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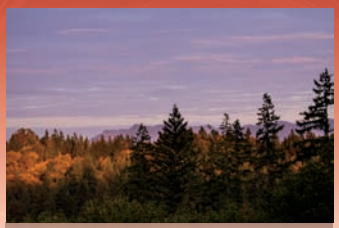
Charlotte K. Lowrie

Canon® EOS Rebel T3/1100D Digital Field Guide



Canon® EOS

Rebel T3/1100D

Digital Field Guide

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Charlotte K. Lowrie

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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About the Author

Charlotte K. Lowrie is an award-winning photographer and writer based in the Seattle, Washington, area. She has more than 25 years of photography experience, ranging from photojournalism and editorial photography to nature and portraits. Her images have appeared in national magazines and newspapers, and on a variety of websites, including MSN.com, www.takegreatpictures.com, and the Canon Digital Learning Center.

Charlotte divides her time among maintaining an active photography business, teaching photography, and writing books and magazine articles. She is the author of 15 books, including the bestselling *Canon EOS 7D Digital Field Guide* and 13 other Digital Field Guides. In addition, she teaches monthly online photography courses at BetterPhoto.com. Visit her website at wordsandphotos.org.

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I dedicate this book to my children who endure book deadlines with the utmost grace and with great support for me. And this book is dedicated to God, my constant source of inspiration.

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You'll see pictures in this book that were made by my son, Bryan Lowrie, and my daughter, Sandy Ripple. Thanks so much, Bryan and Sandy for your help and for allowing me to use your lovely images. I am blessed to have you as children.

Contents

Introduction xviii

QT
Quick Tour 1

A Quick Look at Key T3/1100D Camera Controls 2
Setting up the T3/1100D 3
Setting the date and time 4
Setting the image quality 5
Choosing a Shooting Mode 6
Getting Sharp Focus 7

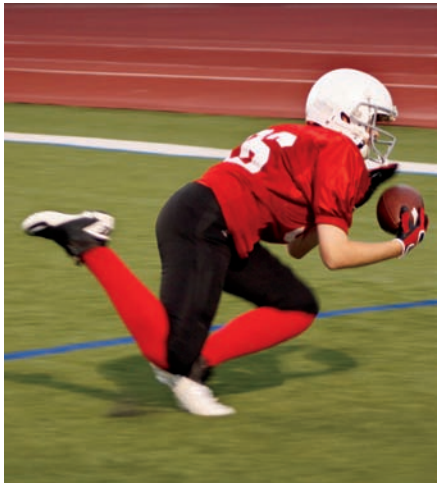
CHAPTER 1
Setting up the EOS Rebel T3/1100D 11

Overview of the T3/1100D Camera Controls 12
Roadmap to the Rebel T3/1100D 13
Front of the camera 14
Top of the camera. 15
Rear of the camera 17
Side of the camera 21
Lens controls 21
The LCD 22
Viewfinder display. 23
Resetting the Rebel T3/1100D 25
Memory Cards. 25
Choosing the Image Quality 27
JPEG format 28
RAW format 30
RAW+JPEG 31
Working with Folders 32
Choosing a File Numbering Method 34
Continuous file numbering 34
Auto reset. 35
Manual reset. 35
Additional Setup Options. 36
Adding a Copyright to Images 39
Viewing and Finding Images and Movies . . . 40
Single-image or movie playback 40
Index display. 41

Rating images and movies 41
Image jump. 42
Slide show 42
Displaying images on an HD TV 44
Erasing and Protecting Images and Movies . . . 44
Erasing images and movies 45
Protecting images and movies 46
Working with Eye-Fi Cards 47

