

**SIMPLE PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE FOR  
BEGINNERS**

# Simply Snapping

**SIMPLYROOTEDFAMILY.COM**



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## HI, I'M RENEE FROM SIMPLY ROOTED FAMILY

*With the chaos of modern day life, it can be challenging to make time for our passions. Especially when your passion is as complex as photography. That's where I come in.*





*Let me simplify what took me years to learn, and put it in easy to understand terms!*



*After reading this, you will be Simply Snapping, too!*

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# THE BASIC ANATOMY OF THE CAMERA

To learn about your camera, you first have to be familiar with the basic anatomy of your camera. Let's strip your camera down and learn the basics. Don't be shy!



To keep it simple, your camera has a camera body and a camera lens, which attaches to the front of the body. There is an opening of your camera that takes in light and your pictures, and there is a shutter release (or trigger)



On the back of your camera, you will see a display screen. This screen will show you all of your camera settings and it will display the picture after you take it.

Those settings SHOULD feel like a different language to you right now. After you read this, it will all make sense!

*To summarize, your camera has a body and a lens. On the back, you will see all of your camera settings. Read on to understand what those settings mean.*



## A VERY GOOD PLACE TO START

The human eye. I bet you didn't think this was going to be one the first sentences in your photography guide, huh!?

It may sound surprising, but the inventors of the camera did NOT invent the wheel. Your two main camera settings actually mimic exactly how your eye works. When you start to visualize your camera settings as an "eye" then it will start to actually make sense.

**1** The first camera setting is called aperture. That sounds like a big fancy word, but all it means is how big your **camera's opening is**. It is measured by something called an **F-stop**.



Aperture is your camera's PUPIL. It can constrict (get smaller) or dialate (get bigger) to let in more or less light.

**2** The second camera setting is called shutter speed. This is a little more self explanatory. It is the speed that your shutter opens and closes.



Shutter speed is your camera's eyelids. It can blink (open and close) fast or slow.

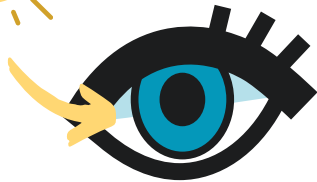
*To summarize, your two main camera settings mimic the pupil of the eye and eyelid. Read on to find out what exactly that means.*



## LIGHTING IS EVERYTHING

Lighting is one of THE most important components in photography. It determines what settings you will need and what your pictures will ultimately look like. When you change any settings it will impact your exposure (or how bright or dark your picture is)

Like I mentioned earlier, your camera has a "pupil" and an "eyelid".



When the PUPIL (aperture) is constricted (small) it will let in **LESS** light. When it is dilated (big) it will let it **MORE** light.

When the EYELID (shutter speed) blinks fast, it will let in **LESS** light (open quickly). When it blinks slow, it will let in **MORE** light.

You will learn in the next few pages that your camera settings control WHAT your picture will look like and HOW your picture feels to its viewers; however, you always have to keep LIGHTING in mind anytime you are adjusting your camera settings.

Additionally, the placement, quality and quantity of light will have a huge impact on your pictures, but we will cover that when we talk about composition.

*To summarize, your camera settings control the amount of light that your camera can "see" and will impact the camera settings you select.*

*Let's read more to learn about these settings.*



## SIMPLIFYING APERTURE

Overview

**Aperture** is the camera setting that describes the **size of the opening** of the lens. It controls the amount of light that enters the camera.

Again, it is the **pupil** of the camera. In bright light, it constricts to let in less light, and in a dark room it will open, or dialate, to let in more light.

