Dapto Camera Club Magazine.

Viewfinder.

May 2022

Club Meeting 3rd May

Dapto Camera Club Newsletter..
The teaching Club.

Stop Before You Shoot

By Everest Knobel

Probably, if you are reading this, you are a practicing photographer. But have you stopped to ask yourself *why* you take photographs? Certainly, there are some things in life you just accept – like the goodness of a hot fudge mocha sundae or an early June evening on your friend's back porch – you love them just because. But, as one who has had a bit of experience with the camera, I have a few bits of advice that might help you get to the heart of your interest and hopefully help you produce a more advanced body of work.

First thing is first: question, question, question your world – and your motivation to photograph. Why do you prefer the camera to the paintbrush? What is the main point of your work – to suggest a political commentary, create an abstraction, immortalize a fleeting moment? It is okay to have varied interests, but eventually you should see a dominant style emerge, especially if you consistently shoot.

Second: write as much as you can – about everything. Much like a diary helps sort out thoughts at the end of the day, a photography log or journal can sharpen your purpose and help build a tighter portfolio.

Third, and most importantly: you must practice. Take your camera everywhere. Oftentimes I find the most striking images on my walk to work. Once you begin questioning, writing, and consistently exercising (taking photographs), you are surely on the path to a stronger, more unified portfolio.

https://www.photography-schools.com/stopbeforeyoushootfeature.htm

Links of Interest:

Viewbug - http://www.viewbug.com/
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Federation of Camera Clubs [NSW] - http://www.photographynsw.org.au/
Australian Photographic Society - http://www.a-p-s.org.au/
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Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all

Viewfinder cover photo taken by.

KEITH SMITH

A Brief History of Photojournalism

The photograph has affected the way many cultures throughout the world understand and learn about their world. One of the main fields responsible for this paradigm is photojournalism. Photojournalism is the use of photographs in conjunction with the reporting of news in media such as print newspapers, magazines, television news and internet reporting. The incorporation of photographs into news reports is so ubiquitous that a story without photographs to a contemporary audience feels incomplete, as though they were only getting half the story. Consumers depend upon photojournalists to bring them the images that allow them to feel connected to far-away realities, and to be educated about those realities.

Photojournalism distinguishes itself from other forms of professional photography by its adherence to the principles of journalism: timeliness, accuracy, fair representation of the context of events and facts reported, and accountability to the public. While a wedding photographer may be documenting an actual event, his or her responsibility is to the client and the presentation that client would like to see. A journalist, on the other hand, cannot be held to the demands of the photographic subject, but rather he or she **must be concerned with producing accurate news for the public.**

In addition to accuracy, the photojournalist must be careful not to exclude important parts of the context of the event being photographed. A shot of an individual rioter breaking a store window can look like an isolated act of criminality if the photojournalist does not show it in the context of a larger social event whose significance goes beyond the individual act.

The emergence of photojournalism, along with its current trajectory, depends a great deal upon technological developments in the camera. As early as the Crimean War in the mid-19 th century, photographers were using the novel technology of the box camera to record images of British soldiers in the field. However, the widespread use of cameras as a way of reporting news didn't come until the advent of smaller, more portable cameras which used the enlargeable film negative to record images. The introduction of the 35 mm Leica camera in the 1930's made it possible for photographers to move with the action, taking shots of events as they are unfolding.

Newspapers quickly took advantage of this portability, and publications like *Life*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *The Daily Mirror* staked their reputation on fresh, timely images of matters of interest to their readers. In the first golden age of photojournalism, which lasted from the 1930's to the 50's, photographers such as **Robert Capa** and **Alfred Eistenstaedt** became household names for the news-consuming public. Capa would later go on to found, along with three other photojournalists, the Magnum agency, which supported photojournalists and negotiated to get them copyright of their images, as opposed to letting copyright revert to the publication.

In the late 1970's, the cultural importance of photojournalism began to be recognized by the art world, and photojournalists were given exhibitions and retrospectives at museums and galleries. Photojournalists like **Don McCullin** received wide attention in retrospectives across the country. Today, most major museums

will devote a showing or more a year to photojournalists and documentary photographers.
With the introduction of digital cameras, photojournalism has greatly augmented its capacity for reporting up-to-the-minute news from around the world. Not limited by exposures on a roll of film, digital chips can store up to a thousand images, and are less sensitive to airport x-rays and exposure to light. With a wireless internet connection, a photojournalist can send images from the field to his or her editor within seconds of their initial capture. As a medium, the digital photograph has opened up new venues for gathering news, from small, self-published newsletters, to the online blog. These new venues mean an increased market and an accelerated pace for the transmission of news through photographic images.
https://www.photography-schools.com/photojournalismhistory.htm

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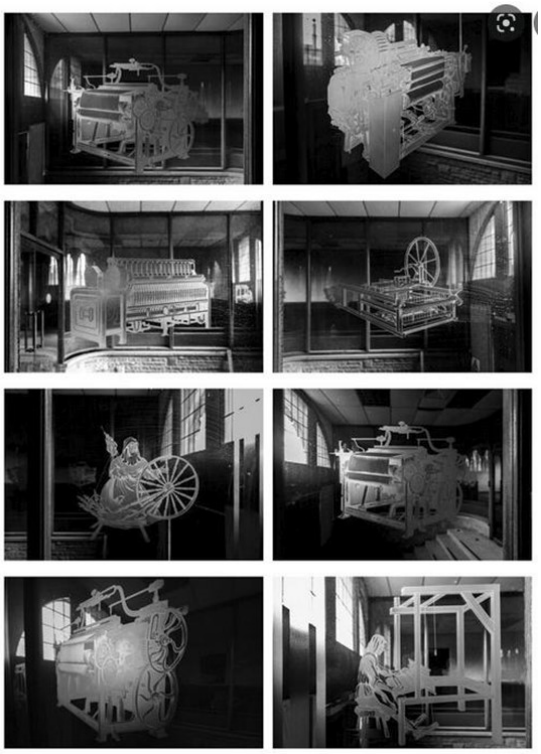
How to Create a Photo Essay: Step-by-Step Guide With Examples



What Is a Photo Essay?

photographic essay is a form of visual storytelling, a way to present a narrative through a series of images. A great photo essay is powerful, able to evoke emotion and understanding without using words. A photo essay delivers a story using a series of photographs and brings the viewer along your narrative journey.