CHAPTER 2
Controlling Exposure and Focus 49

Exploring Exposure on the T3/1100D 50
How shooting modes relate to exposure . . . 52
Basic Zone shooting modes 53
Full Auto mode. 55
Flash Off mode 56
Creative Auto (CA) mode 57
Portrait mode 59
Landscape mode 60
Close-up mode. 61
Sports mode 62
Night Portrait mode 62
Movie mode. 63
Creative Zone shooting modes. 63
Program AE (P) mode 64
Shutter-priority AE (Tv) mode 67
Aperture-priority AE (Av) mode 70
Manual (M) mode. 72
Automatic Depth of Field (A-DEP) mode 75
Setting the ISO Sensitivity. 76
Metering Light to Determine Exposure Settings 80
How the Rebel T3/1100D meters light . . . 81
Three metering modes 82
Evaluative metering mode 82
Partial metering mode 83
Center-weighted Average metering mode 84
Evaluating and Modifying Exposure 87
Evaluating exposure 88
Brightness histogram. 88
RGB histogram. 89
Auto Lighting Optimizer 91
Highlight tone priority 93



Exposure Compensation. 94
Auto Exposure Bracketing 96
Locking exposure on a critical area. 98
Getting Tack-Sharp Focus 99
Choosing an autofocus mode. 99
Selecting an autofocus point 101
Selecting a Drive Mode 104
Single-shot drive mode. 104
Continuous drive mode. 104
Self-timer drive modes 105

CHAPTER 3
Getting Great Color and Adding Creative Looks to Images 107

Understanding Color Temperature 108
Using T3 Color Settings. 109
Choosing White Balance Options 110
Using White Balance options 111
Setting a Custom White Balance 112
Tweaking the White Balance 114
Correcting the color tone 116
Getting accurate color in automatic shooting modes. 117
Changing the Look of Images Using Picture Styles 118
Choosing a preset Picture Style 119
Adjusting Picture Styles 123
Creating your own Picture Styles 125
Using the Picture Style Editor. 127
Color Spaces 128
Comparing color spaces 128
Choosing a color space. 130
Adding Ambience Effects 131

CHAPTER 4
Customizing the EOS Rebel T3/1100D 137

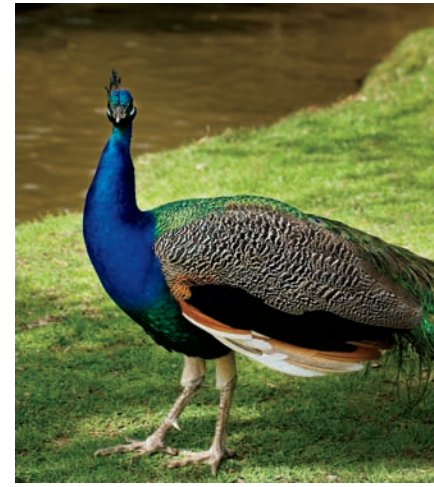
Setting Custom Functions. 138
Custom Function groupings 138
Custom Function specifics 138
C.Fn I: Exposure. 140
C.Fn II: Image. 142
C.Fn III: Autofocus/Drive 145
C.Fn IV: Operation/Others 146
Setting Custom Functions 149

Customizing My Menu 150
Changing the Shooting Screen Color. 153

CHAPTER 5
Shooting with a Live View on the LCD 155
About Live View Shooting 156
Live View Features and Functions. 157
Live View focus options 157
Metering 159
Using a flash 160
Setting up for Live View Shooting 160
Working with Live View. 161
Shooting in Live View 162

CHAPTER 6
Using Movie Mode 165
About Video 166
Video standards 166
Video on the T3/1100D 167
Recording and Playing Back Videos 169
Setting up for movie recording 170
Recording movies 173
Playing back videos. 177

CHAPTER 7
Working with Flash 181
Flash Technology and the T3/1100D 182
Shooting with the built-in flash 183
Working with the built-in flash 186
Red-eye Reduction. 188
Modifying flash exposure 188
Flash Exposure Compensation 188
Flash Exposure Lock 191
Using the flash AF-assist beam to help the camera focus 192
Shooting with a Speedlite 193
Flash Exposure Bracketing. 194
Setting Speedlite Custom Functions. . . 195
Using One or More Wireless Speedlites . . . 196
Basic wireless multiple flash 198
Exploring flash techniques 201
Using bounce flash 201
Adding catchlights to the eyes. 202
Flash Tips. 203



