Online Course Easter 2021

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography for Parents

READ YOUR DAILY LESSON WHERE WE COVER THE INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS.

YOUR DAILY CHALLENGE IS TO SHOOT THE TASK SET.

POST IT INTO THE FACEBOOK GROUP FOR TIPS AND FEEDBACK.

WHAT IS GOOD LIGHT?

LESSON 4:

“My house is too dark, I can never take a good photo here”

Light in most British homes is challenging. The combination of our geographic position, frequent overcast skies and generally small homes just makes this one a tough one, everyone struggles with it. But some people still manage to take good indoor photos, so how do they do this?

The short answer is: skilfully.

The long answer is : with full understanding of their camera and settings and lenses that maximise the cameras sensitivity to light, cameras that are good with low light and above all a great understanding of how light works with your camera.

Obviously, this is not something we can give you in one lesson - in my beginners course we do a module dedicated to light.

But, I can give you some tips and strategies that will get you some way there.

STRATEGIES FOR POOR LIGHT

1. Move yourself or your child relative to the light source

2. Make your camera work harder

3. Bring in extra light

TIPS

Strategy One - Move your child to the light

Let’s find your light first.

Look around your place:

Where is the light coming from? If you have multiple light sources, which one gives you the best light? Does it vary from one time of the day to another? Do a study throughout the day on where the best light comes from in your home.

What kind of light is it? Hard or soft? If it’s a sunny day, where is the sun in relation to your window? If it’s shining right in, you’ll be seeing strong light streaming through. But if it's not shining directly into your window, your light will be softer.

The light will always be coming from somewhere.

STRATEGY 2. MAKE YOUR CAMERA WORK HARDER

THIS IS WHEN THINGS GET A LITTLE TECHNICAL AND REQUIRE YOU TO GET OUT OF AUTO SETTINGS, SO I'LL ONLY SIGNAL THEM HERE.

THERE ARE 2 WAYS OF MAKING YOUR CAMERA GO FURTHER WITH POOR LIGHT.

INCREASE YOUR ISO

Increase camera's light sensitivity

One is to make your camera more sensitive to light changing your ISO setting.

This is not something you can do in Auto, but if you are used to shooting in priority modes or manual, you should look into it.

Your ISO range will usually go from 100 to 3200 or even higher.

The smaller the number, the more light your camera will need to expose an image correctly - this means, it will need longer time to do it, and this means much more chance of blur.
If you increase the ISO number, your camera can make do with less light - so it's better in situations and places that have less light in general. e.g. church

When I shoot outdoors, I will usually have my ISO somewhere between 100 - 400
I almost never have my ISO lower than 400 indoors and that's with fast lenses . I am much more likely to keep it at 800.
The downside to hight ISO is that you can get quite a lot of grain in your image - how much will depend from camera to camera, but in general the newer models will perform better.

ISO DIAGRAM

ISO 100-200

Daylight

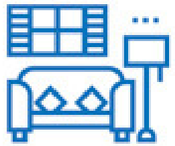
ISO 200-400

Shade/
Indoors

ISO 400-800

Flash
Indoors

ISO 800-1600



Darker
Indoors

ISO 1600-3200

Indoors
at Night

ISO 3200+

Extra Low
Light

Make your child face the light

This seems like the most obvious one – and in many ways for good reasons. If you want your child in good light, make them face it.

If there is space, try and get yourself between the window and your child (so that the window is behind your back) or approach it from the side (with the window pointing at your shoulder)

Place your child with their side to the light

So they basically get good light from one side and have a bit more shadows on the other side of their face. Depending on the time of the day and the angle of the sun behind your window, you may find that the shadows will be deeper or softer. It's generally a really flattering angle for portraits as it allows you to create a really soft, sculpting light which creates a real 3D quality to your subject. Again, the more intense the light, the deeper your shadows will be so play with the light in that knowledge.

If the window is backlighting your child - make silhouettes!

This is the scenario which often causes people lots of problems but one that you can turn into an opportunity to create a silhouette. A small warning here – in my experience, when you're shooting on auto, silhouettes appear when you really didn't plan for them but somehow fail to work when you're trying for them. We do teach how to take them with either priority (P mode) or manual settings in our course but there is not enough space for it here so I'm just signalling this is one of the outcomes you might expect.

Children do not always take kindly to being told to go and stay in particular places and rarely do they want to stay there.

But YOU can still move, and it does make a world difference.
If your child is between you and the light, and you are the one facing the light, you will always struggle to capture them well because they will be creating their own shadow and effectively reducing the light on their face, even if they're close to the window with plenty of light streaming in.
But if you move so that you have the light on the side or behind you, they will still get the benefit of light and you will find it a lot easier to photograph them.

2. Change your lens for a faster one

The other way is to get more out of your camera is to get a lens with a wide aperture which will allow more light to get into your camera in shorter time.

Fast, wide aperture lenses are worth their weight in gold & well worth investing in.

3. Let more light in

Sometimes it couldn't be simpler. Removing obstacles like net curtains, window plants etc can make surprisingly a lot of difference.
Opening the door to another bright room and letting the light spill out is something people rarely think of but can be very effective. Turning on ALL the lights can be effective too – sometimes the light you'll get may not be the most attractive but at times, that's better than nothing.

Finally Flash –
Good flash, used well can make the ugliest and darkest of spaces look like it's bathed in natural light. But even the less than attractive pop up flash has its uses. I always say that it's better to have an imperfect photo of the perfect moment, than to miss on photographing it for fear of not having the right equipment, ambience, light etc.
So if you tried all the above options and it's either turning on your pop up flash or nothing at all – just switch it on.

Day 4 Challenge

Capture your child somewhere indoors where they can benefit from the most light!

Don't forget to post your images to our Facebook group!!

My next Beginners Photography Course starts on May 12th

If you'd like to take better photos of your children - their big and little moments,

the beauty and the crazy of everyday, then sign up today!