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Your How To Guide

For Great Photography!



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How to Select a Camera - Digital vs. 35mm

Selecting the correct camera for you

There are actually two types of cameras that you can choose. It all depends on how new you want to be or how traditional you want to remain. Currently, the choices range from purchasing a manual camera or of the slew of hi-tech digital cameras.

To make it easier for you, the following are tips to help you choose the best digital camera as well as the perfect manual camera for you.

If you want to buy a manual camera, first determine if you would like photography to be a hobby that is serious or simply a pass-time.

If you're really serious, it is best that you choose a camera that is an SLR or specifically a Single Lens Reflex camera. The difference between a SLR camera and an average point & shoot one is that the former allows the photographer to adjust the aperture as well as the camera's shutter speed. Though the pictures may be a bit difficult to

take, it is more fulfilling to do so – if you have the patience for it – as it allows you the opportunity to create the pictures you want. A point and shoot camera meanwhile simply just takes pictures as is and that may be what you want.

Get the opinion of an experienced photographer & photo magazine reviews to help you make the decision.

It is best that you research and read popular magazines on photography and see how they evaluate particular SLR cameras. It is highly advisable that you make yourself familiar with the current cameras being offered.

Reading up could also give you an idea of your needs. It will also help you decide if you want a camera that has a lens for doing close-up shots or do you want a camera with a flash system. What depth of field would you prefer?

Know how much you are willing to spend

The prices of cameras, particularly the SLR ones vary. The low end cameras offer automatic aperture settings and are basically

manually operated. However, the camera models that are on the higher end also include features found on the low end cameras plus more. These types of cameras are also programmable, have an ability to measure flash through the camera's lens and provide more aperture and shutter speed read outs.

Know how to choose when you are finally ready to choose

If you are already in the store and ready to pick a camera to purchase, it is best that you actually hold the camera and look through the camera's view finder. Check how the camera focuses. Is it bright? Are you comfortable operating its controls? Is your wallet comfortable with its price?

It is best that the manual camera you choose fits not just your needs but your budget as well.

However, if you are intent on purchasing a digital camera and actually find nothing impressive about the manual camera, the following are basic tips to make your selection and purchase the best one.

As with purchasing a manual camera, set how much you are willing to spend when buying a digital camera. Know your monetary limits and work from there. Be open-minded as well as realistic. An inexpensive digital camera may not necessarily be a low end kind and an expensive digital camera may not necessarily be a high end kind. Believe it or not, there are refurbished digital SLR cameras that are cheaper than the newer ones being offered, yet have more features not available on newer expensive types. There are many of these listed on eBay.

Determine how Experienced You Are

Be honest with yourself. How experienced or inexperienced are you? If you are a novice, then a point & shoot digital camera may be best for you, but if you are seriously intent on learning more, it would be best to choose a camera that offers more features, exposure, and control.

Check reviews

Just as with manual cameras, try your best to read on reviews of digital cameras. There are several sites on the web. These sites are

both for serious and professional photographers as well as those that are just starting out.

All in all, choosing a camera is easy if you know what you are looking for. Start with your wants and your needs and everything else will fall into place.

Digital versus 35mm

Digital versus 35mm photography is a big discussion among many avid photographers. The 35mm camera has been the camera used by photographers for years. Using 35mm film requires chemical processing in order to expose the photos taken. Digital cameras on the other hand do not require the use of film. At the same time, digital cameras don't require any type of film to take a picture.

Technological advances in photographic equipment have brought about the creation of sophisticated digital cameras. Digital cameras don't require film so photos can easily be downloaded into a computer and printed later. The features of digital cameras have become so advanced and yet so simple to use that more and more people are opting to use them.

Digital photography simply requires the use of a computer and a colored printer to produce any shot taken. With digital photography, amateurs and even professional photographers can do it themselves. Unlike 35mm film photography where the users are particularly amateurs at the mercy of camera stores for the development of their photographs.

In most cases, users can even dictate the outcome of the pictures taken with a digital camera. Pictures can be printed on a variety of materials unlike 35mm film photography that require a lot of work just to be printed on anything other than the standard. However many conventional photographers attest to the durability of 35mm film photography as proven by history.

Although there are cases where digital photography has been used to salvage and restore 35mm film photographs. Pictures taken with a digital camera can easily be stored in a variety of formats from floppy discs to compact discs. Many traditionalists are concerned that the ever changing technology of digital cameras may soon make current formats obsolete.

Digital Photography for Amateurs and Professionals Alike

Digital photography has become quite popular because it is convenient and easy to use. A digital camera in the hands of an amateur photographer can produce some amazing shots that can outdo those taken by a professional with a conventional 35mm camera. Mainly because many of the digital cameras today include a number of features that only professional photographers using conventional cameras would know how to use.

At the same time, digital cameras can be used in various locations. Many digital cameras can even be used for underwater pictures which is a big improvement over shots taken with a traditional 35mm camera. Digital cameras can also be used to take wide shots like landscapes without sacrificing detail or color.

More About Choosing Between Digital and 35mm

Photographers whose businesses rely on taking the right pictures require dependable equipment to help them create the imagery they need. However, many professionals are divided about the use of digital cameras over traditional 35mm cameras. Some prefer digital while

others still prefer 35mm cameras.

Most photographers that capture major news or sporting events need equipment that will help them produce photos quickly and easily. Any delays will be costly; that is why most news and sports photographers rely on digital cameras for prompt and straightforward results.

Next to these photographers, the advertising industry is another community that relies on digital photography. In most cases, shots taken for various ads using digital photography also rely on computer enhancements to add a few significant touches here and there. This is truly something that can't be done with a traditional 35mm shot.

