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is
Norm Blake**

How to Use ISO Settings in Digital Photography

by Andrew Goodall

I

ISO should be one of the easiest aspects of digital photography to master, but many beginners in photography still have a hard time understanding this fundamental camera setting.



Photo by [t.germeau](#); ISO 100, f/1.8, 1/320-second exposure.

I suspect this is because of the way it is being taught. You see, ISO started out as a property of film, and it was much easier to visualize it in terms of the old technology. So that's where I want to start my explanation, before bringing you into the 21st century with ISO today.

ISO actually started out as ASA, which stands for American Standards Association. Decades ago, a commercial film manufacturer came up with a set of numbers to define the sensitivity of different types of film. That set of numbers was accepted by the American Standards Association, so all American manufacturers could use the same system. Later, the American standard was adopted by the International Standards Organization, so ASA became ISO.

What does all that mean? Well, it means that the letters ISO didn't really stand for anything except for the name of an organization.

What is important is what ISO referred to, which was the *sensitivity of the film*. The emulsion on some films reacted quite slowly to light, and on other films much faster. Slower films had a smaller ISO number, like 25, 64, 100. Faster films had a higher number, like 200, 400, 800.

A slow film needed a relatively high level of light to create a well-exposed photo. That meant that to take a photo in darker conditions, you would need to use a fairly wide aperture and/or a fairly slow shutter speed to get a result. On the other hand, **a faster film reacted to light a lot more quickly, so it needed much less exposure to light to take a photo.**

Fast film sounds pretty good, doesn't it? A chance to take a photo in any conditions without a tri-

pod, and to freeze moving subjects with very fast shutter speeds. So why didn't everyone just use fast films all the time?



Photo by [Giuseppe Milo](#); ISO 2500, f/3.5, 1/60-second exposure.

The answer is that the advantages of fast films came with a trade-off: loss of image quality. The grains of emulsion on a fast film were larger, so a photo taken on a film with ISO 400 or 800 had a

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

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rougher, ‘grainier’ look. This may not have been a problem in a small print, but became quite apparent with big enlargements. Consequently, most professional photographers preferred to use slower films of 100 or 64 ISO for most of their work.

So is this just a lesson in ancient history? After all, you have a digital camera, so what does all this have to do with you. Well, it may surprise you to know that despite the huge revolution in technology, the essentials of ISO have not changed one bit.

Your camera should allow you the option of adjusting your ISO setting. Just like in the days of film, **if you set your ISO to a low number like 100, you will need more light to create a correct exposure.** That means that you may need to keep a tripod handy for cloudy days, and in certain low-light situations you may not always get the aperture and shutter speed settings you want. **If you set your ISO to 400 or 800, your camera will become much more sensitive to light; you will be able to shoot in exactly the same conditions without a tripod,** and with greater flexibility to choose the aperture and shutter speeds you want.

But here is the amazing part. Higher ISO settings still come with the same trade-off that once existed with film. Along with the speedier sensitivity to light, you can also expect the image to have a grainier finish. I don’t know if it is pixelation or digital noise, or a combination of both, but it is generally understood that for all their advantages, **high ISO photos come with a reduction of image quality** that becomes more obvious the more you enlarge the image.



Photo by [Archangel12](#); ISO 6400, f/3.5, 1/60-second exposure.

So there you have a quick introduction to what ISO is all about. Perhaps I am just showing my age, but I find this subject easier to explain in old-technology terms. For many people it is easier to visualize when related to something solid like film, rather than something that happens on a computer chip. Anyway, I hope this helps you if you have had trouble understanding what ISO is all about.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/how-to-use-iso-settings-in-digital-photography/>

Wedding Photography list.

Most professional photographers will have their own list of important shots that they develop over time (even if that list is in their head and isn't written down), but they should always be willing to add any special requests to their list.

Here is a sample shot list to get you thinking:

Bride Preparation:

- Getting hair and make-up done
- Dressing (keep it G-rated!)
- Maid-of-honour zipping/buttoning up the bride's dress
- Mother of the bride helping bride put on veil
- Putting on garter
- Spraying perfume
- Looking in the mirror
- With the maid-of-honour



With her parents

Groom Preparation:

- With the best man prior to getting ready
- Putting on cufflinks
- Putting on fragrance
- Father of the groom helping to put the groom's jacket on
- Father of the groom fixing the groom's tie
- Groom and the father of the groom shaking hands



With the best man after getting ready

Ceremony:

