

The left side of the page features a vertical bar with a light blue gradient and several thin, parallel vertical lines. To the right of this bar is a cluster of five dark blue circles of varying sizes, arranged in a roughly vertical line. The largest circle is at the top, and the others decrease in size towards the bottom.

Photo Fun

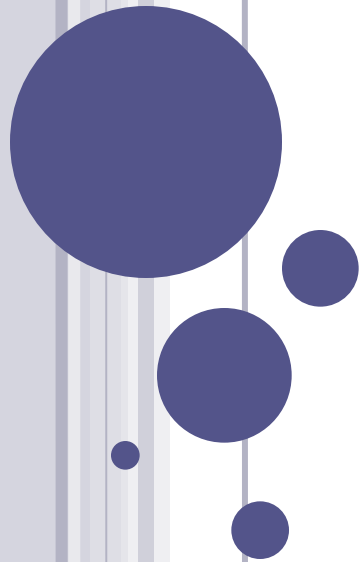
Taking Great Photos

Written by: Mary Ellen Riley

A single dark blue circle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.

First and Foremost:

Read your
Manual



Photography basics

- Lighting
- Composition
- Camera Jargon
- Editing and Printing
- My Camera Settings
- Special Situations



Lighting

- Photography means “recording light waves,” therefore lighting is the primary focus
- Ways to improve your lighting
 - 1. Avoid using the on-camera flash
 - Look for light: a window, inside of the garage, indirect sunshine around a building
 - 2. Use on camera flash outside when you have very dark/shaded areas and a bright/sunlit background
 - Called “fill flash”





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Sometimes when you just need the shot – forget the rules and throw on the flash. Otherwise I wouldn't have this photo at all.

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- 3. Use “open shade” outside
 - Sunny outside, under a tree
 - Overcast day
 - Direct sunlight = squinty eyes, bright sections, dark shadows under brow and nose
- 4. Try to put the subject in position to get “catch-lights” in their eyes
 - Usually a window, light bulb





Example
of
Catch-
Lights

Source:
Bedroom
Window

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Example of “Open Shade”

Taken on
Sunny
Afternoon
In the shade of
the porch
Of the house in
Quail Ridge
Park

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Taken at Founders Park
Morning
Partly Cloudy

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○ 5. Metering (in camera manual)

- If your camera has this option (see your instruction manual under “metering” to see if it does)
- For most children’s portraits and item photos set to “spot metering”
- There are usually 3 kinds: spot metering (meters the light on the subject/thing in focus), center metering (meters whatever is in the middle), and multizone metering (meters everything in the shot; good for landscapes or if family and landscape are in 1 shot and both matter)





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Here, I metered on the face. This caused the snow to “blow out” or become extremely white with no detail.

COMPOSITION

○ 1. Rule of Thirds:

- More of a guideline than a rule
- Place subject where lines intersect





Face is in upper
one third of the
photo.

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Angelica Rose

April 2009

7 lbs 8 oz

Collage of Close-ups

Can be created
in Photoshop,
Or look for “collage”
at Walgreens,
Costco, etc.

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- 3. Get at Eye level: kneel, sit, crawl on floor



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- 4. Use diagonals and lines to help add motion, focus on the subject or add interest to the photograph; experiment with different angles



- 5. Frame the subject using what you have: chair, window frame, picture frame, mirror, tree branches, etc.

- 6. Get your subject in different positions: on the tummy, looking over the shoulder, angle from above, angle from below





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General Tips

- Specifically for children: be fast. Carry the camera everywhere and be somewhere the kids will play well; make sure they are happy and well-fed. Mid morning works well for most
- Use a blank wall, textured background (brick or stone), photography drapes or bed sheets
- Use simple items that you already have for props or some on Etsy
 - Bowls, flowers, baskets, hats, mirrors, etc.



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Camera Technical Jargon

- ISO: camera's (or film's) sensitivity to light
 - 50-100: bright sunshine
 - 200: bright inside or shady outside
 - 400: indoors
 - 800 and up: low lighting like reception hall, church, etc.
 - Drawback: the higher the ISO the more grainy (a.k.a. "noise) the photograph will be





ISO set to 100

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ISO set to 200

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ISO set to 400

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- Aperture: how wide the lens is

- Low aperture: blurry background e.g. F1.4, 1.8, 2.0
- High aperture: everything is in focus
- Most portraits use a low aperture
- Most family portraits will use a higher aperture







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- Shutter Speed: how fast the shutter goes
 - High shutter speed: fast moving scenes e.g. sports
 - Slow shutter speed: sitting still, nighttime
 - Lower the shutter speed → the more camera shake → blurry photo
 - Remedy: higher ISO or wider aperture





Slow Shutter Speed
F8
13 seconds shutter speed
Tripod
30mm focal length (wide lens)

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○ Zoom or lens focal length

- For more natural looking photos, back away from the child and zoom in
 - Why? Our eyes see at about 50 mm focal length

Landscapes: Wide angle (18-30mm)

Chasing children around: Zoom Lens (55-200mm)

Objects: 50mm-200mm

55mm
B&W Conversion
Inside
White Back drop



EDITING AND PRINTING

○ Editing Programs

- Adobe Photoshop Elements (\$73)
- Adobe Photoshop CS5 (\$670)
- Adobe Photoshop Lightroom (\$125)
- Gimp (Free!)
- Picnik.com (Free)
- Picasa.google.com (Free)



EDITING TIPS

- Avoid cropping at the joints
- Straighten any lines using “crop” and “rotate”
- Crop away the background (sometimes)
- Too dark or too light? Correct using “exposure” or “gamma” or “brightness”. Most times I increase the brightness or exposure
- Most photos from a digital camera could use a little “sharpening” or Adobe Photoshop “Unsharp Mask”





Juliana

age 1

LOVES

dogs

popsicles

giving raspberries

cookies

HUGS

swinging

books

bathtime

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Created using Photoshop CS5 (possible using
Elements)
Interior/white back drop



PRINTING

- Mpix.com
- Snapfish.com
- Walgreens, Walmart, etc.
- Costco

- Try to crop the photo the way you want it before sending it to the printer; otherwise they will determine how it is cropped (e.g. 8x10, 11x14, etc.)

- Professionals print on Luster finish



My Camera Bag

1. Nikon D80
2. 55-200mm lens, 18-55mm lens, 1.8D 50mm lens
3. Remote, tripod
4. Nikon SB200 Flash with diffuser

My Camera Settings

1. ISO – depends on light really - Changes a lot. 200 is a good start.
2. Aperture Priority
3. Spot Metering
4. Unlock Focus Point
5. Aperture = F2 for food, F3 or F4 for Face portraits, F5 or F6 full body portraits, F12 for lots of people, F20 for bright landscape
6. Vivid Mode



OBJECTS

- Simple backdrops and get close
- Avoid flash or use an external flash



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BABIES

- Use a bean bag to support the baby
- Let the baby nurse often and keep the room warm with a heater if necessary
- Use as many props as you have since newborns don't have many "poses"
- Get a lot of close-ups
- Try black and white or sepia





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Bean Bag
Interior
1.8D 50mm lens

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IN CONCLUSION

- Shoot what you love and forget what others think
- Take lots and lots of photos
- There really are no rules, but I am providing guidelines for those that want to take quality portraits
- The simpler, the better

