

# Digital Camera and Photography Tips

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## **How to Get the Most Out of Your Digital Camera Purchase**

Compared to film cameras, digital cameras are easy to use, fun and extremely versatile. Every day there's more features being designed. Whether you have the cheapest model or a high end model, digital cameras can do an endless number of things. Let's look at how to get the most out of your digital camera.

### **Display**

If you want to line up a good shot, you need to be able to see it. If you have vision problems, look for a digital camera with a larger screen. However, LCD displays can be hard to see in bright lightening so look for the brightest display that fits your budget. You need to also remember that the LCD displays use a lot of battery power. The way to combat this is to buy a camera that has automated power saving options.

### **Situations**

Your experience will dictate what type of flexibility you want out of a digital camera. Some cameras let you switch options to manual (ie f-stop, focus, etc.), which gives you more flexibility for your photos. Still other cameras are incredibly smart and can calculate everything in a split second so that you can take the best possible photo. So before you buy, think about what it is you want out of your camera and then research each of the cameras on you short list.

The size of the camera should be taken into consideration. Choose based on what your needs are. If you want to pack it around all the time, you might look for a small, compact model. If performance is more important to you then you should consider a larger camera. This really is personal preference so decide what it is that's important to you.

A digital camera can use replaceable batteries, disposable batteries, or USB charging. Batteries that are disposable can become very expensive especially if you take a lot of pictures. USB charging is only recommended if you have a small camera with the options you want because then it can use power efficiently. But the minute the camera gets a little bigger, it isn't very efficient and because you can't use the camera while it's charging that can be a real problem. Replaceable batteries are the best choice as they can save you money.

What you need to do is decide what it is you want from your digital camera and then set your budget. Once you've done that the time has come to compare digital cameras and find out what's right for you.

## **Why Having a DSLR is Like Having a Second Camera**

When it comes to buying a digital camera there are a lot of things to take into consideration. After all, you have many options. The cheapest and easiest to use is the point and shoot digital camera. Professionals are not likely to be using these cameras. Then there are level entry DSLR cameras, which have a few more features than the point and shoot, but they are still relatively easy to use, and that is one of the reasons people are drawn to them. From there you

can move from mid range to high end DSLR cameras, which is where most professionals are looking. Trying to decide what is right for you can be a bit daunting.

There is one perk to any DSLR and that is the fact that you are actually getting two cameras for the price of one. Yes, that's right! You get your digital camera and you get a video camera. Right from the beginning, the three key manufacturers Nikon, Sony, and Canon included 1080 Full HD video functionality and some even have a stereo sound recording.

The professional photographers were not thrilled to see a video camera included in their high end cameras. After all, most of these photographers came are accustomed to the more traditional still photography. Initially only a handful of digital cameras had video but today just about every digital camera from entry level DSLR to the high end DSLR.

Professional photographers are also starting to recognize that there are certain benefits to having a video camera in their DSLR. They also know that the most successful photographers are going to offer a multi media mix that includes photography and video. The DSLR makes this easy. You can ramp up your business services without any additional costs.

You have not yet seen the best of what DSLRs have to offer in the video department. With extra features like Live View, basic editing options, autofocus during recording and even the ability to record still photos while you are shooting video becoming common place, the features are likely to continue to grow. In fact, you may be surprised to learn that many movies are now being shot using a high end DSLR camera.

So you can quickly see, why it might be beneficial to invest in a DSLR – it's like getting a video camera for free – it really is like getting two cameras for the price of one.

## **What You Should Look for in a Digital Camera**

Digital cameras come in all shapes and sizes. With so many features and the crossover of technology into the photo world things can get confusing and frustrating. Let's look at the basics of what you should look for when buying a digital camera.

### **Lens**

Don't worry too much about the digital zoom because this is a software feature and has nothing to actually do with the lens. Focus more on getting the right lens. If you are going to be taking a lot of photos in low light then you'll want to look for a fast lens with a maximum aperture setting of F-2.8. The lower the aperture the faster the lens. On the lower end point and shoots the lenses are usually permanently attached but there are several aftermarket wide angle, fish eye, telephoto, and close up attachments that you can use as long as your lens is threaded so that's worth watching for.

### **Viewfinder**

The optical viewfinder is offered on most digital cameras but if the camera you are buying costs more than a few hundred, it should also offer you an LCD viewfinder. Both have their benefits and drawbacks. The optical viewfinder is great when the sun is bright and the image on the LCD is hard to see, but the LCD is nice because it's bigger and easier for non-camera buffs to focus and click. The LCD is also nice when you are shooting video.

