

# Through The Lens

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



## Setting up a new camera

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The following are some steps for setting up a new (or new to you) camera:

1. While most new cameras come with a quick set-up manual, they are usually pretty limited in scope. Download your camera's full manual either from the manufacturer's website.
2. If the camera you have purchased is pre-owned, find the menu option to reset the defaults so you are not inheriting someone else's preferences.
3. Attach the strap, which can be tricky, so refer to the manual. After getting a sense of the weight of the camera and where it will feel most comfortable on your body (around your neck, shoulder, wrist, etc.) you may wish to purchase a different strap. This may be especially important if you are going to carrying the camera for long periods of time and perhaps even need your hands free for clambering or carrying a tripod. If you think you will use a variety of straps depending on the type of outing, make sure they are easy to swap out.
4. Set the correct date and time so that you will have this information properly embedded in your photos. Also, you may have to set the preferred interface language.
5. Turn off as much sound as possible. Most cameras default to all sorts of beeps for things like telling you when auto-focus has been achieved. You might want to turn all these off so as to not disturb wildlife or companions. There is always an alternative visual indicator for focus lock. However, you still might have to live with the sound of the mirror moving out of the light path in the case of a dSLR or a mechanical shutter. Many cameras allow you to use an electronic shutter which can further reduce noise.

6. Set the file format to your preference, typically JPG, RAW or JPG+RAW. In the case of the latter, you will have two photos per shot to download for further processing.
7. Change the default aspect ratio of your images if you prefer to shoot in an alternate format to the ratio of the sensor. Be aware though that the camera will simply be using only a portion of the sensor and you will be discarding pixels.
8. Adjust the screen brightness to your needs for viewing in live mode or the electronic viewfinder. Note that a very bright screen might not be necessary in most situations and will drain your battery faster. Set auto-power-off to your preferences for extending battery life. The trade-off is a delay of a second or two when you want to start shooting again while the camera powers up.
9. If the camera kit comes with a memory card, it may have a small capacity and fill up quickly, especially if you shoot in RAW format. SD cards can be had for \$25 for 64GB or 128 GB for \$35. Be sure to verify that your camera can handle the format and capacity you are considering.
10. If the camera has an optical viewfinder, adjust the diopter for your vision.
11. If the default setting is multiple point focus and you would prefer a single point focus, refer to the manual to determine how to change this.
12. Cameras have a variety of choices for displaying information in the view finder or the LCD screen for both taking the images and reviewing. For instance, shutter speed, aperture, shooting mode, virtual horizon, battery level, histogram, ISO, as well as “blinkies” that show areas that are overexposed. Typically, you can toggle through multiple options for displays. Check in your manual for the options available on your camera.

Some other settings you may consider at a later date are: burst mode, adding copyright information which will be embedded in the EXIF Info, renaming the root label of your photos (e.g., your initials), continuous autofocus and perhaps setting up back-button focus.