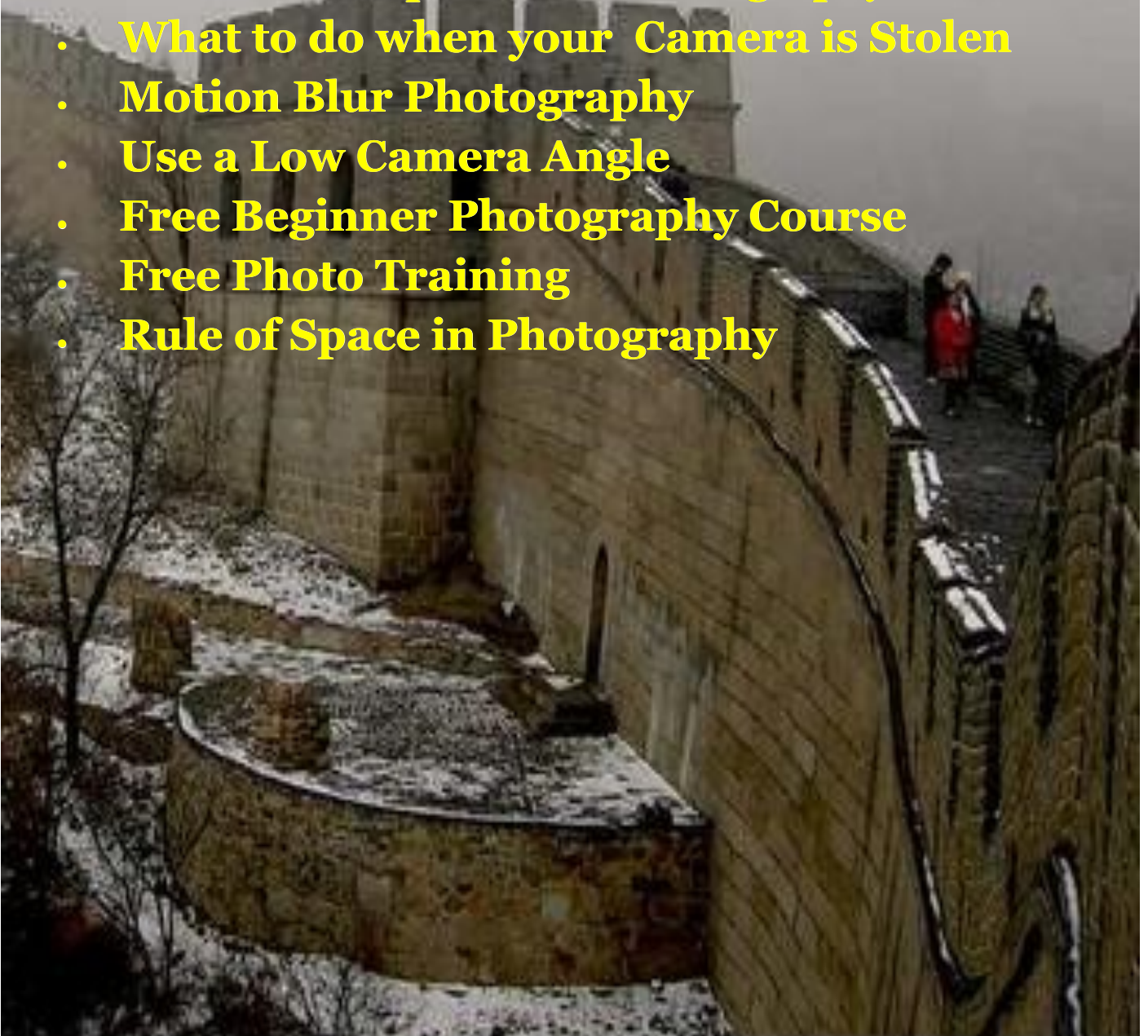


Dapto Camera Club Newsletter

Viewfinder.

October 2017

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Aperture

Size of the Aperture

The aperture of a camera works just like the iris of your eye. It controls the amount of light entering your camera; the bigger the hole, the greater amount of light, and as it gets smaller, less light comes through.

To change the size of the aperture, switch your camera to aperture priority mode. This is indicated by either Av (for Canon cameras), or simply A (for Nikon and Sony users). When you switch into this mode, it just means that your camera goes into semi-automatic. You select the size you want, and your clever camera does the rest.

Depending on your camera, as you turn the dial or push the left-right buttons, notice that the f-number changes as well. This f-number indicates the size of the aperture you'll be using. The bigger the f-number (e.g. f/16), the smaller the hole, the smaller the number is (e.g. f/1.8), the bigger the hole.

Note: The smallest and largest f-number can vary depending on the lens you have on your camera. It can go from f/1 all the way to f/22.

Take a bit of time to let this sink in as it works inversely on how we think about numbers and size, but with practice it will be second nature to you.

So what does this change of size do?



As it turns out, the size of this hole—aperture—also affects the amount of focus you can have with your pictures.

