Dapto Camera Club Magazine.

Viewfinder.

July 2022

Watch out for that bad monkey flu.

Dapto Camera Club Newsletter..
The teaching Club.

5 Useful Tips to Improve Your Headshot Images

Capturing a great headshot requires a few considerations that can really spell the difference between a mediocre shot and an excellent one. Here are five useful tips that you can use when creating headshots.

1. Framing

Unless there is some creative reason, or use in reproduction, that requires a horizontal format, you are best off shooting headshots in a vertical format.

Photo by Aurimas

Links of Interest:

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.
Cathi Rigby

The above image was professionally produced. When you're creating headshots and you choose an unusual format or crop, make sure that there is a reason for it.

2. Choose the right equipment

With a headshot assignment, you want to use a medium length telephoto lens like 85mm, 105mm, or 135mm.

You'd typically use an aperture of f/5.6 to f/8.5. You want enough depth-of-field to keep the face sharp, but let the background go soft.

Always focus on the eyes when doing a headshot. A headshot with soft focus on the eyes never looks good!

Use a tripod to compose your headshots better and to not have the framing and focusing thrown out of balance.

3. Camera point of view

A headshot created for a businessperson or a model, for example, should be shot looking directly into the face.

Photo by Boudewijn Berends

A camera POV that looks down on a person (even slightly) makes them appear more approachable and submissive.

You get the opposite effect when the camera is lower and looking up at your subject. That camera POV tends to make the subject look more commanding and in control.

(Note: Today, you can download our 23-piece Portrait Photography Guided Resource Kit, including a new exclusive free bonus, right here for a limited time!)

4. Your choice of background

The choice of background has a big impact on a headshot image. Take a look at the following images – the lighting scheme is exactly the same. The only difference is the background.

Photos by Steve Jurvetson

5. Skin retouching and props

When you retouch skin, you should not remove all skin texture. This is especially important on a headshot.

We are all used to looking at people up-close. Skin texture looks normal. Wrinkles look normal. Yes, it's important to make your subject look their best. But if you remove all skin texture and wrinkles, your subject will begin to take on the look of a plastic doll.

Props with headshots should be eliminated or used minimally.

6. Extra Tip

Your subject(s) will be more critical about their hair than just about any other aspect of their portrait, head-shot or otherwise. Always check the hair before proceeding.

Master the Sunny 16 Rule (And Other Exposure Settings)

By Andrea Minoia
In photography, there are various rules that help improve your photography.
What is the purpose of the Sunny 16 rule? The Sunny f16 rule helps you estimate which camera settings to use for a balanced exposure. As the name suggests, it's for shooting outdoors during sunny days.
In this article, you'll learn more about the famous Sunny 16 Rule.

Photo by Jimmy Chan from Pexels
[ExpertPhotography is supported by readers. Product links on ExpertPhotography are referral links. If you use one of these and buy something we make a little bit of money. Need more info? See how it all works here.]

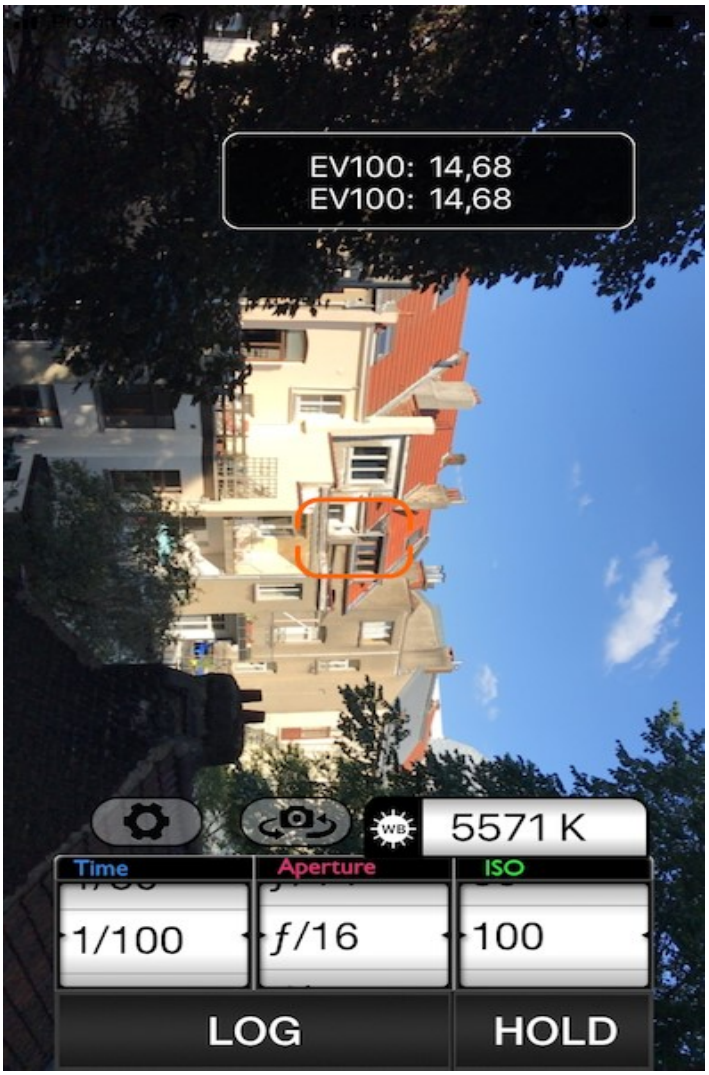
Sunny 16 Rule in the Digital Era

In the past, the Sunny f16 rule or 16 rule was a must-have in a film photographer's bag of tricks. This photography rule acts as a metering system when you don't have a light meter. But nowadays, built-in light meters are present in every device. From the cheaper camera phone to the pro-graded DSLR camera. Nonetheless, the Sunny-16 Rule can still serve you well in several ways:

- It makes you work faster in manual with your digital camera;

- It makes it easier to experiment with film photography. For example, when shooting large format 6×6 film;

It's a useful exercise to improve your ability to read the available light. With a light meter app on your smartphone, you can check the settings you would use against those suggested by the app.



