

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEW DIGITAL CAMERA

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Becoming proficient with your new digital camera requires that you understand your camera's menus and the information displayed on the LCD screen and are able to make the necessary adjustments that will enable you to get the photographic image you seek. It also requires that you become familiar with each of the dials, buttons and controls of your camera. Your particular make and model of digital camera may not have all the features described below. Each camera manufacturer may present the information in its unique manner. Your job will be to learn to use your camera manual to locate the menus, controls and features of your digital camera.

Locate The Following Various Dials, Buttons Or Controls:

LCD Monitor – this is similar to a TV screen and will be used to display the items that will be described in detail later in this seminar. Bright sunlight may make viewing through the LCD difficult. The LCD monitor may also drain a battery fairly quickly.

Optical View Finder – in many cameras this is an optical viewing system. It may not show the entire image.

EVF – in some cameras an electronic view finder is used in place of an optical view finder. This displays the same information that is on the LCD.

Mode Dial – found on all but the smallest pocket sized digital cameras. The mode dial may enable the user to set shutter speed or aperture. The user may also be able to make settings for portrait mode, landscape mode, night scenes, movies, panoramic images or set special scenic menus.

Omni Selector – a way of selecting various menu options and making various other settings. The degree of control depends upon the particular camera model.

Display Button – (May also be labeled “I” button). Changes images seen on LCD or EVF. Clicking on the display button may change the image display to show or hide certain information or may turn off the LCD display.

Menu Button – basic functions in the set up, picture taking, review and scenic modes are displayed using the menu button.

Set Button – this sets the information accessed by the menu button. In some cameras, it is also used to delete single images from the review menu.

Memory Card – the storage device for recorded images. Different manufacturers use various types of cards. They come in differing capacities and a large memory card (512 megabyte or 1 gigabyte capacity) is recommended for storing a large number of images.

Batteries – locate the type of battery your camera uses. If it uses AA batteries, purchasing rechargeable batteries and a quality battery charger is recommended. Having spare batteries is a necessity since a digital camera can drain batteries at a time you most need them.

Shutter Release – depressing this halfway down will set the exposure and focus prior to taking the picture.

Zoom Lever or Knob – a means of adjusting the degree of zoom for taking telephoto or wide angle images.

Information That May Be Displayed On Your LCD Monitor In The Record Menu:

Shutter Speed – this is a setting that can be adjusted in many cameras to enable the user to take sports or action shots.

Aperture – this setting (available on many cameras) will enable the user to adjust the depth of field. This is how much is in focus in front of or behind the selected image.

Resolution – this term is used to describe the quality (expressed in megapixels) of the images that can be recorded. The terms used to describe the setting may also be expressed in the number of stars that are displayed or in terms like small, medium or large.

Compression – a term used to describe the size of the stored file. The degree of compression also determines the quality of the stored image. The terms used may be good, better, best, or normal, fine, superfine. Various types of compression may be available – terms used are JPEG, TIFF and RAW. Together the resolution and compression settings determine the number of images that may be stored on a memory card.

Exposure Compensation – this is a way of increasing or decreasing the brightness of your digital image. Adjustments may be made in increments from -2 (darker image) to +2 (brighter image). This feature is especially useful when flash photography is prohibited.

ISO – this term is used to express what in film cameras was referred to as ASA (film speed). Increasing the ISO beyond ISO 200 may result in some electronic distortion called “noise” and result in lower quality images.

White Balance – is a way the camera can compensate for differences in different lighting conditions (color temperature). The camera tries to make a white object appear white under various lighting conditions. Adjustments can be made for sunny days, cloudy conditions, and tungsten or fluorescent lights without the use of external filters.

Photo Effects – settings can be adjusted to take the photographs in black and white, sepia, or make the colors more or less vivid. Various other effects and color changes are available in certain camera models.

Light Metering – the camera can be set to measure the light over the entire frame (evaluative), measure the light in the center of the frame (center weighted) or at the subject (single point).

Macro – a setting that enables the user to take close up photographs. May be able to take pictures as close as _” to 1” from the subject depending upon camera make and model.

Optical Zoom – a true zoom lens that enables the image to appear closer to photographer.

Digital Zoom – an electronic “trick” that enlarges the pixels in the center images. This may degrade the quality of the photograph. It may be turned on or off in a menu setting.

Image Stabilization – available on some cameras with very long optical zoom lenses to help correct camera movement and steady the recorded image. True optical image stabilization involves a slight shifting of the lens or image sensor to compensate for the slight shaking of the camera.

Continuous Shooting Mode – enables the user to take multiple sequential images when the shutter is depressed

Bracketing – can be set to automatically change focus while taking 3 photographs or to change exposure while taking 3 photographs.

Self Timer – may be set for 2 seconds or 10 seconds.

Auto Focus Assist Beam – the camera will project a beam of light to help the camera focus in darkened conditions.

Flash Settings – these may be used to turn the flash on at all times, to turn the flash off, to automatically enable the camera to determine if the flash is needed, or to fire a brief flash to help prevent red eye.

Panoramic Image – available on many cameras for linking several photographs together to make a panoramic image.

Movie Mode – a setting for taking short movies with the camera.

Information That May Be Displayed In The Playback Menu:

Protect Images – selecting this will prevent images from being removed from the memory card.

Rotate – selecting this option will automatically rotate images that were taken in a vertical mode.

Erase All – this will erase all images on the memory card

On some advanced cameras all of the information used to record the image may be displayed and viewed here.

Information That May Be Displayed On The Set Up Menu:

LCD Brightness – controls how brightly displayed the images will be on the LCD screen. Increased brightness increases battery drain.

Sounds – various camera models have various set up sounds. This option enables the user to select or adjust these sounds.

Date/Time – a vital setting since images are recorded on the camera by date and time taken. Should be set as soon as a new camera is turn on initially.

Format – CAUTION this permanently erases all images on a memory card. This setting should be used on occasion to clean up a memory card after all images have been deleted by the user.

Language – may be set if the user prefers to have information in a language other than English.

Information That May Be Displayed On The Scenic Menu:

Depending upon the camera model, there may be specific settings for up to 12 -20 differing scenic modes. Typical scenic modes include beach/snow, dusk/dawn/, twilight, fireworks, foliage and night scenes.