- Guests being seated
- Bride & Groom's parents being seated

- Groom, Best Man & Groomsmen awaiting the Bride
- Flower girl, ring bearer, bridesmaids and maid of honor walking down the aisle
- Bride and father of the bride walking down the aisle
- Father of the bride giving away
- Bride and Groom together at altar
- Exchanging vows
- Exchanging rings
- First kiss as a married couple
- Signing the wedding certificate
- Holding the wedding certificate
- Exiting the ceremony venue
- Getting into limo



First toast together in limo

Family – Group Shots (Be sure to get a full length and close up shot of each):

- Bride with each of her parents
- Groom with each of his parents
- Bride with her parents and siblings
- Groom with his parents and siblings
- Bride with her grandparents
- Groom with his grandparents
- Both with both sets of parents
- Both with both sets of parents and siblings
- Bride and Maid of Honour
- Bride, Maid of Honour and bridesmaids
- Groom and Best Man
- Groom, Best Man & Groomsmen
- All the women & girls
- All the men & boys

Group shot with everyone

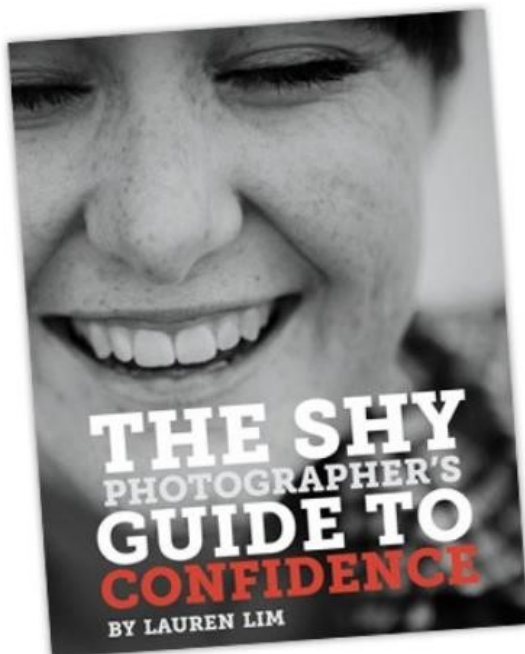
Reception:

- Parents being announced
- Bridesmaids and Groomsmen being announced
- Bride and Groom being announced
- Bride and Groom's first dance together
- Bride and Groom dancing with family members (Bride with father, Groom with Mother, Bride with father in law, Groom with mother in law)
- Best man's speech & toast to the Bride and Groom

- Toasting with champagne glasses
- Close up of the wedding cake
- Cake cutting
- Kiss after the cake cutting
- Bride throwing the bouquet
- Groom removing Bride's garter
- Bride and Groom's last dance

Remember, the above shots are to be used as a guide only.

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Why Manual Mode Isn't Always The Best Mode

By Jason D. Little

Print it out and keep it for when you really need it - when you're out shooting!



What people are really trying to say when they say pros shoot manual is that pros shoot exclusively in manual mode. The thing is, most don't. The idea that manual mode is always the best choice is a myth. Below I will present to you three reasons why manual mode isn't always the best mode and three ways in which other shooting modes get the job done.

Manual Mode Means More Adjustments

Each time you want to shoot a new scene you'll have to change settings. In a controlled environment (studio work) this won't be a concern. You can just dial in your settings and shoot away. When you're working in an environment where conditions are changing quickly or when you're consistently moving from one place to another, you want to be able to concentrate on getting the shot. Unless you're a master of shooting in manual, constantly having to change settings can be a distraction.



slon_dot_pics at Pexels

Manual Mode Means More Mistakes

Having to fiddle with your camera settings on the fly when you aren't accustomed to working in such a manner can lead to mistakes — mistakes as simple as stepping out of the sun and into the shade and not adjusting your settings.

Will you be able to take the shot again? Maybe, maybe not. It's not a risk worth taking, though.

Whether it's underexposure or overexposure, unintended motion blur or not enough depth of field, these relatively easy to make mistakes are made that much easier when you insist on shooting manual in certain situations.

JESHOOOTS.com at Pexels

Manual Mode Means Taking More Time

If you favour speed and simplicity when shooting, manual mode isn't going to give you either of those.

This is, of course, a generalization. There are photographers who are highly adept at working in manual mode. This doesn't change the reality of manual shooting, however — it can slow you down and cause you to miss shots.



Aperture Priority

Aperture priority is the go-to mode for many photographers, professional or otherwise. In this mode, you control one setting — aperture.

Set this according to how much or how little depth of field you want. If you're shooting portraits, you'll probably want shallow depth of field, so set a larger aperture. If you're shooting landscapes or architecture, more depth of field will be preferable.