This amount of focus is called depth of field. When you have just the subject in focus and the background blurred out, you have a shallow depth of field. When both the subject and the background are in focus, it's called a deep depth of field.

Exercise: Controlling Depth of Field

The best way to learn a new concept is by trying it out first-hand. So grab your camera and put into practice what we have learned so far.

Tools needed:

- A camera, preferably a DSLR
- Your subject (a few pencils, for example)

Optional: a tripod, or mini-tripod

Setup

By default, your camera will look at the scene and try to determine where to focus. As we want control over where to focus on, we need to change some settings. We want to tell the camera where to focus, rather than let it choose for us.

Go to your camera settings, and change the AF point to the one in the center.

1. Set your camera to aperture priority mode, and dial to the smallest f-number you can get (e.g. f/2.8).
2. Focus on the pencil nearest to you by half-pressing the shutter button.
3. Once it's in focused, press down fully to take the picture.
4. Next, without shifting your camera around much—this is where the mini-tripod comes in

handy—increase the f-number to f/8. Focus on the same pencil and take the picture.

5. Lastly, dial to f/16 and take your picture.

Load all three images onto your computer.

Notice how in the second image, the pencil you've focused on is sharp, but the pencils behind it are blurred out. Look at the second and third image. Notice how the pencils behind the first one become sharper as we increase the f-number (f/4 -> f/8 -> f/16).



If you've followed our exercise, congratulations! You've just moved out of the automatic mode and started to gain more control over your photographs.

Summary

- Aperture controls the amount of light coming into your camera.
- The smaller the f-number, the bigger the "hole," the bigger the f-number, the smaller the hole.

Varying the size also controls the depth of field, which is the amount of focus we can

have in our pictures.

Taking better images starts with taking control over your camera. Learning what aperture is and how it can improve your photography is a good start. But nothing beats taking what you've learned and applying it.

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Using and Abusing Lens Flare



by David Peterson

Raise your hand if this has happened to you: you're out shooting some photos in the late afternoon. The light is beautiful (it's that magic hour), your subjects are particularly photogenic and you just know you're going to end up with some amazing pictures. Then, when you get home and review your shots, you realize that you failed to take one little factor into account: the sun.

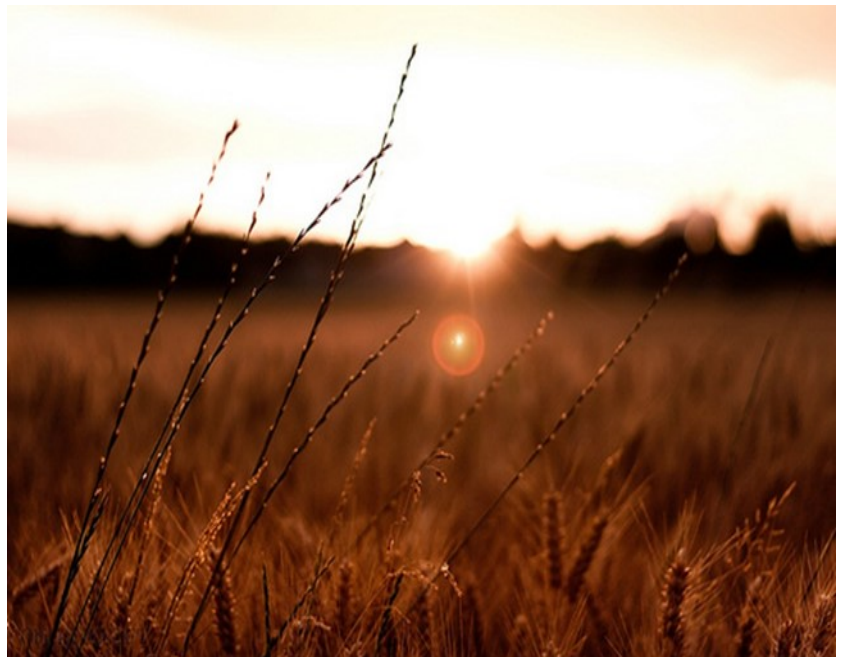
Yes, the sun. It makes the grass green and the tomatoes red. It gives us that beautiful, natural light that can never truly be

matched in a studio. And it creates lens flare.

Now if you're like a lot of photographers, you try to avoid lens flare, and when you have a senior moment like the one described above, you probably just delete the photos, grieve for them a little and then move on. But lens flare isn't always the disaster that your Photography 101 instructor might have told you it was. In fact some photographers regularly use lens flare as a creative tool. So instead of avoiding lens flare, how can you rein it in and make it a part of your creative process? Let's see how!

What Causes Lens Flare?

Lens flare happens when stray light reflects on some of the internal elements of your lens. This stray light can create light streaks, "sunbursts" or reduction in contrast and saturation. For most of the history of photography, lens flare has been a much maligned anomaly. Photographers learned all sorts of little tricks to avoid it or minimize it. Lens hoods were invented to give photographers a weapon to use against it. For some reason, it wasn't until the very recent past that someone noticed that under the right circumstances, lens flare is actually pretty cool.