4 Photo Essay Examples

There are plenty of interesting photo essay ideas that offer endless avenues to tell a powerful photo story. Some examples of areas you could cover are:

1. Day-in-the-life photo essay: These kinds of photo essays tell the story of a day in the life of a particular subject. They can showcase the career of a busy farmer or struggling artist, capture parents' daily chores and playtime with their children, or memorialize the routine of a star high school athlete. A day-in-the-life photo series can be emotionally evocative, giving viewers an intimate glimpse into the world of another human being.

Historic site photo essay: Taking pictures of historic landmarks offers a variety of different perspectives—the use of unique angles, depths, and lighting. The use of drones and reflections are also useful in your quest to find the ideal vantage point and display a variety of scenes of the same subject.

1. Behind-the-scenes photo essay: Behind-the-scenes photo essays are great ways to capture what goes into events from start to finish. With this type of photo story, you can see the working parts of a production and how it all moves together in harmony.

Local event photo essay: Local events like fundraisers, art shows, or festivals are great places to document a photography project. Candid photos of people working, performing, or taking in the sights can be compiled into a photo essay along with background objects to help paint a scene.

4 Tips for Creating a Photo Essay

Creative photography can be fun, sentimental, eye-opening, or gut-wrenching. It can expose a truth or instill a sense of hope. With so many possibilities to share a good photo essay, it's important to keep the following tips in mind:

1. Do your research. There may be many types of photo essay topics available, but that doesn't mean your specific idea hasn't already been tackled by a professional photographer. Look up the best photo essays that have already been done on your topic to make sure the narrative can be executed in a new and interesting way.
2. Follow your instincts. Take photos of everything. Overshooting can be helpful for photojournalism. You never know what you'll need, so the more coverage you have, the better.
3. Only use the best images. From your lead photo to the final photo, you're creating a visually vivid story. However, if you use too many images, you risk diluting the impact of your message. Only include the key photos necessary.

Be open-minded. Your project may evolve past its initial concept, and that's okay. Sometimes a photo essay evolves organically, and your job as a photojournalist is to extract the right narrative from the images you've captured—even if it wasn't the original idea.

How to Create a Photo Essay in 7 Steps

Before you get started, think about these questions: How are you going to make it all happen? What are the budgetary and schedule issues that you'll have to overcome to make the assignment work? Once you have those answers, you can start working on a photo essay of your own. Here's how to do it:

1. Tell a diverse, confident story. Know what you're shooting and why. It's important to figure out what your message is and shoot with a purpose.

Make sure you have a wide variety of images. Getting a multitude of shots during your photoshoot can ensure you've covered your bases. You may need a wider angle, a close-up detail shot, or different lighting—you may even decide to steer your photo essay in another direction altogether. With a large collection of images to choose from, photographing everything can give you a wide pool to choose from when compiling your photo series.

Be a ruthless photo editor. Your editing process should be blunt. If a shot is beautiful but won't work in your essay, don't use it. However, don't edit any images on the same day you shoot; it'll be easier to be objective if you let a little time pass between shooting and editing. Learn Jimmy Chin's photo editing tips here.

1. Choose your top 10 images. Once a few days have passed, pick the best 100 photos from your shoot to start with. Then, a day or more later, look at those 100 images and narrow them down to the top 25. Finally, narrow the 25 down to the top 10 images, making sure each photo serves your original concept for the story.
2. Ask for outside input. Get a trusted, visually sophisticated friend to help you: Give them the top 100 photos and a written description of the overall story, and let them select what they think are the top 10 photos. Compare how their choices align with the 10 photos you selected. Where did they differ? Ask your friend why they chose photos that were different than yours, making sure you listen to what they say without arguing about any of their choices; your job is to listen and understand what they saw in the images, and why they made the choices they did.
3. Make your final selections. Keeping in mind your discussion with your trusted friend, make your final selections for the 10 best images that tell your story.

Write captions. Your final 10 images can be captioned to help enhance your visual narrative, but it isn't necessary. If you feel like your images could use some text, add it. However, if you think the images can stand on their own, then you can present them as they are.

https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-create-a-photo-essay#4-photo-essay-examples

The Basic Digital Photography Secrets That You Should Know

The digital camera makes it so easy for beginners to just walk around taking loads of pictures of random subjects with no concern for what's actually in the photograph.

Well, here's some basic digital photography tips that might help you to slow down and think before you shoot.

We have all seen it before or maybe we are guilty of it ourselves. I recently went on a short break to Venice in Italy and for anyone that has not been there before I cannot begin to describe the volume of people that is on every street, no matter where you are in the centre of Venice. So, as you can imagine, the opportunity to grab yourself a really good shot is difficult in such a beautiful location.

Time and time again you can spot people getting caught up in the trap of 'point and shoot' photography. They just stop, point the camera, shoot and walk. Some of the people don't even stop, they just shoot the frame as they're walking.

At the end of the day, when they return home and upload the pictures onto their computer, all they have is lots of pictures. Actually what you're left with is lots of pictures that show you were in Venice but nothing worth showing your friends.

This leads me on to the main error of this 'point-and-shoot' technique. When taking a picture hold the camera firmly in both hands and point the camera lens at the subject of your photograph. This should cut out all the blurry or shaken pictures that you would normally have to delete from your camera.

