

Digi-Quick.co.uk?s 10 tips for getting the best from your camera.

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Top ten useful tips for getting the best from your digital camera.

Shoot RAW

If you?re serious about getting the best quality images, then shooting in RAW mode is the only option. As the name suggests, RAW files contain just the unprocessed sensor data, which can then be edited and manipulated in RAW processing software, giving you the greatest control over the finished image.

Not all memory cards are equal

When buying a memory card size is important, but so too is the card write speed (the time it takes for the data to be transferred from the camera memory to the card). Faster cards will mean your camera processes the data quicker, which is vital if you shoot in RAW as these are bigger files.

Read the manual

It may sound obvious, but if you really want to know how your camera works then revisit the manual. Digital cameras use a mass of technology which never existed in the days of film, so even experienced photographers can learn something new.

Know your exposure modes

- **Program:** the camera sets both aperture and shutter speed.
- **Aperture Priority:** control depth of field by setting the aperture.
- **Shutter Priority:** choose the shutter speed to control movement and blurring.
- **Manual:** set both aperture and shutter speed guided by the camera?s meter.
- **Auto:** similar to program mode, but the camera will fire the flash if it thinks it necessary.

- **Portrait:** camera sets aperture and shutter speed with a bias to wide aperture to send the background out of focus.
- **Landscape:** camera sets aperture and shutter speed with a bias to smaller aperture to increase depth of field.
- **Sports/Action:** camera selects continuous focus for moving subjects and fast shutter speed to freeze the action.

Explore Photoshop

Adjust the 'Levels' to give more vibrant colours and more contrast. 'Unsharp mask' can be used to sharpen the image. Use the 'Clone stamp' tool to remove dust spots or unwanted elements in the photo.

Use the right ISO

As a general rule, higher ISO ratings give an image with more 'noise' or distortion. So in bright conditions, use as low an ISO setting as you can to achieve the required shutter speeds; in low light situations, bump up the ISO to 800 or even 1600 for sharp, correctly exposed images.

Use a tripod

The key to getting sharp images, particularly when using longer lenses or for longer exposures, is to use a tripod. Don't extend the tripod legs any higher than necessary to increase stability, and use remote shutter release to prevent wobbles.

Carry a spare battery/memory card

It's uncanny how batteries go flat or memory cards hit saturation point just when you least want them to. With a spare battery and memory card in your bag or pocket you will be back shooting in a matter of seconds.

Run batteries flat before recharging

All rechargeable batteries work best if you discharge them fully, and then charge them fully ? do this and they will last longer. Lithium-ion are the best: they cope better with top-up charges, drain less in storage, and last longer between charges.

Keep it clean

Dust and small particles are your camera?s worst enemy, so keeping your kit away from these will prevent future problems. DSLRs, with interchangeable lenses, can suffer from dust spots forming on the sensor which cause dark spots on the image.