How to add Lens Flare to your Images (on Purpose)!



Fortunately for those of us who want to use lens flare creatively, it's pretty easy to do. That's why so much attention has been devoted to how to avoid it, because it's one of those "problems" that crops up all by itself under fairly common circumstances. To get lens flare to show up in your images on purpose, try these tricks:

Remove your lens hood. Your lens hood is there because the people who designed your lens decided that you don't like lens flare and will attempt to avoid it under pretty much all circumstances. Don't blame them, they're tech guys, not creative geniuses. Happily, they were

kind enough to also design your lens hood to be removable. So unscrew your lens hood and put it in your bag.

Position your subject with his or her back to the sun. By positioning your subject in such a way, you're inviting that stray light to do its reflecty thing on those internal lens elements. Depending on how you meter the scene, this may actually turn your subject into a silhouette, which might also be pretty cool.

Adjust your subject's position and/or your camera angle. Depending on your creative goals, you may want an extreme effect on your image - washed out colors, low contrast and all. Or you may simply want a few of those polygonal subbursts strategically positioned in the corner of the frame, or perhaps you'd like some streaks to create a sort of heavenly effect. You can control this to some degree by moving your subject so that some or all of the light is behind him/her. Or you can simply adjust your own position so the sun is angled behind a tree or building.

Take more than one shot, even if your subject isn't moving. Like a fast-moving subject, lens flare can be unpredictable. Set up your subject and shoot multiple images as you make slight adjustments to your camera's angle. This will change the overall position and strength of the lens flare, which will give you multiple final images to choose from.



Switch to spot metering. If you don't want your subject to succumb to that often lovely but sometimes unwanted silhouetting effect, make sure you switch to spot metering mode and then take a reading off of your subject's face before you make the shot. Unless your subject is dead-centered in the frame (ahh rule of thirds violation!), you'll need to use exposure lock to lock in that meter reading before you recompose and make the exposure. And don't forget to bracket - this is a tricky lighting situation and your meter might not make the same decision you would have made if you were a metering system. So shoot one shot where your camera tells you to, one shot that's a stop overexposed and one shot that's a stop underexposed.

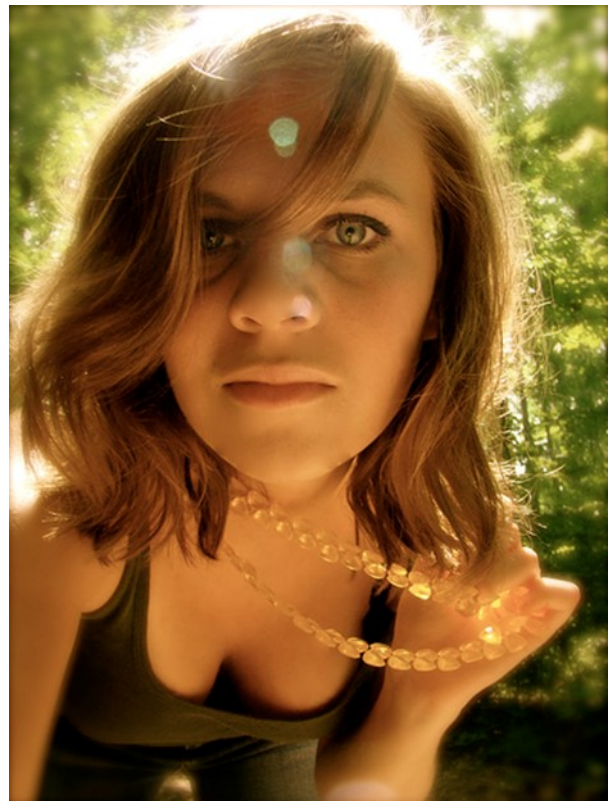


shot that's a stop underexposed.

Block the light so you can focus. Your autofocus system is probably going to have some trouble locking onto anything when there's all that stray light bouncing around, so you may need to position your hand in such a way that it blocks all that lovely lens-flare long enough for you to actually focus on your subject. When all else fails, turn off the autofocus system altogether and manually focus on your subject instead.

When is lens flare bad?

OK, as cool as lens flare can be under those right conditions, you and I both know that there are still cases where it will detract from your image rather than add to it. You don't, for example, want lens flare to cover your subject's face, especially his or her eye(s), and you don't want it leaving a strange and unattractive trail from his forehead to his chin. You don't want your subject to be so washed out as to be unrecognizable (although you might be aiming for that artistic effect). Obviously there's a lot of creative choice involved in your decision to include lens flare or exclude it, and ultimately it's going to come down to what looks right to you in the final image. That's why it's so important to take multiple shots whenever you think you might want to include lens flare as a part of your composition. You're probably not going to know exactly which camera angle or subject position works in any given situation until you actually see the final image on your LCD, or on your computer monitor. That's where creativity and guesswork come together to make that serendipitous final image.