Another problem is the constant use of the LCD when taking pictures. The LCD is only a few inches wide on most digital cameras and sometimes doesn't give a true representation of the shot. So maybe when shooting once off shots you could take the picture using the viewfinder. You will be surprised how this will slow you down and help you think before you take a picture.

Digital cameras come with many and various modes built into them. As beginners, we have all been guilty of setting the camera to the auto mode and just leaving it on auto for years. I would say that most people's early pictures have all been taken on auto mode.

The auto mode is a white balance mode which can sometimes leave your shots feeling a bit cool or empty. A small tip would be to take the same picture in a few different settings, view them on your computer and learn the level of differences between the modes.

The cloud setting on your digital camera will add more red and yellow colours to your pictures. This will give them slightly warmer and more colourful tones. The level of difference in modes will vary from camera to camera so get out there and practice using the different modes.

I hope these few short and basic digital photography tips will help you to cut down on the number of frames you have to delete at the end of each vacation. Make sure to practice with the different modes and slow down.

https://www.digital-photography-tips.net/the-basic-digital-photography-secrets-that-you-should-know.html

Secrets to Great Vacation Photography

Vacations are great for resting and relaxing, but many people also make their vacations a time to see and do special things.

A family trip might be all about sightseeing in the national parks, or a retired couple might be on a trip to scout out antiques or unique roadside attractions. This all means that any vacation is a good time to take photographs.

The thing about many vacation photographs is that they tend to be of the "standard" or "stock" variety. For example, the family standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon or the "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign. While such iconic images can make for a nice addition to the family album, it is a good idea to really aim for some truly great photographs of a vacation as well.

Now, this doesn't mean that you have to try to be the next Ansel Adams if you are going on a trip to Yosemite, but it does mean that you should think about the vacation as a way of making your own distinctive and high-quality photographic venture.

The first thing to do is forget the traditional poses. Instead of positioning the family on the edge of the Grand Canyon, take a different approach? Why not head down into the canyon and take an image of everyone waving down into it instead? Or why not try individual silhouette photographs of each person against the familiar backdrop of the canyon?

Stepping away from the traditional or ordinary usually results in great images. Of course many people get excellent vacation photographs by "downsizing".

This usually means looking at very specific details rather than an enormous scene. For instance, instead of taking a photograph of the entire beach, why not click some shots of the family's footprints in the sand, or a photograph of someone crouched down to collect shells along the shore?

There is that old saying about it being "all in the details" and this is where innovative and memorable vacation photographs can occur. Unique road signs, unusual groups of buildings, funny farm animals and even the flower beds in front of the rest stop are all perfect memories to gather during a vacation.

Remember, however, that the point of all of the photographs is to record your memories, which means YOU have to be a part of it as well. This is where your camera's automatic timer can come in handy and allow you to be part of every almost every photograph you take.

Long Exposure Photography: A Step-by-Step Guide

By: Francesco Gola

Are you struggling to capture beautiful long exposure photography? Do you want to learn the long exposure basics – and even take some pro-level images?

Long exposure techniques may seem difficult, but they're really not. With a little bit of know-how, you can start getting stunning results…

…and that's what this article is all about. I'm going to give you a simple, step-by-step process for long exposure images. By the time you're done, you'll see how easy it is to get satisfying shots on your first attempt, and you'll know *exactly* what to do the next time you're faced with a great opportunity.

Let's dive right in.

Step 1: Study the weather

Long exposure photography can rise and fall depending on the weather. If you look at the long exposure shots throughout this article, you'll notice that I make extensive use of clouds to create intense, eye-catching skies.

Therefore, partly cloudy skies are often best for long exposure photography, though you can also work with mostly cloudy or even moody, overcast horizons. Flat white skies (i.e., clouds with no texture) are best avoided – in general, the long exposure effect will be lost on these scenes, and you'll end up with a drab shot.

Most important of all, a day with a cloudless sky is a good day to have a drink with friends, not to make long exposures. No clouds means no drama, and as with flat overcast skies, a long exposure won't actually *do* much.

Step 2: Visit the location well in advance

In a long exposure photo, the world looks completely different from how you see it with your eyes. You must see a long exposure scene with your mind, imagining the look of moving clouds or the force of the sea. And this takes *time* – certainly longer than it takes to shoot a single, fast-shutter-speed composition.

To address this issue, and to ensure you return home with a strong shot or two, I recommend you scout the location ahead of time. Think about any moving objects you might encounter, such as clouds, water, or even birds. Try to determine how they'll move on the day of your long exposure photoshoot (you might even take some long exposure test shots).

Also, use a photo planning app to determine where the sun will be positioned during your final shot, then take steps to avoid putting it in the frame. Why? Well, the sun moves across the sky, so if you include it in your composition, you'll end up with a bright streak of light, which generally does *not* look great in an otherwise magical long exposure shot.

Step 3: Set up the right gear (including a tripod)

Long exposure photography isn't especially gear intensive. You need a camera, and while I recommend a DSLR or a mirrorless body, you can even get away with using a smartphone. You also *might* need a filter, depending on the lighting conditions – more on that later.

But you definitely, one-hundred percent *do* need a tripod.

A tripod will keep your camera steady over the course of a five-second, ten-second, or even ten-minute exposure. Without a tripod, you're bound to end up with a blurry shot, no matter the power of your cam-

era's in-body image stabilization.
So don't risk missing out. Invest in a quality tripod, one that can withstand significant wind (especially if you shoot near the coast), and it'll pay you back for years.
At this point in the long exposure shooting process, you'll want to mount your camera on the tripod, then set up any relevant accessories, such as your filter holder (if you plan to use drop-in filters), and your remote shutter release (if you plan to use one, though you can also get away with a remote shooting app on your phone or your camera's self-timer).
Note: While you'll need to install the filter holder on the front of your lens, wait to actually add the filter. This is very important!