I like to use the app Pocket Light Meter on my iPhone to keep practising my ability to reading light. Here, I bet on the Sunny 16 and was right.

How Does the Sunny 16 Rule Work?

The Sunny f16 rule states that, on sunny days, at an aperture of f/16, your shutter speed is the inverse of your ISO value.

This means that if you are at, say, aperture f/16 and ISO 100, your shutter speed should be 1/100 seconds.

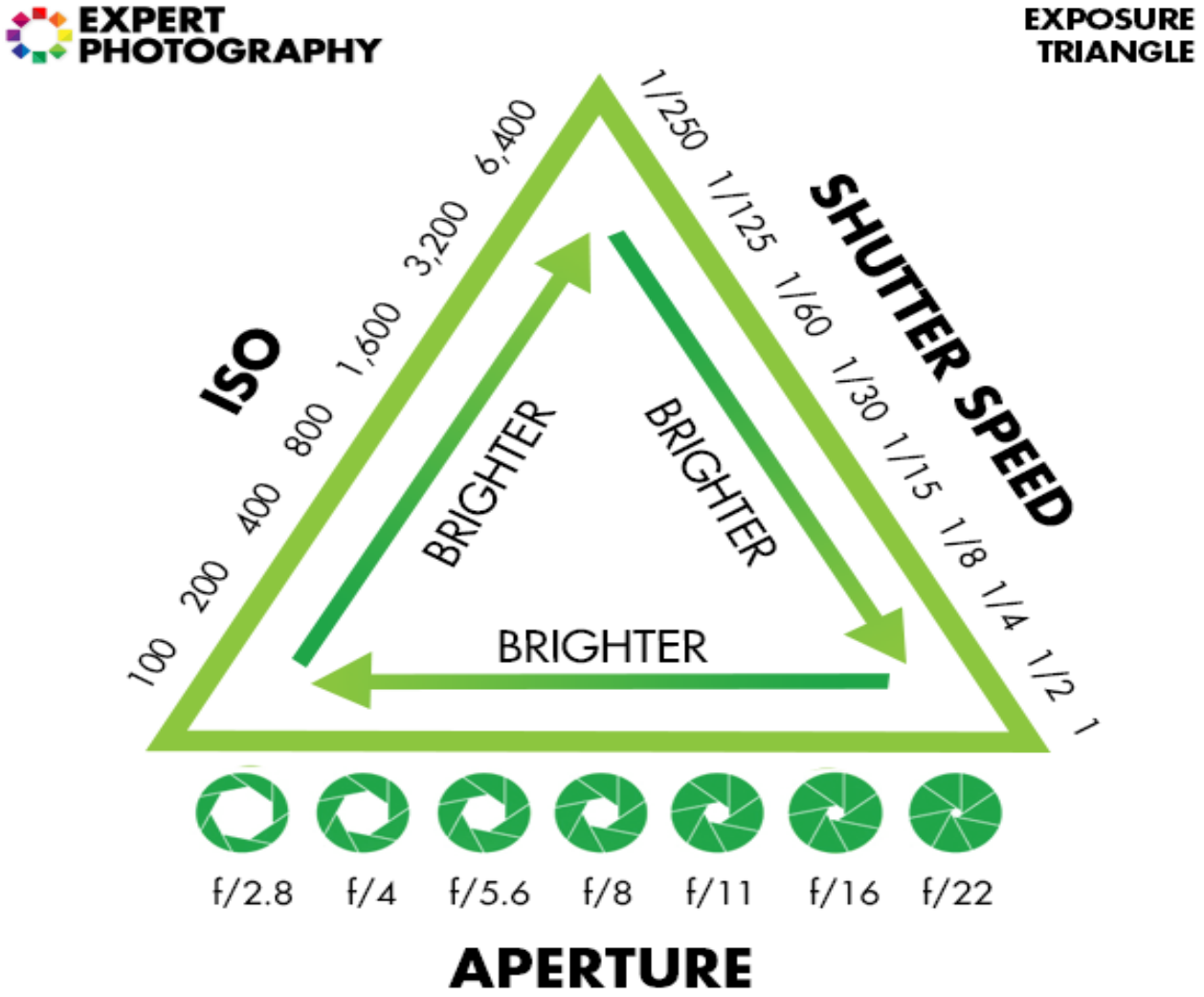
This is one of the easiest photography rules to remember.

It is a great starting point, as you will no doubt want to change your exposure settings based on the reflected light available.

This is a good example of light conditions that match the prediction of the Sunny f16 rule.

The Exposure Triangle

The Sunny-16 rule works on the so-called exposure triangle. Your image exposure is the combination of the aperture, shutter speed and ISO values.
The triangle assumes you can get the same exposure by changing those values. When the lighting conditions change, you can raise your ISO, shutter speed or aperture to reach the correct exposure.



The Exposure Triangle. Shutter Speed, Aperture and ISO – together they determine the image exposure.
Say you're using aperture f/16, ISO 400 and shutter speed of 1/400s. You get the same exposure with the following settings combinations:

1. f/11 (+1EV), ISO 400 (0EV) and 1/800s (-1EV)
f/16 (0EV), ISO 800 (+1EV) and 1/800s (-1EV)

The over- or under-exposure appears in the brackets.
Not all cameras and lenses allow you to shoot at f/16 or narrower apertures. For example, my Sony RX100 does not close more than f/11. Micro four-thirds cameras start to suffer from diffraction over f/8.

