Making Everything Easier!™

Olympus® PEN E-PL1 FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Understand and use all the camera's onboard controls
- Manipulate focus, color controls, exposure, and lighting
- Get great shots in all types of settings and edit images on your PC

IN FULL COLOR!

Julie Adair King
Author of Digital Photography For Dummies

Olympus® PEN E-PL1 For Dummies®

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by Julie Adair King

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About the Author

Julie Adair King is the author of many books about digital photography and imaging, including the best-selling *Digital Photography For Dummies.* Her most recent titles include a series of *For Dummies* guides to popular digital SLR cameras, including the Canon EOS Rebel T2i/550D, T1i/500D, XSi/450D, XS/1000D, and XTi/400D, and Nikon D5000, D3000, D300s, D90, D60, and D40/D40x. Other works include *Digital Photography Before & After Makeovers, Digital Photo Projects For Dummies, Julie King's Everyday Photoshop For Photographers, Julie King's Everyday Photoshop Elements,* and *Shoot Like a Pro!: Digital Photography Techniques.* When not writing, King teaches digital photography at such locations as the Palm Beach Photographic Centre. A graduate of Purdue University, she resides in Indianapolis, Indiana.

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Introduction

In 1959, Olympus revolutionized photography by introducing the first PEN, an ingenious marriage of single-lens reflex (SLR) and point-and-shoot camera designs. Offering the same interchangeable lens flexibility as an SLR model, but in a lightweight, compact body, the PEN lived up to the promise of its name: a camera that offered the features demanded by serious photographers yet was as easy to carry around as a pen.

Today, the PEN E-PL1 offers the same best-of-both-worlds approach to digital photographers. Like the original PEN, the E-PL1 packs a ton of photographic punch into a sleek, stylish package that doesn't break your back (or your wallet, for that matter).

The E-PL1 is so feature-packed, in fact, that it can be a challenge to sort out everything, especially if you're new to digital photography. In fact, if you're like many people, you may be so overwhelmed by all the controls on your camera that you haven't yet ventured beyond fully automatic picture-taking mode. And that's a shame because it's sort of like buying a Porsche and never actually taking it on the road.

Therein lies the point of *Olympus PEN E-PL1 For Dummies.* Through this book, you can discover not just what each bell and whistle on your camera does, but also when, where, why, and how to put it to best use. Unlike many photography books, this one doesn't require any previous knowledge of photography or digital imaging to make sense of things. In classic *For Dummies* style, everything is explained in easy-to-understand language, with lots of illustrations to help clear up any confusion.

In short, what you have in your hands is the paperback version of an in-depth photography workshop tailored specifically to your Olympus picture-taking powerhouse. Whether your interests lie in taking family photos, exploring nature and travel photography, or snapping product shots for your business, you'll get the information you need to capture the images you envision.

A Quick Look at What's Ahead

This book is organized into four parts, each devoted to a different aspect of using your camera. Although chapters flow in a sequence that's designed to take you from absolute beginner to experienced user, I also tried to make each chapter as self-standing as possible so that you can explore the topics that interest you in any order you please.

Here's a brief preview of each part:

Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps: Part I contains three chapters to help you get up and running with your E-PL1. Chapter 1 offers a tour of the external controls on your camera, shows you how to navigate camera menus to access internal options, and walks you through initial camera setup and customization steps. Chapter 2 explains basic picture-taking options, such as shutter-release mode and image quality settings, and Chapter 3 shows you how to use the camera's most automatic modes, iAuto and SCN (scene). Chapter

3 also shows you how to record high-definition movies.

Part II: Working with Picture Files: This part offers two chapters, both dedicated to after-the-shot topics. Chapter 4 explains how to review your pictures on the camera monitor, delete unwanted images, and protect your favorites from accidental erasure. Chapter 5 guides you through the process of downloading pictures to your computer, preparing photos for printing or online sharing, and connecting your camera to a television for large-screen picture playback.

Part III: Taking Creative Control: Chapters in this part help you unleash the full creative power of your camera by moving into the advanced shooting modes (P, A, S, and M). Chapter 6 covers the critical topic of exposure, and Chapter 7 explains how to manipulate focus and color. Chapter 8 summarizes all the techniques explained in earlier chapters, providing a quick-reference guide to the camera settings and shooting strategies that produce the best results for portraits, action shots, landscape scenes, and close-ups.

Part IV: The Part of Tens: In famous *For Dummies* tradition, the book concludes with two "top ten" lists containing additional bits of information and advice. Chapter 9 covers ten features geared to your fun and creative side, including the ART shooting mode and in-camera picture-editing tools. Chapter 10 wraps things up by detailing some camera features that, although not found on most "Top Ten Reasons I Bought My PEN E-PL1" lists, are nonetheless interesting, useful on occasion, or a bit of both.