Camera Settings

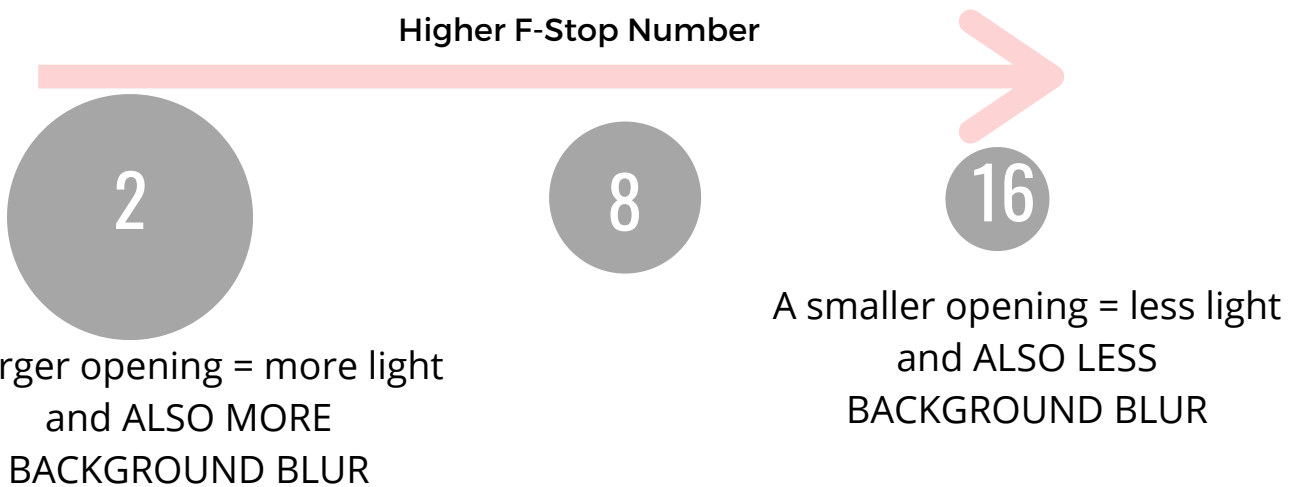


Aperture is measured by the **F-STOP**.

When you adjust the F-STOP, you adjust the size of the camera's opening. You also adjust the depth of field. In other words, you can control if your picture has a **background blur effect**.

Adjusting Aperture

When you increase the F-stop (bigger number), then the opening of your camera actually gets smaller.



*Let's see this in action...*

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## THE POWER OF APERTURE

Picture A and B were taken at the same time and same place. In both pictures I focused on the flower. The only difference was that I used two different F Stop values.

**Observe what the girl looks like in the two different pictures, which were taken with different F-Stops.**



**Picture A** was taken with F stop of 2.5.  
Small number = bigger opening  
AND **more background blur**



**Picture B** was taken with F stop of 12.  
Large number = smaller opening  
AND **less background blur**

*Personally, I love using an F-stop around 3 because everyone loves background blur.  
Now it's time to practice!.....*

## PRACTICING APERTURE

Before jumping into more camera settings, it is important to practice and master aperture. This way you will learn photography in a step-approach and guarantee that it truly sticks.

To start, change the dial on your camera to A or an Av (depending on your camera brand).



### This is Aperture Priority Mode.

In this mode, YOU (the photographer) decide the aperture (**F-stop**) setting, and your camera will do the rest!

Once you are in aperture priority mode, you can turn the other control dials on your camera to ADJUST the F-stop. All cameras are a little different so you may have to consult your manual if you aren't sure what dial to use.

**Remember, your F-stop impacts both light and background blur.**



### *Practice Aperture*

- Find a well lit location (not too bright, not too dark)
- Set an object (toy, fruit, your kid) in a spot
- Adjust the F-stop, try a low number and a high number and everything in between
- Observe what it does to the LIGHTING and the BACKGROUND blur in your picture



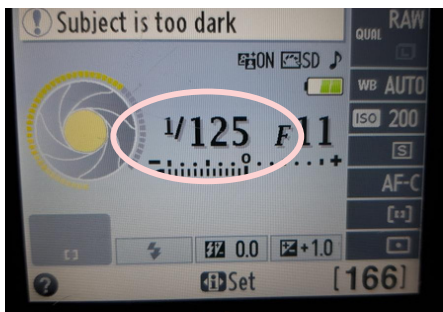


## SIMPLIFYING SHUTTER SPEED

**Shutter Speed** is the camera setting that describes the length of time that the camera's shutter is open.

Again, it is the **eyelid** of the camera. If your eyes are closed and you blink them open very quickly, less light will get in your eyes. If you open your eyes for a long time, more light AND **more movement is captured by your eye.**

The **speed that your shutter** "blinks" is measured in seconds, or fractions of a second.



