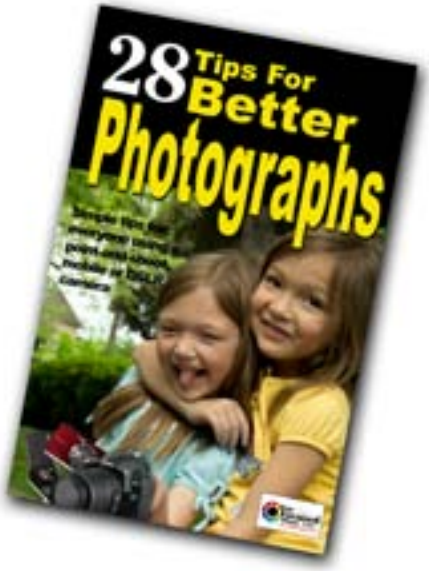
28 Tips For Better Photographs



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3413 Roger B Chaffee Memorial Drive SE
Suite 101
Grand Rapids, MI 49548
www.stayfocusedpress.com

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Introduction

Open virtually any book on how to use a digital camera and you're immediately hit with terms, words and procedures that make you cringe from confusion and frustration.

Besides, who has the time to read through a technical manual on how to use a digital camera. This is especially true if you want a quick suggestion on how to avoid a single problem.

Here are 28 simple tips to make your photos better.

It doesn't matter what camera type you're using; these suggestions are written for everyone regardless of whether you're using a powerful digital camera, a point-and-shoot or one of today's popular cell phone cameras.

It's time to step away from the straight-on shots and discover how to liven up your photos.

We'll show you how setting up the subject on the screen in a slightly different way can achieve a more pleasing and creative photo. Even if you are not trying to be a professional photographer, following these simple tips may give that impression. Facebook friends and Twitter followers will see how great your photos are. You can also revel in the satisfaction of having taken a great photo when looking back.

Too many photographers probably believe that software and their computer can fix any bad photo they snap with their digital camera. Yes, there are several competent programs that can improve photographs that need some help, such as Photoshop, Elements, Picassa and others.

Nevertheless, the idea that you can "fix it in Photoshop" shouldn't be a license for you to practice lazy camera techniques.

Your digital camera already has several adjustments for capturing quality photographs under a variety of conditions and situations. Keep in mind that adjusting your camera for the best capture not only produces a better photograph than an image that you try to fix with software later, but doing so also saves a lot of time.

Your goal should be to start with a properly exposed photograph directly from your camera, even if you choose to enhance the color, tweak the contrast or lighten the shadows later with software.

There's no need to read this book from front to back because we've written the tips so you can use them individually.

So jump right in!

Get Down

When photographing kids keep in mind that their faces are closer to the ground than your camera is when you're standing.

The reason to keep this in mind is that you're pointing your camera downward when taking photos from your viewpoint (standing). The result is that you're getting the tops of their heads and may miss the expression on their face as in the photo on the left.

If, however, you get down to their level, you've lowered the viewpoint to that of the child (as in photograph on the right, above). This photograph shows much more of her face and it's easy for anyone to see that her expression is quite different from the photograph on the left.

Normal Angle Is Best For People

Don't be afraid to kneel, crouch or even lie down to see how the photograph changes. The camera height changes your view of the subject and its relationship with the foreground and background. This is true even for landscape photographs...the foreground changes from kneeling to standing.

Move In Closer

When you first see a “picture moment” you may be tempted to take the picture quickly because you don’t want to disturb the subject.

The result is often a “microscopic” photograph of your subject similar to photo below left. The toddler’s face is so small that it’s difficult to identify her.

By simply moving closer to the subject, I’m able to see much more of the same toddler. It takes, therefore, only a few steps to “enlarge” the photo.

The following shows a side-by-side comparison that should bring home the idea very clearly.