CHAPTER 8
Exploring Lenses and Accessories 205

Evaluating Lens Choices for the T3/1100D . . . 206
Building a lens system . . . 206
Understanding how the T3/1100D sensor size relates to lenses . . . 207
Zoom Versus Prime Lenses . . . 210
Zoom lenses . . . 210
Prime lenses . . . 212
Working with Different Types of Lenses . . . 213
Wide-angle lenses . . . 214
Telephoto lenses . . . 217
Normal lenses . . . 218
Macro lenses . . . 219
Tilt-and-shift lenses . . . 220
Image Stabilized (IS) lenses . . . 221
Correcting Lens Vignetting . . . 222
Doing More with Lens Accessories . . . 224
Lens extenders . . . 224
Extension tubes and close-up lenses . . . 225
Learning Lens Lingo and Technology . . . 227

CHAPTER 9
The Elements of Exposure and Composition 229

The Four Elements of Exposure . . . 230
Light . . . 231
Sensitivity: The role of ISO . . . 232
Intensity: The role of aperture . . . 234
Wide aperture . . . 235
Narrow aperture . . . 236
Choosing an aperture . . . 236
What is depth of field? . . . 237
Time: The role of shutter speed . . . 239
Equivalent Exposures . . . 240
Putting It All Together . . . 240
Approaches to Composition . . . 241
Subdividing the photographic frame . . . 241
Balance and symmetry . . . 243
Tone and color . . . 243
Lines and direction . . . 245
Filling the frame . . . 246
Keeping the background clean . . . 246
Framing the subject . . . 247

Controlling the focus and depth of field. . . 248
Defining space and perspective 248

APPENDIX A
Exploring RAW Capture **251**
Learning about RAW Capture 251
Canon's RAW Conversion Program. 255
Sample RAW Image Conversion 256

APPENDIX B
How to Use the Gray Card and Color Checker **261**
The Gray Card 261
The Color Checker 262

Glossary **263**

Index **273**

Introduction

If you're reading this, then chances are good that you are the proud owner of a Canon EOS Rebel T3/1100D. You probably already know that the camera delivers excellent images right out of the box. Just attach the lens, charge the battery, set the camera to one of the automatic shooting modes, and start shooting. But if you've spent any time exploring the camera controls and the camera menus, then you know that there is a lot of creative opportunity with the camera that you may be missing. This book is written to help you discover and understand all the creative power that the T3/1100D offers. The editors at Wiley and I hope that this book becomes your one-source guide for getting the best images that you can get with the T3/1100D.

As you read this book and use the camera, you're encouraged to explore the creative options that are available at every turn with this camera. If you're moving up from a point-and-shoot camera to the T3/1100D, you'll find some controls and features that are immediately familiar to you. Even if you're currently using only the automatic modes, the T3/1100D offers you some creative control over your images. As you read this book, you can transition from the automatic modes to the semiautomatic modes and Manual mode, where you have full creative control. The main goal of students in my Rebel photography courses is to move from shooting in the automatic modes to shooting with control over the exposure. This book is written to help you make and enjoy making that transition.

Given that the T3/1100D is a great camera to grow your photography skills, it's also good to know that the camera sports some of the newest technologies in Canon's stable — technologies that help deliver excellent image quality. For example, the image sensor offers 12 megapixels that produce images that make beautiful prints at 11 × 17 inches and larger. The color out of the camera is pleasing and exposures are consistent thanks in large part to Canon's latest metering system. This system uses a dual-layer metering sensor that reads both illumination and color from 63 zones and combines it with information from the autofocus system. You also get the latest iteration of Canon's venerable DIGIC processor, which has 14-bit processing for smooth tonal gradations, rich color, Live View shooting, and a number of customization options.

The camera offers good performance at 3 frames per second during continuous shooting to record up to 830 large JPEGs in a shooting burst. That makes it a capable camera for photographing everything from school football games to skiing competitions. With its high-resolution 1280 × 720 HD video, the T3/1100D is a great tool for multimedia storytelling, opening new doors of creative expression.

With that short introduction to some of the features of the T3/1100D, this book is written to help you learn not only what the camera features and options are, but also when and how to use them — with step-by-step instructions. And if you are new to digital photography or are returning after a long hiatus, be sure to check out the introduction to photographic exposure in Chapter 9.