Similar Rules

It is not always sunny outside. Some days are pretty dark, and the sunny f16 rule does not fit those conditions. For this reason, there are different rules depending on the weather.
The sunny 16 chart below illustrates the conditions for which the different rules apply:

- Sunny-16 Rule: when photographing in an open field during a sunny day;
- Slight Overcast-11 Rule: when the sky is variable;
- Overcast-8 Rule: cloudy weather, but not dark;
- Heavy Overcast -5.6 Rule: bad weather, maybe rainy;
- Sunset-4 Rule: for typical sunset conditions;

Snowy-22 Rule: If the sun is shining over a snowy landscape, f/22 is the suggested aperture. You get a balanced exposure using a shutter speed that is the inverse of your ISO.

The principle is the same as for the Sunny-16. In overcast conditions, follow the Overcast-8 Rule. To achieve a shutter speed of 1/100s, you should set your camera to f/8 and ISO 100.
Let's see a couple of examples:
A classic light that suits the Overcast-8 Rule better than the Sunny 16.

A typical situation for the Heavy Overcast-5.6 rule.

Forget the Weather, Read the Shadows

To estimate which rule best matches the light conditions, look at shadow hardness. Actual sky conditions can be misleading.

In this photo, the sky looks great and clear, but some clouds are blocking the sun. As you can see, there are no shadows on the ground.

In these conditions, the light meter of my Sony RX100 Mk II camera tells me that a balanced exposure is obtained at ISO 100, f/11 and shutter speed of 1/100s.

This is the Slightly Overcast-11 rule.

While the sky suggests the Sunny f16 rule should apply, because of passing clouds in front of the sun, the in-camera light meter will tell you that the Slightly Overcast f-11 rule works better.

With very soft shadows or no shadows at all, you want to use the Heavy Overcast-5.6 rule.
The Sunny 16 works best with hard, deep shadows. Anything in-between is for the Overcast-8 or Slightly Overcast-11.

One of the best use of these rules is by applying them you will get fluent in reading light and shadows hardness.

Applying the Sunny-16 Rule in Real Life

These rules are not exact. Reality is not made of individual factors (sun, clouds, heavy clouds, etc). It is an ever-changing mix of different factors, and there are no bulletproof rules. This is why it's important to know how to read the light, particularly for an outdoor photographer.
Let's consider the image below.

This image will defy the Sunny 16 rule

You can see very strong shadows on the ground. However, the in-camera light meter is telling me that to have a shutter speed that is the inverse of my ISO (i.e., 1/100s).
Instead, I should use an aperture of f/5.6, and not f/16 as the hardness of the shadows would suggest.
Why? Because due to the strong foliage, the scene is rather dark. Compare it to the brightness of the image below, taken only a few minutes later and under the same kind of daylight.

This image of open ground follows the Sunny 16 rule. In general, open ground images are much brighter than those taken under the canopy of trees.

Conclusion

The modern digital photographer does not need to memorise these rules, thanks to the in camera light meter. But practising with the sunny-16 rule is a great exercise to learn to read the available light. You can use our Quick Capture cheat sheets to have all the top photography rules at your fingertips.
Start practising right away! Take a look out the window: is that 'use the sunny 16 rule weather' or something else?

The Essential Guide to Camera Light Meters

By: Simon Ringsmuth

These days, every camera has an in-built light meter – but what actually *is* it, and how does it work?
In this article, I share everything you need to understand your camera's light meter. And by the time you're done, you'll be able to select different metering modes, plus you'll know how to meter your camera for great results.
Let's get started.

What is a camera light meter?

A light meter *measures* the amount of light reflecting off a scene, then indicates the proper combination of settings (shutter speed, aperture, and ISO) for a well-exposed image.

In other words, light meters are all about getting a nice, detailed, balanced exposure, where the highlights aren't too bright and the shadows aren't too dark.
Your camera almost certainly includes a light meter, though some photographers also purchase handheld meters. The latter are just like camera light meters, except they offer increased control and greater flexibility.

Now, if you're familiar with the basics of exposure, you know that a well-exposed image is the product of the aperture, shutter speed, and ISO working together. You might use a wide aperture but a fast shutter speed, a narrow aperture but a slow shutter speed, or a high ISO but a narrow aperture – and you'll end up with the same exposure.

My point is that a camera meter won't tell you the precise aperture, shutter speed, and ISO you need for a well-exposed shot. Instead, it will let *you*, as the photographer, balance your settings, and it will simply tell you where that balance point exists. Make sense?

How a camera light meter works

As I explained above, a light meter measures the light. These days, most cameras use a process called TTL metering (i.e., *through the lens metering*). Your camera examines the light coming in through the lens, then uses it to evaluate the brightness of the scene.

Next, the meter indicates the optimal exposure settings based on internal calculations. Generally, a light meter's goal is to make the scene an *average middle gray*, also known as *18% gray*, which is a decent approximation of most scenes.

So if you're photographing a tree, your camera's meter will measure the light reflecting off the tree and into your lens. It will calculate a shutter speed, aperture, and ISO combination that will make the scene 18% gray when photographed. And it will communicate (or automatically select) these settings, depending on your camera mode.

If you're using Auto mode, your camera will quietly do its metering, then pick settings for an optimal exposure. If you're using Aperture Priority mode, you can pick the ISO, then your camera will pick a shutter speed that produces an 18% gray result. And if you're using Manual mode, your camera will simply indicate the ideal settings, using the exposure bar at the bottom of the viewfinder:

Set your camera to Manual mode, then look at the bottom of the screen in your viewfinder. Notice the scale with zero in the middle. That is the light meter at work.

Raise the shutter speed, and the little indicator will move to the left; this indicates underexposure. Drop the shutter speed, and the little indicator will move to the right; this indicates overexposure.

