

Dapto Camera Club Magazine.

Viewfinder.



5 Tips for Taking Great Action Shots of Kids

By Drew Bittel

Jumping, running, swinging, hopping, sliding, and skipping can all be used to describe children on the go! Kids are constantly on the move, and I love capturing them in action as they busily explore and discover their world. However, it's frustrating when you try to get the perfect action shot and your images turn out blurry. It's an easy fix, though. Try these tips below to get sharp and focused shots of children in motion!



1. Raise your shutter speed. To get tack-sharp pictures, you need to freeze motion. And in order to freeze motion, you need to have a high enough shutter speed. If you are shooting in manual mode, be sure that your shutter speed is above 1/200. Anything below that is going to be blurry with much motion. If you are

Viewbug - <http://www.viewbug.com/>

ePHOTOzine - <http://www.ephotozine.com/>

Federation of Camera Clubs [NSW] - <http://www.photographynsw.org.au/>

Australian Photographic Society - <http://www.a-p-s.org.au/>

Gurushots - <https://gurushots.com/>

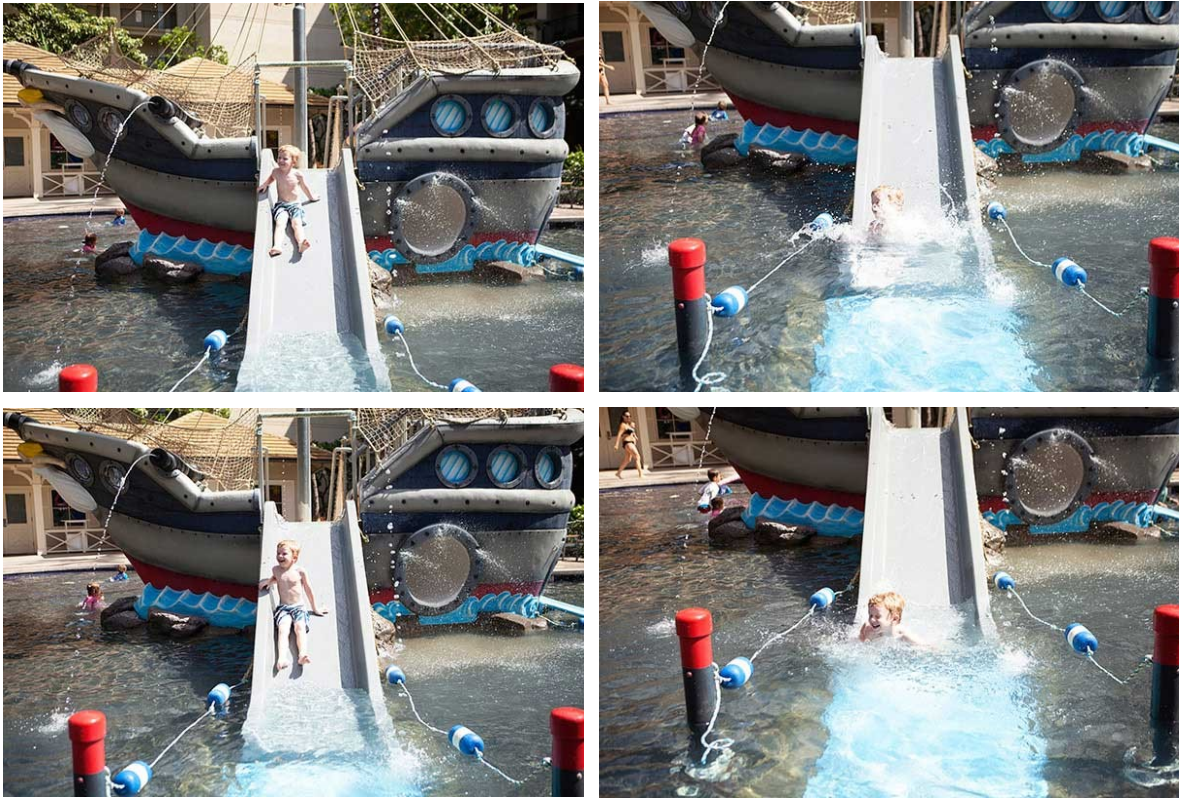
Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - <http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all>

Viewfinder cover photo taken by.

Debbie Henderson

shooting sports outdoors where you have a lot of available light, set your shutter speed at or above 1/1000. The higher the shutter speed, the better when shooting action.