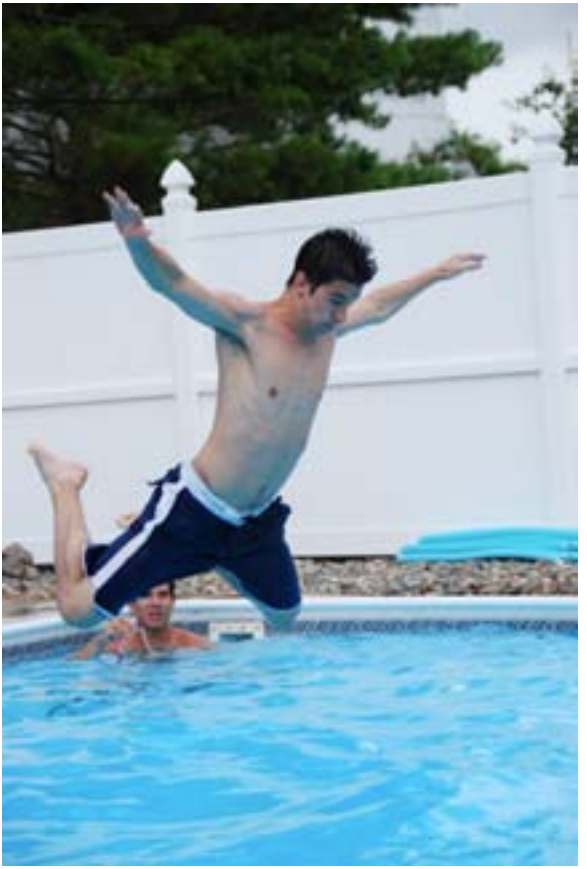
Patience Counts

Today's cameras make it easy for you to snap exciting action photos. Here's an obvious but often overlooked tip for taking advantage of one of your camera's impressive capability:

BE PATIENT — BE READY

A common practice for many photographers is to snap as soon as they see the action begin. The photograph below is an example. It shows that our young swimmer has started his run down the diving board. I stopped the action using Sport mode on my camera.

A few minutes later, a second diver takes to the air. This time, however, I waited patiently until his body was fully extended in the air — just before a huge — but intentional — belly flop. The "pose" tells the story:



Patience Counts Again

Sometimes the only way to catch the perfect photo is to snap several photographs until you're satisfied with the desired result.

The photograph on the left is an example. I used a slow shutter speed (1/60th of a second) to retain the feeling of motion. My goal was to "freeze" the young girl's face, yet convey movement. After taking about twenty photos, I finally snapped one that I liked by being persistent (and patient).

I took about twenty photos similar to this one using a relatively slow shutter speed. While it captures the motion of the young girl, overall the photo is too blurry.

I snapped the photo on the right while the young girl was at the top of her swing where her velocity was zero. I was able to stop most of the motion because I waited patiently for this exact moment.

See the following pages for more information on shutter speed.

More About Shutter Speed

The shutter is a mechanical device inside the camera positioned directly in front of the sensor. It's electronically controlled to open and then close for a varying length of time. This time period is known as the camera's *shutter speed*.

A shutter that opens for only a short time allows less light to reach the sensor than a shutter than opens for a longer time. Let's say this a different way: a slow shutter speed implies a longer exposure time while a fast shutter speed implies a shorter exposure time.

Turn the command dial so that S (Shutter Priority) is the current mode.

Let's see how your camera refers to the shutter speed. Power on your camera and turn the mode dial to the shutter priority mode (usually indicated by an S or Tv).

Spin the command dial and you'll see that the value in the center of the LCD changes to, for example, 1/60 or 1/125. A larger value, 1/60 for example, indicates a shutter speed of one-sixtieth of a second while a smaller value, 1/125 for example, indicates a faster shutter speed of one-hundred twenty-fifth of a second. As you can see, these values usually indicate a fraction of a second.

A camera's shutter speed also changes the way action or movement in a scene is captured in a photograph. You'll want to use a fast shutter speed to freeze fast-moving subjects such as runners or racing cars. Conversely, you'll want to use a slow shutter speed to blur moving subjects to create special effects such as flowing water.

More About Shutter Speed

The value in the LCD changes to numbers, for example 1/200 or 1/160, as you spin the mode dial. A smaller value (1/160) indicates a shutter speed of one-one hundred sixtieth of a second. A larger value (1/200) indicates a faster shutter speed of one-two hundredth of a second.

A camera's shutter speed also changes the way action or movement in a scene is captured in a photograph. You'll want to use a fast shutter speed to freeze fast-moving subjects such as runners or racing cars. Conversely, you'll want to use a slow shutter speed to blur moving subjects to create special effects such as flowing water.

When you set your camera to shutter priority mode and select a specific shutter speed, your camera automatically sets the aperture to produce the proper exposure.

Capturing The Motion

Use a short shutter speed when you want to freeze the action of your subject. I used Sport mode for the following shot to stop the motion of the young girl on the left.

By deliberately using a longer shutter speed, such as 1/30th or 1/15th of a second, I've captured the subject as she's moving. Although the young girl is no longer in sharp focus as you can see in the photograph on the right, you can almost feel the swinging motion.

Setting Sport Mode

Set Sports mode on your camera by turning the mode dial to the Sport mode icon (it's usually indicated by a symbol on the mode dial).