I believe that any book about a camera should have staying power; in other words, it should be useful to you for as long as you use the T3/1100D. With that in mind, the book includes both basic and advanced shooting techniques so that as you progress, you'll have more advanced techniques to explore.

You may be wondering if this is the type of book where you can skip around reading chapters in random order. You can, of course, read in any order you want, but be sure to read Chapters 1 through 3 early. These chapters provide the foundation for learning the camera, getting the best image quality, and getting great color. From there you can explore customizing the camera, using Live View shooting, video, flash, and lenses in any order you want.

Before you begin reading, know that the best way to learn the T3/1100D and photography is to shoot, evaluate, and then shoot some more. Rinse and repeat. Carry the camera with you everywhere and use it. Be curious. Be fearless. Be passionate. And always look for the light.

The team at Wiley and I hope that you enjoy reading and using this book as much as we enjoyed creating it for you.

Charlotte

Postscript: Thanks to the many readers who have contacted me over the years. Your questions, suggestions, and ideas for previous books continue to influence the content of the books that I write today. I learn as much from you, I believe, as I hope that you have learned from me. Thank you, and keep the questions and ideas coming.

Quick Tour

Whether you just got your EOS T3/1100D or you've been using it for a while, it's important to set up the camera to get the best image quality and to suit your shooting preferences. This Quick Tour gives you a brief look at key camera controls and provides the basics for setting up and using the camera. Many of the topics here are discussed in more detail later in the book, but this tour helps get you off to a good start.

For this image of a sunset over the Cascade Mountains, I relied on the T3/1100D to give me a great overall exposure, and I was not disappointed. Exposure: ISO 100, f/2.8, 1/60 second.

Some people worry about changing camera settings for fear that they will "mess up" the camera. You don't need to worry because you can easily reset the camera to the factory default settings. The Canon EOS T3/1100D is versatile and fun to use. You can begin making pictures at your current skill level and get excellent images. Then as you gain experience, you have all the power you need to take full creative control.

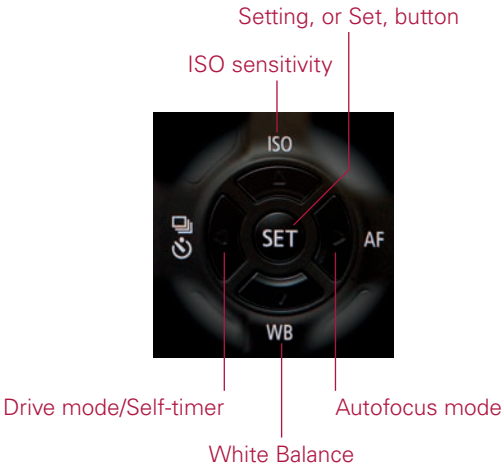
A Quick Look at Key T3/1100D Camera Controls

The camera controls you use most often are within reach. The following main controls can be used together or separately to control key functions on the T3/1100D:

- **Mode dial.** This dial enables you to choose a shooting mode. Shooting modes determine how much control you have over your images and over camera settings. To select a shooting mode, turn the Mode dial until the mode you want is lined up with the line on the camera body.

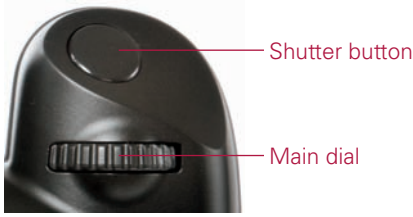
QT.1 The Mode dial

- **Cross keys and Set button.** When you are shooting images, you can press these keys to make adjustments to the ISO, AF (Autofocus mode), WB (White Balance), or Drive mode that is displayed as an icon in P, Tv, Av, M, an A-DEP shooting modes. When you are using the camera menus, you can press the left or right cross key to select a menu tab and the up or down cross key to move to menu options and make other menu selections. After you make a menu choice, press the Set button to confirm your choice. The Set button functions like an OK button for many actions.