### Sensor

The higher the sensor resolution, the higher the image resolution, and the higher the image resolution the sharper the detail of your images. 640x480 is okay if you just want to show your images on screen, but most people want to have the ability to print their photos and so you should look for cameras that offer more than 1 megapixel. If you are going to be printing images larger than 5x7 then you'll want more than 2 megapixels. Of course, these days most cameras are 10 or 12 megapixels.

### Flash

When you are trying to take photos under poor lighting it can be a little tricky, which is why you want to have a good automatic flash. Also, look for red eye reduction, slow sync flash, forced fill flash, and illumination levels that you can adjust. This will provide you with options for the various lighting conditions you can find yourself in.

Digital cameras offer all kinds of different features as well. It's best to set your price point and then start to compare what different cameras have to offer, but always make sure you have your basics covered first.

## **The Benefits of Purchasing a DSLR Camera**

If you are like so many consumers that like to take photographs of your friends, family, activities and events, you may have been using a point and shoot, compact camera, or your smart phone. If you like the slim style that fits in your pocket and the almost automatic functions why would you even bother considering a DSLR – it isn't going to fit in your pocket, you'll need a camera bag, and while it has many of the same automatic features there are going to be advanced DSLR features. The answer is simple – you want to consider buying a DSLR camera because it has so much more to offer.

With the extra features and capabilities, you will be able to create images that are far more creative. This means you'll be able to put your creativity out there whether it's the middle of the day or late at night when light is low. You'll be able to easily capture a subject on the move, whether that's an animal or a person. Let's not forget about the beautiful flowers and tiny insects that you can take advantage of the macro features.

Owning a DSLR camera rather than a 'point and shoot' has other benefits. You will find that the quality of your photography will go up dramatically. The DSLR camera is built with materials and parts that are of a much higher quality. It's a well-known fact, that when you pay more you get more, at least in most items. Of course, you should always price compare to make sure you get the most for your money.

Finally, a DSLR is able to produce images that are a much higher quality providing greater balance and contrast, colors that are richer, and images that are superior to a point and click camera. You can even enlarge high-resolution images for printing.

DSLR cameras come in a variety of price points with a number of different features. To get the most value for your money you should always compare products. Before doing a comparison, you need to decide what it is you are looking for out of a DSLR. Determine the kind of

photography you will do most often and then you can purchase the appropriate camera and lens or lenses. If your goal is to take better images but you want to keep some of the auto functions then think about buying a level entry DSLR which usually comes with an 18-55 focal length, which is good for many different situations.

One thing is for certain, you won't regret moving up to a DSLR camera.

## **Are You Getting the Most Out of Your Digital Camera?**

Having an inexpensive point and shoot doesn't mean you can't take amazing photos. There are a number of things you can do to take your point and shoot to the next level – let's have a look.

Even though we hear a lot about DSLR cameras, the majority of people don't own one unless they are a professional photographer. They are bulky, heavy, expensive and inconvenient. On the other hand, a point and shoot is light, compact, affordable and convenient. So if you are one of the many that owns a point and shoot it's time you started getting the most out of it.

Start by reading your manual. Not only does it tell you all about the features of your camera and how to use them. You will also find tips and tricks on making the most of your camera. It might seem somewhat monotonous but it's worth your time.

Next, it is time to become familiar with your menus. Once you have read about your features in your manual, you need to start to play and experiment with those menu features. It's better to know how to get what you want in advance rather than fumbling when you most need to capture that special moment.

In fact, take some time to play with your camera and take photos when it is not important that you get a good photo. Try out every setting on your camera and all the various scenarios such as sunny days or low light situations.

It's important to take some time to work on your techniques. One of the first things you can learn is to not snipe your subjects. In other words, stop framing the people who are in your image as if you are a trophy hunter looking to add another prize catch. These photos are boring and uninspiring. Try something different. Experiment and learn what works and what doesn't.

While you are at it take some time to play with the Rule of Thirds. Every photo you are going to take should be thought of as being in a nine square grid. Then start to avoid putting things right square in the center. To improve your skills look at photos in magazines and look at print ads to see how the Rule of Thirds is being applied. In addition to the Rule of Thirds, avoid taking photos in conventional ways that have become boring. Try playing with angles and don't be afraid to shoot from above, below or... well just about anywhere.

Getting the most out of your digital camera starts with getting the most out of your picture taking abilities. Why not get busy today.

## **Learning to Use Your Flash Properly on Your Digital Camera**

Point and shoot cameras have certainly changed the way we take photos. You can get 12 MP point and shoot cameras that are no bigger than a deck of playing cards. So you can't expect to find an awesome flash in such a camera. On a camera so small, it's really impossible to put the flash away from lens.