On the other hand, photographers who take various pictures concerning nature and animals rely on the traditional 35mm camera for results. For these purists, digital photography simply will not do. These photographers sacrifice speedy printing for quality that they believe only a 35mm camera can provide.

Despite the differences of both many photographers have actually combined both mediums to create the exact photo they want.

In fact, most photographers own both types of cameras wherein either one serves as a backup to the other. 35mm cameras have become the backup to digital cameras.

Simply put, it's because digital cameras have become so simple that even a child can operate one. At the same time, digital cameras provide a wide assortment of features that would make any amateur photographer feel like a professional.

Loading Film

So just how do you do it? Loading film on a manual camera is basically easy. All you need is plenty of concentration and focus and you are on your way to shooting the pictures you want and need.

The following are basic steps and tips on loading film on a manual camera.

First things first, it is best that the film you are loading is the type that is perfectly suited for your camera. Determine the brand that works best for you as well as on your equipment. Try to search through and research the types of film you have seen developed. Do

you like how they came out using that specific brand? If not, try to look at other types until you find the picture that is colorful and that fits your taste.

Believe it or not, there are many different film brands to choose from. The most popular is Kodak, of course, as well as Fuji. There is also a type of film that provides black and white picture shots. The camera films available also have a range that offer a slow speed. There is an ISO film speed that is in the 100 while there is also a fast film speed of 400.

An ISO film that has a speed of 100 basically offers a picture that would best be taken outdoors rather than indoors. Outdoor shots using this type of film are well lighted and bright. However, indoor shots that are taken on an ISO 100 film will turn out dark and blurry without the appropriate lighting and flash system. Also, an ISO 100 film when used to take shots where movement takes place, will basically not turn out good. Pictures taken using such a film will also appear blurry.

Meanwhile, an ISO 400 film offers the best option and shots whether outdoors, indoors, static shots, wide angle shots, or moving

shots. An ISO 400 shot provides clear pictures.

Get ready to lock and load

Depending on the speed of the film you choose, set the ISO of your camera on the type of film speed you are loading. This could be done by adjusting the speed dial of your camera. Usually, this function is located on the left of the camera's top. However, in some models, particularly Canon, the film speed adjustment is located on the right.

After adjusting, pull the tab of the film out of the film canister to about three inches. Then, open the camera's back via pressing a release button located usually on the camera's right side. For other types of camera, this release could be found and pressed at the camera's left side.

Place the film on the available space on the left part of the camera's inside. Don't forget to place the film with the side that is flat facing you.

Later, the film should be pulled across the inside of the camera's

length in order to reach the right side of the camera's spool. This is where the tab of the film is to be inserted into this spool and be wound manually, specifically counter clockwise or until this same film wraps itself around the spool.

Spooling a film on a camera that is automatic is a lot easier. You just close the camera's back and press a small button, and viola, the camera spools the film by itself.

When the film has been loaded and spooled, close the camera's back and let the film advance until the counter on the camera's top reads 1. In other cameras, the counter could read the actual number of shots still available on the film.

Get ready to shoot and shoot and shoot

Now that the camera has been loaded with film, it is time to get ready and take those award winning shots. In manual cameras, it is best that the film be advanced immediately after a shot is taken. In automatic cameras, the film advances by itself.

However, be it a manual camera or an automatic, it is important

that you check whether the film is advancing or not – or if you have advanced the film or not. If you fail to check, you might be shooting to your heart's content and the pictures may not turn out the way you want.

How a Digital Camera Works

How a Digital Camera Works

Digital cameras come in a variety of different shapes and sizes. Different brands of digital cameras also offer users an array of features designed to make each and every shot fantastic. Despite the numerous features offered by digital cameras, manufacturers still manage to create products that are simple enough for a child to use.

Day by day digital cameras are becoming a well-known fixture in most homes across the globe. In fact, most of the people around the world own one and use it on a regular basis. Digital cameras have also been incorporated into a variety of technical gadgets that have been integrated into the lifestyle of people everywhere.

PDA devices as well as cellular phones are just some of the

technological devices that have a digital camera feature. Despite being an add-on feature, the digital camera device installed in these gadgets fair relatively well compared to detached models.

As a matter of fact the memory used for digital cameras, detached models or otherwise, can easily be upgraded using memory cards. The added memory will certainly come in handy because most digital cameras can also be used to take video clips.

There are numerous brands of digital cameras available on the market today. Mainstream electronic brands like Nikon, Kodak, Canon and Olympus are just some of the manufacturers of conventional 35mm cameras who have jumped on the bandwagon to create their own lines of digital cameras. Other famous brands that manufacture digital cameras include Panasonic, Casio and Sony.

Basic Features of Digital Cameras to Consider

Regardless of brand names, digital cameras have the same basic features that any consumer should know and consider before buying one. Even though digital cameras are generally a point and shoot device, certain features can often single out a particular brand or

model. A good example of this is the term mega pixel, which became known when digital cameras were introduced in the market.

Mega pixels, which means millions of pixels, measure the quality and size of a digital camera. Pixels refer to the dots that make up a picture. Therefore a digital camera that has about a 5-mega pixel resolution will produce better quality pictures compared to a 3-mega pixel digital camera.

Moreover, photos taken with a digital camera that offers greater mega pixels can be enlarged safely without sacrificing the quality of the picture. Average digital cameras with less than 3 mega pixels often forfeit the clarity of the picture once it is enlarged. Unfortunately, there is a downside to using a digital camera with greater mega pixels as they consume more of the camera's memory.