Some manufacturers refer to Sport mode as Action mode.

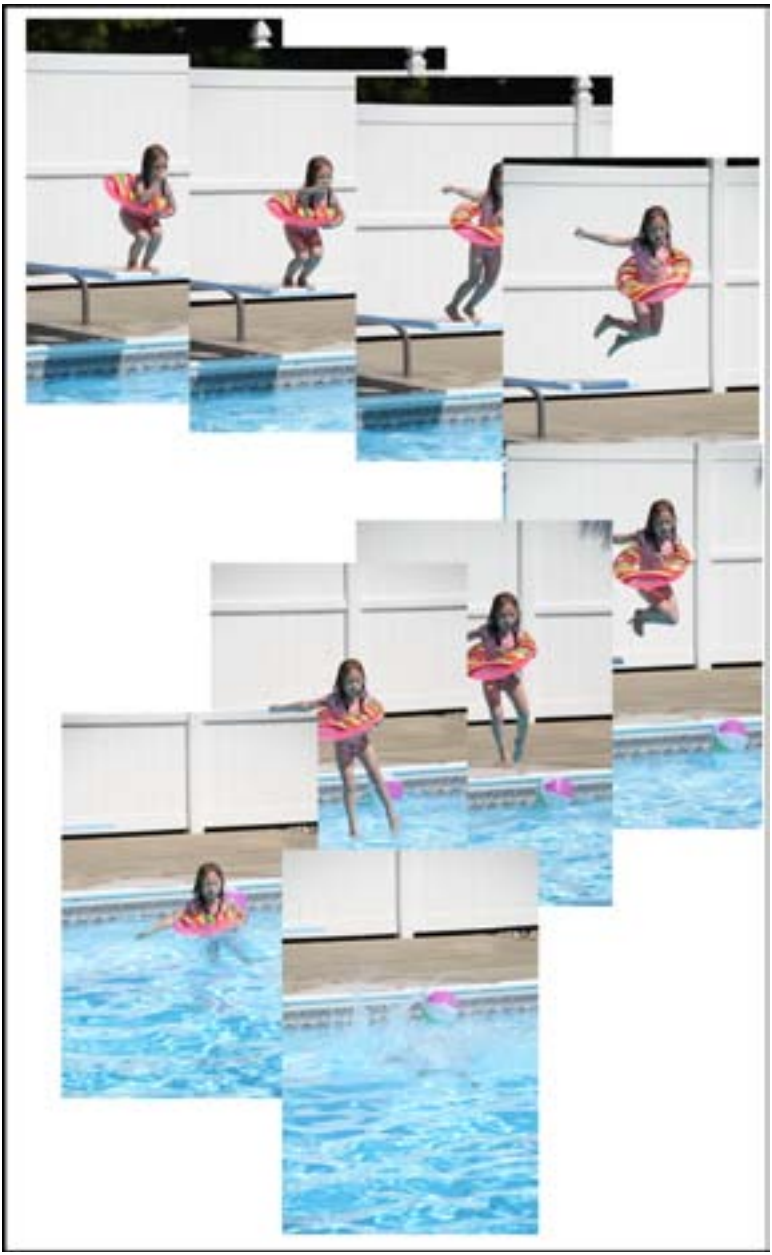
Continuous Shooting

Most digital SLR and many point-and-shoots have a feature called continuous shooting that lets you capture several photos in a very short period of time. (Continuous shooting is also called burst mode on some cameras).

The advantage of using continous shooting is that you're snapping a series photos instead of just one. If you're at a soccer match, for example, you can capture a series of photos showing your star player by holding down the shutter. You'll then have several photographs showing her as she runs towards the action, swivels her leg into launch position behind her, quickly drives her kicking shoe forward and finally strikes the ball.

On a recent outing, I caught one of our future diving stars practicing at the pool. With the camera set to take continuous photos, I quickly fired off nine shots as she made her big leap into the water.

Here's a miniature composite:



Setting Continuous Mode

You'll probably find the Continuous mode as a Shooting mode option. The Shooting mode is usually indicated by a symbol or something similar to that symbol.

Some manufacturers refer to Continuous shooting mode as Burst mode.

Direction Of The Light

Snapping photos of people outdoors offers a wide variety of lighting challenges as well as opportunities. Observe and take advantage of the direction from which light is falling on your subject.

The lighting in the following photograph originates predominantly from behind the subject. This backlighting produces shadows on much of the girl's face.

I turned the subject slightly for the following photograph so the light is coming from the side. This is not only a simple thing to do, but also adds a more “rounded” and fuller look to the facial features.

