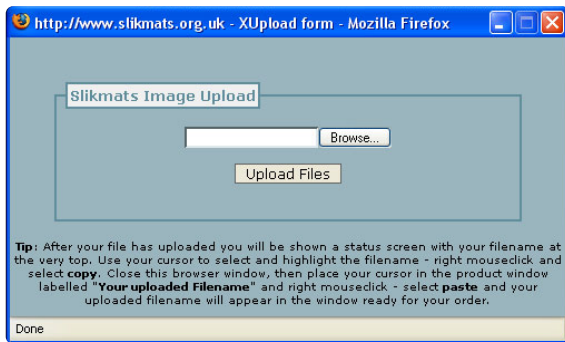
Locate your Slipmats file on your PC

Clicking on the "Upload" button launches a small pop up window, shown left.

Click "Browse" which launches an "explorer" style window, whereby you can browse your local drives to find your custom slipmat file.

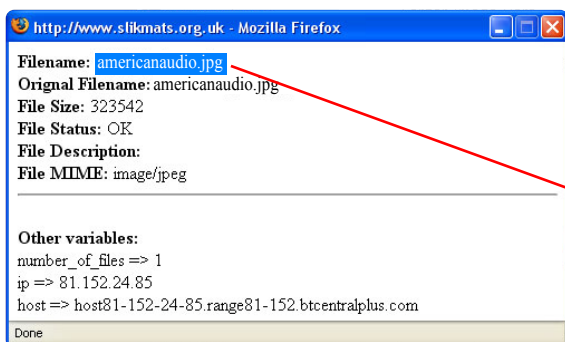
Select the desired image file and click "open" on the explorer window.

your filename and path will appear in the upload window - Click "Upload Files" to begin your image upload. A progress indicator will keep track of your upload so that you can see the status of the upload.



Successful Image Upload

When your file upload completes the window changes to a status report. Using your cursor, select and highlight the top file name. Right mouseclick and select copy. Close the upload window. You can now "paste" the filename into the the product window. you can type the filename manually if you prefer but this way avoids any "typo" errors".



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Additional Slipmat Information

Many of our customers supply their Custom Slipmats images in a fully finished state, requiring no further input or additions from ourselves other than to print the slipmat images as supplied.

Many other customers require a little help from us - perhaps just uploading a photograph or background image, and then requesting additional text, etc.

We have no problem with this providing you provide clear instructions in the "further instructions" window - shown here:

You can also follow this up with an email if desired, but please be sure to provide an order reference number.



The screenshot shows the 'Custom Slipmats' website interface. At the top, there's a header 'Custom Slipmats' and a sub-header 'You can upload your own Artwork or images Online'. Below this is a preview of a slipmat design featuring a Vitruvian Man figure with the text 'YOUR ARTWORK' overlaid. To the right of the preview is a section titled 'Custom Slipmats 01' with the text 'Sold in pairs - The same image printed on each slipmat.' and 'Our Price: £20.00'. Below this is a form for 'Your Uploaded FileName 1:' with the value 'americanaudio.jpg'. Underneath is a section for 'Your further Instructions' with a red box containing the text: 'Please add Slikmats logo at bottom of image and add: "DJ Funky Lady" around top in white lettering - thanks.' At the bottom of the interface, there is a checkbox for 'Send Product Details to a Friend'.

Slipmat Image Previews

Please note the upload facility does not provide a preview of your slipmat design

We provide additional artwork tweaking, adding text etc, for free. Unless you have requested precise instructions, our artists will use their best judgement in the type of font, colour, placement on the image etc, and they're pretty damned good at it!

Please don't request visuals or proofs for simple mods like this - and if you've uploaded completely finished artwork, then you definitely don't need a visual - your slipmat print will be exactly the same as the artwork supplied.

If you absolutely must have a proof before printing we will do this on confirmed and paid orders only.. i.e. you pay for your order initially and we will only print and ship your slipmats when you have approved the visual proof.



Slipmats Design Help

This guide only covers some basic ideas and principles in creating slipmat artwork. There are numerous web tutorials available for all the popular graphics software - I encourage you to "google" the various programs and sit through a few tutorials.

Be sure to fully browse our **Customer Gallery** - There are approx 1000 individual customer designs in there - more than enough for inspiration - most are private individuals - some are record labels and producers, but all have one thing in common - They love their Custom Slipmats - and so will You!