The zoom function of a digital camera is another feature that most consumers should consider. There are generally two types of zoom features for many of the digital cameras on the market today. The optical zoom feature is common in devices without permanent lenses. The user can simply zoom and focus on the subject to be photographed.

A digital zoom feature is similar to using an editing software program for images. In most cases, a digital camera may offer both types of zoom features. Most digital camera users recommend concentrating on the optical zoom feature to validate the quality of the device.

What to Look for In a Digital Camera

A digital camera generally has an LCD screen. This wide screen replaces the small aperture in conventional cameras through which you look into before taking the shot. The LCD screen allows the photographer to view the picture while taking it to see how it would appear in reality.

Digital cameras have memory stick slots where memory sticks are inserted. Unfortunately, memory is another major consideration that many consumers often overlook. For the most part it is because digital cameras that require larger memory can be quite expensive.

On the whole, many of the digital cameras of today make use of rechargeable batteries. Consumers should check if the particular brand

they wish to purchase comes with a charger. If not, then you need to purchase it separately.

Downloading pictures taken with the digital camera is another factor that needs to be considered. In most cases, many digital cameras can easily be connected to a desktop computer using a USB port. Through this connection, a user may download the pictures taken with the camera into the computer's hard drive for printing or editing.

Focus, Depth of Field and Lenses

Use depth of field wisely

There is a certain way that experienced photographers take such stunning pictures, portraits and photographs where the subject being shot is focused in a clear and perfect manner while the background is sort of a blur.

The following are the steps to take those amazing picture-perfect shots.

The technical

First things first, it is best that the camera being used has a plate for imaging that is large. Also, a lens that is considered fast should also be used. "Fast" in photography language means a lens that has an aperture that is larger than f2.8.

When the aperture of a camera is large, the image or picture that will be produced has a depth of field that is shallow. In photography language, this basically means that the area that is behind as well as front of the subject being taken is a blur.

As much as possible, the shoulder and the head of the subject should fill the whole frame. Also, if the subject is a person, don't forget to focus on the subject's eyes.

The technique

Practice really does make perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect job done only once. It takes perseverance as well as patience. When shooting pictures it is best to take a series of shots using a lens that has a wide opening and a stop on at least one or two.

Focus on various areas such as the ear, nose, and hair using varying apertures for such. When the pictures come out, you then have many different options to choose from.

To be able to create a depth of field that is shallow, the best thing you should do is use a long lens – preferably a telephoto – and have it set on the zoom that at its maximum. Then, try to stand as close to the subject as possible.

However, for subjects that are in motion, for example a car the camera must then be moved the same way the subject is moving. Or simply put, the subject must be followed. The best film to use for shots such as these is ISO 400 film. Also, don't forget to set the camera at an ISO setting that is similarly fast.

The body of the camera, especially when taking such moving picture shots, must be steady. Make sure to focus on the subject as you see it through the lens of the viewfinder. Using such a technique ensures that the subject being focused on is clear and crisp while the background is a beautiful blur. Such a picture helps highlight the movement being done by the subject therefore making it seemingly

jump from the picture.

Photo effects

Believe it or not, there is also an easy and stress free way to create a similar photo effect without doing the techniques mentioned. This has become possible through the magic of software. Photoshop has a "blur" function, which blurs the picture's background in a uniform manner independently as well as authentically the way an actual photograph may be done by a technically-savvy photographer. The software blur is and looks artificial while the real blur is more organic in feel.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the technology of software is advancing so that there is a CS2 version of Photoshop that enables anyone to create a blur that is considered as "smart." This function takes into consideration the picture's depth of field. This basically means that the function applies a lot of blurring effects to the pixels that appears more distant and applies a lot less blurring to the pixels that appear nearer. Believe it or not, such a function is adjustable that anyone could achieve any effect desired.

All in all, depth of field is a fairly easy concept to understand especially to those serious in learning the art and craft of photography. All it takes is a lot of patience, perseverance and a heart that is willing to learn as well as a mind that is open to making mistakes and gradually correcting them along the way towards creating a picture perfect shot.

Focus and get the best out of a shot

Taking pictures is an experience that is rewarding as well as memorable. Photography can be fulfilling as well as frustrating.

The following are basic tips and advice to get the most out of taking great pictures.

Taking pictures indoors

The best way to achieve a good focus indoors is by using a roll of film that has a speed of ISO 400.

There may be instances when pictures taken indoors are blurry. The best way to solve this problem is by switching the automatic focus

on your camera. This prevents from you having to manually focus and tirelessly concentrate on getting it sharp when the camera can do the work for you, in less time, making it easier for you.

Also, there is a reason why there is a flash on your camera. You need to use it especially when taking indoor shots. Pictures that are blurry are also the result of poor lighting. When this happens, the shutter of the camera is forced to open for a considerable amount of time therefore making the image blurry.

Dark photos could be prevented by using a flash. Indoor shots need to have a flash even if there is light available. To make sure though, it is highly advisable that one shot be taken with a flash and another without.

Batteries, batteries, batteries

Sometimes, trying to achieve focus can prove to be difficult especially if your camera is running out of power. You should always check your batteries. A flash system takes a lot of battery power and the sign that you need to have your old batteries exchanged for new ones is when your flash does not fire when taking that shot.

Get the glare out of your pictures

There may be instances when the final prints of your pictures may have a glare. Usually this happens when the flash reflects off mirrors, walls that are shiny, windows, TVs, etc. You may be able to avoid this by putting the camera on its side.

Frame and focus

Before clicking on that shutter button, focus on framing the shot you are taking. Be aware of the picture's frame and try not to cut off the top of the head.

The best way to take pictures is with your bare hands. Remove gloves if you are wearing them and don't hold any objects while framing and focusing the shot. Doing such actually helps in avoiding the lens to be unnecessarily blocked.