Walk Around To Find Best Lighting

The amount of shadow on the subject changes as the angle to the light changes. You can change the shadow simply by walking around the subject. You can see this for yourself. Turn on a light in a room and stand near the light. You won’t see shadows at first but as you move away, the shadows get larger.

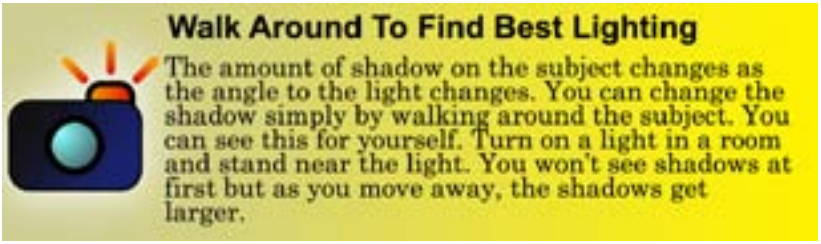
Lighting Tricks

Portraits are usually composed using soft, even lighting. However, you can put strong and high contrast lighting to good use by carefully posing your subject.

I snapped the following photograph in the shade where the light was soft. This type of lighting made the young girl's skin tones equally soft.

For the following photo, I've placed the subject in a location that has strong side lighting. I like the effect on the highlighted side of the face.

You'll need to be careful not to overexpose the highlights in these types of situations.



Frame Cleverly

I managed to snap the first photograph on the following page over a wooden fence. The colorful rock formation by itself makes for a very picturesque photo.

I then decided to kneel behind a wooden fence and use it to frame the rock formation for the bottom photograph. This time the rock formation was framed by the fence creating an interesting alternative to the first photo.

Framing The Subject

Consider using foreground elements to frame your subjects. A frame not only adds depth but also welcomes a veiwer to the photograph and creates a point of reference. Use elements such as **tree branches, windows, and doorways or even a fence** such as in our example here, to frame wide or long shots.

The Eyes Have It

If you ask your friends what they notice first in a photograph of a person, they'll probably tell you that it's the eyes that catch and hold their attention. Here's a few examples of how the eyes make a difference.

I've pretty much filled the viewfinder with the face of this little one in the following photograph. Her eyes, however are focused downward and therefore pointing away from the photo.

The young girl in the following photograph was looking directly at me when I snapped the photograph. Although she has a very serious look on her face, her eyes draw me into the photo.

The following is another photograph of a young lady who's looking directly at the camera. Her large eyes become the center of attention and help "make the photo work."

I've used a slightly different technique in the following photograph. I decided to move in and eliminate the forehead and the chin. The result is a photo that totally emphasizes the child's bright, compelling blue eyes.

I think you'll be rewarded if you are patient and wait for the subject's eyes to meet the lens.

A complimentary tip - long ago my mentor taught me that before pressing the shutter button, I should make sure that the lens was carefully focused on the eyes. These have remained essential words of advice ever since.

Turn Your Camera

When you're taking a picture of a tall object, such as this mountain in the following photograph on the left, your first reaction may be to take the photo in vertically (or what is often called portrait orientation).

Notice, however, the difference in the photograph on the right. All I did was simply to turn the camera horizontally and by doing so, I was able to include more of the pine tree's branches in the photograph. The horizontal photo (called landscape orientation) emphasizes the breadth of the mountain base and the trees help to frame the mountain very nicely.

The Long And Short of It

Sometimes you may have a difficult time deciding how best to capture your scene. Fortunately with digital, shooting that extra picture is nearly free. So go ahead — press that shutter button again and again.

It's not always easy when you're out in the wilderness and seeing all the beauty that is all around you on how best to take that photo. What is going to look better: horizontal or vertical?

Well don't fret, just go ahead and try both ways and then make your decision afterwards.

One advantage of shooting vertical because it emphasizes the depth of the scene. But since there is no right or wrong, you decide.

Take a Short Walk

A great photograph is sometimes just a short walk away from where you're standing or driving.

The first photograph on on the next page is an example. What a view! I jumped out of the car and snapped the gorgeous Grand Tetons from the road at the Jackson Lake Dam.

My initial thought was that here's a view that can't miss. However, a quick in-camera review revealed the orange floats in the foreground.

I decided to walk twenty feet to the left and snapped the bottom photograph (see following page). The objectionable orange floats disappeared and a sliver of beach appeared in the viewfinder to produce what I think is a more interesting shot.

Therefore, keep walking if you don't like where you're standing...there might be a terrific opportunity just a few feet away.

