

## **How to Take Better Digital Photos 101**

By Mark Sincevich

Wouldn't it be great if you could take sharper photographs and increase your odds of capturing a better number of photographs each time? Are you ready to save money by purchasing products that will allow you to capture the moment instead of being distracted by changing batteries or poor light? Now is the time to take control of your digital camera instead of allowing it to control you. Listed below are some great pointers to help you improve your photographs when using a digital camera so that you will get sharper and clearer photographs, capture truer colors and take a greater variety of quality photographs.

### **• Know Your Resolution**

How you capture your photograph will determine the maximum size of the final print you can produce. Starting with a higher resolution image will allow you to crop your photograph later and still have a sharp looking final product. Most cameras have an automatic resolution setting that will allow you enlarge them up to 8x10. However, if you were thinking about taking a landscape photograph, it would be a good idea to increase the image resolution to the maximum setting and to use a tripod.

### **• Use a Tripod**

A stable camera means sharper and clearer photographs. Digital cameras are very sensitive in lower light situations. If you turn the flash off thinking you'll capture some beautiful night scenes, you'll be very disappointed with the blur of the final image. The best way to prevent this is to use either a tabletop tripod or a regular-sized tripod with a remote control or cable release. You will be able to trip the shutter without shaking the camera. Remember; don't forget to turn off the flash each time you power on the camera.

### **• Purchase NiMH Batteries**

Long lasting batteries will allow you to take more photographs and not miss 'the' moment. An added benefit with rechargeable batteries is that they will save you hundreds of dollars and are good for the environment. The best type is NiMH (Nickel-Metal Hydride) rechargeable batteries and each one lasts approximately 500 times longer than a regular AA or AAA battery! Think of the batteries you won't be throwing out. You'll also need a battery charger too. If your camera only takes proprietary Lithium batteries, then make sure that you have a fully charged spare when the first one runs out of power. Keep your batteries and equipment warm at cold temperatures by putting the spares near your body.

### **• Program ISO Below 200**

When you learn how to override a camera's automatic function and set the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) value to 200 or less, you will take photographs that are sharper and have less grain. A higher ISO value allows for greater flexibility in lower light situations; however, commercial digital cameras are very sensitive and don't have the sophisticated electronics of a more professional unit. This means that they don't perform very well when their ISO values are set beyond 200. It's even better to keep it set at 100, but then you'll almost always need a tripod in lower light.

### **• Use an External Flash Unit**

If you have more light in a darkened area, you will usually take better photographs of your subject. Unfortunately the built-in flash units of most digital cameras lack the quality and



power required for good flash photography. If your digital camera has a hot shoe (something that looks like a metal bracket on top of your camera), then you have the ability to use an external flash unit. Look for ones that take the same kind of batteries as your digital camera.

#### · **Light the Subject**

If you increase the quality, and often the quantity, of light falling on your subject, you will improve your final image. The colors will be more vibrant, truer and the image will be clearer. Where you take a photograph is critical too. Make sure you ask your subject to pose near a window or open doorway. Experiment with turning the room lights higher. You can also use various props to bounce light onto your subject. One way is to use a white jacket that may reflect window light or a portable reflector that folds up into the size of a Frisbee. Used in conjunction with an external flash, this strategy will increase both the quality of light on your subject and of your final print.

#### · **Attach Optional Lenses**

The benefit of having a wide-angle lens or a telephoto lens is that you can photograph most situations from a wide city skyline to a person across the street. This will allow you to capture more interesting photographs and extend your operating range. Some digital cameras allow you to attach an optional wide-angle and telephoto lens on the end of the standard lens increasing your optical zoom factor. However, you will want to increase the image resolution on your camera when using a telephoto lens if you don't have a built-in large optical zoom factor or the lens attachment feature. Please ignore the digital zoom features for they are meaningless and will not improve the quality of your photographs.

#### · **Keep Practicing**

The more you practice and learn from your experiences, the more you will become proficient with your camera. This will allow you to anticipate the scene and know exactly what to do when it comes to taking a better photograph whether it is working with quality light, using proper batteries or increasing the image resolution. As you progress along your path to taking better digital photographs, you will see marked improvement along the way by following these suggestions. The bottom line is to keep learning and to keep taking photographs! □

#### **About the Author**

Mark Sincevich has been practicing photography for over 21 years. He is an instructor at the Washington School of Photography and his photography has been featured in numerous newspapers and magazines. Mark is an active member of the National Speakers Association and regularly delivers professional speaking programs on photography, creativity, leadership and balance all over the country. In addition, he has an active photography consulting practice where he helps accelerate his customer's knowledge and application of photography. He also spent over 13 years in high technology sales and marketing and this background gives him a unique perspective to take the guesswork out of the burgeoning world of digital photography. He is the author of two books including "The Real Ideal" and numerous articles. He can be contacted at 301-654-3010, [info@staashpress.com](mailto:info@staashpress.com) or [www.staashpress.com](http://www.staashpress.com).