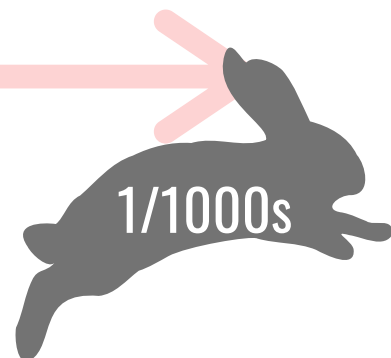
The higher the **BOTTOM** number, the faster the shutter closes. (Think of 1/500 as 1 500ths of a second)

The lower the **BOTTOM** number, the slower the shutter closes. (Think 1/2 as one-half of a second)

Higher bottom number



A slower shutter speed = more light and **ALSO MORE** movement **BLUR**



A faster shutter speed = less light and **ALSO LESS** movement **BLUR**

*Now it's time to Practice!....*

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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHUTTER SPEED

Picture A and B were taken at the same time and same place. In both pictures, I had the boy jump out of a swing. The only difference was that I used two different shutter speeds.

**Observe what the boy looks like in the two different pictures, which were taken with different shutter speeds.**



**Picture A** was taken a shutter speed of  $1/60$  s  
Small bottom number = slow speed AND **more movement blur.**



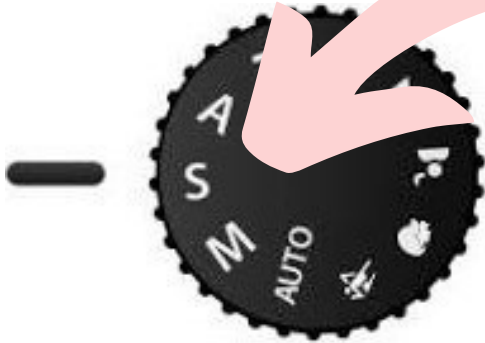
**Picture B** was taken with a shutter speed of  $1/500$  s  
Large bottom number = faster speed AND **less movement blur.**

*Anytime I am photographing a moving subject, I use a shutter speed of at least  $1/160$  s.  
Now it's time to practice!.....*

## PRACTICING SHUTTER SPEED

Shutter speed is a super important camera setting. When you understand shutter speed, you will be able to eliminate any unwanted blur from the subject in your photo. You will have to practice to get a feel for what shutter speed is needed for different scenarios.

To start, change the dial on your camera to S or an Tv (depending on your camera brand).



### **This is Shutter Speed Priority Mode.**

In this mode, YOU (the photographer) decide the shutter speed, and your camera will do the rest!

Once you are in shutter speed priority mode, you can turn the other control dials on your camera to ADJUST the speed of the shutter. All cameras are a little different so you may have to consult your manual if you aren't sure what dial to use.



### *Practice Shutter Speed*

- Find a moving object, such as a car, a pet, a kid, a moving toy.
- Adjust the shutter speed, try a fast number and a slow number and everything in between
- Observe what it does to the movement blur and the lighting in your picture

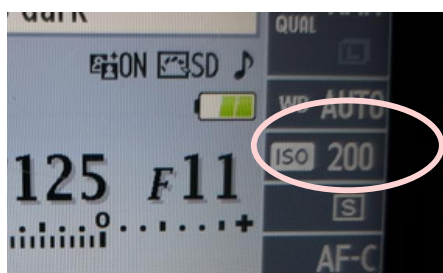


## SIMPLIFYING ISO

**ISO** is another, unique camera setting. Some like to think of it as the third "main" camera setting. I, on the other hand, like to think of it as a "supporting" feature.