What about pictures taken outdoors

These types of pictures may be taken using film that is ISO 100

where there may be light readily available like during the day.

However, there may be instances where people may be squinting when their pictures are being taken. To avoid this, try to position people so they aren't facing the sun. It may be handy to have an umbrella handy.

Cases also occur where people appear dark or shadowy in the picture even if the pictures are taken outdoors. When this happens, it could be that the photographer was positioned directly towards the sun. As much as possible, the sun should be behind the person taking pictures. Or use a flash to reduce any shadows on the subjects being photographed, if it is necessary that the photographer be positioned towards the sun.

Most cameras have a capacity to lock on their focus. To do this, have your camera point towards a spot that is bright. Keep pressing on the shutter halfway, without going overboard and pressing it completely. Then, move the camera to the picture you are to take and press the shutter fully.

Be aware not just of the subject you are focusing on but on any

backgrounds available where your subject is positioned. Pay attention to trees or any objects that could appear behind the subject that could ruin the shot. There have been instances where a flag pole seems to be coming out of a model's head, when actually the shot was just poorly framed and focused.

All in all, focusing is easy if you put your mind, heart and eyes into it.

Use a telephoto lens for your aquarium

Do you have fish in your aquarium? If you do, believe it or not, you can take beautiful pictures of the fish using a telephoto lens.

So just how does one do it?

First things first, set your photography equipment up. Before you start taking any pictures, just make sure that the tripod and the camera, as well as the light are located at the aquarium tank's top. Do not immediately take any pictures. Let the fish get familiar with the equipment first. This will help them relax and so shots taken of them will look natural and candid.

Usually, the best film to use when taking shots of moving subjects – in this case, the fish – is an ISO 400 film. This type of film is able to take shots of quick moving subjects without the blur. This is also the best type of equipment to be used for an environment that is low on lighting yet fast in movement.

So how long should the lens be?

When taking pictures of aquarium fish, a lens with a measurement anywhere between twenty eight millimeters and eighty millimeters is best to use. For close up shots, use a tube that can be extended.

Be aware though that you need to try out different types of lenses and measurements to make sure that the desired effect you want to achieve is ultimately accomplished. Experimenting is the key. The type and length of the lens that works well outdoors may not work as well when used inside a fish tank.

Be sensitive of the shadows

Try, as much as possible, to observe any shadows that crop up in the background while you are taking your shots. It is best that you first wait a moment until there is a fish that appears to contrast against the background and away from any shadows. This ensures that your subject will appear clear in the final and developed picture.

And then there was light

The tank you are going to take pictures of should be well lighted. It is best that light be placed at the top of the tank. You need to be careful though when lighting is used in the water as electricity is involved. Make sure that the placement of the lighting is safe and secure to prevent any type of electric shock as this could prove to be fatal, both to the fishes as well as to the photographer.

It is also highly inadvisable to use your camera flash when taking pictures of aquarium fish. This is because the glare of the flash could give off a reflection or produce a shiny, glaring spot in the picture that could distract, if not ruin, the shot.

Focus, focus, focus

As much as you can, focus on the moving fish as it darts and swims across the water. It is during this time when you could determine the specific type of measurement, lens, and aperture opening as well as shutter speed. Here is a good tip, if a fish is swimming towards you, try to increase the depth of field in your camera to create a much more focused and clear shot.

The secret to good photography

There is a way to take great pictures. However, it won't take just a few seconds, hours, days, weeks or months, but probably years to achieve. A lot of patience and practice is needed to perfect a shot, a photography technique and a photography skill.

Also, avoid having any electrical equipment near any form or types of water. Common sense dictates that doing so avoids any and all forms of electrical shock that could prove to be fatal.

All in all, photography is an art form and medium that is used to express any emotion, idea or message. For the photography hobbyist, taking pictures is a way to experiment and explore, while a

serious photographer could just as well use photography to convey a concept that no other medium could best express. Photos do not just capture a moment, but an idea whose time has come.

Why wide angle, and how?

When is the best time to use a wide angle lens and how do you select the appropriate wide angle lens for a particular shot?

First things first. The best time for selecting a wide angle lens is when you are planning to take a beautiful shot of a landscape.

Another important aspect of landscape photography is the selection of the appropriate light as well as the perfect location of the landscape shot. As much as possible, and depending on what it is being shot, the selection of the appropriate day to catch that landscape picture perfect landscape view is everything.

Lights, location and action

When the location has finally been chosen for the wide angle lens shot, try to notice the light effects visible on the area that you plan to shoot in over a whole twenty four hour day. This ensures that

you know how the lights play over the range of mountain, sand or seas. This also helps you plan just how it is you are to go about taking that shot, when and how.

When you finally know, it is therefore time to be a little bit creative. You may include elements in your picture's foreground in order to have an additional scale and depth to your pictures. Also, feel free to look around from other points in the area where you think the shot could just as well be taken. This may add a little bit of interest to the final picture. Also consider taking a variety of levels and positions.

Time is always of the essence

Believe it or not, in order to avoid any shadows that may appear harsh on the picture, the best time to shoot is early during the morning as well as late in the golden afternoon.

During this time, take your camera out and set it up using a tripod. Then, take a reading of any area of the shot using a light-meter. Once the appropriate measurements have been taken, adjust the speed of the shutter and the aperture.

After all these, all you need to do is to press the release button

and take a beautiful picture.

Make use of natural effects

If there are any natural creations occupying your shot, try to use a backlight or side lighting that provides the leaves, – for example – grass, water or smoke an appearance that these seem to be translucent, almost ethereal.