<http://www.digital-photo-secrets.com/tip/3831/using-abusing-lens-flare/>

The First Step to a Quality Portrait



It would take a much longer article than this to tell you everything about how to pose your subject, because one of the hardest pictures to take is one where you have to pose the human body. You want the portrait to be as captivating and natural as possible. Please consider the following points that will help to lift your portraiture to a higher standard.

- The best portraits are the ones that not only capture the physical likeness of a person, but his or her **character**, as well. At least one element revealing the personality of the subject, or maybe his or her attitude, mannerisms, or other features will make a super portrait, as it will tell us something about them.
- It is the portrait photographer who has never met the subject before that is presented with the biggest challenge. He or she must work on

the proficiency of **studying people**, their mannerisms, expressions, reactions, body language, and anything else that can be presented in front of the camera.

- If you can develop a skill in **understanding human nature**, it would be a great asset to your photographic profession. Developing this skill mandates getting quickly involved in conversation with the subject, questioning their interests, perhaps evoking reactions or excitement, and really bringing out his or her natural personality.

This process results in a more relaxed presence in front of the camera for the subject, with a more at-ease and natural attitude. At this point, it is important to remember not to rush through the portrait session. Do your work, avoiding idle conversation that would take up your time and his or hers. Always **boost confidence** by telling the person that the session is going well.

Be confident in yourself and portray your confidence at all times during the session. Be relaxed but ready to photograph when the subject is ready. Remember that you are the person in control, and the subject needs to see you that way.

About the Author:

Tom Watson is the owner of indigitalphotography dot com, a website with tips, digital cameras, and resources.

How to Photograph Kids (who don't want to be photographed)

by David Peterson

We all know about moody teenagers, right? In fact it's almost a cliché—mom takes camera to event, mom points camera at moody teenager, moody teenager ducks behind another person or object in order to avoid being photographed. It's maddening. And if you are the parent of that reluctant photographic subject, even more so.

We all want to have pictures of our kids at various stages of life, from that adorable first day when a child isn't capable of ducking behind anything, to those important adult life milestones such as college graduation, marriage, and parenthood. And we don't want any important gaps in the photographic calendar because then we feel like our photographic history isn't complete.

So what do you do if it isn't just your moody teenager who doesn't want to be photographed? Not all kids love the camera, and it could be that your toddler is rejecting your efforts to capture those photographic memories. Fortunately, all is not lost. I've got some great strategies that should help you capture photos of even the most reluctant subject. Read on for my best tips.

Forget those formal sessions

Sometimes, when you dress your child up and take him to a picturesque location with the goal of capturing some adorable, professional quality images, you'll find that just the opposite happens. You end up with a whole bunch of images of him crying, turning away from the camera, or just acting reluctant. When you get home, you open up your photos and find that you don't have a single one that reminds you of those wonderful, professional quality images you've seen on Flickr or in photography magazines and books. So what happened? How come your photo session was such a failure?

Photographing reluctant toddlers

I'm sure it won't surprise you to hear that children even as young as toddlers can sense the pressure. Dressing up, driving to a particular location, watching Mom set up her tripod and fancy DSLR, watching Mom get frustrated because you're not doing exactly the thing she wants you to do—these things all put pressure on the child. In other words, your child, regardless of how old she is, knows something is up, and she doesn't like or necessarily understand why you have these very sudden, rigid expectations for her. She doesn't like knowing that your mood depends on her doing exactly the right thing, and because she's a toddler, she doesn't even know what that thing is that she's supposed to be doing.

Also remember that children at all stages of life are grasping for independence. A particularly reluctant subject may not be reluctant because she necessarily cares that you're taking her picture, she may be reluctant because she's being told what to do. Look at it this way—your child spent the first few months of her life learning simple control over her own body. When she heard a sound, for example, she learned that she could turn her head in a certain direction in order to see the source of that sound. Now that she's mastered that skill, she can look pretty much wherever she pleases, whenever she pleases—until now. Now, you're ordering her to only turn her head in the direction that you want her to turn her head—“Look at the camera,” or “Look at this toy.” That's an affront to her personal and new-found sense of independence. When she's suddenly being ordered to do all those little things that she is supposed to have autonomy over, well, that can be upsetting. So one very effective way to turn things around during your otherwise disastrous photo shoot is to make the child feel like she's the one with the ideas.

How do you do that? First of all, don't use phrases like “Look this way” or “Look at the camera.” Instead, let your child do whatever she would do naturally in that environment. You can bring a few toys along if you like, you can make sure the setting is full of other natural curiosities, but don't make it seem like the only reason you're there is to take pictures.

That means you're not going to get those wonderful posed shots, you're going to have to be patient and wait for the perfect moment to arrive. Your photos are probably going to be more on the candid end of the spectrum, but that's really okay. You can still get great, professional quality, candid photos. All you have to do is let go of the idea that you're going to get those perfectly posed shots, because you're not, and because you don't have to.

Before you even start taking pictures, give your child some time to acclimate to the surroundings. In other words just let him explore. You can bring your camera along and capture some of those discovery pictures, but it really is best to just hang back and let him lead the way. If you start taking pictures immediately, chances are he's going to be on to you. And then it may be more difficult to get photos of him as the session goes on.