In either case, you set the aperture and let the camera take care of the rest.

One of the drawbacks of aperture priority occurs when the light gets low and the camera selects a shutter speed slower than you want, which can introduce motion blur or camera shake.

Shutter Priority

In this mode, you dial in the shutter speed you want and leave the rest to the camera.

Shutter priority is especially effective in rapidly changing situations where motion matters, such as sports and street photography. Most of the time the goal is to freeze motion, so you'll usually want to use a shutter speed anywhere from 1/200th of a second to 1/500th of a second, depending on how fast your subject is moving.

One downside of using shutter priority is that you can't control depth of field. If the camera has selected a large aperture it's still possible to get blurry images because not everything will be in sharp focus.

Pixabay at Pexels

Program Mode

Don't confuse program mode with full auto. Unlike full auto, program mode still allows control over ISO — hence, why program mode is sometimes referred to as ISO priority.

While program mode selects both shutter speed and aperture, it still allows you to override either setting if you need to. Program mode, in short, works by attempting to maintain a consistent exposure from scene to scene.

Program mode might be the way out of full auto for some photographers, but it can be useful to even seasoned photographers who want to focus primarily on getting the shot and getting it as quickly and simply as possible.



rawpixel.com at Pexels



Final Thoughts

All photographers should learn to shoot in manual mode; it's the single most powerful mode on any camera, as you can do absolutely anything you want with it. But manual mode isn't always the best mode to use. Program mode, shutter priority and aperture priority each make capturing shots in various situations far more efficient than manual mode.

The fewer technical parameters you have to concern yourself with, the more you can connect with your subject. There are times when this matters more than being able to boast about shooting exclusively in manual mode.

<https://www.lightstalking.com/why-manual-mode-isnt-always-the-best-mode/>

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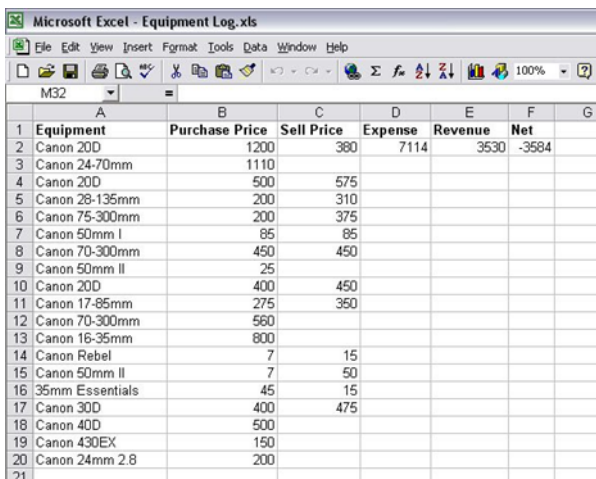
Michael Zhang

My first DSLR camera was a Canon 20D that my parents purchased for me as a graduation present back in August of 2005. We went to the store expecting to purchase the camera for \$1,599, but found that it was selling for *only* \$1,299. Boy was I excited. Looking back, I consider purchasing that 20D the worst photo-related decision I've ever made.

When other photographers see some of the lenses I own (i.e. 24-70mm, 16-35mm), they often wonder how I can afford such expensive gear. After all, I was only an unemployed college student from a middle-class family. What most people don't know is that I almost exclusively purchase my equipment used from sellers on craigslist. This article is about everything I've learned through years of buying and selling camera equipment on that site. If you have the money to purchase the gear you want new, then this article obviously isn't for you. However, if you want nicer gear without paying absurd amounts of money (maybe photography is just a serious hobby for you), then these tips might be useful to you.

First of all, something I've found very useful over the past years is keeping a detailed log of equipment transactions, since it helps me to keep track of how much I've spent on this serious hobby of mine. I do this in a Microsoft Excel file, but any spreadsheet software or website (i.e. Google spreadsheets) will do.

Here's the current state of my equipment log:



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Equipment	Purchase Price	Sell Price	Expense	Revenue	Net	
1	Canon 20D	1200	380	7114	3530	-3584	
2	Canon 24-70mm	1110					
3	Canon 20D	500	575				
4	Canon 28-135mm	200	310				
5	Canon 75-300mm	200	375				
6	Canon 50mm I	85	85				
7	Canon 70-300mm	450	450				
8	Canon 50mm II	25					
9	Canon 20D	400	450				
10	Canon 17-85mm	275	350				
11	Canon 70-300mm	560					
12	Canon 16-35mm	800					
13	Canon Rebel	7	15				
14	Canon 50mm II	7	50				
15	35mm Essentials	45	15				
16	Canon 30D	400	475				
17	Canon 40D	500					
18	Canon 430EX	150					
19	Canon 24mm 2.8	200					
20							
21							

The columns I add entries to are “equipment”, “purchase price”, and “sell price”. The values in “expense”, “revenue”, and “net” (cheesy names, I know) are automatically calculated (i.e. expense is “=SUM(B:B)/2”). As I add purchases and sales to the log, I see how much money I've given, how much I've received, and what my net spending (or earning) is at the current state.

