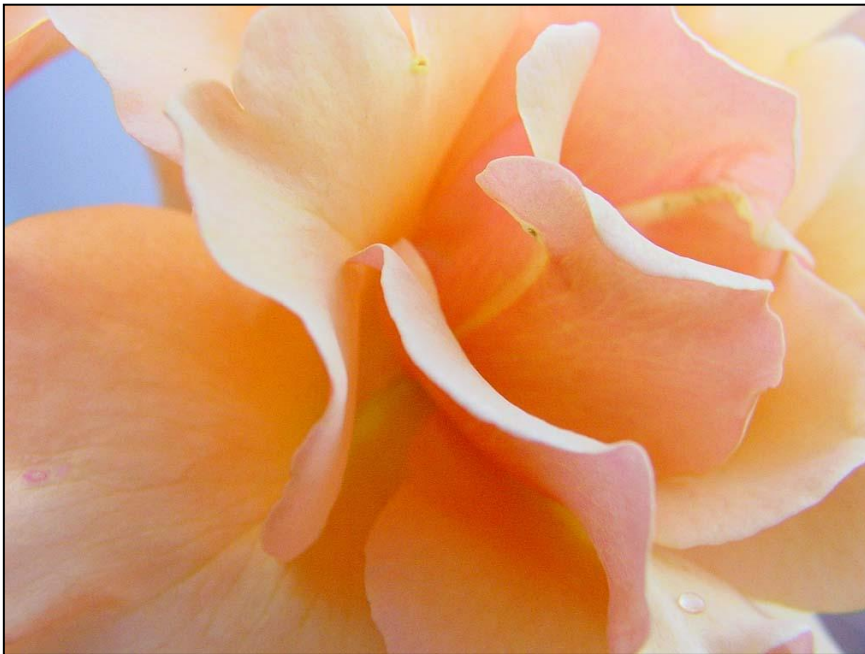


Digital Photography Success



**How you can easily turn your ordinary “snaps”
into masterpieces you can be proud of!**

Part 1: Chapters One to Six

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Introduction

Do you love the idea of taking stunning photographs? Do you have a digital camera and have been a bit frustrated with photos not turning out the way you want? Have you enjoyed your traditional film camera, but are now ready to explore digital photography? Unsure of how to get great shots? Still confused about how digital photography works and the differences between digital and traditional film photography? Or perhaps you only wish to be a little more confident in using your digital camera equipment?

This book is written for *you*, to promote your creative experimentation and enjoyment of digital photography. In this book you will find plenty of ideas for creating great photos, with tips and handy hints as well. Technical terms are explained so that you can choose to explore the technology if so inclined, or simply experiment from practical experience. The artistry of photography is a theme in this book, showing you how to first visualise your photos, even before pressing the shutter button. Then of course the fun begins, with composition, lighting, night photography, landscape and nature experiences, working with colour and black and white, portraits, printing, and more.

I offer this book for practical use. Read up on your particular interests then go out and put it to the test. When you have gained confidence in a particular aspect of digital photography, read a different chapter and experiment with suggestions and learning. Have fun! Soon you will be producing superb photos for gifts, for framing, or just general admiration.

Chapter One

Getting Started With Digital Photography



Photo courtesy of www.science.ie

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Getting Comfortable with a Digital Camera

Whether you are just starting in photography or have been doing it for years as a professional, take heed of some of my suggestions for starting out with digital cameras. It is a fantastically convenient way to take photos, and depending on the mega pixel capacity of the camera, you can develop some of your best work.

Make it easy on your self. If you are just moving from traditional to digital, purchase a smaller, easy camera that you feel comfortable using, one with familiar settings on it like your other traditional camera, and ease into it. It took me about a year before I was really comfortable with the concept of the camera being different. The way I eased in to it was to use my SLR for the great shots and then use my point and shoot digital for the family barbeque shots. Eventually I became comfortable, and now love digital as much as traditional. Yes, I use both. So sit back, relax, and ease your mind into becoming totally comfortable with digital photography.

Why digital?

There are many pros and cons to digital photography, as there are with traditional film photography. The beauty of digital photography is that obviously you do not need film. Digital photography cuts down on the costs associated with the processing of your photographs by a huge amount. That is why it has appealed so much to photographers around the world. One drawback about using digital though is that the resolution and true colour imaging are not always the same as when you use a standard SLR with film. A lot of photographers believe that digital photography just cannot capture the beauty of the scene accurately enough to warrant their time and energy.

I can see their point. I must admit my trusty old Nikon F 80 is still a wonderful camera which I use often and yes it certainly can create lovely photos. However the processing of the film is time-consuming and takes a lot of equipment, and expensive equipment too, like dark room processing for example, which slows down the whole process of photography.

One thing that inspires me with digital is its instantaneous nature. You can take a photo of a beach, download the photo onto the computer, send that photograph as an attachment, and send it to your mates back home. This is why traveling with a digital camera is a fabulous way for us to keep in touch with people we love.