In fact, working in Manual mode is a great way to understand how your meter works, and how it's affected by different camera settings. You can watch the exposure bar change as you point your lens at different

scenes, and you can see how, with the adjustment of aperture, shutter speed, or ISO, the exposure changes.

Metering modes: what part of the scene does a light meter evaluate?

You might be wondering:
Does a light meter measure the entire scene? Or just a sliver of the scene? Where in the frame does the meter look when it measures the light?
Well, that depends on the *metering mode* your camera uses.
Most cameras today have a few metering modes, and each one measures the light slightly differently. Camera manufacturers have various names for these modes, but the labels used below are the most common:

1. Matrix or Evaluative Metering measures the entire scene and creates an intelligent average, with weighting of different scene elements. (Nikon puts a bigger emphasis on the area where your lens is focused, for example). Nikon calls this mode *Matrix Metering*; Canon calls it *Evaluative Metering*.
2. Center-Weighted Average Metering looks at the light of the entire scene and averages it, but with emphasis on the center of the frame.
3. Partial Metering measures the light only in a small portion of the center of the frame (about 8-12% of the scene). This is a Canon metering mode; Nikon does not offer an equivalent option.

Spot Metering measures the light only in a small area around the central autofocus point (about 1.5-3% of the frame).

The metering mode can have a huge impact on whether your photo is properly exposed. If your camera spot meters off a sliver of bright sky, the entire image will turn out dark – except the sky sliver, which will be well exposed. If your camera spot meters off a dark rock in a forest landscape, the entire image will turn out too bright, except the rock, which will be well exposed.
To illustrate this, here are three shots taken with different metering modes:

Image #1, taken with Matrix (Nikon) or Eva

luative (Canon) Metering.

Image #2, taken with Center-Weighted Metering.

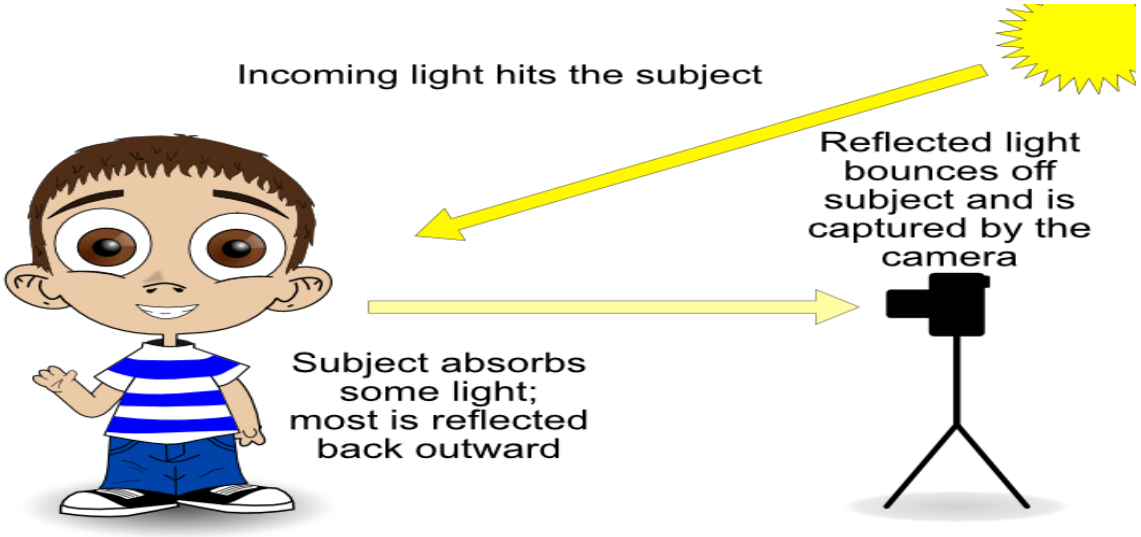
Image #3, taken with Spot metering.
Note that the Matrix metering produced an average of the entire scene, including both the figurine and the background. The Center-Weighted Average metering gave an underexposed result, because it metered off the window in the background. And the Spot metering gave an overexposed result, because it metered off a dark area inside the window.
That's why it's essential you choose your metering mode carefully. Meter using the wrong algorithm, and you'll end up exposing for the wrong part of the frame!

Reflective versus incident light metering

There's another aspect of light metering that comes into play when setting up a shot. It has to do with how TTL metering works compared to a handheld light meter.

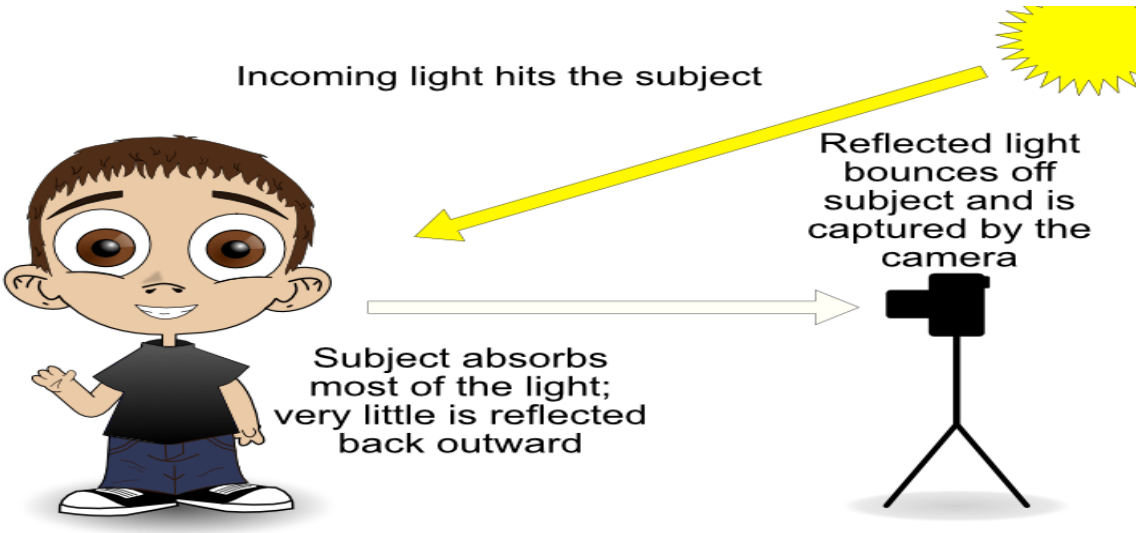
Reflective metering

TTL metering works by measuring the amount of light that comes through the lens. But there's a problem: unless you are pointing your camera directly at the light source, the light is actually bouncing off your subject first.