Icons and Other Stuff to Note

If this isn't your first *For Dummies* book, you may be familiar with the large, round icons that decorate its margins. If not, here's your very own icon-decoder ring:

I apply this icon either to introduce information that's especially worth storing in your brain's long-term memory or to remind you of a fact that may have been displaced from that memory by some other pressing fact.

When you see this icon, look alive. It indicates a potential danger zone that can result in much wailing and teeth-gnashing if ignored.

Lots of information in this book is of a technical nature — digital photography is a technical animal, after all. But if I present a detail that is useful mainly for impressing your technology-geek friends, I mark it with this icon.

A Tip icon flags information that will save you time, effort, money, or some other valuable resource, including your sanity.

Additionally, I need to point out a few other details that will help you use this book:

Other margin art: Replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen graphics also appear in the margins of some paragraphs and in some tables. I include these to provide a quick reminder of the appearance of the button or option being discussed.

Software menu commands: In sections that cover software, a series of words connected by an arrow indicates commands that you choose from the program menus. For example, if a step tells you to "Choose File⇒Print," click the File menu to unfurl it and then click the Print command on the menu.

Camera firmware: *Firmware* is the internal software that controls many of your camera's operations. The E-PL1 uses two pieces of firmware, one for the camera body and one for the lens. This book was written using version 1.1 of the body firmware and 1.0 of the lens firmware, which were the most current at the time of publication.

Occasionally, Olympus releases firmware updates, and it's a good idea to check the Olympus Web site (www.olympus.com) periodically to find out whether any updates are available. (Chapter 1 tells you how to determine which firmware version your camera is running.)

Online cheat sheet: To download a handy, tuck-in-your-camera bag reference guide to some of your camera's controls, visit the following Web address: www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/olympuspenepl1.

Practice, Be Patient, and Have Fun!

To wrap up this preamble, I want to stress that if you initially think that digital photography is too confusing or too technical for you, you're in very good company. *Everyone* finds this stuff a little mind-boggling at first. So take it slowly, experimenting with just one or two new camera settings or techniques at first. Then, each time you go on a photo outing, make it a point to add one or two more shooting skills to your repertoire.

I know that it's hard to believe when you're just starting out, but it really won't be long before everything starts to come together. With some time, patience, and practice, you'll soon wield your camera like a pro, dialing in the necessary settings to capture your creative vision almost instinctively.

So without further ado, I invite you to grab your camera, a cup of whatever it is you prefer to sip while you read, and start exploring the rest of this book. Your PEN E-PL1 is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and I thank you for allowing me, through this book, to serve as your tour guide.

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Part I

Fast Track to Super Snaps

Making sense of all the controls on your PEN E-PL1 isn’t something you can do in an afternoon — heck, in a week, or maybe even a month. But that doesn’t mean that you can’t take great pictures today. By using your camera’s point-and-shoot automatic modes, you can capture terrific images with very little effort. All you do is compose the scene, and the camera takes care of almost everything else.

This part shows you how to take best advantage of your camera’s automatic features and also addresses some basic setup steps, such as adjusting the viewfinder to your eyesight and getting familiar with the camera menus and buttons. In addition, chapters in this part explain how to obtain the very best picture quality, whether you shoot in an automatic or manual mode, and how to use your camera’s movie-making features.

Chapter 1

Getting the Lay of the Land

In This Chapter

- Taking a tour of external controls
- Looking at lenses and memory cards
- Using the optional electronic viewfinder
- Selecting from menus
- Customizing your display
- Viewing and adjusting picture-taking settings
- Customizing basic operations

At first glance, the Olympus PEN E-PL1 could easily be mistaken for just another digital point-and-shoot camera. But don’t be fooled by your camera’s diminutive size or the simplicity of its outward design: Under that small, sexy exterior lies a lot of photographic muscle.

This chapter covers the basics you need to start enjoying all the E-PL1 has to offer, introducing you to its external features, showing you how to work with interchangeable lenses, and explaining how to navigate menus and select camera settings. In addition, the last part of the chapter details options that enable you to customize basic camera operations.

Taking a Quick Tour

If you've used a digital camera before, some external controls on the E-PL1 may be familiar to you. The button that you press to erase pictures, for example, is marked with the universal delete symbol — a trash can. But some features are unique to the E-PL1, so the next three sections provide an overview of the function of each external control. (I discuss these controls in more detail later in this book.)