Digital photography is much more convenient. It saves you money and stops the annoyance of frequently reloading film. If you are at a public event for example, using a SLR and you run out of film, and it's a sunny day, and you do not want to change film in direct sunlight, then you urgently need to find a place that is cool and dark to change the film. What happens is you miss out on excellent photographic opportunities as you re-load the camera. This just doesn't happen with digital. Digital cameras are so convenient that the process of dark room photo developing is completely eliminated. You can simply delete the photographs you do not like at the time of taking the photo itself. This is a huge advantage and I seriously believe it's going to revolutionize the industry.

Digital cameras are getting better all the time and, like so many new technologies before them, the costs are coming down too. I mean who would have thought ten years ago that you would be able to take pictures without film? Yet now, instead of film, we deal with memory space. You don't need film as the images are captured and stored 'digitally,' either in the camera's built-in memory or a removable memory card. And I'm not talking about your old shots of Cousin Fred's birthday party either. I'm talking about photographs that you sell or for which you buy magnificent frames to hang on the wall or give as gifts, or that a client commissions you to do for them.

However taking photos using a traditional film camera is a great way to get comfortable with using the digital photography medium. You can still have that standard film scanned and images produced digitally for use at a later stage. But with a digital camera, you simply remove the memory stick from the camera or connect your camera to the USB port of your computer and then download the images. You can edit those images if you want to repair or fix technical errors in the photograph, then you can put them on to CD, or e-mail them to a day photographic processing place that deals with digital, and you have your prints! All from the comfort of your own computer chair. Some places will even send them to you in the mail after giving credit card details to bill you for the printing cost (which is not much at all), and this way you really have not left your computer chair at all!

Once you get your photos onto the computer you have so much more control over them. Digital is such an easy and convenient process, simply because the digital camera and computers talk to each other in the same language which makes it so easy to "process and develop" your photographs. Once downloaded to your computer you can make them into 'digital albums and sideshows,' store them on CD and then watch them on the DVD player, or email your friends straight away, or even add the pictures to your website, instantly.

With Digital there is no longer have the disappointment of discovering whether your prints are underexposed or you've cut off someone's head. With the LCD screen at the back of the camera most digital cameras allow you to see what you've taken, so that you can either keep the shot or delete. It's that easy.

The great thing too about digital cameras is that because you can see the photo you've just taken, you will be able to decide right there and then if you need to take another photo. With standard SLR photography you cannot see what you've just taken; you have to wait until you get the photos back. Digital photography gives you artistic control because the camera can show you exactly what you've taken the instant you've taken it. It is faster than Polaroid processing because you can share this photo with people who are your subjects *before* it is printed or anything further is done with it. And unlike with Polaroid, you can decide whether to keep the shot or not. Like it? Yep, keep it. Don't like it? No, delete it! So the beauty with digital is people can see what photograph you've just taken.

That's why I believe digital is a helpful learning tool for amateurs to improve their photography, or for ambitions towards becoming professional. In recent times the point-and-shoot method of taking photographs has become very popular, and of course the digital camera is proving to be perfect for this method.

This book is about photography using the digital medium. By 'digital medium' I am not only talking about the camera, I'm talking about putting photos onto a computer, editing them, printing them and displaying these photos publicly.

I encourage you, if you have not used digital before to simply try it out with a very basic, reasonable pixel, point-and-shoot camera. This way you will feel more comfortable with starting with something basic. There is now healthy competition with the highest standard SLR cameras on the market today. Many of today's digital cameras give SLR cameras a run for their money.

Funny story

The first time I ever used a digital camera I hit myself in the head with it! I was so used to my SLR that I kept looking into it as you do a traditional camera; it took me a long time to get used to the fact that you hold a digital camera away from you because the view from viewfinder shows on the LCD screen at the back of the camera. You don't need to look "through" the digital camera at all! SLR was so ingrained into my psyche that I kept forgetting this.

I can liken this feeling to driving an automatic car for the first-time after driving a manual for so many years. You automatically go to change gears manually, foot on the "clutch" that isn't there, and you keep doing it till you get used to *not* doing it. So my first experience with a digital camera resulted in me bopping myself in the face, I was so programmed to using SLR. Now I know that you will not be as silly as me!

Printing Your Digital Photos

There are various ways to print your digital photos. Here are a few ways to do it.

You can use a web-based printing service. This works by emailing your prints to a photographic developer, having your photos printed and then mailed to you, by way of a credit card. To be honest with you I have never done this before, because I like to pick up my photos from the shop itself and examine them there and then, so that if they have done anything wrong I can get them to remedy the problem straight away.

You can also use your own personal printer, using photographic paper that you can pick up from a stationery shop or photographic supply place. I have done this and found that my printer produced pretty perfect prints. I had these prints exhibited publicly and I received comments of amazement and awe. Those commenting could not believe something like that could come out a standard printer. Needless to say I was very pleased with the printer. You can use your printer in a couple of ways. You can download your photos to your computer and then print them directly to your printer with the correct setup with the photographic paper. Or you may have purchased a printer that connects directly to your camera and print your shots directly, no need to have a full computer setup. These types of printers are becoming very popular at present.

