T I P S & T R I C K S

Photography

A collection of innovative ideas and tips & tricks for taking better photographs

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Welcome

Well were up to Issue 3 and things are looking good. We would like to thank all our readers for there comments, submissions and questions. We have really begun to sky rocket in the number of readers which is a win for all of us.

I've been thinking that the front page of this magazine/newsletter seems a bit lame. After all we are about photography so perhaps we should flaunt it more. I would like to try in future issues placing a nice full size title page of a great picture, much like a magazine cover that showcases the great photos our readers are taking. So this is a call to all photographs, we want your best photo to cover the front-page of Tips and Tricks Photography. No matter if your a beginner or an expert we would be happy to show off your creative works: tipsandtricksphotography@gmail.com

Were also thinking about adding a new beginners tips column. Simple tips to keep you motivated, expand your creativity, and overall hopefully get better results.

We also have our first submission for critique from Ben Darfler. So please take some time, look at the photos (pg. 10) and comment on them

Enjoy,

Jeff Tindall

The Bounce Flash

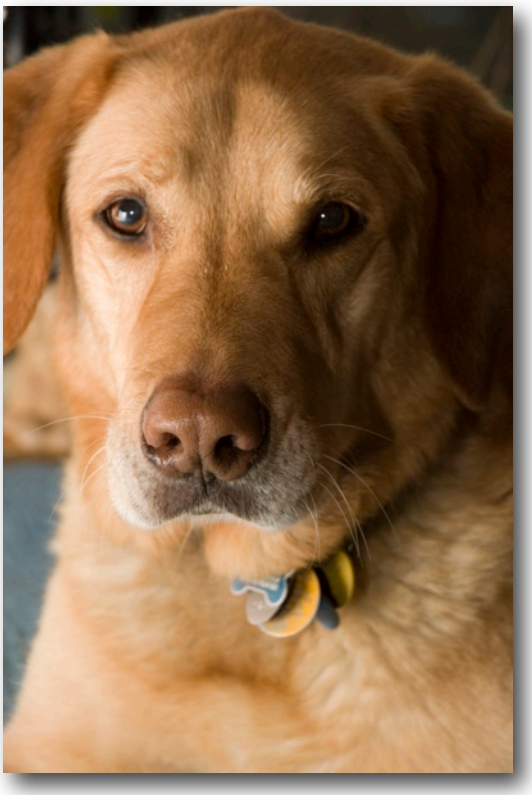
Light is the basis of good photos, controlling it will definitely improve your pictures.

Written by Jeff Tindall

Flash photography is a fairly new aspect of photography for me. For the longest time I have been using my built in flash and the extent of my knowledge was subjected using a flash as a filler to minimize or eliminate harsh shadows. Recently, I was lucky enough to pick up a Speedlight and after a few days of playing with it a entirely new world of photography was opened up to me. Immediately I saw reductions in red eye, better range of illumination and the most fun of all directing the flash elsewhere than at the subject of interest. By no means do I consider myself and expert in flash photography, I have several years to go before I can even consider using the terms, but I did want to share with you my favorite new way of illuminating a subject. By using a bounce flash.

The bounce flash is pretty much as the name suggests where you direct the head of the flash in another direction and bounce the light off of something and then onto your subject. So why is this good? Well first off if your

shooting a person or animal, you can eliminate red eye. The light falling upon your subject is coming at an angle that's not along the same plane as your lens, thus the light doesn't reflect off of the blood vessels in the eye. However, the truly great thing about the bounce flash is that it creates a much softer light that is evenly spread over your subject. This eliminates harsh shadows created with direct light and often creates more flattering pictures of people and animals through enhancing subtle tones.



There are a couple of tips to help improve bouncing a flash: firstly, keep in mind that because your bouncing the light off of a surface (like a ceiling or wall) the light has to travel further, this typically means that there will be less light hitting your subject. After all light that is bounced will partially be scattered away from your subject and partially be absorbed by the ceiling, wall or whatever your bouncing off of (with the exception of a mirror). With less light hitting your subject you can run the risk of underexposing, so keep in mind you may have to increase the power your flash emits. Increasing the flashes power can typically be done either manually or using the flash exposure compensation (available on SLR's).