In the log above, you can see that I've spent a net of \$3,584 on all the camera equipment I currently have. If I were to sell everything I currently have at very reasonable prices right now, my chart tells me that I would have only spent a total of \$300-\$500 on all the photography I've done since I purchased

that 20D back in 2005. That's roughly the cost of the point and shoot camera I used throughout high school before it finally broke during a trip to china! In fact, the reason I'm still at a net loss right now is because of the few bad choices I've made along the way (20D, 24-70mm, 70-300mm). If I had followed what I'm going to write in this article from the very beginning, I would have actually ended up making money while using professional gear at the same time.

So what *have* I learned?

Know the Street Value of Camera Gear

This doesn't mean knowing how much a camera body or lens retails for. This means knowing the average price a certain piece of equipment is being successfully sold for on craigslist. After all, if you don't know how much something is worth, how will you know when you see it being sold for a good deal? If you see multiple listings of a certain piece of equipment that are roughly in the same price range, then that's probably pretty close to the street value.

Buy Low, Sell High

Now that you know the street value of what you want, avoid it. If you buy it at street value now, you'll have to sell it at lower than what you paid for if you ever sell it later down the road. If you look at my equipment log, you'll see that most of the time I sell something, it's either for the price I originally paid or higher. I've often used a lens or body for quite a long time and many actua-

tions before selling it for a good amount more than I paid.

Look For Packages

It's pretty much always the case that someone selling multiple items together as a package must sell it for significantly less than the sum of each item separately. They are, in a sense, exchanging the extra money they could earn for the time they save by selling it all at once. This presents a great opportunity for the photographer looking for a good deal on a particular item in the package. If a package you come across includes a piece of equipment you want along with many pieces you don't want, and is extremely cheaply priced, buy it all and sell off everything you don't want.

If the price was good enough, there's a good chance you'll end up paying nothing for the gear you wanted after selling off the rest.

Always Sell Items Individually

This is pretty much the previous point reversed. Buying items in packages and selling them individually can get you free gear and maybe even allow you to pocket some cash with your free gear. Buying items individually and selling them in a package will probably lose you money.

Camera Bodies Depreciate Like Cars and Computers

This is what I wish someone would have told me before I started out, since I sold the original 20D I purchased for \$1,200 a couple years later for \$380. The moment you take the first photo on a camera you purchased new, the value of the camera instantly plummets. Furthermore, camera technology advances very, very quickly, and the next model of your new camera will be released within the next couple years. When this happens, your camera instantly depreciates even more. The moral of the story is, buy camera bodies used and from a couple generations back (since depreciation will be much slower). Also, "upgrade" often (you'll want to anyway, right?). This allows you to constantly move up in camera technology without paying extra money.

Professional Lenses Don't Depreciate Like Camera Bodies

Lenses made for the Canon EF and Nikon F lens mounts are interchangeable and can be used on cameras from as far back as 1987 and 1959 (respectively) and as recent as the latest models. Lens quality and features do not improve nearly as fast as the camera bodies they're used on, so it's possible hold onto a professional lens for many years without losing much of its street value. The caveat is that if you accidentally break the lens this tip goes out the window, so take very good care of your gear. Always use a filter.

I've found that top of the line lenses (like Canon's L series) depreciate least quickly, and probably won't break or fail on you due to their spectacular build quality. As a result, I don't own any EF-S or third party lenses, though I'm sure you could go for those and do just fine as long as you go for high quality ones that get good reviews.

Jump At Ridiculously Good Lens Deals

Even if you don't plan on adding the lens to your collection, you will be able to try out a wide range of lenses while pocketing money after you're done with it. People sometimes pay to rent lenses they're interested in, which seems funny to me (unless you're pro, rich, employed, or all of the above). Why rent when you can buy, sell, and profit?

People also talk of variations in sharpness and quality from lens to lens. This is definitely true, but is all the more reason to buy lenses used on craigslist. Some people buy and return a lens repeatedly in order to find a "good copy", but buying and selling the lens on craigslist will help you do the same thing while potentially putting money in your pocket.