So when your camera measures incoming light, it's looking at the amount of light bounced off your subject, not the amount of light actually hitting your subject. This has huge implications and can dramatically affect your exposure. In the illustration above, the subject is wearing clothes that absorb most colors of light except for blue, which means there is still a great deal of light being bounced off the subject and sent to the camera. However, if the child changes clothes, the light meter receives a completely different read-

ing:



In the illustration above, even though the amount of light hitting the boy has not changed, the camera will read the scene much differently because he is now wearing a dark shirt and pants. In the second situation, the camera will think it needs more light to compensate for what it believes to be *less* light in the scene – when in fact the amount of light hasn't changed. As a result, the dark-clothed subject will be overexposed. Here's a real-world example of how this works:

Nikon D7100 | 200mm | f/2.8 | 1/8000s

In the photo above, so much light was being reflected off the girl's white shirt that my camera had a hard time metering the scene properly. Much of the sunlight was bouncing off the shirt and coming directly back to my camera, so it responded by using a very fast shutter speed and low ISO value to make sure the shirt was properly exposed. The rest of the scene, however, turned out *underexposed*.

I then took this shot a few seconds later – after my subject put on a brown shirt. Much of the light was absorbed by the dark color, so my camera created a much brighter exposure:

Nikon D7100 | 200mm | f/2.8 | 1/1500s

To summarize:

Because different subjects reflect different amounts of light, your camera meter is often fooled into underexposing or overexposing an image. In such situations, there *is* an optimal exposure, but thanks to reflective metering, your camera will consistently fail to find it.

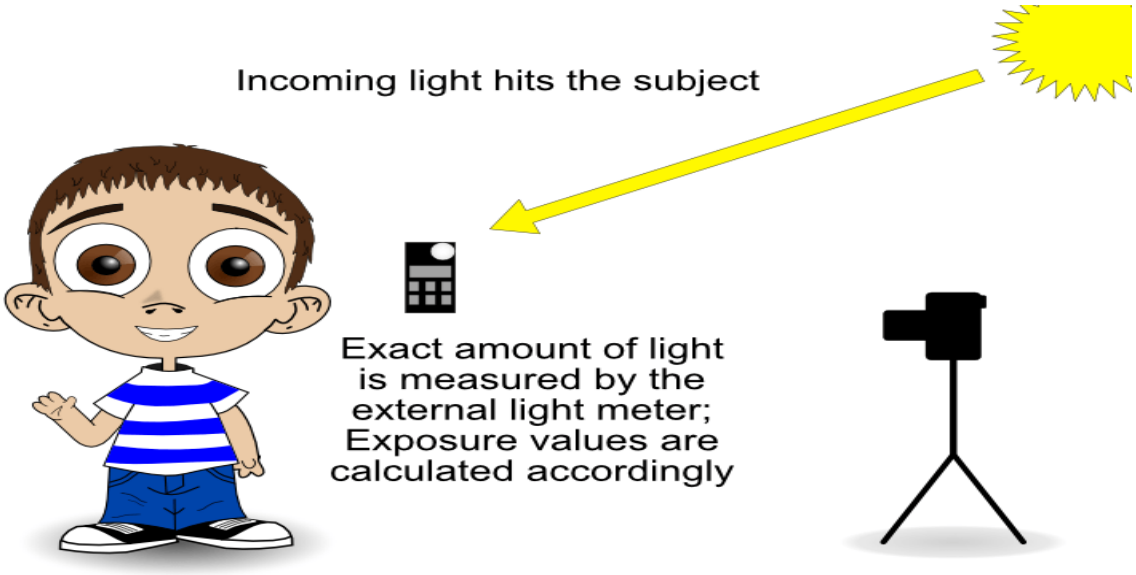
Incident metering

If you are shooting a wedding, reflective light metering can cause serious problems; grooms often wear dark tuxedoes whereas brides will usually be dressed in dazzling whites, and this can really throw off your camera's TTL metering system. The solution is to use an external handheld light meter, such as the Sekonic L-308X-U, which actually measures the amount of light falling on the subject (known as *incident metering*).

Handheld light meter for incident light metering (light falling on the subject).

Incident light metering will give you consistently correct exposure results, because it won't be fooled by subject reflectivity.

Here's how the diagram from above would look when using an external handheld incident light meter:



You will often see wedding photographers using a handheld light meter – *not* the camera light meter – in order to get a more accurate light reading.

Camera light meters: final words

Now that you've finished this article, you should understand the basics of camera light metering – and you should know how to use a meter to create top-notch exposures.

That said, it's important to remember that there is no one correct way of metering a scene. Any of the metering modes and methods will work, as long as you know what you are shooting and what type of results you are trying to achieve.

https://digital-photography-school.com/understand-camera-light-meter-desired-exposure/

Understanding shutter speed.

Learn the basics of this photography principle and see how it offers creative opportunities.