Pictures of a beautiful sunset are best taken just when the sun has gently touched the horizon and immediately a maximum of five – count them - five short minutes just after the sun has finally set.

It is best that you use or position yourself to a geographically high point.

A filtered polarizer may also be used in order to heighten the sky's color or tone, thus delivering a picture befitting a postcard.

A wide angle lens helps a lot in increasing the picture's scope.

Do not forget to relax. This prevents the camera from

unnecessarily shaking and helping you focus on the subject more than anything else.

Supply yourself with much needed supplies

Since landscape photos are usually taken far from the city and well into the country, it is best that you pack up a host of equipments that enables you to take pictures even during temporary obstacles. A flashlight always comes in handy, bottled water is another (to keep the photographer replenished and not thirsty), as well as a lot of extra rolls of film. This is one piece of equipment that photographers generally can't do without.

Basically, a wide angle lens has a focal length that measures less than forty millimeters. Be aware as well as be wary that the length of the lens changes how an image is seen.

All in all, determining the best lens to use for a particular shot requires a lot of patience, skill and practice. The art of mastering landscape photography doesn't have to be difficult. And the best lens to use for such kind of photography is a wide-angle lens. Getting that that shot right takes not only skill but the strength, stamina and

endurance to get to where the location of the landscape is and the energy – upon reaching that location – to get the job done. And when that moment arrives, the job has only just begun.

Zoom (Filters)

If you are a photographer or just someone that loves taking pictures using your camera, specifically the single-lens reflex (SLR) camera, you must know what zooms are for. Zoom lenses are added to your basic camera unit to be able to focus on a subject correctly. It is similar to filters that you also add on your camera for specific special effects.

During the past, you would see a photographer carrying his huge camera case which contained about half a dozen different lenses. Each of these lenses has a fixed focal length and can only be used for a certain type of focus shot. If the photographer wants to take a shot on something from a different angle, he would need to change lenses. That takes a lot of time and possible loss of the good view for the shot.

Having all these lenses and carrying them every time you have a shoot can be a big burden, not to mention, expensive. Thanks to our

ever improving technology, zoom lenses were introduced. With zoom lenses, you can have a single lens that covers the same range that three or more fixed focal length lenses. This definitely lets the photographer change angle or focus instantaneously as compared to the old lenses.

Mid-range zoom lenses are versatile since they can cover normal, wide-angle and telephoto focal lengths with just a single lens. Telephoto zoom lenses are great for portraits, scenic, travel, candid and sports photos. Long zooms are useful for wildlife and sports photography.

Features of Zoom Lenses

Here are just some of the features of most zoom lenses available:

1. Macro focusing. This feature allows the lens to focus at a close range. To determine how close a lens is able to focus, a reproduction ratio is specified in the lens. A 1:4 reproduction ratio means that a lens can focus an object such that if the diameter of the object is 4 inches, it will measure just 1 inch in the picture itself.

2. One-touch zoom control. Most of the zoom lenses have just a single ring that controls the focus and zoom at the same time.

3. Lens aperture. There are zoom lenses that have only one maximum aperture, while others have two, for example f2.8-4.0. The f-number changes as the zoom changes.

Tips for buying zoom lenses

If you are planning to buy a zoom lens, the first thing you have to consider is the focal length range. For you to know what correct focal length range to buy, you must identify your purpose for the lens. If you think you will use it mostly for travel and vacations, a mid-range zoom would suffice. However, if you are planning to use it for sports and portraits, a telephoto zoom is a better choice.

The size and weight of the lens is also a consideration. In general, a bigger and heavier lens is usually faster. One that has wide zooming range can also be larger.

Lens speed is important if you are intending to use the lens for

indoor photography. A faster lens allows more light which makes it easier to shoot in subdued lighting.

If you are using a lot of filters, it is best to consider the size of the zoom so it can accommodate as much filter. If you want close-up photos, you must also consider the specifications of the camera with regard to macro focusing. If you are after flexibility, it is best to have a zoom with continuous macro focusing than a limited one.

Of course, just like any other product, price is also a consideration. The better the features of the zoom lens, the more expensive they will be.

Zoom lenses are really a good investment if you are thinking of making photography a business. Even if you don't, and you are just someone who loves taking pictures, having zoom lenses is still a good choice. You can take great shots at different angles and distances.

So if you are thinking of getting one, decide first on how you intend to use the lens so you can make the right choice. As you become more and more into this hobby or profession, then you can buy different types of zooms. Carrying just one or two zoom lenses is

not a bad idea.

How Do Filters Work?

If you are a professional photographer, you must have a set of filters in your camera equipment. Even if you are just an amateur, you probably have one or two filters. What are filters? Why do photographers buy different filters? How do they work?

Camera filters are transparent optical elements that change light properties entering the camera to improve the recorded image. Filters affect the different properties of an image such as sharpness, contrast, color, highlight flare, and light intensity. It can alter one or a combination of these properties, and can also create various special effects.

Camera filters are connected to the front of the lens. Aside from its features, it also protects the lens from elements such as salt air. Some cameras need lens adapters to be able to use filters.

Filters work the same whether you use them on a digital camera or film. There are just a few differences to be considered. Filters that

can reduce excess contrast such as polarizers are helpful in a digital camera because digital is more inclined to blow out highlights. Digital cameras are also known to be less sensitive to ultraviolet light, thus, ordinary UV filters may not be needed. Also, infrared filters are easier to use in digital cameras.

Some Filter Types

There are different kinds of filters for a camera and each has its own purpose.