<https://petapixel.com/2009/05/20/pro-camera-gear-on-a-student-budget/>



Portrait Composition: 6 Simple Tips to Get Beautiful Photos Every Time

by Jo Plumridge

Taking stunning portraits is a complex business. For most photographers starting out, it's hard enough to remember to ask their subject to look animated, let alone to take notice of surroundings and composition. But a portrait is about much more than just a subject.

In this article, I will look at some **simple composition tips** that will leave you with stunning results every time.

1. Start with the eyes

Absolutely every good portrait has at least one thing in common and that's pin-sharp eyes. Whatever composition and style you choose, a portrait will have no impact if the eyes are soft. The quickest way to make sure that eyes are sharp is to choose an appropriate focus point manually on your camera, which you then place between the eyes like a bulls eye! This will ensure sharpness. Another trick with your subject's eyes is to keep them in the top third of your photograph (unless your subject is full bodied in the bottom third of the photo). This is the most natural place for the eyes to be and is where a viewer will automatically look for them – thus making it easier for them to connect with the subject.



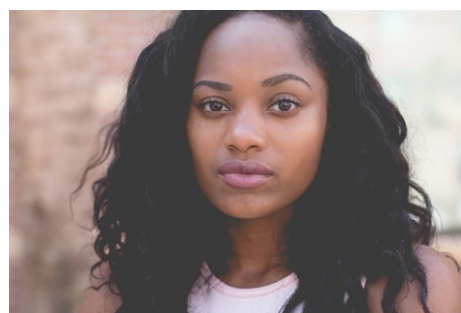
2. If you're going to crop, don't be half-hearted!

Remember that a portrait is about the subject and they should always be the focus of your image. One of the easiest ways to draw attention to your subject is to zoom in until their face fills the frame. Do not be afraid to go in for the crop!

There's nothing worse than a half-hearted crop, whereby one foot or hand has been cropped off with tons of dead space on the other side of the subject. If you're going to crop, it needs to be a strong crop, done evenly on both sides. Look for the strongest features in your subject and focus on those.

3. Use your depth of field

When pros shoot portraits in a studio environment, we have complete control over the background we're using. But sometimes, when we're out on location, the background won't be very glamorous and could even be fairly distracting. Or, you could be trying to photograph one person in the middle of a crowd. Whatever obstacles are in your background, the easiest way to deal with them is by controlling your depth of field.



By making your subject sharp and your background blurry with a small depth of field, you focus the attention on the subject, whilst getting rid of any distractions in the background. For a head and shoulders shot, look at using around f4-f5.6. Do remember, however, that depth of field will be more visible with longer focal lengths and specifically designed lenses for portraiture. Depth of field will be more visible with longer focal lengths and specifically designed lenses for portraiture.

4. Check your headroom

If you are photographing your subject with background around them, do be careful not to include too much headroom. You need your subject to appear balanced in the frame – they are the focus of your image after all! Too much headroom distracts the viewer.

Whilst there are no hard and fast rules, try to keep in mind that your headroom should decrease the more that you zoom in.



looking out of the frame.

6. And finally – don't forget about framing

We've talked about zooming in to add focus to your subject, but sometimes portraits are full length. And full-length shots can be tricky. So, rather than leaving subjects standing in the middle of nowhere, looking a bit lost, try framing them with the environment around them.

Doorways, windows and arches can all add visual interest and provide a natural frame for your subject to interact with.

Remember that portraiture is all about capturing a relaxed and natural shot of your subject. By using these simple composition tips, you'll make this job far easier!

<https://contrastly.com/portrait-composition-6-simple-tips-get-beautiful-photos-every-time/?s=cfg4bdoi3ubwaisqtrns>

5. Don't just go with the traditional

The standard portrait is usually taken vertically, with direct eye contact from the subject. And this often produces stunning results. But part of the creativity of composition is learning to try new things. Something as simple as taking a portrait horizontally can make a big difference.

Try placing your subject to one side of the frame, shooting from a different angle (stand on a ladder for instance), or experimenting with your subjects



to

ISO

100	Full Sun, no shade
200	Lots of sun, could be in partial shade or an overcast day out in the open
200	Inside on a sunny day, directly by a large window
400	In the shade on a sunny day or under a covered area on an overcast day
700	Inside on a sunny or overcast day (near a window)
640-800	Sun is starting to set and less light
800	Inside, quite a distance from a window (sunny outside)
850-1000	Inside, quite a distance from a window (overcast day)
1250	Inside during the evening, light bulbs are the only source of light
1600	Inside a dark room where there is a light source (theatre, school production, etc)

Noise
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