2. Adjust your aperture. Your aperture will also play a role in getting sharp images. If you shoot with too shallow of a depth of field (a small f stop number), it will be hard to get your subject in focus. For action shots, try shooting with an aperture of 5.6 or smaller (larger f-stop number). That way you will have a broader depth of field, which will allow more of your image to be in focus. When you get used to shooting action shots then you can try shooting with a larger aperture to really isolate your subject from the background.



3. Turn on continuous shooting mode. When teaching my Mom*togs sessions, I always tell beginners to shoot in single shot mode when getting started in photography. That's so they really pay attention to each shot and don't just "spray and pray," taking multiple shots in a row and hoping one will turn out. However, for action shots I do recommend turning your camera to continuous shooting mode. When shooting in this mode, you can take multiple pictures at a faster rate, allowing you to capture an entire sequence of action. Remember, your camera will have to record all of those images. The more images you shoot, the longer it will take for your camera to record them and allow you to begin shooting again.

4. Use the center focal point. Whenever I'm taking action pictures, I always keep my center focal point on the face of my subject. If you focus past your subject, you will get an out of focus shot. When I can, I also like to focus and recompose to keep interest in my image and not always have my subject in the center of the frame. However, I still use the center focal point because it's typically the most accurate.

5. Switch to shutter priority mode. If you are uncomfortable shooting in manual mode, try shooting in shutter priority mode. In shutter priority mode, you set your shutter speed and your camera automatically adjusts your aperture. Set your camera to TV for Canon users or S for Nikon users. Next, set your shutter speed to 1/1000. If you don't have enough available light, try lowering your shutter speed or raising your ISO.

When you are comfortable shooting in shutter priority mode, then move onto shooting in manual where you can really have control of your images.

<https://www.nyip.edu/photo-articles/fun-stuff-for-photographers/five-tips-for-great-action-shots-of-kids>

5 Best Online Photography Courses for Beginners

In this day and age learning photography is easy because there are so many online resources to use. College students can access more than just custom term papers online. When we talk about photography, we do not mean being able to use your phone's camera. There is so much to photography than taking amazing photos for Instagram.

As an aspiring photographer, you don't have to go to school to be a professional. Many successful photographers are self-taught thanks to today's near-unbridled access to information. All you need is a strong internet connection and a functional computer.

The only thing you need to work about purchasing are photography essentials once you become a professional. The best part is camera phones today are so good that you don't have to purchase an actual camera when you're just starting out.

Whether you're interested in photography as a hobby or as a profession, ensure you learn all the basics. After all, so many people make money from their hobbies, and you too can do the same.

Here is a comprehensive round-up of the 5 best photography courses you should take as a beginner photographer.



1. Basics of Photography: The Complete Guide

This is a beginner photography course that sheds light on all basic concepts that guide photographers. It is a comprehensive tutorial that shows you how to use a digital camera. You get to learn about the automatic as well as the advanced settings of a digital camera.

There is also a section that talks about editing and post processing. As you know, taking photos is the easy part of photography. The heavy lifting comes after you've captured the images.

You also get access to additional resources for extended learning. The course even includes so that you have as easy time understanding the material.

2. Introduction to Photography and Related Media

At number two is yet another beginner course that focuses on the fundamentals and the technical aspects of

working with cameras. The course guides beginners on how to use the analog, as well as the digital SLR camera.

It is a semester-long course available to anyone via the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

3. Your Road to Better Photography

This Udemmy course offers you all the resources you need to learn how to shoot in natural light. The lessons focus on teaching beginners about the settings of a manual camera.

It comes with 301 minutes videos and offer comprehensive instructions. You get 10 lectures that will teach you everything you need to know about working with a manual camera. To maximize on the lessons, consider getting a DSLR camera or a mirrorless camera.

4. Lighting 101 by Strobist

As the name suggests, this course majors on lighting and lighting equipment. As a photographer, light plays a huge role in your work. You need to know how to position your lighting equipment based on the shot you want to achieve.

This course addresses topics in an understandable way to ensure beginners have an easy time following. When you understand all the basics of lighting, you drastically improve the quality of your shots.

5. Commercial Photography: Still and Moving Image

Lastly, we have a course that is designed for aspiring commercial photographers. If you want to develop your skills in new media, this course is for you. The course explores still and motion pictures for commercial use.

Conclusion

Photography is a diverse field with so much to learn. If you're a passionate beginner photographer, online resources will ensure you become a self-taught professional. Take your time to learn all there is about photography.