Step 4: Compose the image and lock focus

Refine your composition, then set your focus.
In general, you'll want to keep the entire shot sharp from foreground to background, so focus at the hyperfocal distance (about a third of the way into the scene). If you're struggling to determine where to focus, try using a depth of field calculator such as PhotoPills.

If you are using manual focus, go ahead and set the lens's focus ring exactly where you want it. If you are using autofocus, position your active autofocus point over your main subject, half-press the shutter button to engage the focus, then toggle your lens from *Autofocus* to *Manual*. That way, the focus will remain locked, even if you accidentally press the shutter button again.

Step 5: Set the exposure

Now it's time to choose your essential camera settings. First, set your camera to Manual (M) mode or Aperture Priority (A/Av) mode and your ISO to your camera's lowest native value (probably ISO 50, ISO 100, or ISO 200).

Then set the aperture to an appropriate value for the scene (for landscapes, I suggest between f/8 and f/11), pick the shutter speed based on your camera's recommendation, and take a test shot.

Check your histogram to determine whether you've nailed the exposure (do not trust your display; it is too bright!). The test is complete when you get a correct exposure, so adjust your shutter speed or exposure compensation, then keep shooting until you get the result you want.
(Side note: It's true that there is no universally correct result on the histogram, but there are histograms that are universally incorrect; namely, histograms skewed completely to the right or left side, indicating overexposure or underexposure, respectively.)
Once a test shot is successful, write down the shutter speed you used for that image, then move on to the next step.

Step 6: Add your filter

Now add your neutral density filter. If you're shooting in near darkness and you don't need an ultra-long exposure (e.g., you're okay with an exposure in the five-second to thirty-second range), you can get away with shooting filterless, but for most long exposure shots, a filter is a good idea.
If your filter is very strong (10 stops, for example), you will not be able to see through the viewfinder or Live View. Do not worry, though – if you have followed the guide up to this point, you will notice that we have already made the composition and set the focus. You may be shooting blind, but all is prepared and your camera will see everything perfectly.

Step 7: Switch to Bulb mode

Bulb mode allows you to discard your camera's thirty-second shutter speed limit, so if your camera has this option, I recommend using it. If your camera doesn't have Bulb mode, or if your filter isn't especially dark and/or you're shooting in strong light, you may not need to make this change.

Step 8: Calculate the right shutter speed and take your long exposure shot

You're almost there; how are you holding up? In this step, all you need to do is determine the perfect shutter speed, which requires a simple calculation.

Remember the shutter speed that you noted down from the test shot you took during Step 5? Now you must adjust the shutter speed to compensate for the number of stops introduced by the filter.

For example, if your test shot was 1/15s and you're using a 10-stop filter, you'll need to decrease the shutter speed by 10 stops, for a shutter speed of approximately 60 seconds.

(If you're *not* using a filter, then you'll decrease your shutter speed by zero stops.)

Also, don't let the mathematics intimidate you. On the internet, you can easily find conversion tables and apps for your smartphone that will do the conversion in moments.

Finally, take your photo!

Step 9: Check the histogram again

Once you've taken the shot, check the histogram as a final precaution.

If the new histogram is approximately equal to the histogram of the test shot, you've accomplished your mission (feel proud!). But if the new histogram is shifted too far to the right or the left, repeat the shot again, but adjust the shutter speed accordingly.

Long exposure photography: final words

Well, there you have it: a simple guide to long exposure photography.

Easy, isn't it? Now fill your backpack with your camera and filters and go practice in the field!

Long exposure FAQs

When should you do long exposure photography?

You can do long exposure photography at any time provided you have the right equipment. I recommend starting out with long exposure photography in the very early morning or the very late evening; that way, you'll be able to see what you're photographing, but the limited light will allow for impressively long exposures. Generally speaking, the *easiest* time to do long exposure photography is any moment when the light is limited.

Can you take long exposure photos in daylight?

Yes! However, you'll need a neutral density filter. Otherwise, your long exposure images will turn out too bright.

Why are my long exposure shots white?

If your long exposure photos are white, then you're *overexposing* your images. You'll need to increase the shutter speed, narrow the aperture, or drop the ISO to compensate for this issue.

What is meant by "long exposure" in photography?

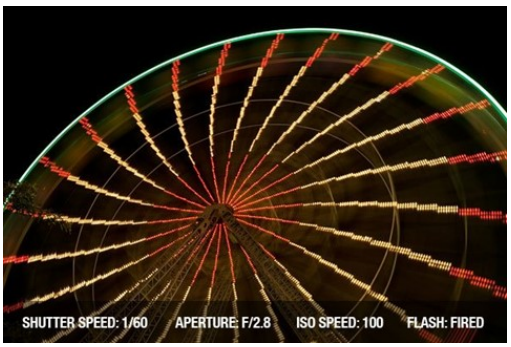
Long exposure refers to a technique where you keep the shutter open for an unusually long period of time. So instead of capturing an image in a split second, you trigger the shutter button and wait – often for minutes or even hours – until the exposure is finished!

https://digital-photography-school.com/step-by-step-guide-to-long-exposure-photography/

Long Exposure Photography Tips

Take Your Night Photography to the Next Level!
By Attila Kun
A useful technique in night photography is the long exposure.
The effects that can be captured with a long exposure are stunning and have an ethereal quality.
The most important tool that you will need is a sturdy tripod, along with a DSLR camera that allows for long exposures.
1

Photographing the Ferris Wheel



To photograph a Ferris wheel at night, move close and use a wide-angle lens to get as much detail as possible. Place your camera on a tripod and frame the image.
Because we want all the elements to be sharp, choose a small aperture between f/11-f/32. Set your camera to either Manual or TV (Shutter Priority) mode and select a shutter speed according to the speed of the lighted Ferris wheel, and the style you are after (anywhere between 1-30 seconds).