Make sure the child is engaged. A bored child is not going to make for great photos, so bring props and make sure they are fun props. Let your child make decisions about what he's going to do with those props. And if you need him to look at the camera and smile, it generally works better if you do something that encourages him to look that way rather than ordering him to. For example, make a funny face, tell a stupid joke or wave something interesting, attractive, and most important, noise making. That's a guaranteed way to get your child to look right at the camera and smile, or at the very least look right at the camera with a "What are you doing you crazy person" expression on his face.

When older kids are reluctant

An older child may need different strategies, but the idea is basically the same. For example, you could tell jokes, have her talk about her favourite hobbies or school subjects, have her tell you stories about her friends—anything that gets her to smile naturally is going to help her shake off some of that reluctance.



You can also try using a ball—this is a great trick to get a child of any age to look at the camera. Of course, make sure it's a soft ball because you don't want an errant throw to end up knocking your camera to the ground, but generally speaking if you roll or toss a ball to a child and ask him to toss it back, he's going to look directly at the camera before doing so.

Reluctant teenagers

The reluctant teenagers are a different story altogether. They may have it set in their heads that they don't want you to take pictures of them at all, and that is a much more difficult hurdle to overcome. For a reluctant teenager, sometimes it works to just try having a rational conversation with him. I know, teenagers sometimes seem like the least rational creatures on the planet, but if you approach this from a perspective of letting him make some decisions, he may just take a few minutes to listen to you.

For example, you could promise that you won't follow him around with the camera all the time as you have been doing, but in exchange, he has to let you take a few photographs of him every month. Decide on some of the obvious days—Christmas and his birthday are two good examples, and then talk together about what some of the other occasions might be. When those occasions approach, remind him that you're going to take a few pictures of him and discuss when and where you'll take those pictures. Then keep your promise. Take the pictures, then put the camera away and leave him alone. Sometimes this will be enough to convince even the most reluctant teenager to let you snap a few photos. Make sure you tell him how important it is to you to have these images for the future, and remind him that when he is an adult he will want to look back on his teenage years, and it will be a shame if there are no photos chronicling the things he did when he was young.



Conclusion

Remember that the most important thing, no matter what the age of your subject is, is to make sure that you don't make him feel as if he's under a lot of pressure to perform. Children are under all kinds of pressures anyway—whether it's pressures at school, from their friends, or from you, their parents. Kids want to have autonomy and independence over some aspects of their lives, and sometimes that camera interferes with that sense of independence. So don't give up on those reluctant subjects, but recognize that you need to find some middle ground. Take the pressure off, and I think you'll be rewarded with some beautiful pictures of even the most reluctant subjects.

<http://www.digital-photo-secrets.com/tip/6349/photograph-reluctant-kids/>

Taking Colourful Photos In Your Garden

by David Peterson

Why travel to an exotic location for photography when you can take some of your best shots in your own backyard? Photography and gardening go together like two peas in a pod. It's a great way to show off your hard work all while perfecting your macro and flower photography skills. But for all the fun you'll be having, there are a few things that may surprise you about taking pictures in your garden. Here's what you can expect.



With so many colors in your own backyard, why would you ever need to go anywhere else?

First of all, when you think of gardening and photography, you almost immediately think “sunny day in the middle of summer or the beginning of spring.” After all, that’s when you’re most inclined to get out there and work in your garden. Interestingly, those days are actually the worst time to photograph your garden. The light is simply too harsh.

When you photograph a mountain, you want big shadows to give the photo a sense of drama. The shadows emphasize the ridges and make the mountain appear more.. well... mountainous.

Interestingly, the same can't be said of gardens and flowers. Shadows are enemy number one in that domain. They overpower the shot and destroy the delicate details in your subject.

The Garden Photography Rules



Here's the shocker. When doing garden photography, cloudy days are better than sunny days. I know what you're thinking. When is that ever the case? Well here's why. Cloudy days disperse the sun's light, making it more diffuse and less able to produce shadows. You get a softer kind of light that works wonders on flowers and other garden-sized things.

On an overcast day, these flowers actually appear a lot more detailed because there are virtually no shadows.

It might look grey outside, but down on the ground, your flowers are as colourful as ever. Clouds make zero difference so far as that is concerned. The key is to get the exposure correct. It's especially important to avoid letting in too much light thereby overexposing your flowers and making them too bright.

Your camera's automatic flower mode or macro mode can help, but I find it's always better to go with manual settings. If you want more colour, it's generally best to pick a faster shutter speed,

usually one or two stops faster than what you'd normally expect. The rest of your photo may appear darker, but the colour from your flowers will definitely pop.

How else can you change it up?

There are a variety of ways. There are so many that I could go on for days. But here are some of my favourites.

I like to take some of my taller flowers / plants, and turn them into gorgeous backlit silhouettes. Just get down on the ground and point your camera up towards the plants.

Try to align the sun with the plant in an interesting way. This particular shot makes a really cool effect when you combine it with dandelions blowing in the wind. The dandelion amplifies the sun's light, creating a kind of halo.