Make a quality black and white picture using Photoshop -

Black and white photography tip #1

Read my black and white photography tip #1 before pressing that button!

When you first dive into black and white photography it's tempting to photograph anything and everything.

The household pets? Your garden? Maybe even the kitchen sink! (that chrome tap just *has* to look good in black and white, right?). After all, the world suddenly looks different to what we're used to.

Hold on though! Black and white photography tip #1 - before you press the button, think about the scene you are about to photograph.

The most important tip on this page is to think about the contrast in the scene before you take the photograph. Black and white photography suits some photographs better than others.

A little thought before you press that button can produce really good black and white photographs.

The duck test

Black and white photography tip #1: look for contrast!

Black and white photography needs a high contrast scene to start with. There should be a lot of difference between the light and dark parts of the photograph.

The example photographs here illustrate this a lot better than I can explain it.

First, the photos of the ducks (why I was photographing ducks in the first place I've long since forgotten!). The photograph itself is pretty lifeless in its contrast.

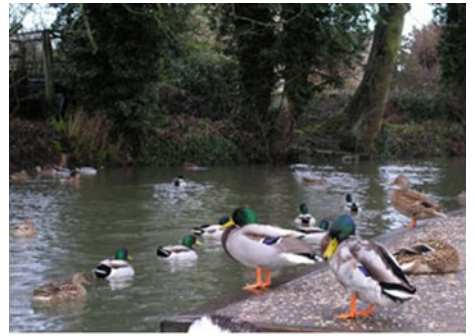
No really bright areas and no really dark areas. Just a lot of “in between” areas.

When we convert it into a black and white photograph we end up with a very average photo.

It's ok. But it doesn't really make a punchy image at all. It looks like what it is – a colour photograph that's had the colour removed.

The duck photograph definitely does not follow black and white photography tip #1! This is one photograph that should have been left in colour.

Or maybe it's one photograph that should have been deleted shortly after it was taken!



It's ruined!

A good example of this black and white photography tip is shown below.

The photograph is of a ruined cathedral in Lisbon. It was ruined in the 1755 earthquake that devastated much of Lisbon (the things you learn when you travel!). And if you go to Lisbon, try some Ginga – it's delicious!

The reason I've put it here is because it's a photograph that has good contrast. It nicely demonstrates black and white photography tip #1. The image has light and dark areas right next to each other, all over the photograph.

When we follow the tip explained above (looking for contrast) to the scene we can see strong areas of contrast here. Especially where the white columns and arches meet the sky, and between the white columns and the shadows.

When we convert it to a black and white photograph it looks great!



The black and white photograph stands on its own, as if it was always meant to be black and white. It follows my black and white photography tip #1.

The same cannot be said of the ducks!

The most important thing to remember concerning black and white photography then is to think about the contrast in the scene before pressing the camera's shutter button.

To help you to remember this tip – apply the “duck test”. Can you visualize the scene as a strong black and white photograph? Or will it always look like a colour photograph, but with the colour missing?

By the way (and this black and white photography tip is essential!), never, ever take your digital black and white photographs by using the camera's built in black and white function.

Emotional Impact of Colour in Landscape Photography

By Charlotte Gibb

What goes into creating an emotionally compelling colour landscape photograph? Certainly, subject matter is very important, as well as composition and light, but purposeful and intelligent use of colour in landscape photography can bring a deeper meaning to your images and create more emotional impact.



The cool tones of granite are contrasted with the golden tones of reflected light from above on the shallow creek bed below.

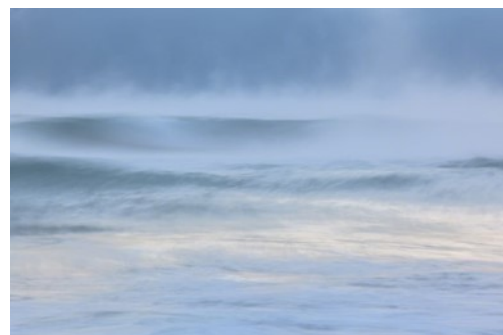
The great painters understood how to use colour to create a specific mood and evoke a desired emotional response. For example, Abstract Expressionists, such as Clyfford Still (1904-1980), relied entirely on colour to convey emotion in their paintings. But although painters create art with paint, we landscape photographers make art with light, and only with the light that is available to us in nature. So, how can you use the symbolic power of color to give your images more emotional impact?

