

# When And How To Use A Neutral Density Filter

by David Peterson [5 comments](#)



There are a number of filters on the market today. You've probably heard of polarizers, warming filters, and cooling filters, but what about neutral density filters? The language sounds overly complicated, but rest assured it's not. If you've ever wondered what one these filters does, and how you might use it in your own photography, you are about to find out.

## Turning the volume down on light

Sometimes there's so much light outside that it limits your creative options as a photographer. In the middle of the day, the sun gets very bright. If you don't use a fast shutter speed, your image will end up overexposed. Most of us use fast shutter speeds in the middle of the day anyway (your camera will select it for you if you're shooting in automatic mode), but that's not always the best choice. Certain photographic effects, like motion blurs, require you to use slower shutter speeds.

A [neutral density filter](#) turns down the volume on the light. With less light coming through the lens, you won't need to use as fast of a shutter speed to get a correct exposure. The same goes with aperture and ISO speed. With a neutral density filter you will have a little more freedom to use wider apertures or larger ISO speeds during the middle of the day, something that's useful for a number of photographic effects.