

# 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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## Getting up close and personal!

*by Lynda Buske*

Even though I think of myself as primarily a landscape photographer, I do like getting up close to objects in nature. Sometimes this involves getting down low as well and I enjoy achieving that different perspective from the very common eye-level pics many people take. While a lower perspective can work in all sorts of situations, it is particularly useful for macro nature photography. If I'm going to show you what a mushroom looks like from the perspective of a mouse, I need to get at mouse level. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Let's think first about some common macro natural subjects. For me, what immediately come to mind are blossoms, bugs and butterflies. The key to macro composition is eliminating background clutter and homing in on a single subject. There are various ways to do this. If you don't have an actual macro lens, just get as close as you can (either physically or zooming) and crop your image tightly later. It varies but many standard lenses do not allow you to get closer than a foot or so from your subject.

My cell phone (Google Pixel 6 pro) can actually focus within an inch or so of an object and once it's locked in, I can zoom even closer whereas it will not focus that close from the start (this is only possible if you have an optical zoom on your phone).

A second method of eliminating or lessening background "noise" is to have a short depth of field so all but the main areas of interest are softened. With a standard lens, this can be done by opening your aperture as wide as you can (smallest f-stop number). However, with a macro lens, your camera is so close to the subject that setting a wide aperture may literally result in only a few millimetres depth of field (the area of your photograph that is considered to be acceptably sharp focus). Unless the subject is very thin, this will probably result in too much of the photo being out of focus. So, while you can get much closer with a macro lens, you need to make sure you have sufficient depth of field. Using my 105mm macro, at just a few inches from the subject, I set the aperture to f/11 for image 1 and f/16 for image 2.



Image 1, A=11 (f/11)



Image 2, A=16 (f/16)

When selecting a small aperture (high number) in order to achieve enough depth of field, you will need a longer shutter speed to let in sufficient light for proper exposure and it may be too slow for you to hand hold the camera steadily enough. Using a tripod will keep things still when a long exposure time is required. For image 3, I didn't have a tripod but instead placed my camera on the ground (on a plastic bag) and shot up. It is very useful to have an articulated back screen in this situation so you can see what you are shooting.

An alternative to a longer shutter speed is bumping the ISO to a higher number. This will give you a faster shutter speed although it may introduce some graininess/noise at the higher settings. This can be corrected in post processing.



Image 3

Of course, macros do not have to be only bugs and flowers. It is fun to take closeups of all sorts of subjects and isolate details you want the viewer to focus on.



If you wish to explore macro photography further, an excellent Canadian photographer is Don Komarechka. (<https://www.donkom.ca/>)