- Ultraviolet filters. As the name implies, this type of filter absorbs ultraviolet light. Cameras, especially ones that use film, have high sensitivity to the invisible light known as ultraviolet light. This is common in making outdoor shots, especially in highly elevated places where there is only a thin layer of atmosphere that absorbs the ultraviolet light.

Without UV filters, viewing far images can be difficult because UV causes a haze that diminishes details with farther distance. UV filters are available in various absorption levels measured by the percentage of transmission at 400 nanometers. A filter that transmits

0% is ideal for long distance and aerial shots. For normal situations, a UV filter with 29% transmission is generally good enough.

- Infra-Red filters. These filters are used to reduce visible light. Filters that can totally absorb visible light and transmit only infrared lights are useful for situations like recording heat effects and aerial haze penetration.

- Natural density (ND) filters. ND filters are used when light intensity is high and proper exposure needs to be attained or when a specific lens opening is required for sharpness purposes. This type of filter evenly absorbs light throughout the visible range which alters the exposure effectively without the need to change lens opening or do color shifts.

- Polarizing filters. Polar filters or polarizers enhance contrast, color and reflection control. It has a different optical principle compared to other filter types. Polarizing filters allows light to pass through in just one vibratory direction. Different alignment can produce different effects to the image. If the filter is aligned perpendicularly to the polarized reflected glare, the result would create stronger colors because true-colored reflection will pass through.

Polarizers are increasingly being used for outdoor shots to improve contrast and color saturation. A blue sky can be darkened by a polarizing filter, but it has to be blue in the first place.

Polarizers can also minimize and control reflections from water or glass surfaces. To get the best results, an angle of 33 degrees incident to the surface is advisable. The effect can be seen by viewing through while the polarizer is rotated. An object in water can appear as an object out of water without having the reflection.

Optical filters can be a good investment for those who want to make a living out of photography. It allows for different kinds of shots with special effects. It also makes an image look more alive by the different features and effects these filters have to offer.

But even when taking pictures just as a hobby, having some of these filters will be necessary to get the image of clarity desired. Taking a shot without a filter is indeed different from a shot with one.

There are just some considerations that need to be thought about before buying filters. Different types of filters are obviously for

different purposes. It is best to determine what the main purpose is and what type of situation is commonly encountered.

Filters for Special Effects

Have you seen picture ads in magazines that look so nice that they don't look real at all? Some of them have been edited using photo editing software. But, definitely, most of them have been taken using a camera with a special kind of filter.

There are a wide variety of filters to choose from when adding to your camera equipment. There are filters for either color or black-and-white shots or both. Each filter has its own function, whether for enhancing the color contrast, improving sharpness, highlight flares and more. And there are filters for special effects like those photos normally seen in magazines and advertisements.

Here are some examples of filters that can be used to enhance the image by adding special effects to them.

Star and Cross Effect Filters

There are different star effect flares available such as Star-Six and Star-Eight. The Star-Six has six-pointed light flares, while Star-Eight has eight-pointed flares. These flares add more brightness to images. This filter is good when taking pictures of streetlights, theme-parks during the night or sun-reflections on glass structures.

A cross screen filter is similar to star filters except that the flare is four-cross. It also gives a dramatic effect to bright points in the image. It is ideal for taking photos of ladies wearing jewelry.

Spectral cross filter produces cross effects as well as soft-focus effects normally desired for portraits, outdoor shots with direct lighting or back lighting with increased cross effects. It is a filter with two transparent and colorless optical glasses in a rotating frame with a black gauze-like fiber in between.

Vario cross filter gives an effect of four rays of light coming out from each light source point. It is a filter consisting of two glasses with parallel lines etched on each glass. The front glass can be rotated separately to modify the angle of the light rays.

Close-up Filters

As the name implies, these filters are for close-up photography which are better than zooms. These filters are available in +1, +2, +3, +4, and +10 diopters with the higher number giving a much closer shot.

Macro close-up filters are good for taking shots of small insects, flowers and other tiny objects at close-up. It has a +10 diopter rating with a 2-element, 2-group construction lens.

Split field filter takes a close-up shot of half of the image while the other half is normal. This is used for keeping in focus both close and far objects at the same time.

Multivision Filters

To create a fantastic effect of repeating an object in a single photo, multivision filters are used. These are available in 3PF, 3F, 5F, 6F, and 6PF where the number determines the number of times the object will be repeated. It works great with dark backgrounds or larger

objects.

Multivision filters are made up of optical glass accurately cut into different facets. Color multivision filters add different colors to the image. There are two types available – 3F with three faces in red, green and blue and 5F with five faces equally divided into orange and green colors.

Misty Spot Filters

This type of filters provides a blurring effect of the background of a clear and sharp central image. There are four types of these kinds available.

A breezing filter gives unidirectional streaks of the blurred background. Gradual filter has streaks that seem to originate from the center image. The windmill filter has a blurring background that swirls about the center. The halo filter has blurring streaks that originate from a point at the edge of the field.

Diffusion Filters

Diffusion filters provide a soft focus effect on the image due to an irregular or uneven surface. This kind of filter is specifically used for portraits.

Center Spot Filters

The center of this filter has a clear spot that gives the center image a clear and sharp effect, while the background can have an effect of fog to make it romantic.

These are just some of the special effects filters available for professional and amateur photographers alike. It surely is nice to add even just one or two to your collection with the fabulous effects that it can provide on your shots.

Color or Black and White?

The debate regarding the use of color or black and white for photographs has been going on for decades. Many traditionalists still prefer the formal appearance of black and white photographs.

However, these days there seem to be only a few traditionalists left as more and more photographs are being developed in color.

Many people are opting for color pictures simply because they are simpler and cheaper to produce. This was not always the case, as it took some time before the required technology for color photographs could surpass the quality of black and white photos.

