

Digital Photography Basics Are The Key To Better Pictures

Have you ever seen someone else's photographs and wondered why they are so much better than yours are, even though you may even have a better camera? The truth is that it's not usually the camera, but how it's used that makes for a terrific picture. By learning about your camera and practicing basic photography techniques, you can greatly enhance your digital photography in a short amount of time. The following pointers will help you see noticeable improvement in your photos.

Understand how your camera operates.

Although almost all cameras are equipped with a "Point and Shoot" or "Auto" setting, when you depend on this to make your settings, you are badly restricting your ability to take excellent pictures. Most cameras have many modes, and by analyzing the shot and choosing the appropriate mode, you'll find your photographs will be much improved. Some common modes are: "Portrait" when taking pictures of people or close objects, use this setting if you wish to keep the subject clear and the background (if it's distant) somewhat blurred; "Action" when shooting fast-moving subjects, or if you are in a low-light situation and prefer not to use the flash, use this setting to have the camera pick a fast shutter speed, which will stop the motion; "Scenery" this mode provides settings for distance shots; "Nighttime" use this for low-light situations if you have a tripod, since it uses a slow shutter speed to capture the greatest possible light; "Macro" excellent for extreme close-ups, ideal for flowers, bugs and such. By using the proper mode, the camera works with you to depict your subject in the most excellent way possible. It may be that you have manual settings on your camera, but these are for advanced photographers, and beyond the scope of this article.

Take care in how you set up your picture.

In general, people taking a picture look only at the subject in the center and then are surprised when they view the picture and see a street sign emerging from their girlfriends hat! You can dramatically increase the quality of your photos simply by taking a moment to look at what the camera is seeing - the entire picture. Are there some unsightly wires across the top, any annoying objects in the background, and if so, take steps to change the picture to remove these problem areas. When taking shots of people, try to have them fill most of the shot. Faces are interesting, usually more so than whole bodies, for the most part. Choose what the point of the picture is, and then shoot with that as your goal. A little care in the preliminary stage will be well rewarded.

Pay attention to your camera angle.

In some movies, you'll often find that when a malevolent person is filmed, it is often from a lower angle looking up, which distorts the subject and makes him look frightening. In still photography, it is also true that an angled camera will produce a distortion, possibly giving your photo a point of view, often by accident. Be certain that you are even with your subject unless you desire to create a precise effect. Adjusting your camera angle can have a dramatic improvement on photos of children and animals. By getting down to their level, you correct the unintentional distortion that results when shooting from above. For these subjects, lying on the floor usually helps to take better pictures.

Try to draw on natural lighting if at all possible.

Flash, in particular the typical on-camera flash, can create a host of woes with your pictures, creating such problems as unforgiving shadows, color loss, red-eye, and over- and under-exposure. At times you really must use a flash, such as at an indoor party where everyone is moving about, but you will almost always get the best outcome by using natural light, including indoor lamps. You can take eye-catching indoor portraits by surrounding your subject with lamps, with one side of the subject more brightly lit than the other, creating soft, interesting shadows. Try different lighting - you'll be amazed at the beauty of shots taken in this manner.

Be sure to hold the camera steady.

Not much needs to be said on this point. When the camera moves around while shooting, the resulting photo will be blurry. Squeeze the shutter button rather than push it. When taking shots in low light, use a tripod or some other form of support.

Take tons of pictures.

With the advent of the digital camera, there is no longer any reason to be stingy about shooting pictures. There's no film, no processing, and you only print what you like, so go to town and take lots of shots. Professional photographers take many shots of each scene, since they know that each one is slightly different, and taking more improves the chance of an exceptional shot. Play around with lighting, angles and composition. If you're taking

moving subjects, you should use the "Burst" setting if your camera has one, to take many pictures in quick succession. At the end of the day, you'll find you have many more "keepers".

Take batteries and a spare memory card along.

There's nothing more frustrating than getting ready to take the critical shot of the day, and finding that your battery has just given out. Be like the pros and be prepared. Have a spare charged battery, or a new pack if your camera uses alkaline batteries, and take a spare empty memory card. One day you'll be glad you did.

The difference between a snapshot taker and a photographer lies not so much in the camera, but in how the camera is employed. Follow the basics described here, and you will be using the techniques of professional photographers - knowing how your camera operates and choosing settings for the appropriate situations, carefully designing the shot, noticing your camera angle, using flash sparingly and with care, correctly supporting the camera, taking an abundance of pictures, and being properly equipped.

So, spend a little time getting to know your camera, and go out and practice. In a short time you will be shooting photographs that you can proudly keep for a lifetime.

About the Author

At DigitalPhotography4All.com you can find lots of ways to enhance your picture taking experience, even if you're just {beginning}starting to "go digital".

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