First, we need to understand how we perceive specific colours, how the physical mechanics of color perception function, and how our cultural and gender biases come into play. There's a lot to this topic, so let's just start with the primary colours: blue, yellow, and red.

Blue

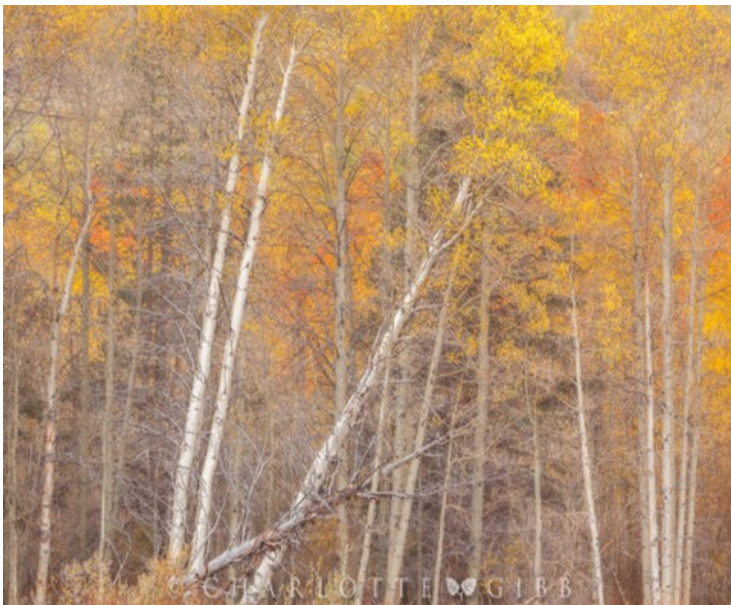
On this morning, the whole world seemed to be a soft shade of blue. I used horizontal lines of the waves to emphasize the peacefulness of the scene.

Blue is certainly a very common colour in landscape photography, as it is the colour of the sky and water. Blue has a calming effect on people because we tend to associate blue with trust, strength and purity, as in the ocean. Dark blue signifies dignity and intelligence,



while light blue evokes feelings of serenity and peace. It is a spiritual colour too, used in ancient art to represent the heavens. The coolest of all colours, it tends to recede because of how our eyes perceive it. It is also interesting to note that blue is the number one favourite colour in the world.

Yellow



The yellow-ness of this ancient grove of Aspen struck me as cheerful dancers, two of the trees locked in a dipping swoon.

The most luminous and visible in the entire spectrum, yellow is the one colour that catches our attention more than any other because our eyes process yellow first before other colours. As such, it can seem a secondary light source when it is present. It is a happy colour, full of energy, optimism, and imagination. In just about every culture, yellow represents sunshine and warmth, and in many religions, it is the colour that is most often associated with the divine. Men, interestingly, tend to regard yellow as a child-like colour.

Red

As if El Capitan in Yosemite is not dramatic enough, the clouds swirling around her summit lit up bright red at sunset, giving the scene a sense of excitement. A vertical orientation accentuates dramatic lines of the cliff and the clouds.

Red is the colour of action, danger, and adventure. It is associated with courage and bravery. Landscape photos with red in them demand attention. Our primal selves react to red because it is the colour of fire and blood, yet red is considered good luck in Asia and is the most popular colour in China. In fact, red is one of the top two favourite colours of all people, only after blue. Red is probably the most stimulating of colours, evoking intense, strong emotional responses. Some studies have even shown that red can elevate blood pressure, increase respiratory rates and raise confidence. Because of the way our eyes physically adapt to process red, we perceive red as advancing.



I made this photograph during “the blue hour” – that magical time of day between day and night when the little light that is still visible is a pleasing shade of blue.

Developing an eye for colour in landscape photography takes time and practice. Start by training yourself to recognize and see colour in natural scenes as design elements, noting what emotions colour is evoking in yourself.

Blue is a calming colour and is frequently used in landscape photography. Reflections, because they represent stability, contribute to the overall peacefulness



of this image. Placing key elements in the centre of the frame and placing the horizon in the middle creates a sense of balance, adding to the feeling of serenity.

Does a blue sky reflected in blue water give you a feeling of peace and tranquillity? What can you do



compositionally to accentuate the blue-ness and peacefulness of the scene?

In contrast to the image above, this red sunset against looming storm clouds create a sense of danger and excitement. By placing the horizon in the lower quadrant of the image, the dramatic clouds and red in the scene are emphasized.

Does red in a scene create emotional excitement? How can you place key colour elements in your composition to create focus and impact?