The problem is when the flash sits so close to the lens the light is shot forward and parallel to the camera's lens. This will cause your photos to be flat and shadowless, which means there is no depth to the people in your photos. If you get too close to the subject, he/she will be washed out.

You might not be able to solve the problems associated with point and shoot flashes, but there are ways you can work around it. Try to shoot your photos where there is enough light so that you don't have to use the flash. You will need to be really steady if you are not using a flash, so brace yourself against a table or a building; hold your camera tight against your body for stability, or invest in a tripod. There are some awesome little tripods out there that can be bent all kinds of ways. Invest in one!

Of course, if you have to use the flash to get the picture, do so. You don't want to ignore the shot just because it requires a flash. You might miss out on some great shots if you do this. Some of those moments aren't going to come again.

Take some time to practice using your flash in different lighting situations so you can figure out in advance the best way to get a photo under certain lighting conditions. You should also learn how to diffuse your flash, which will cut down on the distance it is able to reach. Diffusing can sometimes mess with the exposure and so learn how to use this technique properly. You can adjust exposure using photo software so don't worry about it too much. It is easy to fix underexposure than overexposure so keep that in mind.

Flashes are perfect for creating balance in the exposure of your photo. The flash will fill in the exposure and makes sure that your subject stands out from the background. Learn to get the most out of your flash so that you can keep taking great pictures.

## **Learn to Use Your Presets on Your Digital Camera**

Most digital cameras come with all kinds of bells and whistles. Even today's point and shoot cameras have plenty of solid features and maybe a little fluff too. Getting to know your camera involves using it and shooting pictures over and over! However, experts also have some solid advice for you and that is to forget about the bells and whistles and learn to use your presets.

One of the features you can turn off is the 'digital zoom.' This is a feature that sounds a lot more impressive than it actually is. If there's one thing about digital zoom is that it is terrible no matter what camera it is on and you should avoid using it. You can use photo software to do a much better job than the digital zoom that is found on almost all digital cameras. Instead, look to use your optical zoom, which is when your lens actually brings the object closer. Never put your trust into digital zoom.

Another of the bells and whistles that's getting a lot of attention is the blink and smile detection that some manufacturers, like Nikon, have incorporated into their digital cameras. This technology hasn't been without controversy. Nikon caught a lot of flack for their detection feature that wasn't able to tell the difference between an Asian and someone who was blinking. Instead of using gimmicks like this, make a habit of taking three or four photos in a row. Then you can take the best shot and use it.

Finally, get to know your presets. These really are invaluable! There are all kinds of presents on most digital cameras and you should learn what they are and how they work. They can instantly make you a better photographer. The presets are named to match their function. For example, if you are taking pictures of a sports even then choose the sports preset.

You can also be creative with the presets and use them in ways that are not so obvious. For example, the landscape present, which provides a wide depth of the landscape, can also be used if you want a photo where your subject and background are both in focus.

Your camera will have a number of different presets. Take the time to learn what these presets are supposed to be used for and how you might use them in a more creative manner. Don't be afraid to experiment.

Thanks to the world of digital photography, almost anyone can take good pictures so why not start taking yours today.

## **What Brand of Digital Camera is Best?**

With so many digital cameras on the market, it is hard to know which brand of camera you should invest in. After all, who makes the best digital camera?

Sony, Canon, Fuji, Nikon, Kodak... they all make digital cameras. If digital sales were the indicator of what was the best, Canon would be the winner, easily – at least according to Amazon. That just means someone has done a great job of advertising.

So how do you know the best brand of digital camera? It can be overwhelming trying to make that decision and everything you read says something different. Not to worry, because it's really quite simple – you compare features and choose the digital camera that has the features you are looking for at the price point you want.

1. What kind of photography are you planning to use your digital camera for?
2. Make sure that the camera has the right lens for the type of photography you want to do. Point and shoot cameras usually don't allow for lens changes to you need to get the right lens right away.
3. Look for the features that you are interested in such as built in flash or the ability to add an external flash. Of course, the features are endless, so be real about what it you will use and what you will never use, because you are going to be paying for those features.
4. Consider the camera weight and size – even point and shoots vary from very light to heavy. Size is very important too. If you want to pack it around in your pocket vs. carry in a case, you will need to choose smaller.



5. Look at warranties. You might be surprised to learn they do vary. Some manufacturers also offer extended warranties on their products. If you spend more than \$500 this might want to consider purchasing an extended warranty.
6. Make sure it is in your price point. There are many different price points' in point and shoot digital cameras and the price doesn't always reflect the quality of the camera or the features it has to offer.

It's easy to compare cameras online. By doing so you can see which cameras offer the features you want for the price you want to pay. It's a convenient way to compare products and match you with the right camera for your needs.