You should take the image using the camera's self timer or a cable release so that you avoid touching and jiggling the camera. The image captured will be full of light trails against a black sky, yet the center beams that hold the wheel will be sharp.
2

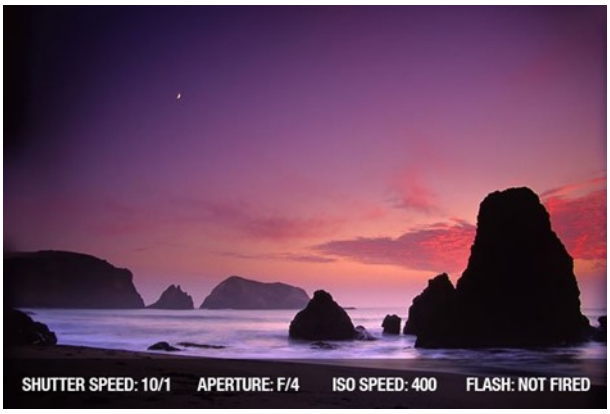
Making Star Trails

A long exposure on a starry night can produce beautiful light trails created by the stars and the rotation of the earth. The best way to frame the image is to include an element of interest such as an old tree in the foreground. Place your camera on a tripod and focus the lens to infinity. You'll want to use a cable release to eliminate camera shake of any kind, as it will RUIN your photo.
Set the camera to B "Bulb" shooting mode and set your aperture between f/2.8 – f/4 for optimal results. Depress the remote to open the shutter. You should keep your ISO at 100 to keep the digital noise at a minimum. To complete the photo after your desired elapsed time, depress the remote again, and release the shutter. These exposures can be 15 minutes to several hours long.
3

Stunning Light Trails

Traffic head light and tail light trails give a stunning effect and are a great way to get acquainted with long exposure times.
Select a busy road that has lots of traffic at night. Use a sturdy tripod and position the camera so that it has an overview of the area. Use a small aperture of f/16 or smaller for a greater depth of field, making most of the image in focus. The longer the exposure, the more lines will appear and the longer they will look.
4

Blurry Sea Waters



To capture that dramatic look of the ocean and the sky, you should utilize the fantastic light of "the golden hour," the last hour before the sun sets.
Follow the basics of night photography – place the camera on a tripod, use a wide-angle lens with the smallest aperture possible, and focus to infinity. Turn the camera's mode dial to Manual or Bulb shooting mode and use a slow shutter speed (5-30 seconds) for a longer exposure. The longer the exposure, the mistier the water appears.
Use your camera's self-timer or a cable release to take the photo with absolutely no blurring. Don't use flash because it could ruin the effect in the image.
5

Determining Exposure

The exposure of your night time image will vary depending on certain factors. If there is a lot of ambient light, then the shutter speed will be shorter. If you are shooting somewhere very dark, then the shutter speed will need to be longer.
To capture the effects of light trails you need a shutter speed of at least 1/15th of a second, which means you must use a tripod. The image of the Houses of Parliament required a 6 second shutter speed, which is slow enough to capture the traffic trails. The f/8 aperture allowed the building to be sharp.
The more you practice, the more you will become tuned to the exposure you need for the effect you want.
S

Recommended Settings

The main thing to keep in mind while deciding on the correct exposure is how to capture both the shadows as well as the highlights.
If you are successful in obtaining the right shadows, you will be able to produce an excellent night scene that will win you compliments. When taking long exposures, the key is to keep the shutter open only long enough for the desired effect. If you keep the shutter open too long, you'll lose the details in whatever light source is illuminating your subject, and you might even lose the ability to identify what the subject is.
When trying to create a light trail, the shutter should be open for at least 1 second, and therefore requires a tripod. Use shutter priority mode and start with 1 second shutter speed and see what the result is; if the trail is too short, add 2 seconds, and then keep adding 2 seconds until you get the lighting effect that you want (the beauty of digital photography is that you'll know immediately). If you have too much blurring, then your shutter was open too long, and you need to dial it back down maybe a full second.
E

Recommended Equipment

In addition to your digital camera, you need a sturdy tripod to take good night photographs. This will ensure you stabilize your camera firmly, thereby avoiding blurriness in your pictures.

Conclusion

Taking long exposure images at night can be perfected with practice and by learning to recognize the lighting conditions and how to adjust the camera to meet those conditions.
Depending on what you have to work with, your shutter speed can be anything from 1/60th of a second to several minutes.
What makes long exposure images unique is that each image is unique, since light trails move in unusual ways, and with practice, you should have a collection of photos that are truly one of a kind.
https://www.exposureguide.com/long-exposure-photography-tips/

Digital Camera Maintenance Tips

Maintenance and prevention prolong the life of your digital camera

By Kyle Schurman

Although today's digital cameras are reliable pieces of hardware, they can fail from time to time. Sometimes, they fail because of a manufacturer error. More often, though, they fail because of user error and a lack of digital camera maintenance.

Best Practices for Camera Maintenance

Use these digital camera maintenance tips to keep your camera in the best possible working condition.
Avoid dirt and sand: Use care when cleaning dirt particles and sand from your digital camera. Do not use canned or pressurized air to clean the sand, as you blow particles into the camera case. Budget-priced camera cases may not be sealed properly, making it easier for grit and sand to penetrate the case and cause damage. Gently blow out the grit and sand to avoid this problem. Use care when shooting photos on a windy day at the beach, too, where sand can blow with excessive force. Avoid opening the battery compartment on such days.

- Avoid liquids: Keep all liquids away from the camera unless you own a model with a waterproof case.

Avoid touching the lens and LCD: Oils from your skin smudge the lens and LCD, eventually causing permanent damage. Clean the lens and LCD with a microfiber cloth when you see a smudge from your fingertips.

The lens and sun don't mix: Do not point your camera's lens directly at the sun for any length of time, especially with a DSLR camera. Sunlight focused through the lens of the camera could damage the image sensor or start a fire inside the camera.