The Adjustment Sliders in Photomatix Pro

by [Curt Fleenor](#)

Photomatix is at the core most people's HDR processing but it comes with a bit of a learning curve. There are so many adjustment sliders available that wrapping your mind around them all can be somewhat intimidating. Adding to the confusion is their tendency to interact with each other in sometimes unpredictable ways.

Most of the time when I'm processing an image in Photomatix I will slowly move each slider to each of its extreme points just to see what effect it has until I find the best setting. I have read many posts by other photographers who also use this method but at some point you want to understand the intended effect of the sliders. Knowing what each one is supposed to do can make your processing experience faster and a little more pleasant.

Photomatix ships with several presets that can set you up with a good starting point but I think most people prefer the "Default" preset! This one sets everything back to the default settings so you can begin to apply your own feel to the image. It's important to reset to the defaults each time you start Photomatix because it remembers the settings that were used the last time it was open.

Photomatix has two processing methods: Tone Mapping and Exposure Fusion. Details Enhancer gives you a wide range of controls and the most flexibility when processing. Since I have only ever used this method those are the adjustment sliders that I'll be discussing in this article.

Primary Options

Strength

The Strength slider is the foundation that your Tone Mapped image will be built on. It sets the initial contrast of the image to help bring out detail. The higher value you assign to Strength the more detail you will see. For really gritty images, there's nothing wrong with pumping it up to 100% but other subjects don't need that much. For example, I typically don't use more than 50% on landscape images because they begin to look too surreal. Too much strength can add noise to smooth areas of your image, blue skies will begin to look grey and grainy if too much strength is applied.

Color Saturation

This one does exactly what it says, controls the global saturation of your image. You'll find that you use saturation in different ways depending on the image you're processing. Lowering the overall saturation in urbex images can help draw the viewer's eye to the details of the image and enhance the feelings of age and abandonment. Increasing the saturation in landscapes can help the natural colors pop and create a vivid image. Of course, you do want to be careful not to apply too much saturation. Colors that are already close to blowing out will begin to take on a psychedelic appearance and no body wants that.

Luminosity

Think of the Luminosity slider as global fill lighting, it increases the brightness in the darker areas of an image. As with all of the adjustments, the amount you apply depends on the type of image you are processing and the what result you are looking to achieve. An important thing to keep in mind here is that setting the Luminosity too far to the left or right combined with a high Strength slider can produce halos in areas with high tonal contrast.

Detail Contrast

Adjusting this slider changes the amount of contrast in the details of your image. It also brings down the brightness in the overall image. As you may have guessed this is where the sliders begin to work off of each other. You can use Detail Contrast to add some shadow into your image and pull back any extra Luminosity that you've added. You may also have to bump up your Luminosity to counteract the effect of Detail Contrast.

Lighting Adjustments

The overuse, and misuse, of this slider can be blamed for many of the super-surreal and haloed artifacts that are found in so many HDR images. Lighting Adjustments should be used sparingly and with care. The effect of this slider is completely different on every image. Pay attention to you image as you move the slider, you'll see that it actually applies light and shadow to different part of the image. It almost functions like a graduated neutral density filter.

There is a check box called Lighting Effects Mode below the Lighting Adjustments slider. When this is checked, five presets are made available: Normal, Normal+, Medium, Surreal and Surreal+. In previous versions, you had to use either the slider or the presets but with version 4.2 you can choose a preset then use the slider to adjust it's effect. Personally, I prefer to work completely with the slider and don't use the presets.

