

Making Everything Easier!™

Sony® Alpha **α SLT-A35/A55** **FOR** **DUMMIES®**

Learn to:

- Use the camera controls, set up shooting modes, use Auto mode, and shoot video
- Play back, review, and edit your images
- Experiment with exposure, flash, and focus to create great photos

IN FULL COLOR!

Robert Correll

*Author of Digital SLR Photography
All-in-One For Dummies*



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Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/sonyalphaslta35a55 to view this book's cheat sheet.

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Cheat Sheet

***Sony® Alpha SLT-A35/A55 For
Dummies®***

by Robert Correll



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About the Author

Robert Correll is the author of several books about digital photography and imaging, including *Digital SLR Photography All-in-One For Dummies*. His most recent titles include *Photo Retouching and Restoration Using Corel PaintShop Pro X4*, Third Edition; *HDR Photography Photo Workshop*, Second Edition (with Pete Carr); *Canon EOS Rebel T3/1110D* and *Canon EOS 60D For Dummies* (both with Julie Adair King), and *High Dynamic Range Digital Photography For Dummies*.

When not writing, Robert enjoys family life, photography, playing the guitar, grilling, and recording music. Robert graduated from the United States Air Force Academy and resides in Indiana.

Dedication

To my family.

Author's Acknowledgments

I want to express my profound appreciation to everyone I had the pleasure of working with on this project. Each person devoted their skills, talents, attention to detail, vision, and time. Those are valuable commodities.

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Introduction

The story of the Sony A35/A55 begins with two other camera manufacturers, Konica and Minolta. These storied names in camera history merged in 2003, and then decided to leave the camera business in 2006 and focus on other, more business-oriented technologies. They transferred all their camera assets to Sony, which continued developing the Konica Minolta dSLR line under the Sony Alpha brand name. Since that time, Sony has established itself as a serious contender, offering both inexpensive entry-level dSLRs and full-frame professional models.

Today, Sony has upped the technological ante by introducing cameras, including the A35/A55, with translucent mirrors: *dSLT* (digital single-lens translucent) cameras. Traditional dSLRs, like their SLR forefathers, use a reflex mirror to bounce light coming into the lens up into the viewfinder so you can compose the scene and manually focus. Just before the shutter opens to take the photo, the mirror has to flip up out of the way. That's the loud "clunk" you hear when you take a picture with a dSLR and why the mirrors are called reflex mirrors. They move. The translucent mirror in the A35/A55 doesn't have to flip up out of the way when you take a picture. The light bounces off it *and* goes right through it, whether you're framing, focusing, or taking the picture. Having a stable, translucent mirror makes the camera quieter, faster, lighter, and more mechanically reliable.

One other unique feature of the A35/A55 is the electronic viewfinder. Instead of seeing light bounced off a mirror, through a prism, and out the viewfinder, you look at a high-contrast, high-resolution electronic display. The electronic viewfinder functions like its optical counterpart in many ways, but it has some major advantages. You can look at camera menus, view

photo and movie playback, check shooting functions, turn on a histogram, and see other displays impossible for normal viewfinders.

About This Book

This book's purpose is to put the right information in your hands so you can take advantage of the technological prowess of your A35/A55. You don't need to know anything about photography before opening these pages. In classic *For Dummies* style, I explain everything in easy-to-understand language and use plenty of color photos to show off the cameras and make the photographic concepts easier to understand.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into four parts. Each one has a particular focus. They flow from what you need to start out to more advanced subjects. You can read the book from start to finish and progress from beginner to advanced user — or you can jump to any section in any chapter and dig right in. Use the table of contents, the index, and the chapter cross-references to jump to sections with related information.

Here's a quick look at what you can find in each part.

Part I: Pictures Worth Keeping, Pronto

This part contains four chapters designed to familiarize you with your A35/A55 and get you started taking pictures and movies as quickly as possible. Chapter 1 is where you get to know your A35/A55. You'll see where all the buttons and dials are, what they do, and how to use them. You find steps for navigating the menu system, the shooting functions, and how to decode the viewfinder and LCD displays. Chapter 2 covers the necessary first settings. You read about the basic shooting modes, other important settings, how to use the flash, how to set picture quality, size, and aspect ratio, as well as which settings make the most sense for you. Chapter 3 is devoted to explaining, in practice, all of the basic shooting modes. Chapter 4 is all about making movies: how to configure the camera, which options are best for you, how to shoot and review them, and how to do some basic editing.

Part II: Playing with Pixels

In this part, you read about what to do after you take a photo. This includes playing back photos on your camera as well as transferring them to your computer. In Chapter 5, you'll see the ins and outs of photo playback. Review pictures, look at the settings you used, change the display to include more or less information, delete photos, rotate photos, set up a slide show, and show off your photos on an HDTV. Chapter 6 is where you read how to transfer what you've stored on your memory card from the camera to a computer. Once there, you can process, print, and share photos and movies.

Part III: Expressing Your Creativity

Part III explains the concepts you need to operate your camera in the more advanced modes, which allows you to make creative decisions on your own. You see how to make exposure and flash decisions in Chapter 7. Use the advanced exposure modes and decide what exposure settings you want to use to create the photos you like. Change the metering mode, use the histogram, and use other advanced exposure tools on the A35/A55. You also read more about the flash. Chapter 8 is about working with focus and color. Explore the autofocus options, depth of field, and color issues such as setting the right white balance. You also see how to apply creative styles and choose a color space. Chapter 9 is a putting-it-all-together chapter. With this information you can take pictures in advanced exposure modes. Review good general settings, come up with a plan, then photograph portraits, landscapes, close-ups, and more.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

Always a favorite, The Part of Tens concludes the book with two chapters of essential nonessential information. In Chapter 10, you read about how to spruce up your JPEG photos. This isn't mandatory. You can always use the photos as they come out of your camera. However, they aren't always perfect. Some photos can use a little help: remove red-eye, sharpen, or correct brightness and contrast. Chapter 11 concludes the book with a list of interesting features that you might want to check out on a rainy day. These include picture effects for the A35, GPS for the A55, and options like changing the file or folder-naming scheme for both.

Icons Used in This Book

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



Danger is lurking. Pay attention and proceed with caution. You know, as though you were about to open a hatch you shouldn't (Locke) or be so foolish as to be a minor character lecturing people about the dangers of dynamite while wrapping an old stick of it in a shirt on a deserted island (so long, Artz).



This icon should trigger an immediate data download for storage in your brain's long-term memory. The information is something important that rises above the level of a cute tip but not quite to the danger of a warning. As Spock would say, *Remember*.



Here lies helpful information that's likely to make your life easier. It may save you time, effort, or sanity. (Your mileage may vary.) I love tips. If I could, I would make every paragraph a tip.



Some of the information in this book is pretty technical. If it's not necessary for you to understand, it's marked with this icon. Use the information to impress your family and friends. Or skip it completely.

Conventions Used in This Book

I should point out a few other details that will help you use this book:

- ✓ **Margin art:** Small versions of some buttons, onscreen symbols, menu graphics, and other modes or settings appear in the margin next to relevant material. They will look like what you see to the left.
- ✓ **Software menu commands:** In sections that cover software, a series of words connected by an arrow indicates commands you choose from the program menus. For example, if a step tells you, “Choose File⇒Print,” click the File menu and then click the Print command on the menu.

eCheat Sheet

You can find an electronic version of the famous *For Dummies* Cheat Sheet at

<http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/sonyalphasltA35A55>. The