## **Understanding Shooting Speed on Your DSLR**

Are you considering buying a new DSLR? There are certainly plenty of choices out there for you! One thing you need to keep in mind is the shooting speed. Most photographers find this the most noticeable change when going from compacts to a DSLR. Shooting speed is the term used to refer to the number of frames per second that your camera is able to capture. Another way to look at it is as the continuous shooting rate of the camera.

Let's have a look at an example. Nikon makes the D3200 as their entry level DSLR. This camera will shoot up to 4 frames per second of full resolution images. This is far more than what most hobbyist photographers will ever need to capture their running pets or kids. However, for those photographers that are professional or dabbling in capturing more action shots, this may not be adequate.

If you are going to be shooting wildlife, sports or other types of action, you are going to want to find a camera that has a faster shooting speed. A mid range DSLR at around 7 frames per second (at full resolution) should do the job. The Nikon D300S fits is such a camera. Of course there a many others. If you don't like doing anything half way, then you might opt for a top of the line camera that shoots 14 frames per second or more. The Canon EOS 1D X is such a camera, designed with wildlife photographers and professional sports photographers in mind.

Don't assume just because a camera costs a lot that it has a fast shooting speed. That's simply not true. Other high-end cameras are designed for a different purpose like photography or professionals that are not shooting subjects that are fast moving. These photographers are seeking different requirements for their images. For example, they may be more focused on capturing the sharpest image for fashion layouts.

The DSLR that has the fastest shooting speeds also has the largest buffer, which is where all of your images are stored before they are moved over to your data card. The faster the camera can process and place the image in the camera buffer, the more shots you are able to take in a given moment because there is less delay between the shots.

Now that you understand, what shooting speed is and does, you can decide just how important it is to you and purchase accordingly.

## **Become a Good Photographer Before Buying Expensive Equipment**

Most of us are attracted to digital photography as a hobby – after all, it can be a lot of fun and finally you don't need nearly the skill you used to need to take good pictures thanks to digital cameras that take the guesswork out of taking almost all photos.

Only a few people are thinking about taking their photography to the professional level and making a business of it. Yet hobbyists commonly make the mistake of thinking they need to buy expensive equipment to get great photos. There's a bit of irony here since you really should know how to take good photos before you blow your bank account to buy expensive equipment.

Quality digital photography has a specific skill set just like brain surgery or cooking. If you are a hobbyist then most of what you are going to do with your photography does not need you to buy expensive cameras. Actually, that will make it harder for you to learn and take good photos.

Why not start by learning the basics about good digital photography. Learn how to control your images and how to manipulate them after so that you can enjoy the best results. These basic skills include having a good understanding about composition, lighting, exposure and focus. These four components will certainly make you a better photographer.

You should always start your hobby photography with the most affordable camera. That way you won't become overwhelmed. Learn each of the features. Once you've given yourself the challenge of improving your photography skills and you see improvements happening, you can begin to have a look at the cameras that are available and what they can do for you.

Point and shoot cameras have come a long way in a short time. Today, many of them have the same features of the DSLRs from just a couple of years ago. That means that you can get more camera for less money and that's a real perk for hobby photographers. Now you can play with the same type of equipment as the pros without buying expensive equipment.

If money is no object, you can certainly spend your money on expensive equipment. However, if you are like most of us, you have a budget. So why not first take a photography class and start to learn what digital photography is all about and then as you get better graduate yourself to a level entry DSLR. For most, that's going to be adequate and you'll still have the fun and enjoyment of your 'point and click.'

## **8 Digital Camera Brands You Should Know About**

Buying a digital camera can be a lot of fun, after all the choices are endless. However, it can also be a bit daunting. By knowing what camera brands are available will help you when you are shopping. Let's look at 8 popular digital camera brands.

### **#1 Canon**

This is a brand that's loved by many. Canon was making cameras back in the film era. Today they make point and click as well as DSLR cameras. Canon manufactures a number of lenses including the 3L series lenses. They are considered the best in still photography with Sony in the running.

## #2 Nikon

The majority of professional photographers use Nikon who makes a top notch line of cameras that are user friendly. Nikon definitely gets a thumbs up. Nikon isn't interested in making cameras for teenagers or the disposable market. They make a product that's of the finest quality and meant to last, and that's why those who use their product enjoy their experience. In fact, no other brand can meet Nikon when it comes to SLR cameras.

## #3 Sony

Sony was one of the first on the scene for digital cameras and today remains a viable competitor. They remain a contender with the DSLR line; however, they have been focusing a great deal on their point and shoot market too. Many see this as a wise business decision, hooking the teenagers into their products should turn them into adult buyers.

