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Digital Photography Tips – By Lisa Eaise, Owner Digital Xpressions ©

This was an article that I wrote a few years back - although camera technology continues to update and change, the principles behind photography remain. I feel it is important to update and publish – using your own photos for publications and marketing can prevent costly lawsuits.

Digital Photography Tips

Digital Cameras today, are like VCR's - everybody had one but didn't really know how to use it.

This overview is simply going to cover some basic's to make your shooting easier.

First, let's identify your camera genre. Digital Cameras can be broken into three categories: consumer, prosumer and professional. The first two will be the point of focus for this overview. (No pun intended.)

Digital Image Basics:

Digital images can be broken down into four areas: Resolution, Dimensions, Bit Depth and Gamut. Resolution is how many pixels per inch. A pixel, short for picture element, is the smallest unit in an image. Dimensions is the size the image is in width and height (800 x 600 is an example), Bit Depth is how many colors can a single pixel hold and the color gamut is the range of colors, for digital images it would be RGB.

Consumer cameras are basic point and shoot cameras. It is your basic x mega pixel (x being the number that represents your camera, since this ranges – the most popular on the market today 8 – 12 mega pixels. The number of mega pixels, really determines the overall printing size that the camera can produce. How many pixels at the highest setting can one image hold. It does not break it down to how many per inch. It really does not mean that it's going to take a better photo than the next camera. So do your research when buying your camera. It is the resolution that the camera can support that will make the difference in the quality. Most consumer cameras (point and shoots), only take an image at 72 dpi (dots per inch) and they also do not come well equipped with zoom capabilities. If looking for a camera that can zoom, then look for a camera that is at least a 5 optical zoom.

What is the difference between zoom and optical zoom and how to work around it? Zooming in with your digital camera causes the camera to increase the size of the pixels. Therefore the end result image looks grainy. If your digital camera has less than 5 optical zoom, the answer is easy, move in closer to your subject. Use your distance between your camera and your subject for the right shot.

This will also help with the overall lighting of your subject as well. Another consideration is your flash range. By being too far back, your flash will not have the distance to illuminate your subject, resulting in a dark image. On the other hand, moving in too close, could cause severe flash back and your image could turn out too white. Set your flash settings on your camera appropriately. Cameras today come well equipped with flash options.



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Should you have a camera that has optical zoom, then you're in much better shape and have less to worry about with the distance between your camera and subject. But remember, there is a point on your camera where it will no longer use the optical zoom, so use your zoom – but what looks good in the viewfinder could be a completely different picture on your computer screen.

Macro... what is this macro mode? This is for when you want to take a photo very close up. This is a nice feature of cameras that I have used often. You can shoot a subject as close as four inches away. Keep in mind that each camera differs – check your camera to find out what distance works the best for your macro mode.

Shooting a subject that is behind glass. Well, lets go back to those camera settings. Keep it on auto – this little piece of equipment will automatically set the white balance and saturation on its own when left on auto. Next, have the flash set on auto as well. So when shooting from behind glass, let the camera automatically focus on the subject, before you depress your shutter button, hold your hand in front of the flash, now take the picture. The reason for this, it allows the camera to identify the light and surroundings and knows how fast to relay the shutter. In the same setting, if you were to turn the flash off, your image will more than likely turn out blurry. This is because the camera has identified the lack of light and knows the shutter has to stay open longer to capture the image. Any movement made will be picked up by the camera.

Prosumer cameras; more bells and whistles, a better image – but is it right for you? Depends on what you want out of your photography. If you want images that you can use in print publications, digital mediums, private tv networks, digital advertising, then yes, this is the camera for you. These cameras come with 18-200mm lenses and photograph images at 300 dpi. So zooming is much better with this level camera because of the lens. You can also purchase additional lenses, filters, flashes, diffusers to increase the camera and photographers capabilities. The manufacturers have created a camera so easy to use, that even a beginner can get beautiful photos!

The biggest recommendation that I can give, is to Practice. Practice – it is how you learn your camera its abilities and end results.

A few more points to learn about digital imaging; you can make a digital image smaller, but you can not make it bigger. The best analogy that I can give, if you take a pair of pants and cut them into shorts and discard the unused material – you can't take the remaining material and create the full size piece of garment again.

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