You might not always be able to get down low enough for this kind of shot. In that case, it's helpful to have a wide angle lens so you can get really really close to the flower you're going to shoot. You don't actually need to be behind the camera at all. Just zoom out, focus, and take the shot. So what if it isn't framed perfectly. That's what Photoshop Elements is for.

Before I forget, you really do need to use a fast shutter speed when photographing silhouettes of anything. I'm usually somewhere in the 1/250s to 1/500s range for this particular setup.

Bring your own rain



Don't you just love how the garden looks after a rain storm? You don't have to wait for the rain to make it happen. You can do it all with a spray mister. Just gently cover your flowers with a fine mist, allow it to settle, and snap away. This effect looks its best when you've got out your macro lens. You can see the little water droplets up close and personal.

If you're a bit sheepish, don't worry. There's nothing wrong with faking it when you're in your own backyard. Oftentimes, the best pictures aren't taken. They're made. <http://www.digital-photo-secrets.com/tip/1553/taking-colorful-photos-in-your-garden/>



Your Road to Better Photography by Udemey

This free course from Udemey contains 10 lectures and a total of 31 mins of video content. The teacher, Corey Reese, is a Celebrity Photographer & Cinematographer, and he'll be covering everything from shooting in natural light, to understanding aperture, and using shutter speed to create long exposure shots (among other topics).

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What To Do When Your Camera is Stolen

by David Peterson



I am not ashamed to say that this is something I have literal nightmares about. I've left my camera in my car, or in a hotel room, or horror-of-horrors, I left it hanging on the back of my chair at a restaurant. Some unscrupulous person found it there and decided to claim it for his own, or worse, he broke into my car or home and took my most beloved possession. I generally wake up from these dreams in a cold sweat, and sometimes I even go check on my camera to make sure that my dream wasn't based on any kind of reality.

We don't want to think about it and we like to believe that it won't happen to us, but the fact is that camera theft is big business. Cameras are big-ticket items, which makes them desirable to thieves, which means that we have to take steps to protect them. Here's how.

Preventative measures

I'm sure that you have heard the expression "prevention is the best medicine." These words of wisdom are not just for our own health and well-being, they can also be applied to the health and safety of the things we love. So no discussion of stolen cameras would be complete with-

out a little talk about prevention, even if it is stuff that really ought to be obvious.

First, make sure that you have insurance. If you're a professional, this usually means buying an insurance policy specifically for your gear. If you're a hobbyist, your gear should be covered under your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy. To make it official, ask your agent for a rider and list the model, serial number and receipts (if you have them) for each piece of gear you own. Don't worry if you don't have those receipts—you can still file a claim if it comes to it, it just means you'll have more hoops to jump through.

Remember that if the worst happens, you may need to file a police report—even if your insurance company doesn't require one, it will make



your claim easier.

If you're a pro you do need to individually insure your equipment, which is more expensive than simply adding it to your home insurance policy. But a pro insurance policy has added benefits—for example, if you drop your camera on someone's head you'll be covered if they decide to sue you for damages.

Now let's not forget that your gear is not the only thing at risk if your camera is stolen. Your camera's [memory card](#) may be even more valuable to you than the camera itself, especially if your primary subjects are your [children](#) or other loved ones. I would personally far rather lose even my nice DSLR than the photos that are kept on the memory card inside that DSLR. So one thing you can do to protect yourself right away is take the card out of your camera whenever you aren't using it. At home, store your cards separately from your camera gear, so if a thief does break into your home he won't take the cards along with the camera. And I know I don't have to stress to you the importance of [backing up](#). It's not enough to simply copy your files to an external hard drive—this will protect you in the event that your primary hard drive fails, but if someone breaks into your house I can almost guarantee they will take the hard drive along with your camera equipment. You can back up your files to DVDs and store them in your book shelf for some protection (a thief isn't likely to take a binder full of DVDs) but this requires diligence. Instead I recommend using a cloud service that will automatically back up your files for you, without any effort from you at all. It really is a small price to pay for the knowledge that your photos will be protected even if your hard drive disappears.



And my other tips are just common sense—hopefully you're already putting them into practice. When you're out with your gear, travel light if you can. If you must carry around extra lenses, make sure they're in a bag that doesn't scream "camera gear!" Wear your camera cross-body or keep it secure in a case that you also wear that way. Never hang it from the back of a chair and avoid leaving it unattended in your car whenever you can. If you must leave it in your car, make sure you conceal it (I like to throw a sweatshirt or a jacket over it so it's not obvious if someone decides to look through the window) and make doubly sure you lock up. Having an alarm for your car doesn't hurt.

And keep your gear secured inside your home, too. There's no reason why you have to make it easy or obvious for a thief who does succeed in getting

through your home's first defenses—so consider buying a safe to store your gear in, and keep your safe somewhere inconspicuous such as the back of a closet or inside a cabinet. Most thieves aren't going to spend a lot of time searching, they're going to grab the things they can see and leave while they have a chance. A safe is a tempting target but an impractical one—it's heavy and if the intruder does succeed in getting it out of the house, he might never be able to open it. It's much easier for him to just grab the flat screen TV and go.