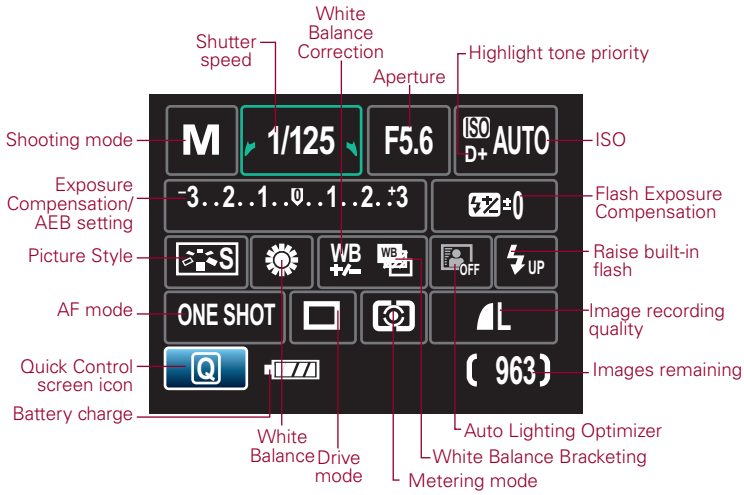
QT.2 The cross keys and Set button. The surrounding camera controls are screened out to isolate the cross keys and Set button.

- **Main dial and shutter button.** Use the Main dial to move among camera menu tabs, to make selections on the Quick Control screen, to change the aperture in Av shooting mode, and to change the shutter speed in Manual shooting mode. Half-press the shutter button to set the focus. Then fully press the shutter button to make the picture.



QT.3 The Main dial and shutter button

- **Quick Control button.** The Q on the back of the camera is very handy for quick access to the camera settings you change most often as you're shooting. Press the Q button, press one of the cross keys to select the setting you want to change, and then turn the Main dial to adjust the setting. The number of settings you can adjust depends on the shooting mode that you choose. In P, Tv, Av, M, and A-DEP shooting modes, you can adjust more camera settings than when you use the automated shooting modes such as Flash Off, Portrait, and Landscape.

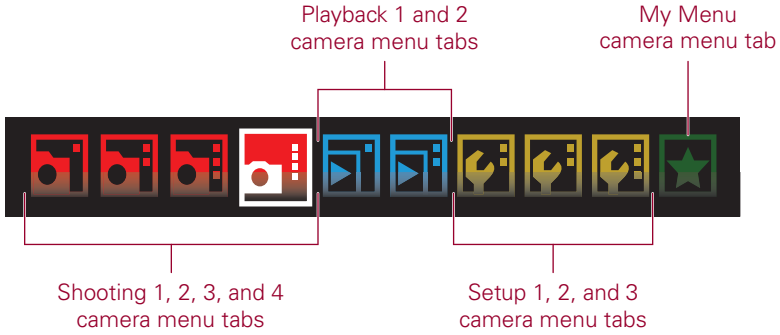


QT.4 The Quick Control screen

Setting up the T3/1100D

Much of the setup for the camera is done using the camera menus. To help you navigate the menus, similar settings are grouped and color-coded. For example, settings that affect shooting are located on the Shooting (red) menu tabs while setup and playback settings are grouped on other menu tabs.

It's important to know that the items on the camera menus change according to the shooting mode that you chose. In the automatic, or Basic Zone shooting modes, there are fewer options on camera menus than there are in the semiautomatic and Manual, or Creative Zone, modes. Also, the menus change when you're in Movie and Live View shooting modes. So if you can't find one of the options mentioned in this book, first check to see what shooting mode the camera is in, and then switch to P, Tv, Av, M, or A-DEP shooting mode and check the menu again.