## #4 Pentax

When it comes to price, quality and experience there is no company that can touch Pentax. Canon and Nikon will cost you hundreds of dollars more than the same camera from Pentax, so it definitely pays to compare. Pentax is known for building a reliable camera. They also have earned recognition for not using deceptive marketing tricks. Pentax is backwards compatible with many different lenses so that offers you an opportunity to use lenses you already have. And their waterproof Optio point and shoot deserves mentioning.

## #5 Olympus

Many consumers like what they see in the Olympus, which is often overlooked as a result of not getting the exposure that some of the others do. This is a camera that offers a well made product with plenty of features for a reasonable price, making it a great choice for those on a budget.

## #6 Samsung

Samsung offers an affordable middle of the road digital camera that's stylish and easy to use. It has the most experience at this price point offering the highest technical features for the least amount of money. It also has a convenient easy to use photo transfer system.

## #7 Panasonic

This reliable and easy to use camera takes great pictures and their 3D mode is definitely worth mentioning. Many agree that this camera is definitely good value for the money. Make sure to check it out when you are trying to decide on the best buy for you.

## #8 Casio

This is a camera that often gets overlooked. Don't let its small size fool you because it does a great job.

When shopping for a digital camera reviewing these 8 picks is a great place to start.

## **Do You Know the Best Digital Cameras to Buy?**

Digital cameras are popular items for consumers to buy. Thanks to the easy use of these cameras, there is no need to have the skills previously needed to take good pictures. Consumer

research shows these are the top 10 digital cameras to buy. Let's review all 10 of these cameras.

#### #1 Canon PowerShot G15

When it comes to point and shoot the Canon G15 is a step above the rest. This camera offers 12.1 megapixels. The sensor is one of the largest out there for point and shot cameras. Canon has made some excellent improvements over last year's model, with an increase in processor power and speed.

#### #2 Nikon D7100

The Nikon D7100 packs a lot of punch for the price. It comes with a 24.1 MP APS-C sensor, dual card slots, and 3.1 inch LCD for better quality images. One of the big selling features is the weather sealing. Up until recently, the Nikon D7100 was considered the top pick and it still remains a great choice.

#### #3 Canon PowerShot SX50 HS

The fifth generation Canon PowerShot SX50 HS is the successor to the Canon PowerShot SX40 HS. This level entry point and shoot offers all in one convenience with the single built in lens and a very effective zoom lens that outperforms many others in the same price range.

#### #4 Samsung WB250F

Don't let the fun of using the Samsung WB250F fool you because this is a very smart camera. This lightweight, point and shoot camera fits in your pocket. The plastic body makes it lightweight and easy to pack all day long.

#### #5 Sony Cyber Shot DSC RX1

Sony digital cameras always generate a lot of interest and the Sony Cyber Shot DSC RX1 is no different. This is the first compact digital camera to offer a full frame sensor. However, at \$2800 this might be more than most people want to spend because at that price point you have plenty of cameras to choose from. You'll have to decide just how important the full frame is for you.

#### #6 Sony NEX 6

The Sony NEX 6 16 MP packs a real punch in the compact ILC market. You get excellent image quality, built in flash, Wi-Fi, EVF, hybrid AF system, standardized hot shoe, and more. This camera won't disappoint. If you are in the market this should certainly make your shortlist.

#### #7 Sony Cyber Shot DSC HX200V

The popularity of this camera dropped off for a while but not for long. Once again, the Sony Cyber Shot DSC HX200V is front and center with its 30x optical zoom, GPS tracking, auto focus, 1080p HD video recording, and Zeiss lens makes this a camera that gets noticed.

## **Digital Camera and the Role of ISO**

ISO isn't new to the world of cameras. If you can remember back to the day of film you could purchase 100, 200, 400, 800 ISO film. Today, on your digital camera you can change the ISO with just the press of a button. So what is ISO?

The ISO speed is a measure of your camera sensor's light sensitivity. The lower the number the less sensitive while the higher the number the more sensitive. If you were to take a photo of a subject using 100 ISO and then take a photo of your subject using 800 ISO or higher, you would discover:

- \* The photo with the lower ISO speed (slower) will force your camera to use a slower shutter speed when you take the photo. On the other hand, the photo that is taken with the faster ISO speed will have a much faster shutter speed. If you are using a faster ISO you'll be able to freeze that moment in time. If you have poor lighting, choose a slower ISO.

- \* The slower ISO speed photo has less noise than the photo taken with a faster ISO. We should mention that DSLR's perform better than the point and shoot cameras do. Therefore, you might find yourself in a situation where you have to trade off between usability and quality when lighting is poor.