Finally, it doesn't hurt to add an identifying mark to your camera—something that isn't obvious, such as an ink mark or (gasp!) a scratch. Then document that identifying mark with a photo and

Craigslist and eBay

Many thieves steal gear not because they want it for themselves, but because they want to sell it to someone else. If you lose a camera or other piece of photographic equipment you should check your local Craigslist immediately, and keep checking until several months have passed. Some thieves will post a sales listing right away, while others will wait knowing that their victim is going to be on the lookout for his stuff. And don't forget to check eBay, which is another favorite place to sell stolen merchandise. Look closely at the listing photos for that identifying mark I hope you added to your camera. Once you spot an ad or listing for your camera, I recommend soliciting help from local law enforcement or an online camera finding service—don't try to go this alone or the thief may suspect and disappear. And don't delay—remember you have just until the eBay auction is over or the thief finds a Craigslist buyer to act or it may be too late.

Pawn shops

Just because we live in a high-tech world doesn't mean that thieves no longer use low-tech routes to sell stolen goods. Don't discount your local pawn shop or a camera shop that sells used gear. It's best not to tell a broker that he has your stolen merchandise—instead tell him you're interested in buying and ask him to hold the merchandise for you. Then contact police and let them know you've located your stolen property. Remember that your serial number and identifying photographs will be important in this situation, but don't expect that you will simply be able to collect your gear and walk out. Some shop owners will be honest and work with you (especially when you get the police involved) but others may not be so accommodating—after all they're going to be out some money too if they have to give your gear back to you. Check the laws in your state or country—in some places you have to buy the merchandise back and then go through the courts or even after the thief for restitution (the law often requires anyone who does business with a pawn broker to give identifying information such as a thumbprint and driver's license number), and in other places the pawn broker is required to give your property back to you provided that you have proof of ownership.



Conclusion

Now I don't want to get your hopes up because although there are plenty of dumb thieves in this world, there are also smart ones—and it may be that your stuff is gone for good. That's why it's so important to make sure everything is insured, and to make sure that your photos are safely backed up and stored outside your home. It's never going to be possible to protect yourself 100%—even a well secured home is not completely invulnerable and even the most cautious photographer sometimes lets his guard down. So always take those preventative measures and hopefully you'll sleep secure in the knowledge that if the worst does happen, you'll be covered.

<http://www.digital-photo-secrets.com/tip/5790/what-to-do-camera-stolen/>

Motion Blur Photography

by David Peterson



Every photographer knows the anguish of a photo that's been messed up by motion blur. It happens to all of us - you're trying to shoot a soccer game at dusk, and as it gets darker your aperture gets wider and your shutter speed gets slower. Finally, you capture that trick shot your son has been practicing all season and, dang. Motion blur. Your soccer star's feet don't show clearly, and the background is a mess. The ball looks kind of cool, though.

Ah ha! That's the part you have to hang on to. The ball looks kind of cool. And motion blur photographs can be really cool, if you shoot them correctly, with purpose, and if you shoot a lot of them.

The luck of the blur

All photography has some aspect of luck. Even landscape photographers rely on luck to a certain degree - the luck of light, the luck of weather, the luck of not having some clueless tourist wander into the frame at exactly the wrong moment. But motion blur photography depends even more on luck, and that's why the first hint I'm going to give you is this one: **shoot a ton of photos**. And I mean a ton. Bring all your memory cards along and an extra battery, too, because depending on your subject and what your goals are, you may have to take a lot of mediocre shots before you finally nail one.

Keep in mind that unless you are going for a purely abstract image, you should aim to have at least one small part of the photo in focus. You may want to employ rear-curtain flash to help you

achieve this - the flash will freeze the subject at the end of the exposure, creating a blurry trail behind him or her (like the image above). Or you can allow the subject to blur out completely while the setting remains sharp (like below).



Equipment

You don't need a whole lot of special equipment to take great motion blur photos - just start with a good camera that has shutter priority mode. But what you do need in addition to that camera is a tripod, or failing that a nice, solid wall. Your camera needs to be stabilized, or the kind of motion blur you're going to capture is going to be the bad kind - your own motion blur, otherwise known as "camera shake".

Now, I'll admit to having seen some cool photos that actually feature camera shake. But they're really difficult to pull off, and this article is about motion blur from your subject. So we're not going to go to that other place.

Other helpful equipment includes a cable or remote release, which will also help prevent the aforementioned camera shake (though you can also use your camera's self-timer with good results), and a set of neutral density (ND) filters. Though not required, the ND filters will give you a lot more flexibility over your camera's settings and the time of day you can capture motion blur images.



Camera Settings

The most important camera setting for motion blur photography is, of course, your shutter speed. The speed at which the shutter opens and closes, exposing your camera's sensor to the light in the

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Use a Low Camera Angle for Landscape Photography

It seems as if everyone is trying to be a landscape photographer these days. With the advent of digital imaging and the corresponding ease in cranking out pictures, photography is every-



rywhere. Because of this, it's getting harder and harder to create landscape images that are different and not the same old stereotypical stuff that everyone else is shooting.