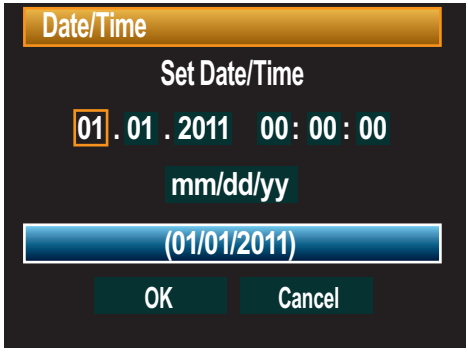


QT.5 The EOS T3/1100D camera menus

To use the camera menus, follow these steps:

1. **Press the Menu button on the back of the camera.**
2. **Turn the Main dial to move to the camera menu tab that you want.** You can also press the left or right cross key to move among camera menu tabs.
3. **Press the up or down cross key to choose an option.**
4. **Press the Set button to display suboptions, or to open additional screens.**
5. **Press a cross key to choose the option you want.**
6. **Press the Set button to confirm your choice.**

Setting the date and time



QT.6 Date/Time screen

Setting the date and time is the first thing that the camera asks you to do. Once you set it, the date and time are included into EXIF (Exchangeable Image File Format) data for every image that you make. The EXIF data contains all the information about a picture, including the exposure information, camera settings, and the date and time you made the picture. You can see this information when you view your images in ImageBrowser, a program on the EOS Solution Disk that comes with the camera. The date and time provides a handy record that you can use to recall when you took pictures, and it can help

you organize images on your computer. You may need to reset the date and time if the battery runs completely out of power.

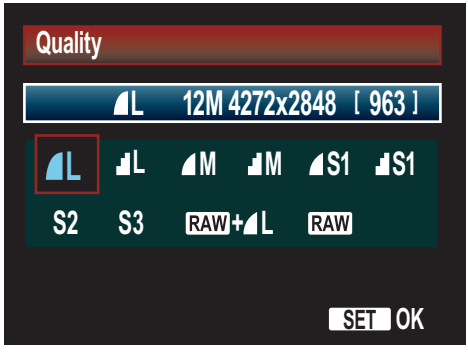
To set the date and time, follow these steps:

1. **On the Setup 2 camera menu tab, select Date/Time, and then press the Set button.** The Date/Time screen appears with the month control selected.
2. **Press the Set button to activate the month control.** The camera adds up and down arrows to the month control.
3. **Press the up or down cross key until the number of the current month appears, and then press the Set button.**
4. **Press the right cross key to move to the next control, and then repeat Steps 2 and 3 to set the day, year, hour, minute, and second.**
5. **Press the left or right cross key to select OK, and then press the Set button.**

Setting the image quality

Choosing the image-recording quality is an important decision because it affects the following:

- **The maximum size at which you can print your images.** The higher the image quality, the larger the print that you can make.
- **The number of images that you can store on the memory card.** The higher the image quality, the fewer images you can store on the card. But with memory card prices being much more affordable in recent years, it's worth getting a large memory card and taking advantage of the highest quality images that the T3/1100D can deliver.
- **The *burst rate* — the maximum number of images captured when you shoot a series of images in rapid succession.** The higher the image quality, the lower the burst rate. But even at the Large/Fine quality, the burst rate is a healthy 830 images.



QT.7 Quality screen

I recommend choosing the Large/Fine recording quality to get the highest quality JPEG images. Also, if you're an

experienced photographer, then shooting RAW capture is an excellent option for getting the best image quality.

Here is how to set the image quality:

1. **Press the Q button on the back of the camera.** The Quick Control screen appears.
2. **Press the cross keys to select the Image-recording quality control located at the lower right of the screen, and then press the Set button.** This control displays the currently selected image-recording quality as an icon; for example, a quarter circle icon with the letter L appears if the camera is set to Large/Fine JPEG recording. The Quality screen appears after you press the Set button.
3. **Press the left or right cross key to select the recording quality you want, and then press the Set button.** As you move through the settings, the screen displays the image dimensions in pixels and the number of images that you can store on the memory card. The icons next to the letters on the Quality screen indicate the amount of compression. A quarter circle with a smooth edge indicates low compression for high image quality while a jagged icon edge indicates high compression for low image quality.

You can learn more about image-recording quality in Chapter 1.

Choosing a Shooting Mode

While Chapter 2 is the best place to learn all about the Rebel's shooting modes, here is a high-level summary to help you choose a shooting mode:

- **When you want to shoot quickly without worrying about changing camera settings, choose a shooting mode such as Portrait, Landscape, or Sports mode to have the camera take control of almost all the camera settings.** You can choose the image-quality settings and a few other options. Just press the Q button to display the Quick Control screen that shows the adjustments you can make.