Wide is Nice

In one of the other parts of the book I mentioned getting close to the subject. This isn't always the best method in landscape photography for many reasons. Many photographers, for example, zoom in close to the subject. The first photograph on the following page is an example. You can see that this photo shows the rock formations in great detail.

I think we can agree that it's a nice shot but notice the difference in the bottom photograph. I zoomed out to take in the widest view possible. In so doing, I've framed the formation nicely with the surrounding pine trees. At the same time, the pines add to the depth of the photo.

Step Up

An old scraggly tree can often be a great photo opportunity. Here's an indirect landscape shot on the left.

I made the tree the main subject in this photograph while the mountains are still clearly visible in the background.

Because the idea was to make the tree more interesting, I moved closer to it to exaggerate its large root. Although I moved closer to the tree, the red mountains are still visible in the background to add color and dimension to the photograph.

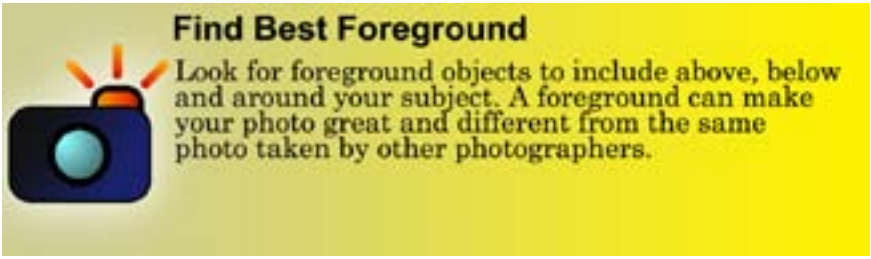
Getting Down To Business

One technique for turning an ordinary landscape into a more interesting landscape is to use the ground or ground covering as a way to emphasize distance.

This beautiful historic building, adorned with bright gold trim sits in the center of Brussels. The photo shows the structure's intricate detail and is typical of how several people would photograph it.

To add a different twist, I placed the camera close to the ground so that the cobblestones becme part of an added perspective:

Don't be afraid to kneel or even lay down – you're a tourist and you'll never see these people again. Besides you'll have a different photo from what everyone else is likely to snap of the same scene.



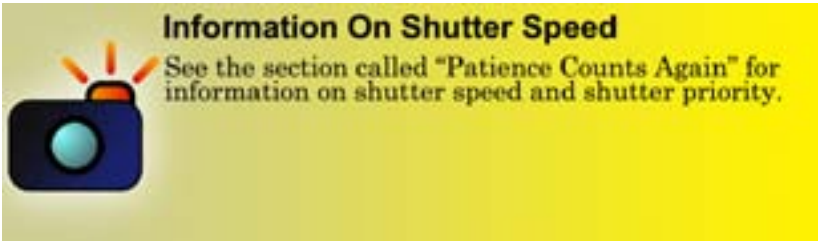
Up, Up & Away

If you've flown before you know there's beauty even at 30,000 feet and 600 miles per hour. On the other hand, it presents several photographic challenges that you won't face on the ground.

Here's some suggestions that I've learned while capturing some of this beauty when flying way up high.

* Ask for a window seat on left side of the aircraft. Approaches to landing are most often made with left hand turns.
* Turn off the camera flash.
* When the light is dim, set the ISO to 800 or higher.
* Avoid shots when the sun is shining directly at the windows of your aircraft.
* Rest the camera lens gently against the window.
* Use a shutter speed of 1/250 or faster for takeoffs and landings.
* At cruise, you'll be able to use a shutter speed of 1/125.

The following photographs are examples from what I've learned and should give you good ideas on how you can use your camera from 30,000 or so feet away from the subject.



We passed over the Rockies on an early morning flight. The snow capped peaks make for a great contrast to the dark mountain base.

Shortly after takeoff, the aircraft passes through the lower layer of clouds on the way to open skies. The sun is starting to peek through the upper layer.

The following is another attractive formation in the Rockies. I was lucky to have the warm color of the morning sunrise shed its even light on the mountains.

The following photograph proves there's beauty closer to the earth, too. It's a shot of a picturesque river on approach to the Munich Airport.

Soft Tufts Of Floating Cotton - Photographing Clouds

When the fluffy clouds appear overhead I often think it's time to grab the camera. There's something magical about capturing these soft tufts of cotton. It's easy to capture those puff balls.

I framed the large cloud formation in the following photograph using the lovely hanging willow branches. Although the clouds show up with lots of detail, I'd like to see a more dramatic effect.

I decreased the exposure slightly to add more impact in the following photograph:

You can do this easily by adjusting the exposure compensation by -1 stop in your camera. For an even more dramatic effect, you can reduce the exposure by - 2 stops.