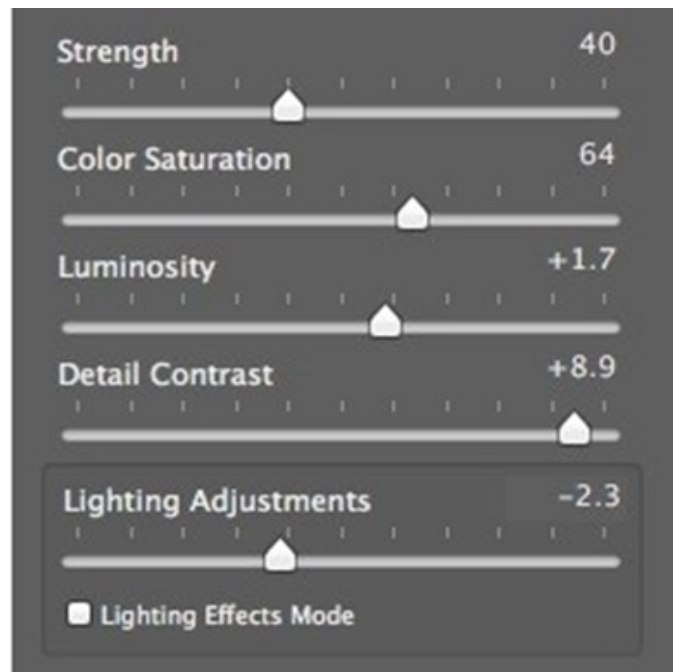
More Options

Smooth Highlights

Sometimes the process of merging different exposures can create harsh artifacts in areas of an image where the lighting quickly moves from very bright to dark. A bright window or a sunburst are good examples. The portion of the image surrounding the highlight can be rendered with a 'stair-stepped' transition instead of a smooth fall off from light to dark. Smooth Highlights can help correct these areas and return that clean transition.

White/Black Point

White and Black point adjustments can be made to increase or decrease the tonal range in an image. Use this slider with you histogram to keep the highlights and shadows from clipping.



Gamma

Gamma applies to the mid-tones and adjusts the global brightness/darkness of an image. I usually don't touch this one.

Temperature

Temperature is pretty self-explanatory. Use it to vary the color temperature of your image from cool to warm. I rarely make this adjustment inside Photomatix but it can help to return color to a clear sky that has lost its tint during processing.

Advanced Options

Micro-Smoothing

This is where you can begin to remove some of the noise that will inevitably show up in your image. Clear skies are the worst but a heavy dose of Micro-Smoothing will help smooth them out. Be careful though, this adjusts the fine details of the whole image and will smooth sharp, gritty details that you may want to keep. The zoom-loupe doesn't always render the effects of this slider so you really just have to wing it most of the time.

Saturation Highlights/Shadows

If you need to change the saturation levels in the highlight or shadow areas of your image separately these are the sliders for you.

Shadows Smoothness

Sometimes the adjustments we make during the tone mapping process can add unwanted artifacts or gradients in the shadows of an image. The Shadow Smoothness slider can help smooth out these problem areas but reducing contrast in the shadows.

Shadows Clipping

Sometimes you need or want to add a little more shadow or smoothing doesn't give you the results you were want. Shadow Clipping literally clips the shadow areas in your image. Use this slider with care because while shadow adds dimension to an image, too much clipping will render large areas to completely black.

You will find that not every slider needs to be used with every image and with a little practice, understanding how the adjustment sliders function in Photomatix will become second nature. Also keep in mind that while you can get acceptable results straight out of Photomatix it is just the starting point for processing your HDR images and more post-processing is often required.

My photographic journey has taken me from simple landscape photos into the world of High Dynamic Range (HDR) images and long exposures. This is an amazing field whose technology is expanding exponentially and I am willing to try it all!

<http://www.CurtFleenor.com>

How Long Do Micro SD Cards Last?

By Cole Humphus



SD cards are an integral component of digital photography, but it's difficult to know when it's time to re-

place one before you've already lost important files. We're sharing what the experts have to say about how long your micro SD card should last, which brands are reliable, and what the best practices for memory card use are according to photographers.

Memory Card Reliability

Whether you're a professional photographer, a hobbyist, or something in between, you undoubtedly use an SD card often to transfer images from your camera to your computer. Micro SD cards, or small-sized "secure digital" cards that use flash memory to transfer digital data, are the smallest widely-used memory cards on the market.

Micro SD cards were designed for use in cell phones but are now widely used in small electronic devices, tablets, and all different kinds of cameras.

SD cards retain downloaded files by writing and erasing cycles on the card's memory cells. An SD card's lifespan has everything to do with how frequently it is used. According to HowStuffWorks, memory cells in micro SD cards can undergo up to 10,000 write-and-erase cycles before wearing out.

Since 10,000 write cycles are the equivalent of writing and erasing the card's content daily for nearly 30 years, memory cards are generally long-lasting. Still, there are specific measures a photographer can take to extend their micro SD card's life.

Which Brands Are Best?

The best way to ensure that your micro SD is reliable is to purchase from a credible, SD Association-approved brand. The SD Association, founded in 2000 by leading SD card brands shortly after the SD card's invention, provides industry standards for SD card tech. Among SD Association-approved brands are SanDisk, Lexar, and Transcend.

If you're looking to purchase the best name-brand memory card on the market, choosing one that carries an SD Association endorsement is a smart idea.