Photo by Mike Boening Photography; ISO 100, f/22.0.

Many photographers go to great lengths to put their own creative stamp on their work, using such things as camera filters or complex computer editing techniques to gain a unique style. These are all well and good, but it's often amazing how much difference there can be in a photograph by getting a different perspective with a lower camera angle.

Humans are very much creatures of habit. If we have a camera in our hands and we see a pleasing scene, we raise the camera to our eye, compose, and shoot. If we're using a tripod, we extend the legs to eye level and shoot the picture. Well it's time to break the old habits. The next time you're out doing landscape photography, try simply dropping to one knee in order to incorporate, and put more emphasis on, interesting foreground elements. If you're



using a tripod, try *not* extending the legs in order to keep the camera closer to the ground.

Photo by [Bill Richards](#); ISO 100, f/18.0, 1.6-second exposure.

You might be surprised at the difference this simple little step will make. Now that you're getting the idea, take it a step further and try some shots

lying flat on the ground. Now you're getting some perspectives that are different than the majority of the casual snapshot shooters out there. Things like rocks, flowers, logs, and even blades of grass are examples of objects that can be incorporated into the image to make it more interesting. Obviously the scene and the foreground elements will dictate how low to go. Experiment and have fun. That's the whole idea, isn't it?

As you incorporate more foreground elements into a scene by using this technique, depth of field, also known as depth of focus, will become an issue. It can be difficult to keep both nearby objects and the distant landscape in focus. Use as small an aperture as possible. This increases depth of field. You can try using a wider angle lens which also increases the appearance of a wider focus area.

If these aren't sufficient, try moving back a little from your foreground elements which will make it easier to keep them in focus. Utilize the depth of field preview button, if your camera has one, to see how much of your scene will be in focus. If there's any doubt, make sure that the closest objects are sharply focused. The human eye can often accept distant objects that are a little out of focus but blurry foreground elements will nearly always spoil the scene.



Photo by Steve Betts; ISO 100, f/14.0, 1/160-second exposure.

The point is, you don't need exotic gear, nor do you need to learn complex post-processing techniques to take digital landscape photographs that have a unique perspective. You just need to see a little differently, and using a low camera angle is one very

simple way to achieve this.

About the Author:

This article was written by photographer Dean Eppen (deaneppen dot com).

your shutter is going to have to be open for a pretty long time. Behind a cheetah, on the other hand, you will be able to get away with much faster shutter speeds.

The amount of blur you want to capture is also a factor in your choice of shutter speed. Long car light trails, for example, are typically captured at much longer shutter speeds. Slight movement such as a person strolling along a beach will require a shorter shutter speed.

I wish I could give you a magic formula for when to choose what shutter speed (although I can tell you what shutter speeds work in different situations). Instead I'm just going to throw out my favorite word: experiment. Set your camera to shutter priority, meter your scene and then play around with the aperture/shutter combinations that your camera gives you. Find out what works best with your subject and what gives you the coolest results. Delete the stuff you don't like, refine your method and then shoot some more. If you keep this up I can almost guarantee you're going to end up with some great images.

Watch out for overexposure

It's tricky to get motion blur shots in broad daylight, and if you're not careful you run the risk of overexposing your shots. Your camera doesn't need that slow shutter speed to make a good exposure during the day - it's your job to reduce the amount of light that reaches the sensor so that you can use those longer shutter speeds to get the shot you want.

One of the ways you can do this is with the help of a neutral density filter. If you aren't familiar with ND filters, they are very simple devices that block light, sometimes referred to as "sunglasses for your camera". They are available in different strengths from the very weak to the very dark and are rated by the number of stops of light that they block. A very dark ND filter will allow you to slow down your shutter speed as if you were shooting at night - this is how photographers capture those misty-looking images of waterfalls and seascapes.

In the absence of an ND filter, you can simply limit yourself to shooting in the very early mornings, the evenings or at night. Under these conditions, you'll be able to use a smaller aperture to cut out much of the available light, and then you'll be able to slow down your shutter speed to match. You may also need to adjust your ISO - the smaller the ISO number, the less light-sensitive your camera will be, and the slower the shutter speed you can choose.

Conclusion

There's definitely an art to capturing good motion blur photographs, so don't be disappointed if your first few batches fail to impress you the way you were hoping they would. Just make sure you ask yourself what went wrong and how you can improve the shot the next time around, and I'm pretty sure you won't fail to get some good quality images as time goes by. And next time, you'll be ready to capture a great motion blur photo at that soccer game instead of a bad accidental one.

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Rule of Space in Photography

If everybody needs space, so does the subject in your portraits. This is a rule in photography more commonly known as the rule of space. This rule states that if the subject is not looking directly to the camera, or looks out of the frame, there



should be enough space for the subject to look into. This technique creates intrigue in the minds of the viewers.

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