Photography is a combination of art and science. While that can make it seem twice as challenging, once you understand the basics of these two aspects, they can combine to offer you almost limitless ways to express your creative vision. Shutter speed is a good example. It's a technical topic, but if you learn how to manipulate shutter speed, you can achieve anything from crisp, freeze-frame sports photos to velvety, motion-filled waterfall shots.

What is shutter speed?

Shutter speed is exactly what it sounds like: It's the speed at which the shutter of the camera closes. A fast shutter speed creates a shorter exposure — the amount of light the camera takes in — and a slow shutter speed gives the photographer a longer exposure.

"Shutter speed gives you two things. One, it lets you freeze time," author and photographer Jeff Carlson explains. "If you have a faster shutter speed, it's going to open and close quickly and get that slice of what-

ever's happening."

"Then there's the instance where you want a really slow shutter speed that opens the aperture to let in more light," Carlson says. "You can use slow shutter speed in a dimmer environment when you need more light to expose a shot correctly."

Challenges that come with adjusting shutter speed.

When adjusting shutter speed, consider light and motion. If you leave the shutter open a longer amount of time to capture more light, motion will affect the photo — maybe in ways you don't like.

"The problem is that when the shutter is open longer, anything that moves in the frame during that time gets blurrier."

"The problem is that when the shutter is open longer, anything that moves in the frame during that time gets blurrier," photographer, writer and teacher Ben Long says of camera shake. "Another problem is when the camera shutter is open for a long time and you move the camera. You can't help but do that because you're a living human being."

A slow shutter speed can help you illuminate a darker scene, as it brings more light through the lens. But with a faster shutter speed, the lens is open for a shorter length of time, so less light enters the lens. That makes low light a challenge and demonstrates the importance of a well-lit scene. Be mindful of this as you shoot or you could end up with very dark photos that miss what you want to capture.

Properly setting your shutter speed is crucial when it comes to not missing the moment, especially with fast -moving subjects.

"A couple months ago, I was photographing cheetahs that were hunting," animal photographer and *New York Times* best-selling author Carli Davidson tells us. "You can't just say, 'Hey, can you redo that? Can you slow down and do that again because my shutter speed wasn't fast enough and the image is blurry?'" Experimentation with shutter speed in advance of a shoot will help to give you a mastery of what you need and when you need it.

Freezing time with shutter speed.

When you don't want motion blur — the effect caused by a subject or the camera moving during a long exposure/slow shutter speed shot — you can freeze time with a fast shutter speed.

"Two-year-olds are notorious for never standing still," Carlson says. "You can set your camera to a higher shutter speed so they're not blurry when you take that shot."

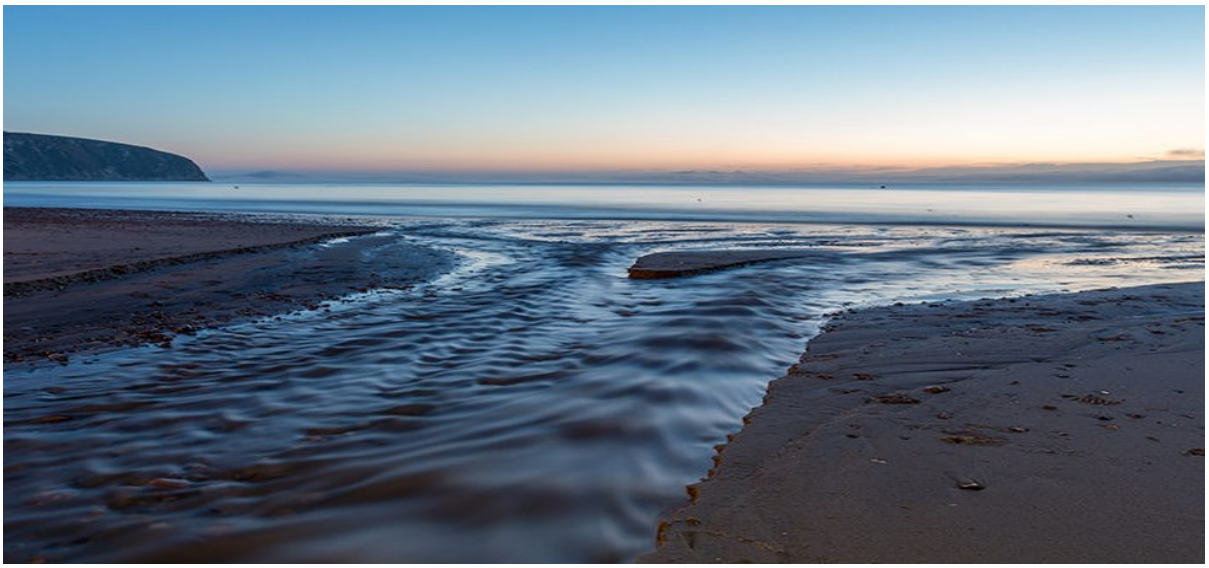
But beyond simply avoiding motion blur, fast shutter speed gives photographers the almost magical ability to put a single moment in a time capsule.

"It goes back to your reason for taking the photograph," photographer and designer Shawn Ingersoll explains. "Are you wanting to capture motion or a split-second in time where something is moving but it doesn't look like it? Like a rock falling into a pond, so you see that split-second where the water flies up into the air."

Water, an element that can be as still as a dewdrop or as powerful as a tsunami, showcases how shutter speed can tell two stories.

"If you're looking at the ocean and it's twilight, you might want a long exposure of 30 seconds," Carlson suggests. "That can give you more light so that everything isn't completely dark. It will smooth out all the waves and give you this really soft, glassy look for the water."

And yet, that same ocean in a single snapshot at a quick shutter speed may showcase a rippling white cap or the roil of a choppy sea. It's choices like these that give photographers creative options driven by technical adjustments.



