

# Through The Lens

*A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts.  
After the click of your camera, you're only half done!*

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## Mirrorless versus DSLR

by Lynda Buske

If you are on the fence about upgrading to a mirrorless camera, this comparative article of selective features might be helpful. There are pros and cons to each type of camera but like so many equipment related matters, it often boils down to your personal preferences and the type of photos you take.

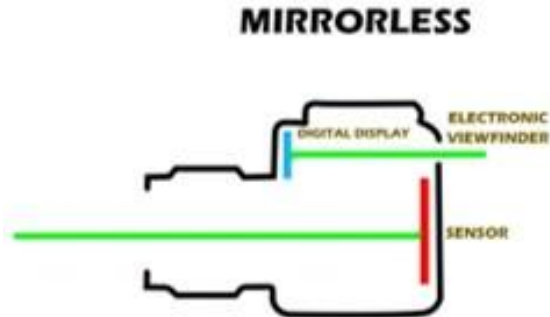
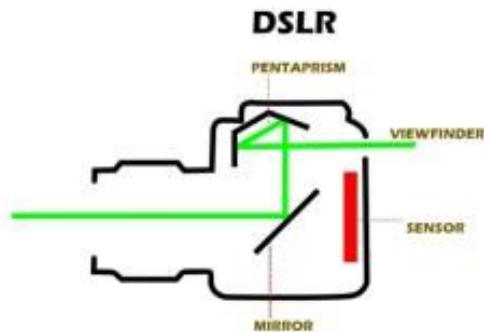
Any camera that does not have a reflex mirror (i.e. not a DSLR) is technically a mirrorless camera including point and shoot, bridge or cell phone cameras. For the purposes of this article, the comparison will be between a DSLR and higher end interchangeable lens mirrorless camera.

### DSLR

Light blocked from sensor by mirror.  
When shutter released, mirror flips out of the way & sensor exposed to light

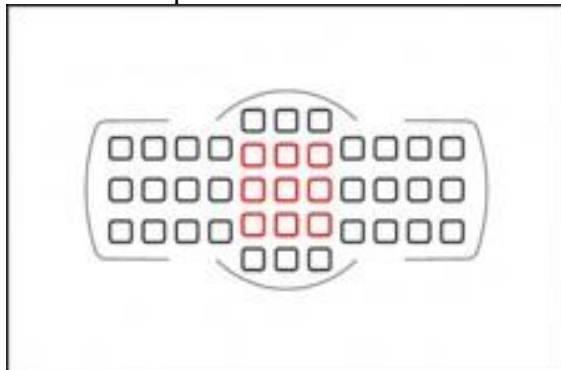
### Mirrorless

Sensor always exposed to the light

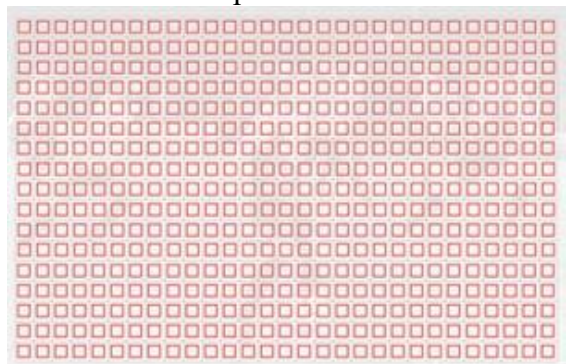


All cameras have distinct auto-focus points where you can choose a single point, matrix etc. However, a mirrorless camera has complete coverage which can help with subject tracking.

DSLR focus points



Mirrorless focus points



A mirrorless camera allows you to shoot as quietly as possible once factory set beeps have been silenced. While there is slight mechanical shutter noise on either type of camera, the sound of the mirror flipping up in a DSLR is not insignificant and can possibly disturb wildlife before you get the shot.

One strong advantage of a mirrorless camera is having multiple features associated with the electronic viewfinder such as live histograms, seeing exposure effects, being able to zoom in for details. None of these are available with a DSLR viewfinder although a few features might be available in the live view (LCD screen). Being able to review your image in the electronic viewfinder of a mirrorless camera is also an advantage since you can zoom in and check sharpness or improperly exposed areas more easily than trying to do so with an LCD screen on a sunny day.

If you are interested in wildlife or sports photography, the mirrorless cameras are superior in their subject detection and tracking abilities. You can actually tell the camera what type of image you are trying to track such as people, animals, cars, planes, etc. They are very good at eye detection which is so crucial for a good wildlife image.

With respect to lenses, the mirrorless camera does not need space for a mirror so has more design options. The selection of lenses for DSLRs is currently very large and with adaptors, most of these lenses can be used on a mirrorless camera. The inverse, however, is not true. If you have both kinds of cameras, you cannot use a mirrorless lens on a DSLR. The selection of mirrorless lenses will no doubt rapidly expand in the next few years.

When it comes to price, DSLRs are generally less expensive and there currently exist some great deals in the used market as people shift to mirrorless. With respect to batteries, the mirrorless uses more power (for features such as the electronic viewfinder) resulting in shorter battery life.

While the body of a mirrorless can be lighter since there is no mirror assembly required, in actual fact, it is the lenses (both on the camera body and perhaps an additional one in your camera bag!) that tend to determine most of a camera's overall weight so we don't consider this to be a significant advantage.

All indications are that camera manufacturers are focussed squarely on mirrorless and future advances will be made on mirrorless and not on DSLR cameras.