- Use cleaning liquids with care: Avoid using an excessive amount of cleaning liquid with your camera.

Other than stubborn smudges, you should be able to clean the camera with a dry microfiber cloth. If a liquid is needed, place a few drops of the liquid on the cloth rather than directly on the camera.
Vacuum the bag: Dirt and sand inside your camera bag can damage your camera, so vacuum the bag regularly to keep it clean and protect the camera. If sand gets in the lens, you'll need a soft brush to remove it.

- Watch the temperature: Although some cameras are designed to survive harsh temperatures, most cameras are not. Do not leave your camera in a sunny vehicle, where temperatures can exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Avoid leaving the camera in direct sunlight, which can damage the plastic. Finally, avoid extreme cold, which could damage the LCD.

Use neck straps and wrist loops: Use neck straps and wrist loops with your camera. If you slip while hiking, or if you lose the grip on your camera near the pool, the straps can save your camera from a potentially disastrous fall.

Water Splash Photography Made Easy

By: Stefan Mogyorosi
Are you looking to capture stunning water splash photography?
You've come to the right place.
I'm an experienced water splash photographer. And in this article, I'm going to reveal my tips and tricks for gorgeous, one-of-a-kind water splash shots.
So if you're ready to get some jaw-dropping photos…
…then let's dive right in!

What equipment do you need for water splash photography?

Water splash photography setups are pretty minimal.
Here's what you should have on hand:

- A glass aquarium with a minimum size of 24" x 12" x 16"
- A table covered in black cloth

A black background (paper or textile), positioned at least six feet away from the aquarium.
If possible, you should also find an assistant – a friend, family member, etc. They will make your life *much* easier.
While you can do everything by yourself, it's hugely helpful to have someone who can throw the objects into the water, get them out, then throw them again and again and again (while you snap away with the camera).

Gear and subjects

You don't need much specialized gear for water splash photography.
Any decent camera will be okay, though to obtain better quality you should use a DSLR or a mirrorless camera with a good lens.
(I shot from a distance with a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens at 200mm.)
And always use a tripod; this will make focusing and framing ten times easier.
Last, you will need two flashes, one on each side of the aquarium, aimed directly at your subject (as

shown in the photo below). I prefer to use light modifiers; these restrict the light so it only hits the subject and doesn't spill all over the scene, which helps avoid unwanted reflections and highlights.

As for your splash subjects:
Use anything you like! I personally prefer fruits and vegetables because they vary in size, shape, and color. But you could also photograph golf balls, coke cans, old tools, and more!

Setting up your water splash studio

Fill the aquarium with tap water. You'll want to make it halfway or two-thirds full, depending on how far you want the subjects to fall.
If you fill the tank too high, every splash will result in water spilling. So please be careful with both flashes and your camera when working with water!
Set your camera at a position where you have the desired framing of the aquarium, leaving enough space up, down, and on both sides to capture most of the splashes.
After you have positioned the camera, you'll need to set the focus manually, as I discuss in the next section:

Focus manually on your subject

For this step, ask your assistant to hold your subject in the water where you want to make the splashes happen.
Focus your lens.
Then leave the camera on manual focus (or use back-button focus). That way, the camera won't need to refocus every time you take a picture, and you'll know that your subject will be in focus every time the object falls in the expected location.

Freezing the water splash

Freezing the motion of your subject will be done by your flash and *not* by your camera.
Why?
Because your camera must be in sync with your flashes. In most cases, this forces your shutter speed down to a maximum of 1/200s or so – which is *way* too slow to freeze fast action. (Note: this maximum speed is referred to as your camera's *flash sync speed*.)
Luckily, there is a magic word: *flash duration*. It's the period of time when the flash emits light (which is *far* faster than your camera's sync speed). And if the flash duration is short enough, it'll give you the freezing effect you're after.

You can use speedlights for water splash photography, as they generally have a pretty short flash duration – but only at very reduced power settings of 1/32 or 1/64. Such settings will result in darker shots, but you can compensate by increasing the ISO and opening the aperture.
Personally, I prefer to use strobes with short flash durations. Most manufacturers make the flash duration of their strobes – as well as the power you get at the shortest flash durations – public information.
For the pictures in this article, I used Elinchrom ELC Pro HD 500 strobes, which have the shortest flash duration – 1/4000s – at power 3.1.
For this shoot, my camera settings were ISO 100, f/16, and 1/125s.

Taking the water splash photos

This is the fun part! If you have an assistant, you'll need to synchronize your movements.
Here's the step-by-step process:
Step 1: Count to three.
Step 2: Have your assistant drop the object(s).

Step 3: Fire your shutter to capture a stunning splash.
I sincerely suggest you repeat these steps for a few hours. I prefer to set my camera to continuous or burst mode (my flashes recycle very fast) and record three or four pictures per drop. That way, I increase the probability of capturing the subject and the splash of the water.