- \* You should use the minimum ISO speed to achieve adequate shutter speed. This is usually 1/focal length for most pictures. There might be a few stops where you will need to slow the image stabilization or make it faster such as with action shots. Keep in mind it is better to have a couple of pixels that are discolored is a lot better than all encompassing defocus or blurred images. Some digital cameras are able to pick an ISO, which is quite handy functionality.

Unless you have an understanding of how ISO works, you will have trouble making the right choice for the conditions you are taking photos under. Your ISO is as important as understanding your flash and in many ways it is more important.

The higher the ISO the larger you will be able to print our photo, but remember the higher the ISO the grainier the photo is going to be. Choose the appropriate ISO to get the clearest pictures. With digital cameras a lot of things have gotten easier and the ISO is one of them. Now you too can be a photographer.

## **Digital Cameras Have Revolutionized Photography**

It was not all that long ago that in order to take a picture you had to have your film developed. That meant you didn't know if your photo was good or not until after you have paid to have the film developed. Today, thanks to digital photography you can take as many photos as you want to enjoy without the costs associated with development, plus you can instantly see whether your photo is any good, retake it or keep it – it's really that simple. It takes the headache out of taking pictures.

Take your digital camera and all that it has to offer seriously. Learn what it is capable of by reading the manual. Play with the presets so you understand the results of each preset. That way you will know exactly what setting to choose for the picture you want to take. Take your picture and you can instantly see how the preset affects the picture.

You can set your digital camera to automatic mode, which means it takes the guesswork out of picture taking. When set to automatic mode your camera's technology will analyze the situation and then choose the correct settings for that picture. Every shot will be analyzed in the same manner and the decision made almost instantly without you even realizing what is going on behind the scenes. Of course, if you get to know your camera and you want to experiment you

can set your camera to manual so that you choose each of the settings yourself. This can be a lot of fun too!

Digital cameras have turned non photographers into photographers. Suddenly everyone can be a photographer if they want to. Editing has never been easier and even when a picture taken isn't perfect you can edit the picture and make it perfect. It certainly has opened up the door for anyone who wanted to be a professional photographer.

Digital cameras may have once been expensive but now you can find them for a fraction of the cost. In fact, you can buy a decent point and shoot camera for a couple of hundred dollars. Of course, you can also buy high-end DSLR cameras that cost thousands of dollars – there is something for every price point, for every skill set, and for every need. Make sure you take the time to discover what each of the cameras has to offer before making your decision to purchase.

## **Low Light Photography Tips**

The definition of photography is to capture light onto digital or film media. The amount of light that is captured makes the difference in the photograph's quality. For example, your photo will be dark if there isn't enough light or you'll have a blown out photo if there's too much light. Low light photography is about getting a great photo with minimal lighting.

Basically, what this means your shutter needs to be open wide enough and long enough to let enough light in. But today's camera takes it beyond the basics offering numerous features to aid in improving a photo that's dimly lit. This includes things like the adjustment of focus, color, depth of field and flash. But in addition here are some tips for getting the perfect low light shot.

### **Tone Down the Flashy!**

We've all had it happen – a flash goes off blinding us as an inexperienced photographer tries to get the shot. A bright flash freezes the action and allows you to capture the image. However, in low lighting it's not the best or most considerate way to get that great shot.

Sometimes a flash isn't needed. A good substitute can be the use of a faster shutter speed rather than a flash. Little flash or even no flash lets you capture more contrast between the light and dark in the room. It will also add depth along with dimension to your photo.

Even the cheapest digital camera will offer you the ability to adjust settings that will work with the lighting conditions. You can leave your camera on automatic but once you get a little experience you can start to play.

Pay attention to the ISO. Remember when you used to buy film you'd see 200, 400, 800, etc. ISO – the higher the number was the more sensitive the film was to light, but it also made the photos grainy. With digital cameras, ISO measures the sensor's sensitivity for drawing in light that creates a digital picture. A digital camera has control over the ISO, With film you would look for lower numbers but with digital you would look for higher numbers.

You will need some stability otherwise; your photo is going to be blurry. Low light settings will cause the shutter to stay open longer and wider so the camera has to be perfectly still. Use a

tripod if at all possible to avoid movement. That's not always possible though, but many digital cameras have built in stabilizing, which helps to keep the picture in focus.

Low light photography takes a little practice but before long, you'll get the hang of it.

## **5 Rules to Buying a Point and Shoot Camera**

The point and shoot digital camera are compact and easy to use. All you need to do is press your shutter button and the camera takes care of everything else (shutter speed, focus, light sensitivity, focus, etc.) Trying to choose from the hundreds of cameras with different price points and different features can be daunting. Here are 5 rules to help you buy a point and shoot camera.

