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22 night photography tips for beginners



Peter Travers

Quick and easy digital photography tips for better photos in the dark. From night photography settings for your DSLR to ideas for creative low light pictures.

Find out how to take photos at night with these camera and photography tips for beginners. Whether you want to learn how to take photos of the night sky, find out how to paint with light or just want to know the right camera settings for high quality pictures, this guide will shed light on the common questions and popular techniques...

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10 Creative ideas for people shots

Invariably we photographers go out of our way to avoid capturing people in our scenic shots. However, when it comes to night photography, including crowds of people in your frame can add contrast and interest to your pictures. If people are stationary, try using them as a creative silhouette to enhance photos. Or, if people are walking through, try using a shutter speed of around 1/4-1/2 sec so they're 'creatively' blurred.

11 Which ISO setting is best for night photography?

The ISO setting you need depends on the type of night photos you're taking. If you're shooting city scenes with long exposures, you'll be using a tripod, so you can keep the ISO at 100 or 200. This will also keep noise levels down – ideal for retaining maximum detail in scenic night shots. If you're shooting an outdoor performance at night and working [handheld](#), you'll need to bump up the ISO (try ISO 1000 or ISO 1600) to ensure a fast enough shutter speed for capturing sharp shots.

12 Motion blur shots

Capturing motion blur on camera can transform drab scenes into dramatic works of art. The good news is, like most night photography, you simply need to use your digital camera on a tripod and select a slow shutter speed (try between 2-5 secs, depending on the speed of the vehicles that you're shooting) to take creative motion shots at night.



13 Auto or manual focus?

For night shots it's best to use both autofocus (AF) and manual focus (MF). Use AF to focus on to part of the scene, then switch to MF to keep the focus locked. That way your camera won't be 'hunting' to achieve autofocus if the light or scene changes or a good surge of traffic drives past. When shooting in the dark you'll need to find part of your scene that is bright enough for your camera to be able to achieve AF. If you're having problems, switch to MF and use Live View to zoom in on your LCD and check your focusing is good before taking multiple long exposures.

14 Timings for night photography

The time of night can make all the difference when it comes to capturing traffic light trails. There will be more traffic in your local city centre between 5-6pm – for once you'll be wishing for rush-hour traffic! Set up in a safe place on a busy road and experiment with 10-30 sec exposures to see which captures the densest light trails. Try and fire the shutter as double-decker buses drive past as their interior and rear lights will produce thick streaks high and low in your frame. Note that early in the evening, there will still be a little light in the sky – even if it looks dark to the naked eye. Which of these images do you prefer? Chances are, it's the first shot, with the lighter blue sky and busier street.

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s0ulsurfing

Most of my work to date has been using natural daylight, so this is a great article for night-time newbie like me, thanks for putting it together!

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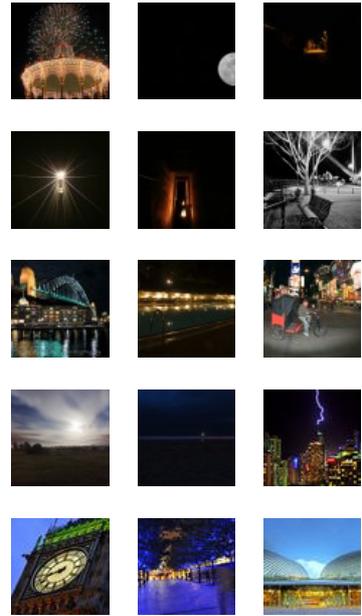
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