Monitor Calibration

The first step in getting a good print is MONITOR CALIBRATION. There are buttons on your monitor. You can make your monitor lighter or darker. You can make it more or less contrast. The room light can be bright or can be dim. You might be wearing a red sweater or a gray sweater. All of these things will make your photograph LOOK different on the screen, yet have nothing to do with how the photograph will print. If you monitor is not correct, you will have a difficult time getting a good print.

In addition these variables, monitors also change as they get older. Monitors are the interpreter of your photograph before you print it. You must calibrate your monitor to have predictable color output. According to the Adobe help center:

“When you calibrate your monitor, you are adjusting it so it conforms to a known specification. Once your monitor is calibrated, the profiling utility lets you save a color profile. The profile describes the color behavior of the monitor—what colors can or cannot be displayed on the monitor and how the numeric color values in an image must be converted so that colors are displayed accurately.

To Calibrate:
1. Make sure your monitor has been turned on for at least a half hour. This gives it sufficient time to warm up and produce more consistent output.
2. Make sure your monitor is displaying thousands of colors or more. Ideally, make sure it is displaying millions of colors or 24-bit or higher.
3. Remove colorful background patterns on your monitor desktop and set your desktop to display neutral grays. Busy patterns or bright colors surrounding a document interfere with accurate color perception.
4. Do one of the following to calibrate and profile your monitor:
   - In Windows, use the Adobe Gamma utility, located in the Control Panel.
   - In Mac OS, use the Calibrate utility, located in the System Preferences/Displays/Color tab.
   - For the best results, use third-party software and measuring devices. In general, using a measuring device such as a colorimeter along with software can create more accurate profiles because an instrument can measure the colors displayed on a monitor far more accurately than the human eye.

Note: Monitor performance changes and declines over time; recalibrate and profile your monitor every month or so. If you find it difficult or impossible to calibrate your monitor to a standard, it may be too old and faded.

Most profiling software automatically assigns the new profile as the default monitor profile. For instructions on how to manually assign the monitor profile, refer to the Help system for your operating system. “

So start by calibrating your monitor. If you are serious about color matching, you should investigate an eye-one or monoco monitor profiler. These cost about $300 but could save you much money in photo paper, inks and hours of frustration. MAKING YOUR image look perfect on the screen does no good if the screen is not showing you accurate information!!