Before color, black and whites were the standard print used for on film. Many historical materials that may contain pictures are often in black or white. During the early days of photography, black and white processing and printing was more inexpensive than color. At the same time, black and white photographs had better quality than color.

At the start, color photographs were too expensive to process and print compared to black and white. Plus, the outcome of color photographs was not as crisp or sharp as black and white. It was only until after the eighties when the quality of color photographs surpassed black and white.

Color in Today's Photographs

Unfortunately the entrance of color printing into the main photography scene meant the decline of black and whites. As a result, the supply of black and white film dwindled as well as the facilities that could process and print them. In just a short time, black and white photographs became the exception in photography while color became the rule.

In today's world almost everything is in color. Photographers, amateur and even professionals prefer using color in order to better express the details of the pictures that they take. In addition, photographs processed and printed in color are cheaper than black and whites. In fact these days it is easier to get photographs printed in color than black and whites.

The technology used in photography these days is able to produce photographs that capture each and every vivid detail in color. Furthermore, the advances in photography have also made it possible for people to convert their existing black and white photographs into color. The results are astounding as the photograph is vibrantly reprinted in color without leaving any detail out.

The Resurgence of Black and White

Following the current trend in revivals, black and white photographs are experiencing a comeback as photographers are rediscovering the power of black and white imagery. Many people now view black and white photos as an innovative take on the usual colored pictures. At the same time, black and white photos impart a sense of reality that can be lost in colored pictures.

Print advertising was the first industry to revive the interest in black and white pictures. Gigantic billboards across the country featured ads done entirely in black and white. Since then, black and white photographs became requested all over the place.

Black and whites became popular with brides who wanted to add a historical and classic touch to their wedding pictures. Photography classes have also used black and white photographs as a great way to teach students on how light affects film. However the resurgence of black and white was inevitable because it's simply beautiful.

What goes with what?

In the early days, people had no choice but to use black and white since it was the only medium available to them. But today, people can choose what they want for their photographs. In most cases, the choice of using color or black and white is a matter of personal preference.

Keep in mind that most subjects can be taken in black and white. However there are times when using color can help bring out the true beauty of the subject. You may want to pass up a black and white motif for subjects that are known for color like an autumn settings, flowers and colorful butterflies.

Use a black and white theme for subjects where color may become a distraction to the viewer. Scenes of war or an accident are more compelling and less violent to look out minus the color of blood. In this way, black and white photographs relay more emotion without being too disturbing.

Tips to Successful Amateur Photography

Whether you just have a simple point-and-shoot camera or the more expensive digital SLRs, you can definitely take quality pictures like the pros do. It's not the type of camera that takes great shots, it's the photographer. If you don't know how to correctly take a shot, you can take a really bad picture from an SLR camera.

As long as you know how to correctly take pictures and are willing to make some adjustments, taking great photos will be easy for you. Here are some tips to help you shoot like professionals even with your simple digital camera.

1. Would you like your shots to have a warmer feel? Most shots taken from a digital camera without any adjustments look cool and clammy. This is because the white balance setting is set to "auto" as default which is fine for snapshots.

If you want a warmer effect, though, with sharp colors, you may want to set the white balance to "cloudy" setting instead of auto. This is like adding a mild warming filter to the lens of your camera. Cloudy setting increases the yellow and red colors adding a richer and warmer

effect to your shots.

2. Polarizing filters can be one of the most important investments you can add to your digital camera. These filters reduce the glare and unwanted reflections on your shots. This is great when you frequently take landscape and outdoor shots. Pictures taken with a polarizer have richer and more saturated colors.

If your camera won't allow filters, like a simple point-and-shoot camera, don't fret! You can still have a polarizing effect on your shots by placing a good quality pair of sunglasses in front of the lens. It gives an effect similar to a polarizer. Just make sure that you place it to the lens as close as possible and the rims are not seen.

3. For an outdoor shot with shine, use your camera's "flash on" or "fill flash" feature. This lets you control when you want the flash to go off, instead of it deciding when it wants to. This mode exposes first the background then adding enough flash to illuminate your subject.

For great results, place your subject where the sun illuminates the hair from the side or back. Alternatively, to let your subject be comfortable and not be annoyed by the sun's heat, place your model

in the shade then use the flash to illuminate the subject.

However, built-in flashes only have a maximum range of 10 feet. Thus, it would be better not to go too far from your subject.

4. Taking detailed shots of objects like flowers or small insects is easy with your digital camera. Most digital cameras have a feature called "close up" or "macro mode" usually indicated by a flower sign. With this mode turned on, you can take shots of objects as close as possible. However, you only get a shallow field-depth when taking close up pictures so it is better to focus on the most important part of the subject then allow the other parts of the image go soft.

5. Leveling the image may be difficult for amateurs as well as some pros. One way to get a level or an even shot, especially of a nature shot, is to look for some horizontal lines as guide. If you have a view of the horizon, where the sky meets the ocean, you can use that as your leveling guide.

If it still is difficult for you, you can try to take several shots at different angles so you'll know which one would give you the best shot. After some time it will become natural for you to take even

shots.

These are just some of the tricks you can do to take wonderful shots on your digital camera, be it a simple point-and shoot kind or the more professional SLR type. Photography is really an enjoyable and fulfilling hobby, especially when a lot of people also appreciate your shots. And it is not that difficult to have shots that most people will like. Just explore, read different books, and take advice from pros and you'll surely be one of them in a matter of time.

Strategies for Portrait Photography

Photography is one of the most popular hobbies and professions in the world. There is nothing like capturing fragments of reality and preserving it on film. There are many kinds of photography, but one of the most in-demand is portrait photography.