Topside controls

As shown in Figure 1-1, the top of the camera sports a couple features:

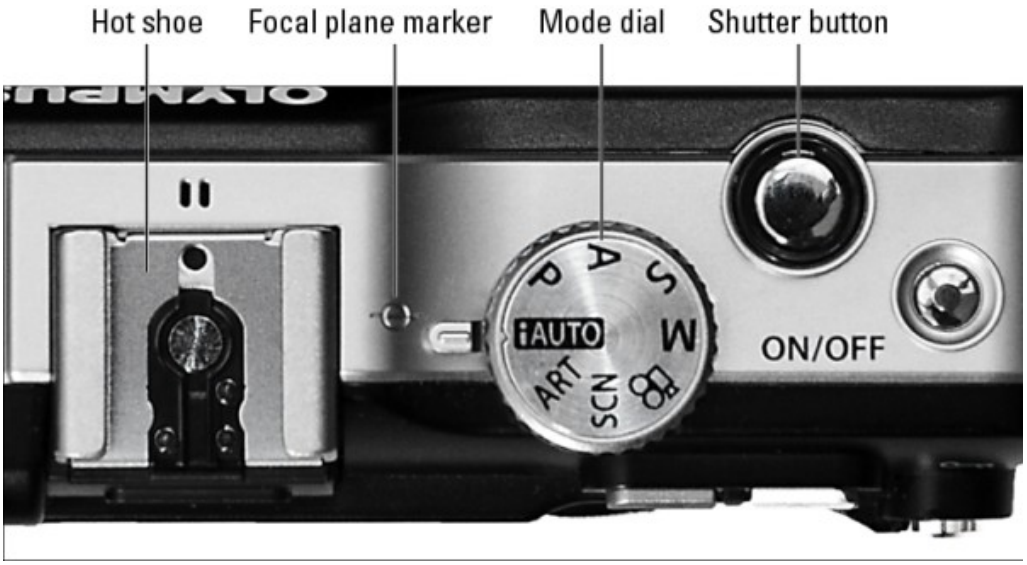


Figure 1-1: Use the Mode dial to choose a basic exposure mode.

Power button: I won't insult your intelligence by telling you what this button does. But see the section "Exploring setup options on the Custom menu," near the end of this chapter, to find out about the Sleep setting. That setting enables you

to specify how quickly you want the camera to automatically shut off to save battery power.

Shutter button: I'm sure you also figured out this one. But see Chapter 2 to find out how to specify whether you want the camera to record a single shot, a continuous series of shots, or a self-timer shot each time you press the button.

Mode dial: You select the shooting mode, or exposure mode, via this dial. Chapter 3 explains the simplest, most automatic modes — iAuto and Scene (SCN) — as well as Movie mode. Chapters 6 and 7 cover the more advanced photography modes (P, S, A, and M). For help with ART mode, check out Chapter 9.

Flash hot shoe: *Hot shoe* is the traditional photography term for "contact on top of the camera for mounting an external flash." But on the E-PL1, the electrical contacts on the hot shoe also enable the camera to communicate with the optional electronic viewfinder. See the upcoming sidebar "Awesome add-on: The VF-2 electronic viewfinder," later in this chapter, for some additional information.

Focal plane marker: See that little circle with the line through it, between the Mode dial and the hot shoe? That line represents the plane at which the lens focuses light onto the *image sensor* (the element that replaces film in a digital camera). If you ever need to know the exact distance between your subject and the camera, basing the measurement on this mark produces a more accurate camera-to-subject distance than using the

end of the lens or some other external point on the camera body as your reference point.

Back-of-the-camera controls

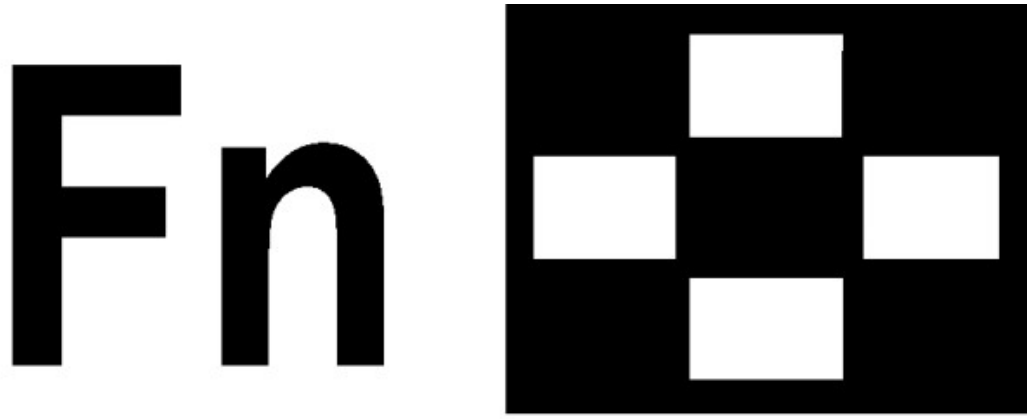
Traveling over the top of the camera to its back, you see the controls labeled in Figure 1-2. The following list introduces you to each item:

Figure 1-2: Use the Start/OK button and surrounding arrow keys to navigate menus and adjust picture-taking settings.