My reason behind this is that both shutter speed and aperture will determine **WHAT** your picture looks like and **HOW** it feels (if there is background blur, or movement blur, or what the lighting looks like). **I use ISO to make sure that the aperture and shutter speed settings I selected will create a properly exposed picture.**

Although, I don't think of it as one of the "main" settings, ISO is extremely important!



ISO measure **how sensitive your camera sensor is to light.**

In a dark room, you want your camera to be **VERY sensitive to light**, so that a little bit of light will go a long way. Out in the sun, you don't want your camera to be too sensitive to the light!

- **A high ISO** (such as 1600) indicates that your camera sensor is **MORE** sensitive to light. The trade-off is that the picture will be grainy (or noisy).
- **A low ISO** (such as 100) indicates that your camera sensor is **NOT** sensitive to light. It will be over exposed in a dark room, but there will be no grain or noise.

*See what that means on the next page...*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ISO

Picture A and B were taken at the same time and same place. The only difference was that I used two different ISO values.

**Observe what the boy looks like in the two different pictures, which were taken with ISO's.**



**Picture A** was taken with an ISO of 100



**Picture B** was taken with an ISO of 1600



**Here is the catch:** the higher the ISO that you use, the grainier your picture will be. Your goal should be to use the **lowest** ISO value possible.

*When I am taking pictures, I first determine the shutter speed I need, then determine the aperture. Lastly, I adjust the ISO.*

## TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now, for the moment that you've been waiting for. You have officially graduate to manual mode. Don't worry, you can do it.

To start, do a happy dance, then change the dial on your camera to M, and say good-bye to AUTO for good.



### **This is manual mode.**

In this mode, YOU (the photographer) decide the shutter speed, the F-Stop, and the ISO value.

You have prepared for this moment, at the very least since page one of this tutorial. Select the appropriate shutter speed and aperture settings first. As you take your pictures, use ISO to make sure your picture isn't too bright (overexposed) or too dark (underexposed).



### *Practice Manual Mode*

- Select a subject to photograph- ANYTHING!
- Ask yourself the following and remember what you learned:
  - Is the subject moving? If so, you will need a faster shutter speed
  - Is it dark? Then you may need a lower Fstop or higher ISO

*Read on for my secret behind using manual mode!*



## THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO MANUAL MODE: METERING

Wouldn't it be great if your camera came with it's own personal instructor?



How awesome would it be if that instructor reviewed all of your camera settings in **manual mode**?? Someone to tell you if your picture would be **OVER**exposed (too light) or **UNDER**exposed (too dark) **BEFORE** you even snapped the picture?

I have great news- your camera **DOES** come with a consultant. It is called your meter.



Your meter is a built-in light sensor on your camera. It will tell you if your picture will be over or under exposed **BEFORE** you take your picture. Yes, it is literally photography magic.



I have great news- your camera **DOES** come with a consultant. It is called your meter.

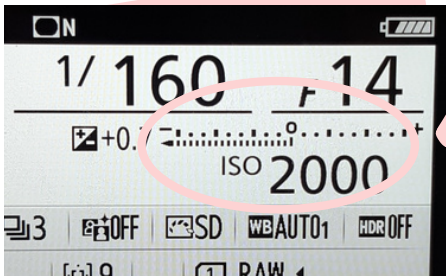


*On the next page, we will learn how to find the meter on your camera and how to use it!*

*Flip ahead to learn this simple, yet amazing setting!*

# PHOTOGRAPHY MAGIC: THE METER

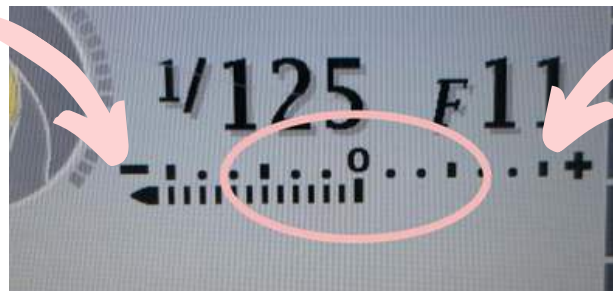
Look on the back of your camera. There should be something that looks like a line with hash marks on it. **That is your meter!**



The dotted line will move based on the lighting around your camera.