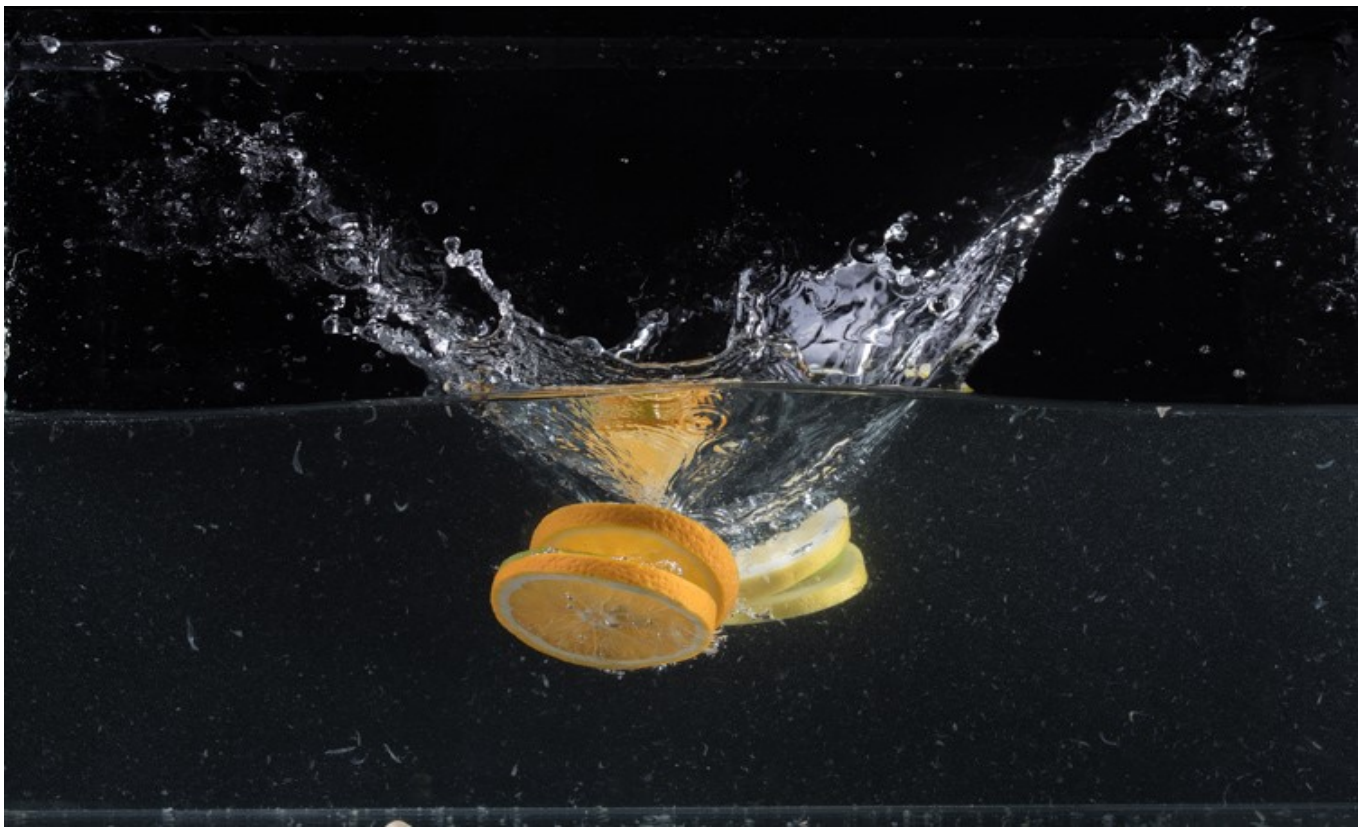
Some quick splash photography tips:

- Use subjects with vivid color; that way, you will have good separation of the subject from the black background and the white/bluish splash. It'll make your pictures really pop.
- If you photograph small subjects, try to use a minimum of six to ten pieces at once.
- Try to combine subjects of different sizes, colors, and shapes.
- To get larger splashes, use subjects with a larger surface area, or let them fall from a higher position.
- Wash the fruits and vegetables before you use them. That way, you can keep the water clean for a longer period of time.
- If the water starts becoming dirty, change it. This can be pretty unpleasant because the tank will be heavy. But the good news is that, by regularly changing the water, you'll have to work less in the post-processing phase – and you'll get sharper, cleaner images.

Frequently clean the front glass of the tank to get rid of the water drops that tend to accumulate on it.

Post-processing tips

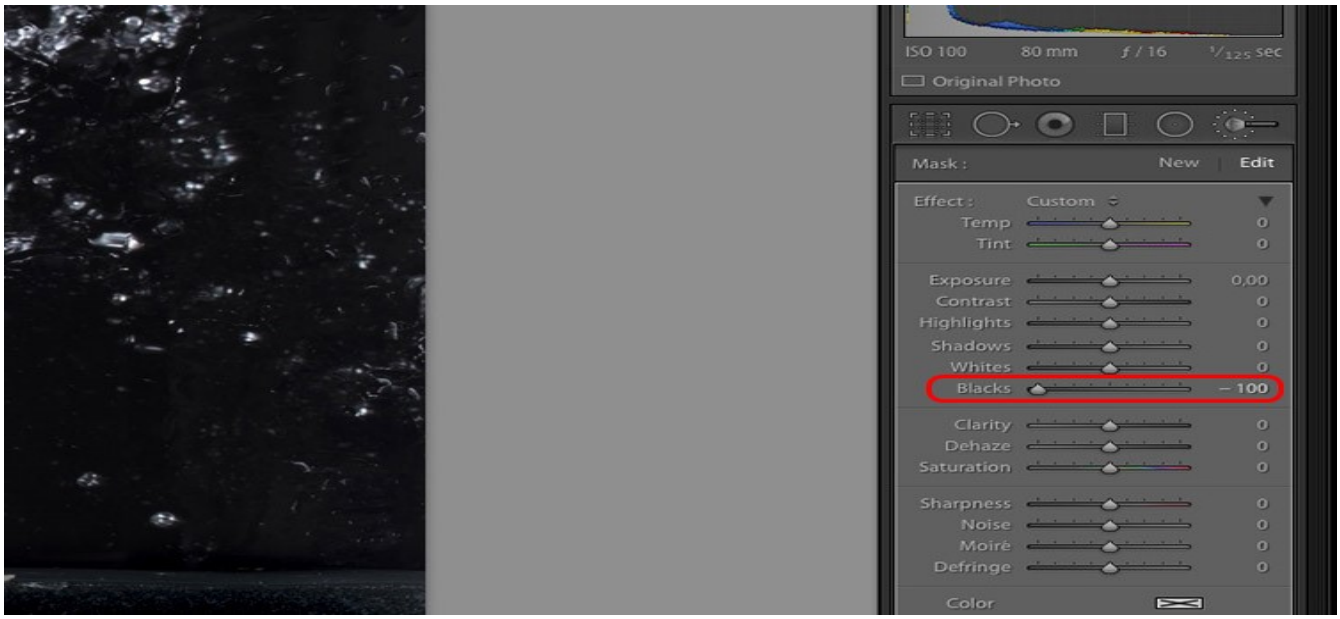
This part is crucial! No matter how hard you try to capture the perfect splash, your RAW images will still need a bit of polishing and processing.