Flash Up switch: To raise the built-in flash, slide this switch to the right and release it. Chapter 3 introduces you to flash; Chapter 6 gets into more advanced flash features. (To close the flash, just press its top gently down.)

Accessory port: If you buy the optional electronic viewfinder (a choice I highly recommend), it attaches into this slot. See the upcoming sidebar

“Awesome add-on: The VF-2 electronic viewfinder” for more details. The port also enables you to attach an optional stereo microphone.



Fn (Function)/Thumbnails button: This button performs a different function depending on whether you’re shooting pictures or reviewing them in playback mode:

- *Shooting function:* By default, pressing this button during shooting toggles the Face Detection feature on and off. (Chapter 2 introduces you to Face Detection.) But you can set the button to perform a variety of other functions instead (see Chapter 10).
- *Playback function:* During playback, pressing the button cycles the display from single-image view to thumbnails view to calendar view. See Chapter 4 for playback details.

To save time and space, I refer to this button simply as the Fn button from this point forward.

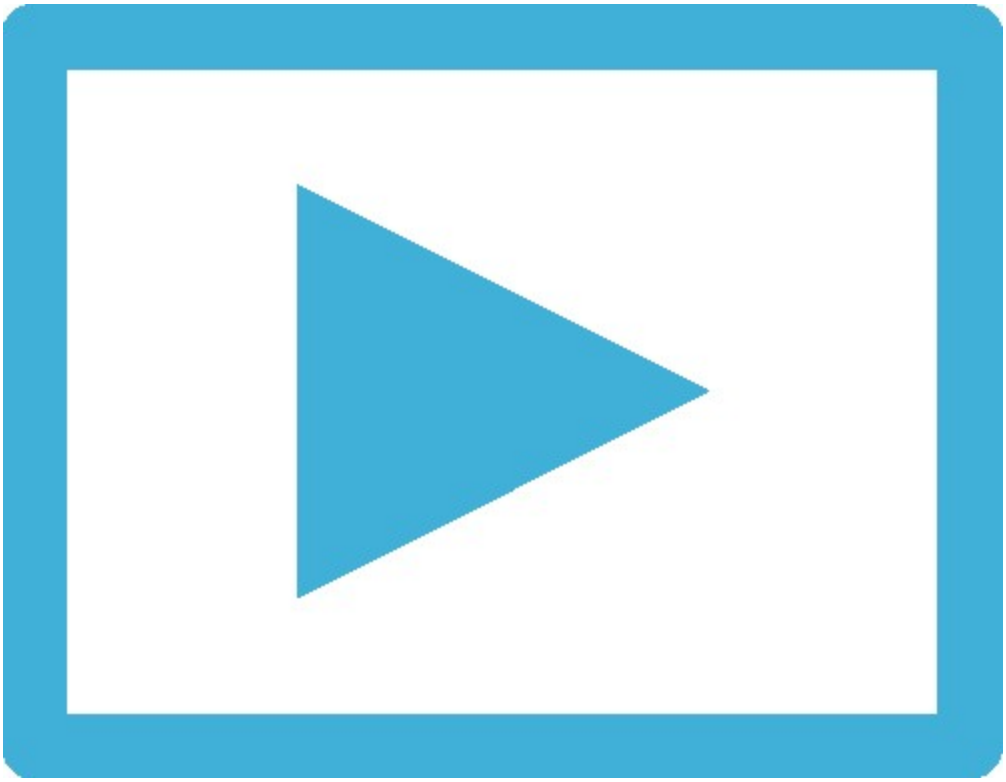
Zoom button: As on most digital cameras, pressing this button during playback magnifies the image. But here's a twist: On the E-PL1, you can also magnify the live view during shooting, which can be helpful for fine-tuning focus. See the later section "Zooming the live display" in this chapter for details.

Movie/Protect button: As indicated by its name, this button also accomplishes a different act depending on whether you're shooting or reviewing pictures:

- *Shooting mode*: By default, this button is used for one-button movie recording. Press the button to start recording, and press again to stop. Chapter 3 explains the art of E-PL1 movie making.

- *Playback mode:* Note the little blue key directly above the button. That symbol indicates that during playback, you press the button to “lock” the picture file and protect it from accidental erasure. Chapter 4 has details. (As a reminder of the button’s playback function, the key is blue, just like the symbol on the Playback button.)

You can change the shooting function of the Movie button, just as you can assign a different task to the Fn button. Chapter 10 provides details.



Playback button: Press this button to set the camera to playback mode. See Chapter 4 for all the ways you can customize the playback display.

Menu button: Press this button to access camera menus; see the section “Ordering from Camera Menus” for the fine points you need to know about the process.