Overall Lifespan of SD Cards

There is no definite lifespan of an SD card, despite their theoretical 30-year timeline. Based on the current flash memory technology, most SD cards are projected to last ten or more years. However, cards that get heavy use are prone to wear out quicker.

Though SD cards have extensive projected longevity, if you maintain a photography business or are by any means an avid photographer, it makes sense to replace your SD cards relatively frequently.

According to the SD Association

The SD Association states that the lifespan of your SD card depends on several factors, including how the card was manufactured. The Association's stance suggests that SD card memory technology is built to last 10+ years with "normal usage" and outlast the lifespan of multiple compatible devices, including cameras and computers.

According to Lexar

While Lexar does not overtly state SD card products' intended lifespans, the SD Association-approved memory company boasts that its products undergo a rigorous testing process for reliability. Further, Lexar offers a lifetime warranty on all of its micro SD products, suggesting that they are intended to last.

Photo by jasleen_kaur licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

According to SanDisk

Like Lexar, the SD Association founding member corporation SanDisk offers a lifetime warranty on most of its SD card products. Though it is difficult to determine the brand's exact lifespan, there is an extensive help forum on the SanDisk site for troubleshooting faulty cards, which suggests a moderate failure rate.

According to Photographers

Professional photographer QT Luong is a seasoned photographer with recent experience in SD card failure. His experiences reinforce the idea that memory cards can last years. In his article, "Lessons from Losing a Week of Photos to Memory Card Failure," he writes that he has been practicing professional photography since 2000 (around the time these types



of memory cards were invented) but didn't have a mishap with an SD card until 2018. Despite this, when he finally did lose essential files because of a card failure, his biggest regret was not backing up his material elsewhere, as the trouble he underwent attempting to recover his files far outweighed the time it would have taken him to back up his footage. Matthew Saville, a professional wedding photographer, adheres to the general principle that well-constructed micro SD cards are made to last years on end. He has never experienced a card failure at a crucial moment in his career. Despite this, he adheres to certain practices to prevent the loss of images, including replacing entirely functional SD cards — even cards with no sign of wear — every two to three years. Additionally, he swears by purchasing only high-quality, SD-Association approved memory cards.

Photo by Neil. Moralee licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Best Practices in Caring for SD Cards
According to the professionals, an SD card's lifespan is projected to last years, but it is by no means set in stone. Most photographers (including Luong, Saville, and Mike O'Leary at Fstoppers) have some helpful tips for avoiding SD card failure and file loss. Go with a reliable brand.

All three professional photographers we consulted warned against buying the bargain brand and suggested seeking out authorized sellers when shopping for well-known brands

such as Lexar and SanDisk, as some sellers list counterfeit cards.

Purchase multiple SD cards.

Owning multiple cards allows for a constant rotation and minimizes the writing and erasure frequency on memory cells. Additionally, suppose you buy just one card with a large capacity. In that case, a failure could result in a loss of all your work, while if you evenly distribute your work over multiple cards, you never have to risk losing your entire portfolio.

Back your photos up on a separate device.

It's always a safe choice to have your meaningful photos saved in multiple locations, and this proves to be the responsible route for avoiding the loss of personal files and clients' content according to professional photographers.

Handle your card with care.

SD cards — and especially micro SD cards — are fragile. Be sure to exercise caution when removing your card from your camera or computer, don't let it get wet or dirty, and don't expose it to extreme temperatures. Additionally, use caution in daily use when removing the card from computer and camera slots, and always make sure to properly eject your memory card from your computer after downloading files.

Micro SD Card FAQs

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about micro SD cards and the professionals' answers.

How Do I Know If My Micro SD Card is Bad?

The unfortunate thing about flash memory technology is that if your SD card is worn from writing and re-writing, you often won't be able to tell that there is anything wrong with your card at all until you are unable to access your files.

DataNumen compiled the most common signs you've got a faulty SD card, including if your files go missing, your devices can't recognize your card, or you receive an error message. Another factor to consider when assessing your SD card's performance is any physical damage or long-term wear-and-tear to your memory card.

Are Micro SD Cards Good for Long-Term Storage?

While it may be easier to store files solely on your micro SD card than to go to the trouble of saving your photos in multiple locations, it pays off to store your files on multiple devices. The storage space on an SD

card is not technically impacted by long periods without use, though most store-bought cards aren't ideal for archival purposes.