Personally I like to have my prints done by a professional photo place. You are guaranteed to get your prints back in a short amount of time, even the same day, and you don't have to use up all your ink because printing out on the standard laser printer does take a lot of ink. And you don't have to deal with the hassle of your printer breaking down either, for whatever

reason. It's just easier for me personally to e-mail my photos to the photo supply place and have them do it. It's quick and easy, especially if you have other things to do in your day. Printing your photographs is a very personal thing. I recommend if you haven't done it before to try a few different methods first.

If you are comfortable with your computer but have not used digital before and you're a bit hesitant, then here's what I suggest. Take your photographs with your SLR with film, then take the film to your photo lab and tell them to process your negatives; but instead of printing them out, to save them on CD as a digital picture file. This way you can view them and manipulate them on your computer however you like. This will ease you into using digital for the first time. It's an SLR way of gently introducing digital into your lives.

The digital picture files of your photographs work in a similar way to a word processing file. The information of which the photographs consist, are turned into the same type of language the computer uses for all types of graphics and documents that you use on the computer every day.

Creating Art with your Subject; "It's Still Life"

How to begin? The first thing I want to tell you here is that making mistakes is a good thing! Besides, they are not 'mistakes' - they are experiments. So called mistakes are merely the shots we don't want. This is how we learn. Any photographer begins with experimentation.

Starting with simple things allows you to gain confidence quickly. When starting with digital photography, take photos of things you love; choosing things that appeal to you or mean something will help your desire to take good photos. Subjects around your home are potentially the best photos to begin with. Being familiar with a still or moving object, is the ideal way to get comfortable with digital photography. You will be amazed at how many things around your home actually make great pictures. Take note of shapes, form, color and size. Flowers, fruit in a bowl, or any favorite objects may sound simple but it is often the apparent simplicity that helps to make great photos.

If you want to venture beyond your home, buildings or other architecture can look really effective. Find a house or building you like, wait for a cloudy day and take photos of your chosen subject at various angles and distances, to become familiar with the subject and the camera's relation to it. Try practicing in different kinds of light, to help you understand how your camera interprets different light degrees. Old churches are wonderful subjects. Taken at close, medium and distant range in black and white on a cloudy day, they can look

sensational. Take pictures of the brickwork, statues, sculptures and other features on the church itself. Try to capture the distinguishing features of one particular church or structure. This can make for some very fine results.

No matter what your still life subject, look at it first. What does it suggest to you? A distance or close shot? Colour or black and white? What light - bright or soft, hot or cool? At what time of day could you best represent the subject? You might get multiple answers - so try them all!

Art in Natural Motion

Taking pictures of something that is moving requires a bit more practice with the camera. If you are ready to try this, take some slower-moving things on automatic exposure and look at their affects.

Water can be still as a small pond or it can be slow or fast-moving like a waterfall. Water rushing over rocks has a dramatic and powerful feel in your photos, as it does in real life. Of course water is in the sky too, so you might like to play around with clouds. Black-and-white creates a very dramatic feel on a cloudy day. The sky is never quite the same two days running; each day is different somehow, so you have ample opportunity to test your pleasure with the camera.

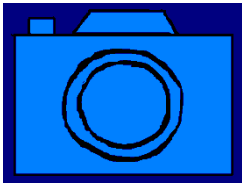
Photography begins with your own perceptions - how you see things. In this way photography not only represents the subject, but also how you see the subject in your mind. Even before the camera is picked up, a photographer takes note of shape, color, form, size in relation to the subject's surroundings, and other factors. When a photographer sees a lovely flower or lake, they will visualize or imagine how that flower or lake could look in a photograph. Then the decision is made whether to take that photo or not. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Sometimes you might simply want to take a spontaneous shot. When you feel this - go for it! Beautiful and interesting things are around us every day. Photography is an art and you are the artist. An impulse or desire to capture something you find interesting, admirable or intriguing, is the very beginning of photography itself.

People

One of the great things about taking photos of people is their every-changing expressions, moods, and look in their eyes. When taking photos of people, you can have several opportunities at once. For example, if you sat in a room with someone for an hour, how many different photos do you think you could get? Even just a slight turn of the head, an unexpected smile or a pensive look, will each give you a great photo subject. Ask your self, what is typical of this person? The way they move? Their gestures, facial expressions? Have a go at capturing the individuality of your subject, without poses for the camera.

Taking great photos is not just a matter of technical ability; it is a combination of a good artistic eye, confidence in camera handling and usage, and confidence in your own ability. It doesn't matter if you're not taking the photos you want now, the important thing is the desire to take good photos. Once you have this desire, the rest will come.

Tip:



Make a promise to yourself that from now on you will experiment and strive to create the best photographs you can.