Bringing motion to photos with slow shutter speeds.

“I used to photograph basketball in this dark gym,” journalist and wedding photographer Anna Goellner recalls. “To get the proper exposure, I would sometimes have to go down to a shutter speed of 1/50, but then I could see movement in my images, which I didn’t want. In sports photography, you want images to be clean.”

When the end goal of your shoot is a sharp, in-focus picture, perhaps capturing the look on an athlete’s face as they hit that winning shot, you want a fast shutter speed to freeze a moving object. It tells the story by pausing a particular moment. But shots that stop time and remove motion can limit certain storytelling possibilities.

“When a basketball team was way ahead or I had all the good pictures I needed, I’d just play with that movement,” Goellner continues. “Following a football player down the field while he was running and capturing that movement — I think it’s a lot of fun to be artistic with that. You can definitely capture movement in sports by playing with the shutter speed.”

Telling a story or capturing action that goes beyond a single moment is possible with slow shutter speeds. Sometimes, it's even necessary.

"If I'm out at the race track and there's a Formula One race car going by at 200 miles an hour," Long relays "and I shoot it at 1/8000 of a second to perfectly freeze its motion, when I look at the final picture, it looks like a parked car. There's going to be no sense of the reality of that scene. There's going to be no sense that it was travelling quickly.

"If, instead, I use a slower shutter speed and time my camera to follow the car as it goes through the frame," continues Long, "the car is going to have a little bit of blur, but the background is going to be totally smeared — it's going to look like [the car] was going 200 miles an hour. That's a creative choice I get to make at the time to impart a greater sense of the true reality in the scene."

How do you choose a shutter speed?

Ask yourself, "What type of photo do I want to take?" Determining shutter speed is something that requires you to consider the end goal of your photo.

"If you take a waterfall picture at a regular shutter speed, the water freezes and you get all that texture," Carlson says. "But you've also seen pictures of waterfalls where the water is smooth and silky. It's a cool effect and it's super easy to do. All you do is make sure that the camera doesn't move and you shoot with a long shutter speed. All those little details of the water running down will blend together and give you that look."

Shutter speed gives the photographer the ability to use motion — or to freeze motion — to tell a tale or

capture a vibe. Whether you choose to take that split-second snapshot with a short shutter speed or to portray the motion of subjects in a slow shutter speed photo, you're opening up narrative possibilities. Is it about capturing the moment as is or trying to portray how we perceive the moment? Or even to capture the energy of the moment instead of simply the visual details? Mastering shutter speed puts that power into your hands.
And while technical knowledge is helpful in seeking this mastery, it's practice that inevitably will build this skill for any photographer.

https://www.adobe.com/au/creativecloud/photography/discover/shutter-speed.html

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Locating Birds to photograph.

By Nasim Mansurov

Now that you have your equipment set up, you need to find birds to photograph. I recommend starting with the most common birds such as finches, sparrows and robins that are used to people and do not mind cooperating and posing for photographers. Try to develop some skills and techniques by photographing them sitting on benches, eating and flying. The best time for photography is either early mornings or late afternoons, and the same thing applies for birds. Early mornings are typically the best for bird photography, because birds actively look for food for themselves and their offspring. So try to go out and shoot some local birds and see what you can do. Review your images afterwards and see what you don't like about your pictures. Whether you have a sharpness problem or focus issues, the best way to improve your bird photography is to practice more!
Once you are done with practicing, go for a real photo shoot. Some of the best opportunities for bird photography might be very close to you. Start off by just Googling for "best birding in (your state)" or "top birding locations in (your state)". For example, if I Google for "best birding in Colorado", plenty of different links come up that point to good birding locations, some only several miles away from where I live. Many of the links will also contain detailed information on different bird species, their habitat, migration patterns and a lot more. Another great source of information on birds is to contact your local bird-watching clubs and groups. Some might even have mailing lists for sharing information on rare sightings of birds. Thanks to the big number of bird watchers, there are plenty of other online resources, books, magazines, newspapers and much more, and locating birds is not hard at all. What is hard, is locating rare and exotic birds and photographing them, especially if they are very shy.

If you have a hard time locating birds or want to photograph birds from a close distance, a local zoo or a bird sanctuary might be excellent opportunities for bird close-ups. The National Audubon Society, for example, organizes various bird-watching activities and tours that you can sign up for. There are plenty of other organizations that look for all kinds of volunteers and sometimes even volunteer photographers.

NIKON D700 @ 420mm, ISO 800, 1/1000, f/5.6

Approaching Birds

What do you do if the bird you are trying to approach gets scared and flies away? There are many different techniques to approach wild birds and I will go through what works for me. Pretty much all birds have superb vision, so it is very likely that the bird will see you first. Also, all birds have their own "comfort zones" and if you try to get any closer, they feel threatened and fly away. Different birds have different tolerance levels for human interaction. Some birds will let people pretty close, especially if they are used to them – those birds are the easiest to photograph. And then there are birds that are extremely shy, that will not let people come anywhere close. Those birds are extremely hard to photograph and you will have to understand the bird behaviour to get closer. The key to successful bird photography is to make the bird feel safe and natural. Some skilled birders can approach birds very closely, sometimes way beyond their comfort zones. How do they do it? Most of them will respond that it is all about patience. Birds feel threatened when you approach them too fast directly. They also feel threatened when you look directly at them, as any other predator would.