After all, a memory card's primary role is not to store files for long periods but to transfer them from your camera to larger, more reliable devices built for editing and dissemination purposes. Especially if your card is on the older side, backing up your images on a separate device and downloading files often are both safe options.

Do Micro SD Cards Wear Out?

Short answer: yes. After undergoing the excessive writing and erasing that accompanies heavy use, the flash memory systems micro SD cards operate with *can* wear out. It's always a good idea to back up your files and keep multiple cards on hand, especially if you often use your SD card.

How Often Do SD Cards Fail?

Most memory cards do not fail. According to photographer Mike O'Leary at Fstoppers, a majority of memory cards are entirely reliable. A poll conducted among professional photographers concluded that the more shots a photographer takes, the more likely they are to have experienced an SD card failure.

Therefore, facing some memory card failure in an entire *career* as a photographer is nearly inevitable. However, most photographers operate under this assumption and should always be prepared.

Key Takeaways

- SD cards are designed to last for 10 years or more.
 - Frequent users should replace their SD cards every few years.
- Professional photographers should have a substantial collection of high-quality backup SD cards on hand.

How long your micro SD card lasts depends on a handful of factors. But by using backups and replacing them every so often, you can keep snapping photos with confidence.

<https://www.colesclassroom.com/how-long-do-micro-sd-cards-last/>



When and Why to Use a Tripod

by Andrew Goodall

Digital cameras offer a level of technology that was unimagined only a few short years ago. The funny thing is, the old techniques are still as important as ever.

A tripod is still an essential piece of equipment for good photography. For beginners, the purchase of a tripod is usually a sign that one is ready to move beyond the snapshot stage and get more serious about photography. But if you have managed without a tripod in the past, perhaps you have wondered if you should take the plunge, or continue to get by without. So here is the first question you need to answer: "Do I need a tripod?"

Photo by Nelson L.; ISO 100, f/14.0, 1.6-second exposure.

Now for the second question: "Why do I need a tripod?"

A tripod keeps your camera completely still, so you can take photos that will not be blurred by any movement of the camera caused by an unsteady hand.

There are two reasons why you might use a slow shutter speed for your photos. Sometimes the light is very low, and you need a slow shutter speed to get a good exposure. Or you may choose to use a slow shutter speed to capture a special effect. In either situation, your tripod will ensure that the camera is perfectly still and the photo will not be blurred.

An additional benefit is that the tripod allows you to compose a photo carefully, without having to concen-



trate on keeping the camera still in your hand. It is much easier to check that the horizon is level, and all parts of the photo are as you want them before you press the button.

Photo by Marco Verch Professional Photographer and Speaker; ISO 800, f/5.0, 1/30-second exposure.

Let's assume for a moment that you have a tripod. Now for our third and final question: "When do I use my tripod?"

Some people will tell you you should never take a photo without a tripod below a certain shutter speed. The trouble is, different people recommend different speeds. Some photographers will tell you 1/125 of a second is the lower limit; other will recommend 1/60 or 1/30 second.

So who is telling you the truth? Actually, all of them. Because the truth is, it's not that simple.

When you use a large lens to magnify your subject, you also magnify the effect of any camera movement. So if you use a telephoto lens, a shaky camera will affect your photo much more than if you use a wide-angle lens. So it could be that a photo you could take hand-held with a wide angle lens would require a tripod with a telephoto lens.

How do you know, then, when to use a tripod? This is a guideline that was recently told to me, and it is a good one to keep in mind.

Let your choice of shutter speed match the size of the lens. For example, if you are using a 200mm lens, you should be able to take photos without a tripod at speeds of 1/200 second or faster. Once your speed drops below 1/200 second, be sure to use your tripod.



Photo by Giuseppe Milo; ISO 200, f/2.8, 30-second exposure.

For a smaller lens, you can go with a slower shutter speed to match. So if you are using a standard lens (around 50–60mm) you could set your cutoff point at 1/60 second. Faster, and you can take the photo hand-held; slower, and you should use a tripod.

With a wide angle lens of 28mm, your cutoff point would be 1/30 second.

There are some photographers who insist that all photos should be taken with a tripod, no matter what lens or shutter speed you use. This is simply not practical, but it does point to the simple fact that

the tripod is always steadier than the hand. If a photo is important to you, it is worth going to some extra effort and leaving nothing to chance. So if in doubt, use a tripod, even when the shutter speed suggests you can get by without it.

Oh, and one more thing. Never, ever, ever take a photo slower than 1/30 second without a tripod.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/photography-for-beginners-using-a-tripod/>



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