### **Rule #1: Don't Just Focus on Megapixels**

Far too often consumers put all their focus on the megapixels, and in the earlier days of 2-3 megapixels, it was important; however, with megapixels up around 16 it no longer matters, as most people will never print images large enough to take advantage of the extra pixels. The size of the sensor is far more important.

### **Rule #2: Weigh Size versus Features**

You can find very tiny point and shoot cameras but they usually don't have a long zoom lens and other more advanced features, because the slim body just doesn't have room for it. If you have big hands, you may also find it awkward to operate such a tiny camera. Take this into consideration when buying your camera.

### **Rule #3: Watch the Lens Focal Length as well as the Zoom Factor**

We tend to put a lot of focus on the zoom factor but really, what's far more important is the lens focal length. This is generally expressed as a 35mm equivalent value so if you have two cameras both with a 5x lens but one covers 28-140mm while the other covers 24-120mm the first one's better if you are going to be shooting in spaces that are small and tight, while the latter is going to be better if you have a longer telephoto reach. The better point and shoots begin around 28mm.

### **Rule #4: Display Resolution is as Important as Size with LCD Screens**

The rear LCD is handy to frame your photos and videos and then review them. Look for a camera with a 3" screen. LCDs are measured in dots. The larger the value the sharper the image. Touch screen interfaces are also available and they are very handy.

### **Rule #5: Image Stabilization is a Must**

Optical image stabilization compensates for shaky hands, a perfect feature especially when you don't have tripod handy. It's not always available on the lower end cameras but it is one feature that's worth paying a little extra for.

### **Rule #5: Good Low-Light Performance Lessens the Need for Flash**

A higher ISO performance of your camera makes it more sensitive to light and so it requires less flash use. Look for a camera that allows you to set it higher than 100 ISO.

Put these 5 rules into play when buying a point and shoot camera and you won't be disappointed.

## **4 Digital Camera Features You Should Understand**

Digital cameras have many different features and functions that you can choose from. In fact, there are so many that it can all become a bit overwhelming when you are trying to choose a digital camera. Let's look at four digital camera features that you should understand when you are in the market for a camera.

### **Audio and Video Modes**

If you are going to be shooting many videos and you are serious about videos, you should not rely on a digital camera to perform to such a high level. Instead, opt to buy a dedicated video camera. Even the best video on a digital camera is no competition for a video camera. However, if you just want to be able to shoot a little video every now and then with your focus on taking pictures, and you like the idea of carrying one device, there are plenty of digital cameras that are prepared to accommodate you. If you want the best motion-picture power a digital camera can offer, look for one that captures video and audio. You should also look for extended video, which limits your video shoot only to the size of your media device.

### **White Balance**

We hear a lot about white balance but if you don't really understand it, you aren't alone. White balance allows your camera to calculate the right color balance for the shot you are about to take. All digital cameras come with this feature. Some models let you choose from a number of preset white balances that have been calibrated for specific lighting, such as incandescent, cloudy, fluorescent, or sunny. This is a very handy feature that takes a lot of guess work out of your shot and offers you the best shot every time. If you like to play, then you might look for a digital camera with manual white-balance controls.

### **Scene Modes**

Many of today's digital cameras offer scene modes, a handy feature that optimizes your camera settings for a specific scene such as twilight, portrait, pan-focus, landscape, etc. Scene modes affect the focus settings, exposure, and more. It's a feature that's worth looking for.

### **Exposure Mode**

All digital cameras have an automatic exposure mode – we call it point and shoot. But some cameras offer you the ability to manually set your exposure. Now for some of us we never want to do anything other than let the camera decide, but for many others they would like the ability to play with their shutter speed, F-stops, aperture, etc. If that describes you, look for a camera with a manual override.

There you have it – four digital camera features you should consider when buying a camera. Set your budget, decide what features you must have, decide what features you'd like to have, and then start shopping.



## **Nikon D5200 or Sony Alpha NEX-6 – Which is the Best Buy?**

There are a number of digital cameras in the \$700 to \$1000 range, but we're going to look at two that have garnered a lot of attention and both are around the \$800 price tag – The Nikon D5200 and the Sony Alpha NEX 6. Which is the best buy? Let's have a look.

### **Nikon D5200**

The Nikon D5200 takes excellent photos and videos. In fact, it's thought to be one of the best in its class. It has an excellent set of features and is nicely designed. You get good value for your money for the home user who wants a little more out of their camera.

The sluggishness in performance in the D5100 is gone in the D5200. It now has some of the features of the D600 such as metering systems and a new autofocus. The D5200 does a good job for optimizing JPEGs. Raw gives you more adjustments than JPEG but there aren't a lot of benefits for noise reduction or sharpness unless you are at ISO 1600 and remain usable right up to ISO 6400.