A good portrait is described as a picture with a quality image that captures both the physical features and character of the subject. Taking good portraits is very challenging because a photographer needs a subject with an upbeat personality that also reflects sensitivity and liveliness.

There are lots of factors that photography enthusiasts need to know in capturing the perfect portrait.

1. Revelation of the subject's character

For a portrait to be considered good, it must capture at least one element that shows the features and traits of the subject as well as one that captures his or her individuality. The image must reveal an important part of the subject's character that can be identifiable by those who know them. Therefore, it is quite challenging for a portrait to show the character of his subject if they have only met for the first time.

2. The right moment to take pictures

Definitely, the photo shoot should start when the subject is comfortable and at ease with his or her appearance and surroundings. Never shoot if the subject is tense or uneasy, because it will reflect in the pictures. There is no rule that says a conversation should stop when shooting starts; it can still continue especially if it makes the subject open up more to the photographer.

Remember that the subject does not need to smile to make the

portrait look good. Oftentimes, a thoughtful or a serious expression is preferred since it reveals more of the subject's character.

3. Preparedness of the photographer

This is important since it is the photographer who takes control of a photo session. The subject must feel that the person behind the camera knows what he's doing and is experienced enough to tell the subject how to pose. The photographer himself must be prepared and relaxed throughout the session.

4. Right kind of lighting

Probably the best light that can be used for capturing the personality of the subject is natural daylight. The variety of lighting choices brought about by outdoor conditions gives more creative leeway for the photographer. Having the subject sit near the window can also produce great effects. The only disadvantage of natural light is that it's not always consistent. This is the reason all photographers must utilize artificial lighting. All photographers must have studio flashes. Also, the position of the photographer in relation to the subject can also be shifted in order to maximize the light available.

5. Appropriate background

Simply put, a bad background can destroy a picture. Always pay close attention on the scenery behind the subject when framing shots. There are many creative options that be used when shooting outdoors. The subject can be made to pose beside or in front of colorful flowers or leaves, the sea or the sky. To reduce the effect of a distracting background, a photographer can make use of long lenses or an expansive aperture. For indoors, one can use black or grey cloth for the background, then adding colored transparent plastics over the flashes to modify color.

6. Usage of costumes and props

Portraits usually are a rare photograph of a subject, and good costumes can make the portrait more interesting and valuable. You don't always need to use a full costume; sometimes a hint of it will make wonders, such as hats or scarves. Props should be used very carefully, and should not distract from the main subject of the photograph. A prop should establish the natural pose and mood of the one being photographed.

7. Framing

The kind of framing can already create the image desired by the

photographer. It is recommended that photos be cropped before shooting. The image should be checked a few seconds before clicking the shutter. Images that are not needed should be excluded from the shot.

Producing the perfect portrait may seem hard at first but these tips can help novices so that they can shoot better pictures.

How to Start a Photography Business

How to Start a Photography Business

Do you love taking pictures? Are you considering making some money out of it? Starting a business in photography is relatively easy, as long as you have the right equipment.

You can start a photography business with only a few bucks, or possibly nothing at all if you already have the right camera equipment. You can even start your business in the comforts of your own home.

You can probably find a small space in your house or a room dedicated for your business. That will serve as your "office" space.

With the advent of digital SLR (single-lens reflex) cameras, you don't even need a dark room to develop the pictures you have taken. All you need is a personal computer with above average specifications and photo editing software such as Adobe Photoshop.

If you want to make your hobby a business, you should not only have your basic camera unit but the additional equipment as well. Of course, you would want your pictures to stand out and be more appealing to potential clients. You would need different zoom lenses and camera filters to make your shots clear, sharp and even have some special effects.

Starting with a few of them will do, and then just gradually increase them as your business progresses. You don't even have to make this a full time business right away, especially if you don't have a client base yet. Doing this part time would be sufficient enough while in the start up stage.

Even if you only do this on your free time, make sure you are still dedicated and serious. You won't be able to get enough clients to sustain yourself if you don't take this business seriously.

Since you are going to make this engrossing hobby a business, there will be some legality that you need to take care of. First, you need to have your business registered and have a name and logo to be able to operate legally. Once registered, you can issue receipts and file taxes for your business.

Also, it would be good to write a business plan. Having one will help you identify your goal for your business and keep focused with this goal. This way, you will know if the business that you start up is worth all your time and effort.

With your business plan, you can also define the different strategies that you can do to make your business more profitable. You can change the business plan from time to time as needed. Having a business plan will surely help your business increase earnings, as well as help you to find ways in financing your business.

Your business plan should include your business' objectives. This is important because it will help you stay in focus on how you want your business to turn out in the long run. It should also include a marketing plan, how you intend to advertise and market your services

to get customers. Also, the price you intend to charge on your services should be included. You may want to change this as your business grows.

Who else can help you better than your relatives and friends with regard to marketing your services? At first, you may want to volunteer your services for free for birthdays and other occasions of your relatives and close friends. For sure, once they have seen your good shots, they will recommend you to their own circle of friends and colleagues.

And it will go on and on until you realize that you are now having difficulty arranging your schedule because of so many appointments. Of course, doing some marketing and advertising techniques would help. You can probably give away flyers or brochures to your neighbors. Or maybe post an ad in your local newspaper.

There are many ways to gain clients. Many people now consider photographs as a very important part in special occasions. Companies also rely on good photos to market their products.

Starting a photography business may be easy to do but it should

be taken seriously. For anyone who wants to make serious money, dedication is important. You should also be responsible for all your actions. After all, wouldn't it be nice to earn decent income with something you love doing?