More About Exposure Compensation

The perfect exposure retains details in both the highlights and shadows. This sounds simple enough but for your camera it may be as difficult as you trying to park a large SUV in a very small garage. If there isn't enough exposure, the image is too light and details are lost in the highlights. On the other hand, if there is too little exposure, the image is too dark and details are lost in the shadows.

You'll certainly be confronted at some point when the subject is too light or too dark. This is an example of when it's time to use *exposure compensation*.

Exposure compensation is simply a "sliding scale" found on most digital cameras, usually indicated with a "plus/minus" sign. The sliding scale usually ranges from -2.0 (darker) on the left to +2.0 on the right (lighter). An indicator compensation adjustment is currently set. It usually appears in the middle (0) on the scale which means the camera will make its exposure and take the picture with no input by you the photographer. In simple terms, moving the slider makes the next photo you take darker or lighter.

Exposure compensation is simply a "sliding scale" found on most digital cameras. It's usually indicated by this symbol  on most cameras.

The sliding scale usually ranges from -2.0 (darker) on the left to +2.0 on the right (lighter).

An indicator shows where the exposure compensation adjustment is currently set. It usually appears in the middle on the scale which means the camera will make its exposure and take the picture with no input by you as the photographer.

More About Exposure Compensation

Keep in mind that you're not setting the actual exposure settings because that is still the job of the camera's computer. You are, however, telling the camera that you are not completely satisfied with its calculations and want to adjust them slightly.

If you want to get a bit more technical, the amount you increase or decrease the exposure is specified in stops. For example, to increase the exposure 1 stop, you specify +1 to open the aperture or slow down the shutter speed.

Increase the exposure (+) to lighten the photo.
This is useful in situations where the background is much lighter than the subject, or when photographing very light objects, such as white china on a white tablecloth.

Decrease the exposure (-) to darken the photo.
This is useful in situations where the background is much darker than the subject, or when photographing very dark objects, such as black china on a black tablecloth.

Winter Wonderland

We get an abundance of snow here in west Michigan every winter. Most of us complain about the snow and cold but others decide to brave the winter weather and "enjoy" it. After all, there's plenty of life in the brisk cold.

Here Kris is celebrating the completion of her snowman. Although the sun is shining, the yard is in the shade of the trees thereby keeping her face in the shade and the snowman a little "muddy"as you can see in the photograph on the left.

I've managed to reduce the effect of the shade and made her smile standout more simply by using the camera's exposure compensation and increasing the exposure by +1.

Information On Exposure Compensation

See the section called "Soft Tufts Of Floating Cotton - Photographing Clouds" for information on exposure compensation.

Avoiding Orange-tinted Photos

Although we're gradually phasing out tungsten light bulbs in our homes, they're still popular for indoor lighting. These tungsten light bulbs are also the reason for the orangish tint or bluish tint that you often see in the faces of your subjects.

To remove the color cast, you'll need to select an appropriate white balance. Virtually every digital camera and even most camera phones let you set the white balance for your camera.

Photographs that have either an orange-tint or blue-tint are probably because you didn't use the correct white balance setting. You've probably see photographs, especially those taken indoors, where the subject looks a bit orange.

Notice the difference in the two photographs on the next page. The photograph on the left is an example of an incorrect white balance setting but the photograph on the right uses the correct white balance setting.

The proper white balance setting in this situation is tungsten.

More About Setting The White Balance

Keep in mind that photos can look too orange or too blue even if the subject looks OK to your naked eyes. White balance is simply making an adjustment to get the color you want. Setting the white balance is quite easy and because you can preview the photos on your LCDs there's no reason not to get the right color balance.

You need to select white balance (WB) on your camera which is usually a button marked WB. You can then set a different white balance depending on your situation.

AUTO / Camera sets the white balance


DAYLIGHT / Camera adds warm tones


CLOUDY / Camera adds warm tones


SHADE / Camera adds warm tones


TUNGSTEN / Camera adds cool tones


FLUORESCENT / Camera adds warm (red)tones.


FLASH / Camera adds warm tones


CUSTOM / Photographer sets custom white balance

Avoiding Blue-tinted Photos

You should also consider the white balance setting while taking photographs outdoors. Keep in mind that photos that you take in the open shade, such as in the photograph below on the left, can often have a blue tint. The photograph on the right uses the correct white balance setting.

The proper white balance setting in this situation is shade.

More About Setting The White Balance

Keep in mind that photos can look too orange or too blue even if the subject looks OK to your naked eyes. White balance is simply making an adjustment to get the color you want. Setting the white balance is quite easy and because you can preview the photos on your LCDs there's no reason not to get the right color balance.