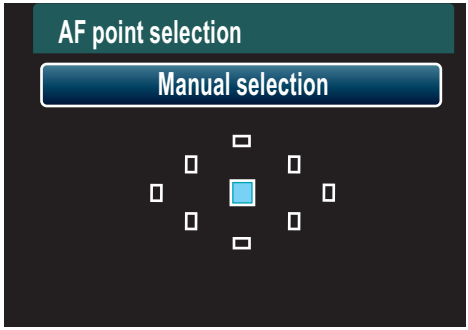
- **When you want more control with minimal adjustments, set the Mode dial to Creative Auto (CA) shooting mode.** Then press the Q button on the back of the camera to display the Quick Control screen. On this screen, you can choose an Ambience setting that changes the overall contrast and color saturation of your images. You can set the level of background blur, which is the same as changing the f-stop. Just press the left or right cross key to increase or decrease the level of blur. Then press the down cross key to select either of the last two settings, Drive mode and Flash firing, and then press the Set button. Press the left or right cross key to select the option you want, and then press the Set button.
- **When you want a lot of control or complete control of the exposure and the camera settings, select P, Tv, Av, M, or A-DEP shooting mode.** In P mode, you can use the camera's suggested settings, or you can temporarily change the f-stop and shutter speed for one picture simply by turning the Main dial. In Av and Tv modes, you can control the f-stop and the shutter speed respectively. In Manual mode, you can set the f-stop and shutter speed yourself. And in A-DEP mode, the camera sets the best depth of field (by setting the f-stop automatically) and it sets the focus automatically. In these shooting modes, you can control all the features of the camera including the White Balance, Drive mode, focus (except in A-DEP mode), and autofocus mode, as well as other settings.

With the shooting mode set on the Mode dial, you can begin shooting. If you set the camera to P, Tv, Av, or M shooting mode, be sure to read the next section on focusing.

Getting Sharp Focus

When you're shooting in P, Tv, Av, and M shooting modes, you can control the focus — where the sharp focus is set in the image. In other shooting modes, the camera automatically decides what and where the subject is, and it decides which autofocus (AF) point or points to use. This is called automatic AF-point selection. Sometimes the camera correctly identifies the subject, and other times, it does not. Because one aspect of getting a successful image is getting sharp focus, it's important to know how to control the focus.

To ensure that the sharp focus is where it should be in the image, the best option is to use P, Tv, Av, or M shooting mode and to manually select the AF point yourself.



QT.8 The Autofocus points are also displayed on the LCD. Here the center AF point is manually selected.

Here is how to manually select an AF point:

1. **In P, Tv, Av, or M shooting mode, press the AF-point Selection/Magnify button on the top right back of the camera.** This button has an icon of a magnifying glass with a plus sign under it.
2. **Watch in the viewfinder as you turn the Main dial until the AF point you want is highlighted.** Choose an AF point that is on top of the place in the scene that should have sharp focus. For example, in a portrait, choose the AF point that is on top of the person's eye. As you move through the AF points, eventually all the AF points are highlighted. This is the option where the camera automatically chooses the AF point or points to use. Do not choose this option if you want to control the focus yourself. Instead select an option where only the one AF point you want to use is highlighted.
3. **Half-press the shutter button to focus, and then press it completely to make the picture.** When you half-press the shutter button, the AF point you selected will be highlighted.

Why Are My Pictures Blurry?

The most common reasons for blurry pictures are

- **Handholding the camera at a slow shutter speed and/or at a shutter speed that is too slow for the lens being used.** This is the number one reason for blurry pictures. If everything in the image is blurry, then handshake is the problem. Chapter 2 gives guidelines for minimum shutter speeds at which you can hold the camera without getting blur from handshake. To avoid handshake at slow shutter speeds, you can use tripod in interior and low-light scenes. Alternatively, you can use the built-in or an accessory flash. Or you can increase the ISO sensitivity setting to get a faster shutter speed.