

The Digital Photo Guy

Digital SLR Workflow[©]

Use this cue card to help you develop a good workflow and remind you of critical steps.

1. Plan the shoot

- What are your goals for the day?
- Visualize what you want to capture.
- Consider the season and time of day.

2. Select an appropriate lens

- Wide angle, telephoto or standard?
- Zoom or prime?
- Fast & heavy or slow & compact?
- Need/want a polarizer or other filters?

3. Immediately check the light on arrival

- Sun direction & intensity
- How much available if indoors

4. Set ISO

- Bright, sunny light, ISO 100 or 200
- Cloudy or overcast, ISO 200 or 400
- Evening or low light, ISO 400 or 800
- Keep 1600/3200 in mind if needed.

5. Decide if DoF or motion blur is key

- Aperture Priority to control DoF
- Shutter Priority for motion blur
- Manual for flash photography
- Program Mode for fast action

6. Set aperture (f/x) or shutter speed (ss)

- Set aperture to f/5.6

OR

- Set shutter speed to 1/125

7. Initial exposure against neutral color

- Gray card, Medium blue sky, Coca Cola red, bright green grass, palm of hand (w/EC)

8. Select Drive, Meter Modes & WB

- Drive to Burst (HS or Normal)
- Meter Mode to Evaluative/Matrix
- In JPEG, set CWB or WB Preset
- In RAW, set to AWB

9. On site, immediately take test shot

- Check histogram and “blinkies”
- Zero Exposure Level Indicator
- Take a 2nd test shot

10. Evaluate scene & ideal scenarios

- Light direction and intensity
- BG & FG, Depth of Field
- Perspective, Angle, Mood

11. Take 2-3 test shots for composition

12. Dial in final tweaks & start shooting

13. Check settings every 3-4 shots

14. Keep an eye on exposures remaining

15. Don't “chimp” excessively

16. Depth of Field Cheat Sheet

- Close subject (~8 ft) & wide aperture (f/2.8 to f/5.6)
- Short lens (<35mm)
 - DoF = Moderate
 - 2-3 people head shot
- Normal lens (~50mm)
 - DoF = Shallow
 - Close up Portrait
- Long lens (~200mm)
 - DoF = Extremely shallow
 - Small objects

- Far subject (~16 ft) & small aperture (f/16 to f/22)
- Short lens (<35mm)
 - DoF = Infinity
 - Landscapes
- Normal lens (~50mm)
 - DoF = Deep
 - Show context
- Long lens (~200mm)
 - DoF = Shallow
 - Full length Portrait