You need to select white balance (WB) on your camera which is usually a button marked WB. You can then set a different white balance depending on your situation.

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SHADE / Camera adds warm tones


TUNGSTEN / Camera adds cool tones


FLUORESCENT / Camera adds warm (red)tones.


FLASH / Camera adds warm tones


CUSTOM / Photographer sets custom white balance

More About White Balance

As its name suggests, white balance removes or adjusts the overall color of an image so objects that appear white in your scene also appear white in your photos. To do this, your camera depends on the "color temperature" of the light source and refers to the relative warmth or coolness of white light.

Keep in mind that most light sources are not 100% white but have a specific "color temperature." A low color temperature shifts light towards red while a high color temperature shifts light towards blue. Different light sources emit light at different color temperatures, which produces the color cast.

The unit of measurement for light temperature is Kelvin (K), named for its inventor, Lord Kelvin. The following table shows approximate temperatures of light sources that might affect your photography:

More About White Balance

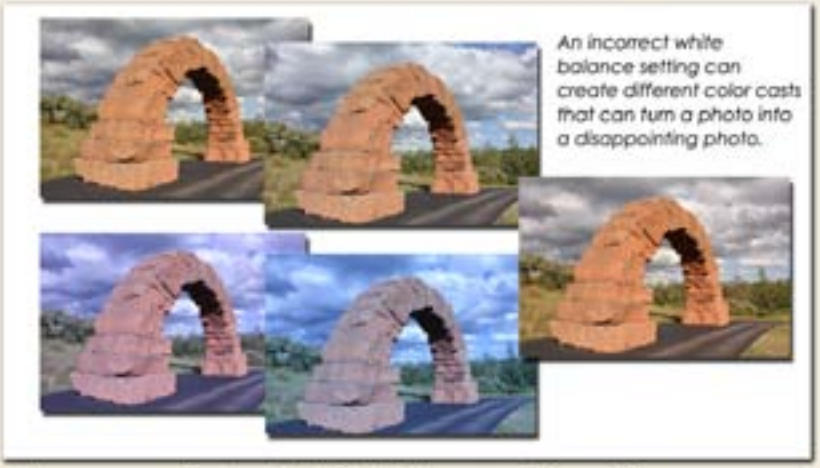
Light source	Color Temperature in degrees K
Candle Flame	1000-2000
Incandescent (Tungsten)	2500-3500
Sunrise / Sunset (clear skies)	3000-4000
Fluorescent Lamps	4000-5500
Electronic Flash	5000-5500
Bright overhead sun, clear sky	5000-6500
Cloudy Sky / Shade	6500-8000
Blue Sky	9,000
Overcast / Heavy cloud cover	9000-10,000

Why is it so important to understand white balance? An incorrect white balance (WB) setting can create blue, orange or even green color casts that can turn an otherwise good photo into a disappointing photo.

When you press the shutter button, your camera considers the overall color of the scene and calculates what it determines to be the automatic white balance (AWB). However, your camera can be tricked, especially if one color, say green, dominates the scene or if there is no natural white present in the scene.

More About White Balance

In other words, your camera must find a reference point that represents white. It then calculates all other colors based on this white point. For example, if you photograph a halogen light shining on a white wall, the wall in the photo will have a yellow cast although the wall to you appears white. If, however, your camera knows the wall is supposed to be white, it'll then compensate all other colors in the scene accordingly.



An incorrect white balance setting can create different color casts that can turn a photo into a disappointing photo.

When you understand white balance, you'll avoid or overcome color casts that your camera may create. You'll also become a better photographer because you'll be improving your skills under a greater range of lighting conditions.

Flash Isn't Just For Low Light Situations

A bright sun or other light source can cause shadows to hide part of your subject. The built-in flash of your camera provides the simple fix in these types of situations. The built-in flash is an easy, effective way to add light to dark areas of your scene.

The photograph on the left shows a common situation when shooting outdoors. Although the main subject (the building) is exposed nicely, the tree in the photograph is a bit dark.

When you use this technique outdoors, it's referred to as *fill flash* where the additional light fills the areas of the subject that are in shadows.

Fill flash is used most of the time to add more light to faces in a scene. But you'll find many other uses for the flash when you want to even out the lighting of a scene. This is true even when you're outside during the daytime.


Using Flash Outdoors
Use the flash outdoors to add light to the subject even when you think enough light is available. Fill flash fills in harsh shadows and adds light to subjects in shade but with bright backgrounds.
People may think you are crazy taking photos outdoors with flash but remember: The pros aren't afraid to use flash outdoors.