The unprocessed shot of these orange slices.
I only use Lightroom and Photoshop for post-processing, but you can achieve the desired effects in pretty much any editing program.

Clean up the water

After you've opened your water splash photo, you'll first need to clean the water.
I suggest that you use the Adjustment Brush with the Blacks slider set to -100.



Use the Adjustment Brush with the Blacks set to -100.
Apply this brush everywhere except the subjects (it would make them too dark).
You can even use the brush on the splash itself because that will make it cleaner and sharper. But be careful not to overdo it, or you'll lose some splash detail.

My orange splash after the Adjustment Brush has been applied.

Final touches

Now open the image in Photoshop, create a new empty layer, select the Brush tool, then start painting the new layer black.
This will give you a clean black background, but be careful when painting near the subjects (you don't want to paint over them!). You can even paint away small drops of water that you consider unnecessary. Try to preserve a little bit of the water's surface, though.
Once you've finished painting, you should sharpen the image. You can also add some contrast or saturation depending on the look you're after.

Water splash photography: conclusion

Are you ready to give water splash photography a try?
Now you know the setup, the techniques, and the post-processing.
So take some shots! Have fun!
You'll love the results.

Lighting 101: Using Umbrellas

Umbrellas are an ideal first light modifier for beginners. They are cheap and very versatile.

As you saw in the walk-through post—and can see in the photo above—an umbrella turns the harsh light of your bare electronic flash into something that approximates beautiful window light.

Okay, back to lighting. Think of your flash as a very brief-but-powerful flashlight. And like a flashlight, the business end of your flash is only about two square inches in area.

Which is to say, pretty harsh light. Just like a flashlight. That may be one reason you previously have been unhappy with your flash photos.

An umbrella takes your harsh flashlight and essentially turns it into a window. Except we are talking nice, soft window light that you can position and control—in intensity, in location, in angle, even in the color of the light itself.

There are two general kinds of umbrellas: the reflected umbrella and the optical white shoot-through umbrella. I tend to prefer the white (shoot-through) version as it is more versatile. In particular, because you can bring it right up next to someone's face for both power and softness.

I used to use the reflected umbrellas, but don't do that as often any more. I pretty much stick to the shoot-thru's 90% of the time. But you might choose differently, which is one reason we suggested the 3-in-1 version for your starter kit.

What You Can Create With an Umbrella

Shoot your harsh flash through an umbrella and you get softness and control. Stick it in close and you get light that is tailor-made for portraiture.

This is a very simple way to make your head-and-shoulder photos look more like they were shot by a professional and not by someone from the Department of Motor Vehicles. With a short telephoto, and umbrella' and strobe and awareness of your ambient light, you can make any headshot look more like a cover shot.

https://strobist.blogspot.com/2006/03/lighting-101-umbrellas.html

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When was the last time you had a look.

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www.daptocameraclub.org.au

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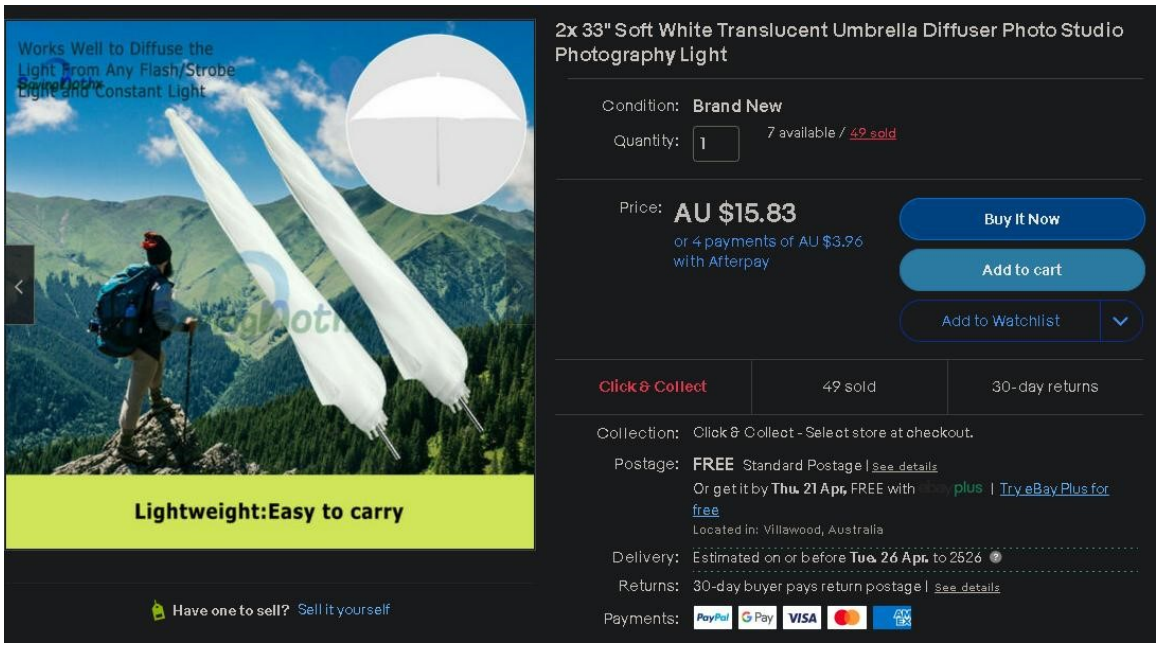
Photo Gear of the month.



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