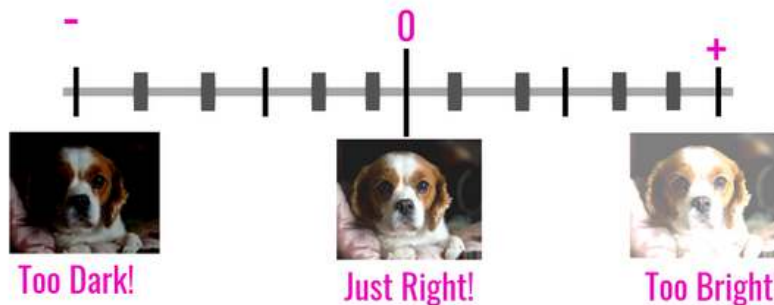
Try it! Press your camera trigger and watch it skip around.

If the indicator is in the NEGATIVE, your picture will be TOO DARK (underexposed)



If the indicator is in the POSITIVE, your picture will be TOO light (overexposed)

★ Your goal is for the indicator to be right in the middle at 0! ★



There are different types of metering modes:



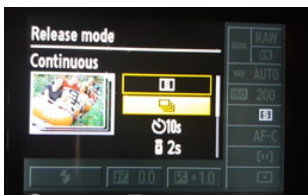
- Spot metering: evaluates the light at the SPOT you are focusing on (**I personally prefer this one**)
- Matrix/evaluative metering: Looks at the entire frame to judge the lighting
- Center-weighted metering: evaluates the light at the CENTER of your picture





## WHAT ABOUT THOSE OTHER NUMBERS AND LETTERS?

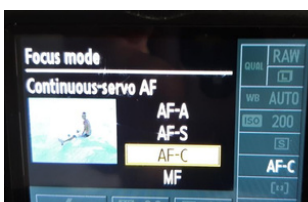
Once you master your primary camera settings, you can start to explore the other settings on your camera. This is a basic overview of some of those settings. Since all camera's are a little different, consult your manual to find out more!



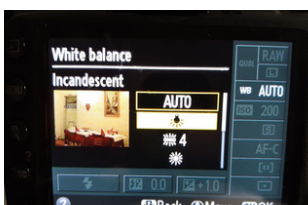
**Release mode** will determine what happens when you hold down the your camera trigger. In single release mode, it will take only one picture. In continuous release mode (also known as burst mode) it will continue to take pictures as you hold down the button. This mode is great for action shots!



**Area Focus (AF) mode-** determines where your camera will focus. You can have your camera focus on a single point, which is ideal for portraits, or multiple points.



**Focus Mode-** determines how your camera will focus on an object. The continuous mode (AF-C) is great for moving subjects. In this mode, when you hold down your trigger half way to lock in a focal point, even if the subject moves the focal point will follow! On the other hand,



**White balance** - controls the temperature of the light (warm or cold). You can use AUTO mode; however, sometimes you may have to adjust this setting if your pictures have yellow or blue tones to them.

*Now for the fun part!....*  
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# COMPOSITION IS KEY

In technical terms, composition is the placement of the elements in your photographs.

In other (more easy to understand) words, composition is how the people and objects in your picture are arranged. The placement may sounds insignificant, but it is a super important part of photography! It can take your pictures from “so-so” to “wow!”. Here are a couple common composition tricks to get familiar with.



## Rule of thirds

You may be tempted to always center your subject; however, when your subject is off-center, it is actually more pleasing to the eye.

Imagine that your frame is divided into 9 sections like this image below. Align your subject on one of those lines.



## Using, or not using, Space

Try taking some pictures with a lot of BLANK space, and some pictures where there is no blank space.