Shooting Buildings At Night

You've probably seen shimmering and colorful lights in nighttime photography and even wondered how the photographer was able to do it without the images becoming blurry.

The blur of the building and building lights comes from *camera shake*. In this photo, the camera automatically set such a long shutter speed that no photographer could hold it steady for that length of time. The typical way to "fix" the blur is to use a tripod.

The problem is that you can't always carry a tripod with you even though you still need to keep your camera steady when you're taking night shots. The answer is setting your camera on a sturdy, flat surface instead of using a tripod. This will help eliminate, or at least greatly reduce, the chances of camera shake and a blurry nighttime photo.

Bustling Nighttime Action

If you like taking photos of your exciting, bustling nighttime environment, you may have discovered that either the flash is impractical or that you're not allowed to use a flash, even though the lighting is dim.

You're dealing with at least two challenges in these photo situations: exposure time and low light. However, by boosting the ISO, you can use a shorter exposure.

Also remember to hold the camera as steady as possible to help keep the image sharp. I formed a "human tripod" for the photograph on the right with the two elbows and the camera firmly braced against the my head. You should hold your camera in a similar fashion to keep it steady. Look for a solid surface such as a ledge, table, rail, etc., on which to place your arms.

Tricky Landscape Is Washed Out

Beach scenes and winter scenes can be tough to photograph for basically the same reason: the bright sun can cause the scene to appear to be too light and even washed out.

You can, fortunately, adjust the exposure similar to what I mentioned in the “The Sky Is Too Light” section.

Set -1 for the exposure compensation but don’t be afraid to use -2 or more for the exposure compensation if needed.

Subject Is Too Dark

There may be situations where you discover that the subject appears too dark even even when you use the flash. The following photograph on the left is an example.

The first step to try is to use the built-in flash to lighten the face of the subject.

However with such a dark subject, the flash may not be set to provide sufficient light. In this situation, you can use flash exposure compensation to add more illumination.

I adjusted the exposure compensation on my camera to +1 and reshot the subject. As you can see in the photograph on the right, the subject is illuminated much better because of one quick and simple adjustment.

Information On Exposure Compensation

See the section called "Soft Tufts Of Floating Cotton - Photographing Clouds" for information on exposure compensation.

Using A Reflector To Fix Dark Photos

You might still run into situations where the built-in flash or adjustingthe exposutre compensation won't be enough to provide sufficient lighting. In these situations, especially when the subject in your photo is only slightly darker than I would like, use a *portable reflector*.

You can find a portable reflector at most photo and camera shops but you can improvise a reflector from a white sheet or pillowcase.

I used a reflector for the photograph on the right so the sunlight was redirected to the areas of her face that the shadows hid or made darker.

I used a reflector with a flexible wire frame that opens to a diameter of about three feet. It has several colors of reflective material, for example, white, silver and gold that adds a tint to the reflective light. The unit collapses to a small size — about ten inches — for easy storage.

If you don't have a reflector available, use a white sheet or pillowcase opposite the subject's face. You'll want the white surface to reflect the sunlight so as to lighten the shadows on the face.

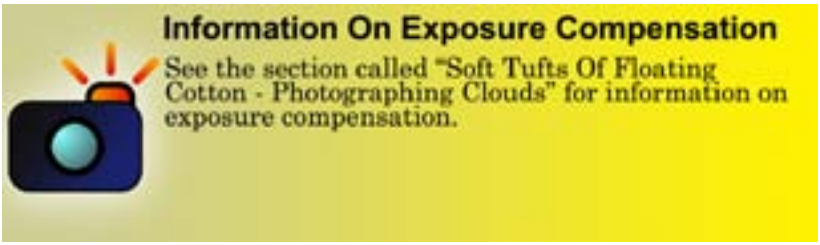
Ask an assistant to hold a portable reflector (available from most photo and camera shops).

The Sky Is Too Light

Most digital cameras usually do a good job of setting an average exposure for the main part of the scene. However, the sky and clouds are often "overexposed" using the average exposure setting, making it appear very light. As you can see in the photograph below on the left.

You can prevent the sky from appearing so light, or washed out, by using exposure compensation. Exposure compensation reduces the amount of exposure for the sky and clouds and can also make the light areas of the scene more vivid.

I set the exposure compensation to -1 for the photograph above right. Keep in mind that too much exposure compensation may unduly darken the rest of the scene so you may want to experiment with the amount of compensation.



We hope that your next photos are filled with smiles and laughter.

Thanks for reading *28 Tips For Better Photographs*.

Please see the following pages for information about out other photography books.

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