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Digital SLR Settings & Shortcuts

FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Get good starting exposure settings before you shoot
- Make adjustments on the fly to get the best results
- Capture formal and casual portraits, high-speed action, and the beauty of nature

IN FULL COLOR!

Doug Sahlin
Author of Digital Portrait Photography For Dummies

Digital SLR Settings and Shortcuts For Dummies®

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Dedication

This book is for the lovely and talented Roxanne, also known as "Nature Girl." Thank you for coming into my life. I love you, Sweetheart.

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Introduction

Many people graduate to a digital SLR and think it’s the ticket for creating great photos. Well it is, but there’s a bit of technique involved. Part of that is your creativity and the way you see the world around you. You translate the vision that is in your head into an image when you capture it with your digital SLR.

To fully master your digital SLR and create compelling photos, you have to venture forth into a brave new world that involves making decisions about settings that will enable you to capture the images you see in your mind’s eye. This does not happen when you shoot in your camera’s Automatic mode. When photographers have the urge to branch out, they turn to the manual for help. And then they get more confused. Which is where this book comes in. My goal in writing this book was to demystify taking photographs with a digital SLR.

About Digital SLR Settings & Shortcuts For Dummies

If you need to know how to photograph your children playing sports, there’s a chapter for that. If you want to know how to photograph a racecar traveling 200 miles per hour, there’s a chapter for that as well. In fact there are 100 chapters that show you which settings to use to take specific images.

Some of the things you can do with this book include learning to

Determine which shooting mode to use for each picture-taking scenario.

Photograph marathoners running, bicyclists racing, and horses galloping.

Photograph artists at work, waterfalls, and pet birds.

Photograph a newborn baby, animals in the wild, and city skylines.

Overcome the challenges and pitfalls inherent to certain picture-taking scenarios. (I include a “Troubleshooting” section at the end of each chapter to help you overcome these challenges.)

Master depth of field to control what's in focus.

Make the histogram work for you.

Calculate the 35mm equivalent of a focal length.

In addition, you’ll learn many tips and tricks from a professional photographer who’s been there, done that.

Foolish Assumptions

There are certain prerequisites for using this book effectively. First and foremost, you must have a digital SLR with at least one lens. Second you must have the desire to break free from the point and shoot mentality and stop using the automatic and scene modes. You must also have the desire to be a better photographer. Your digital SLR is a wonderful tool for expressing to others how you see the world. But it takes some thought and creativity to create a picture that makes people give it

more than just a casual glance. If you have the desire to break free from the mode of point and shoot photography, read on.

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate this book efficiently, I use a few style conventions:

Terms that I want to emphasize are *italicized* (and defined).

Web site URLs are shown in a special monofont typeface, `like this`.

Numbered steps that you need to follow are set in **bold**.

What You Don’t Have to Read

This book is designed to show you how to master specific picture taking scenarios. You don’t have to read every chapter in this book, only the ones that pertain to the pictures you want to take. If you really want to cut to the chase, you don’t have to read the introductory paragraph in each chapter.

What I Encourage You to Read

I do suggest that you read the “Setting the Camera” section of each chapter. This section shows you the logic behind the settings I suggest you use to take each type of picture. I also suggest that you read the steps in the “Taking the Picture” section as they contain important information and tidbits related to taking the photo. So if you’re in a real hurry to learn how to take a picture of your wife twirling a baton while cooking tacos — kidding — or any picture scenario in this book, all you need to do is open the book to the chapter, dial the Camera Settings into your camera, read through the steps, and take the picture. And please take lots of pictures. That’s how you’ll master the settings and steps and make them your own.

I also strongly suggest that you read the appendix: “Beyond Point and Shoot Photography.” This appendix contains a lot of information about digital photography, including some very important information about the sensor in your camera model, and the difference it can have on the way a lens sees the scene in front of you. All digital camera sensors are not created equal.

If you don’t have time to read the entire appendix, please read “Understanding focal lengths.” This section takes about five minutes to read and demystifies what different focal lengths will do and how these focal lengths react on cameras with different size sensors.