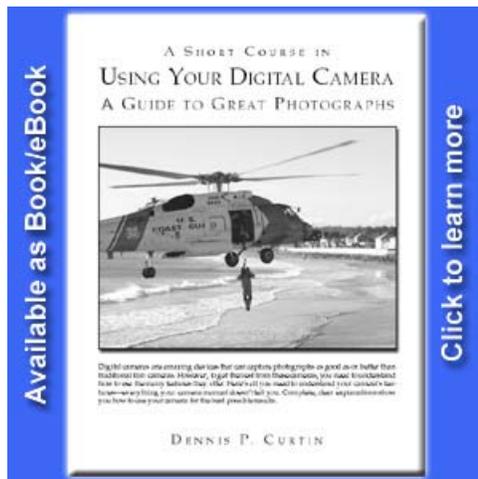


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A Short Course in Using Your Digital Camera

Introduction



All great images, digital or otherwise, start by capturing a great photo and capturing great photos requires an understanding of your camera. It's these aspects of digital photography that this on-line book is all about.

A great photograph begins when you recognize a great scene or subject. But recognizing a great opportunity isn't enough to capture it; you also have to be prepared. A large part of being prepared involves understanding your camera well enough to capture what you see. Getting you prepared to see and capture great photographs is what this book is all about. It doesn't matter if you are taking pictures for business or pleasure, there's a lot here to help you get better results and more satisfaction from your photography.

To get better, and possibly even great photographs, you need to understand both concepts and procedures; the "whys" and "hows" of photography.

- **Concepts** of photography are the underlying principles that apply regardless of the camera you are using. They include such things as how sharpness and exposure affect your images and the way they are perceived by viewers. Understanding concepts answers the "why" kinds of questions you might have about photography.
- **Procedures** are those things specific to one kind of camera, and explain step-by-step how you set your camera's controls to capture an image just the way you want to. Understanding procedures gives you the answers to the "how" kinds of questions you might have.

This on-line book is organized around the concepts of digital photography because that's how photographers think. You think about scenes and subjects, highlights and shadows, softness and sharpness, color and tone. Discussions of the procedures you use with specific cameras are integrated throughout the concepts, appearing in those places where they apply. This integrated approach lets you first understand the concepts of photography and then see where to look in your camera manual for the specific steps you use in all kinds of photographic situations. There are even places for you to write in notes about how you do it with your own camera.

To get more effective, interesting, and creative photographs, you only need to understand how and when to use a few simple features on your camera such as focus, exposure controls, and flash. If you've previously avoided understanding these features and the profound impact they can have on your images, you'll be pleased to know that you can learn them on a

weekend afternoon. You can then spend the rest of your life marveling at how their infinite variety of combinations makes it possible to convey your own personal view of the world. You'll be ready to keep everything in a scene sharp for maximum detail or to blur it all for an impressionistic portrayal. You'll be able to get dramatic close-ups, freeze fast action, create wonderful panoramas, and capture the beauty and wonder of rainbows, sunsets, fireworks, and nighttime scenes.

As you explore your camera, be sure to have fun. There are no "rules" or "best" way to make a picture. Great photographs come from using what you know to experiment and try new approaches. Digital cameras make this especially easy because there are no film costs or delays. Every experiment is free and you see the results immediately so you can learn step by step.

This book assumes you've mastered the mechanics of your camera. It's about getting great pictures, not about installing batteries and connecting your camera to your computer. That information is well presented in the user guides that came with your camera.

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