NIKON D700 @ 300mm, ISO 1600, 1/1250, f/5.6

So, here is my technique to approach shy birds:

1. Do NOT wear clothes with bright colors and try to blend in with the environment as much as possible. Although some photographers prefer wearing camouflage, I personally wear gray or light blue shirts with blue jeans, which work great.
2. If you are hiking and have been walking fast and all of a sudden you spot a bird that you want to photograph, slow down. Don't change your walking speed right away – slow down marginally, so that the bird does not detect sudden changes in your behavior.
3. Do NOT make sudden moves. If you need to raise your camera and take a picture, do it very slowly.
4. Turn off your cell phone or put it on silent mode. It really sucks when you are close to a bird and your phone starts ringing…
5. Once you see a bird, do NOT walk straight towards the bird, but rather walk slowly in zigzags. Sometimes walking in zig-zags is not very practical, especially if you have already scared the bird by your presence. The key is to walk slowly (sometimes 1-2 feet per minute or slower), no matter how you are approaching the bird. Also, instead of walking from heel to toe, try the other way around, keeping your weight on your back foot as you walk.
6. Try not to walk if the bird is looking at you. The best time to approach is when the bird is looking away or is busy doing something.
7. Keep your noise to a minimum. Noise is hard to control if you are walking through bushes or if you have to step on fall leaves that create a cracking sound, so watch what you are stepping on and do it very slowly to diminish the noise.
8. See if the bird is already scared – if it is staring at you and stopped doing whatever it was doing before, it means that the bird is on alert and might fly away any time. You can also tell if the bird is scared if the bird is raising its tail and releasing fecal matter (especially raptors).
9. Do NOT stare at the bird while approaching it. Animals in general perceive direct eye contact as a threat and they will flee at their first opportunity.
10. Your camera shutter will most likely scare the bird you are approaching. Therefore, I recommend shooting the bird as you approach from the distance, so that the bird gets used to the shutter clicking noise. If the bird is perched, you might want to switch to silent camera release mode (electronic shutter), so that your camera does not make loud sounds when taking pictures.

In some cases you might be lucky enough to meet a "YASJ" (young and stupid juvenile). Juvenile birds are typically very curious and will let you approach them very closely. Even if juvenile birds allow you to come very close, still try to keep your distance. If you are able to fill the viewfinder with the bird, you are already too close. Moreover, standing too close to a bird is also problematic, because only a part of the bird will be sharp, due to a shallow depth of field, so you will then have to stop down your aperture, which also translates to slower shutter speed.

Photographing Birds

Photographing birds and making beautiful pictures requires good knowledge of your photography equipment. For birds in flight, high shutter speeds are required or the bird will look blurry. I find that a minimum shutter speed of 1/1000-1/1600 for birds in flight works great for me, but in some cases slightly lower shutter speeds are also OK, depending on the size of the bird and how fast it is flapping its wings. For example, to freeze this hummingbird in flight, I used a shutter speed of 1/1600 and even then, the wings look slightly blurred, just because the bird flaps wings faster than my shutter speed:

Bokeh and clean backgrounds are other key factors to successful bird photography. In most cases, it will be hard to control the background simply because the bird will not let you walk around and plan your shot, but there are a few things you can still do to achieve good subject isolation. First, make sure that there is a good distance between the bird and the objects behind it. The greater the distance, the better the background blur (although the distance between you and the bird is actually more important). Some photographers set up clear benches near bird hot spots or at their houses, which works great because they can set up

feeders and take clear pictures of birds with a controllable background. You can find similar opportunities with bird feeders at a nearby park. Also, shooting birds in winter (depending on your climate) generally yields better results simply because tree branches are clear and birds cannot hide behind leaves. For shorebirds and other water birds that do not sit on branches, the best way to achieve good subject isolation is by laying on the ground/sand when the bird is out of the water.

Here is how I recommend photographing birds:

Shoot at high shutter speeds of 1/1000 and above to freeze the bird. For birds in flight and fast-action scenes, use even faster shutter speeds. For birds that are just sitting on benches and not being active, you can use slower shutter speeds of 1/250-1/800 and lower ISO for better image quality (a tripod or a monopod for slower shutter speeds is highly recommended).

Always focus on the nearest (to the viewer) eye of the bird. It is acceptable to have a blurred tail or other parts of the bird, but at least one eye always needs to be in focus and sharp. For birds in flight, focus on the bird's head or chest – whichever provides better contrast for the camera autofocus system.

Choose your backgrounds carefully. Pictures with objects behind the bird are not as pleasant as pictures with a smooth background.

Be patient and wait for the bird to act naturally. Images with a bird sitting on a bench are boring, so try to capture interesting action instead.

Use a blind whenever possible. One of the best blinds is your car and you could get pretty close to a bird without scaring it with your vehicle. Birds are generally not scared of cars and you could drive up fairly closely and take some amazing shots. I have taken many beautiful shots of birds directly from my car, without getting out of it. Hunting blinds also work very well if you find the right spot such as a pond or a feeder.

Having a camera flash extender such as the "Better Beamer" is very helpful for fill flash, especially to photograph birds under tree leaves or in darker areas.

Shoot lots of images. I typically shoot a single image first, then take a look and make sure that the images are sharp and in focus. If everything looks good, I will shoot the bird in bursts of 5-10 frames at a time. Having a fast camera that can handle 5-6+ frames per second is very helpful. I then go through hundreds or sometimes even thousands of pictures at home and delete the images that I do not want.

Try to position yourself with your back towards the sun. Sometimes having the sun to the far left or right is OK, but having it behind you will give you the best light.

Shoot either early in the morning or closer to the evening. You will find that early mornings or late afternoons provide the best opportunities, because the birds are active and are typically busy looking for food. I personally prefer to shoot early in the morning – that's when the birds are most active.

Try not to take pictures of birds in flight during a cloudy day. Photographs of birds with white or gray backgrounds don't look as good and are hard to deal with during post-processing.

Excerpt from https://photographylife.com/how-to-photograph-birds

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We are on the web !!

www.daptocameraclub.org.au

or

www.facebook.com/groups/560318574135732/aclub.org.au

"Move back just a little Fred....Fred!?!"

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