



The Digital Photography Companion: Practical Photography Advice You Can Take Anywhere

By Derrick Story

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Are you ready to take photos that reflect your creative spirit, rather than just another set of snapshots? Then you want this book in your camera bag. Well-organized so you can look up topics quickly, *The Digital Photography Companion* gives you creative tips and technical advice for taking top-notch digital photos in a wide range of conditions, and for a variety of occasions. In other words, this book will help you make pictures that look better than everyone else's.

Professional photographer and teacher Derrick Story, whose online tips and podcasts at The Digital Story (www.thedigitalstory.com) have made him a popular photography blogger, gives you plenty of examples of how to capture great shots of people, places, landscapes, and more. He also provides a complete summary on camera features, tips for printing, sharing your images, and an overview of photo management applications.

Chapters include:

- **What is It?** -- Choose the right camera (DSLRs, compact cameras, or hybrids) and get a rundown on all of the typical features they offer, such as face detection, image stabilizers, diopter adjustment, focus assist light, RAM buffer, and more.
- **How Does it Work?** -- This A-Z guide of digital camera controls explains everything from Aperture Value (Av) Mode and Autoexposure to White Balance, the Zoom/Magnify Control, and everything in between.
- **Shoot Like a Pro** -- Advice for a variety of photographic adventures, such as capturing existing light portraits, creating powerful landscape images, and shooting fireworks, underwater portraits, infrared photos, and more, along with lighting and filter tricks.

- **I've Taken Great Pictures, Now What?** -- You get complete advice for sharing your photos, converting from color to black & white and more, plus an overview of photo management applications, from Adobe Photoshop Lightroom to Apple iPhoto.
- **Printing Made Easy** -- Printing doesn't have to be a painful experience. Learn various options, including direct printing without a computer, ordering out, and selecting the right inkjet printer for home (and what to do with it once you get it there.).

You also get an appendix with Quick Reference Tables, as well as other useful tables scattered throughout the book.

The Digital Photography Companion offers you friendly advice so you can try techniques that may never have occurred to you -- approaches that will bring you more of what you're looking for when you click the shutter: Great looking pictures!

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Five Fun Photography Tips by Derrick Story, Author of *The Digital Photography Companion*

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1) Produce Do-It-Yourself Product Shots: There are two ways to shoot items using tabletop photography: the hard way and the easy way. The hard way involves multiple studio lights, softboxes, umbrellas, and seamless backdrop paper. Professionals use this equipment to produce outstanding images for commercial advertising and high-end editorial work. But if you just want a nice picture of your old film camera to sell on eBay, you probably don't want to set up an entire studio. So here's the easy way: Find a window that you can set up a table next to. North-facing windows are great, but not necessary for this type of shooting. Cover the surface with white paper, and if you can, create a white backdrop too. This will be your work area. Put your camera on a tripod (or another stable surface) and adjust it so it's facing the item that you want to photograph on the table. Move both the subject and the camera to achieve the best lighting possible via the open window. Once everything is in place, make a tabletop reflector out of white cardboard, or cardboard (or another rigid material) covered with aluminum foil. Position the reflector opposite the light source (window) so it bounces light onto the shadowy side of the item. Set the white balance to Cloudy and put your camera on self-timer. Now trip the timer and stand back. After 10 seconds or so, the camera will take the shot for you to review. Continue refining your setup until you get the shot you want. This simple setup can produce studio-like results with a fraction the cost or effort. Give it a try.

2) Use Sunglasses as a Polarizing Filter: Point and shoot cameras are the height of convenience, but not always versatility. Case in point is when you want to mount a polarizing filter to saturate the sky or reduce glare. There's no where to put it! But that doesn't mean your pictures are doomed to the blinding glare of a reflective world. You can, instead, remove those stylish neutral gray polarizing glasses from your head and place them in front of the camera lens. Quality sunglasses make great polarizing filters for compact cameras. Make sure that the lens of your sunglasses completely covers the front glass element of your camera. You'll get best results when the sun is aligned along your shoulders. You don't believe it works? Then take two shots, one with the sunglasses and the other without. You be the judge.



3) Devise a Shower Cap Inclement Weather Protector: The perfect travel companion for compact shooters is the hotel shower cap. These free accessories are the perfect rain protectors when you want to go outside and get the shot. Just poke a hole in the middle of the cap for the lens to protrude through, put your hands through the “stretchy” opening, and let the elastic close tight around your wrists. You now have a water resistant cover that enables you to work all of the controls--perfect for those shots of the kids splashing water in the gutter on a rainy day.



4) Preview Your Shots in B&W: Many cameras have a Black & White mode that enables you to capture grayscale images. This type of photography can be quite beautiful and is often considered artistic. The problem with B&W mode is that grayscale images are your only option. You may think you only want Black & White at the wedding reception... until the bride asks for color versions two weeks later. I recommend that you capture your pictures in color, then convert copies of them to B&W. That way you have all of your options open. But there's still value to B&W mode, even if you choose to capture in color. It can help you preview your compositions in grayscale on the camera's LCD monitor. By doing so, you can better compose your scene for the best Black & White output later on while working on your computer. Not to mention that it's quite fun.

5) Tennis Ball Tripod Feet: Have you ever tried to use a tripod in the sand? You might as well be trying to steady your camera on chopsticks in rice. But you can bring stability to the situation. Buy a can of tennis balls, cut an “X” slit in each one, and slip them over the feet of your tripod. They will provide a much steadier platform for your three-legged friend.

About the Author

Derrick Story is the digital media evangelist for O'Reilly, as well as the author of *Digital Photography Hacks* and *Digital Photography Pocket Guide*. You can listen to his photo podcasts and read his tips at [The Digital Story](http://TheDigitalStory.com). Aperture fans might want to check out his co-authored video training on Lynda.com titled, *Aperture 1.5 Beyond the Basics*.

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