## Focal Points and Depths of Field

The focal point, is where you are focusing on in your image, and the depth of field basically refers to the amount of background blur.

*Play around with your composition,  
this is what makes photography a form  
of art!*



# I WASN'T KIDDING, LIGHTING IS IMPORANT

We talked a lot, I mean a lot, about the importance of light throughout this tutorial.

Lighting is important for the exposure and quality of your picture. It is also important for your pictures composition. Paying attention to these 3 simple light "rules" will dramatically transform your photos!

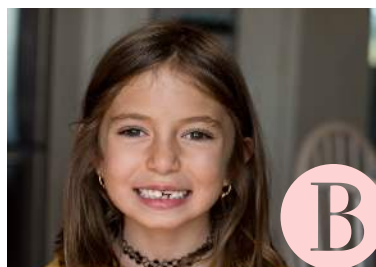
## Rule #1: Find Natural Light and Use it

Photo A and B were taken in the same room. The only difference is in photo B, the subject took a few steps closer to a window.



## Rule #2: Face Subject TOWARDS light

Photo A and B were taken in the exact spot. The only difference is in photo B, the subject is facing TOWARDS the natural light.



## Rule #3: Use Shade When Outdoors

Photo A and B were taken in the same location. The only difference is in photo B, took one step back into the shade.



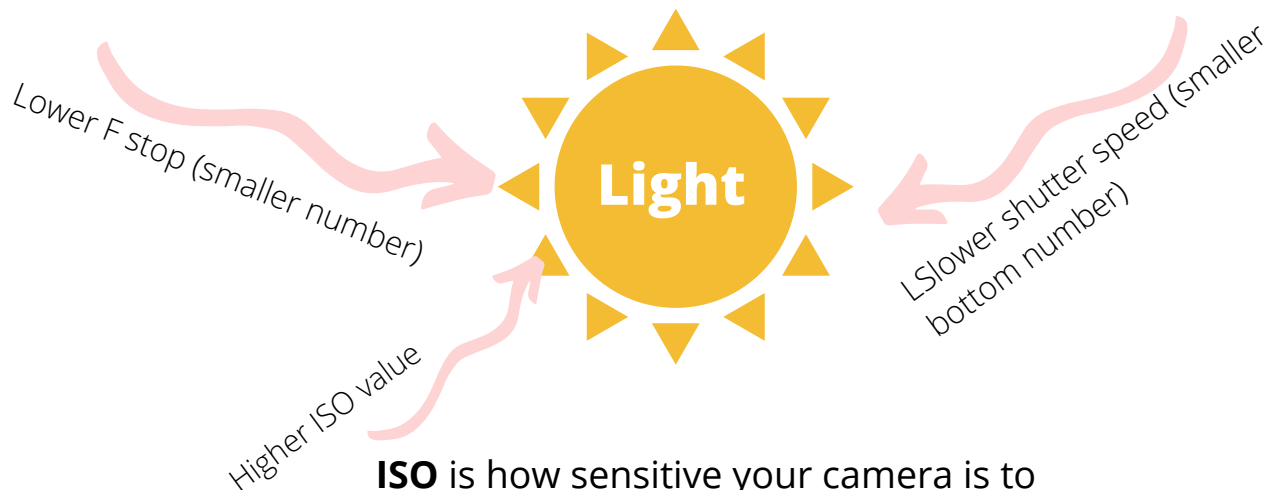


## LET'S REVIEW WHAT WE LEARNED

I know this was a lot of information! The key is to take it slow. Learn one setting at a time and PRACTICE it until it gets boring! Remember your camera settings and how they impact light.

**Aperture**, your camera's pupil, can open wider to let in more light.

**Shutter speed**, your camera's eyelid, can blink slower to let in more light.



**ISO** is how sensitive your camera is to light. You can make it more sensitive to let in more light.

*Keep in mind:*

- *Your Meter is an amazing tool to learn*
- *Always pay attention to light*
- *Take is slow and this will all make sense!*

IN NO TIME YOU WILL BE

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