### **Sony Alpha NEX-6**

The Sony Alpha NEX-6 has an excellent design and offers decent video quality too. It has some of the best performance ratings in its class. What the Sony Alpha NEX-6 lacks is the ability for the user to save custom settings, which is rather annoying. The implementation of the wireless component is rather awkward and their app system is extremely annoying. The Sony Alpha NEX-6 definitely offers performance, design, and image quality that is unbeatable, even though it's a little more expensive.

The ISO 400 is excellent – nice and clean. It can go up to ISO 6400 and if it's scaled down ISO 12800. Shooting raw is still a good option if you need to make exposure corrections above ISO 800.

### **Comparison**

It's easy to see that there two cameras give each other a run for their money. Which one is best for you, will depend on the finer details of the two cameras, although the Nikon D5200 tends to come out just a little ahead of the Sony. What's more important than the manufacturer is ensuring you buy the digital camera that has the features you desire. It's also a good idea to examine the finer details such as how long the warranty is and how warranties are handled, or what the life expectancy is on average, all important factors in making your final decision.

## **3 Basics to Consider When Buying a Digital Camera**

When looking to buy a digital camera there are some things we actively watch such as the lens, megapixels, and sensor. However, we often overlook three other important components: media, batteries and flash. Let's have a look at what you should watch for.

### **The Media**

If you are buying a cheap digital camera with only internal memory that's fine, but for most digital cameras you are going to have some type of external removable storage medium. The most common types are SmartMedia and CompactFlash. Most Sony cameras use memory sticks and a few actually still use mini CDs. IBM Microdrives and MultiMedia Cards (MMC) are commonly used. What's most important is ensuring the camera you buy offers you the type of storage that will provide you with the amount of storage space you are looking for. It is a good idea to understand the difference between these media options before making your final choice.

#### The Batteries

All digital cameras use some type of battery – either lithium-ion, nickel-metal-hydride, or alkaline batteries. You can buy alkaline batteries anywhere, which makes them really convenient; however, they do not last very long and so if you take a lot of photos this can get very expensive. If a digital camera comes with a rechargeable battery then the charger should also come with it. Some cameras allow the use of more than one battery type. Whatever battery you have make sure that you have adequate spares so that you don't find yourself missing that great shot because your batteries are dead.

#### The Flash

If you have low light conditions it can be hard to shoot unless you have a good reliable built in automatic flash. Cameras that have all kinds of presets for your flash are really great too because you don't have to do anything but point and click. After all, not all of us want to understand about the lighting, we just want to point and click, and get a great picture. Look for forced fill flash and slow sync flash too. If you want more power out of your flash than built in flashes offer then look for a digital camera that is equipped with a hotshoe or that is compatible with off camera flashes. If there isn't a recommended flash unit there are many different providers out there so shop around for a good price.

Choose the right media, batteries and flash will make owning your digital camera that much more enjoyable.

#### Understanding the Basics of Using your Digital Camera

Digital cameras have changed the way that we take pictures. No longer do we limit the number of pictures we take because there's no development costs. But there are disadvantages too. Let's look at how to get the most out of your digital camera.

A film camera takes the image the second you press the shutter button. However, with digital cameras it takes a few seconds. This is especially true when adjustments are being made automatically. Digital cameras also need more light than film cameras. In addition, because a person doesn't have to worry about development costs, commonly we snap photos until the memory card is full, and then what do you with them all? You can overcome the disadvantages very easily with these few tips.

A digital camera uses a sensor and memory card. When taking a digital picture the shutter opens and sensor is exposed to light. The sensor then reacts to the light and the resulting image is stored on the memory card.

The light hits the sensor and this decides almost everything about your image. Your digital camera can make a few adjustments but it is all related to the type of light and the amount of light received. There are three settings you can use to control how the light hits the sensor.

1. The focus adjusts the lens making sure that the light gathers on the sensor's surface. Most have automatic focus but some do have manual focus manually and even interchangeable lenses.
2. The aperture, which is measured in F-stops decides just how wide the shutter will open. The wider its open the more light let in. The higher the F-stop number the smaller the opening. The aperture determines the image's depth of field.
3. The shutter speed decides how long the shutter is going to be open. The longer it is open the more light that is let into the sensor.

The shutter speed determines how long the shutter is open. The longer it's open, the more light will hit the sensor. If you or your subject is moving while the shutter is open, the image will be blurred. With many cameras, you are able to manually set the shutter speed and aperture, which can reduce the time between pressing the button and the shutter opening.

Learning how to properly set the speed and aperture means you can control your image. However, because the shutter is open longer your picture can easily blur, so it's a good idea to use a tripod to keep the camera still.

Now that you understand a few of the basics for using your digital camera it's time to start experimenting.