The position of the subject relative to your flash will help determine the angle to use when bouncing light. For subjects close to the camera (up to about 5 ft), the

bounce to properly and evenly illuminate a subject is to aim the head of the flash straight up (90° from the plane created between the camera and subject). The further back a subject the more you should decrease the angle. For subjects 5 to 10 ft I found bouncing the light at angles between 75° to 60°, respectively. For subjects up to 20 ft then your looking for an angle of around 45°. Keep in mind these are suggestions and there is nothing stopping you from bouncing light to the side or behind a subject to achieve the effect you want (take a look at the bounced sidelight photograph).

Another cool effect of bouncing a flash is that you can enhance the warmth or colour of light falling on your subject (alternatively you can also cool a subject). If you bounce light off of a white surface then for the most part the light will hit your subject with the same properties of light that left the flash (white reflects all wavelengths of light), but if you use a coloured ceiling, wall or other reflector the light reflected back on to the subject will have aspects more related to the properties of the reflector (for example, a red ceiling will reflect a lot of red wave lengths). Compare the photographs of my faithful and obedient model, the sidelight picture (Pg. 3 - bottom left) is the most accurate colour representation of my dogs fur. The title photograph at the beginning of the article (Pg. 2) was light bounced off of a warm toned ceiling, leading to the more warm look.

In playing around with the bounce flash eventually I ran into ideas on using attachments for altering how much light you bounce and how much light you send forward. These items often are made out of cheap plastic and costs start around $50. There is a website called: ABetterBounceCard.com which shows you how to make a bounce card to attach to your flash. In making my better bounce card ended up drawing the outline. I've included this file for download here for those who are interested. If I correctly converted the document, after cutting out along the lines the trapezoid should be about 5.5 inches high. I do suggest watching the video for the instructions on what items to use to make the card and how to use it. If you don't have a flash and are strongly thinking about portrait photography or tweaking light, I strongly suggest picking one up and giving it a shot.

The Zone System

I was thinking about writing an article on the Zone system, however just before I had the chance I listened to Jeff Curto's Camera Position Podcast, who dedicated an entire episode to explaining the basics of the zone system and how to use it. I was blown away with just how articulate his descriptions were and the time he spent on creating a PDF to accompany the podcast. There really was no reason for me to write an article because he did such a great job. So instead I would like to encourage the readers of Tips & Tricks Photography to visit his website and download episode 43 and the PDF.

I also transcribed the Jeff Curto's description of the Zone System to be able to put on your iPod Notes, for those who carry their iPod when they go out shooting. Download here.

A Tips & Tricks Photography Experiment

Creating a Variable Neutral Density Filter

Written by Jeff Tindall

Singh-Ray came out with a great filter called the Vari-ND. This is a variable neutral density filter and works similarly like a circular polarizing filter, you can turn a dial on the filter and it varies the amount of light allowed into your camera. The Vari-ND does a very impressive 2 to 8 stops of light allowing photographers to shoot long exposures in bright light. In essence it allows photographers to combine different apertures, shutter speeds and even ISO's in all types of brightness while still achieving correct exposure. This truly is a great filter, no longer do you need to purchase two or three separate ND filters and stack them to minimize a discrete amount of light. Instead, you can now just use one filter and since it's variable there are no discrete amounts your stuck using, you can turn the ring to achieve any stop (including fractions of stops). About the only thing going against the Vari-ND is the cost, with a price tag of $350 (CND) I imagine only the professionals who make a liv-

ing out of photography could justify spending that much on a filter.

This started me wondering how they did it? After contemplating it for a few days I eventually thought back to one of those stupid moments in photography that I was glad no one was around to witness. I was new into photography and had just purchased my first polarizing filter. I headed out to the mountains (Kananaskis - Canadian Rockies) and found a picturesque lake and a sunny blue sky. I had on my clip-on sunglasses because it was such a bright day, I excitedly screwed the polarizer on to my lens, setup my tripod and began setting up my shot. I looked through the lens and all I saw was black, "I must have forgot to take off my lens cap" I remarked to myself, but when I checked, sure enough the cap was off. Well this started me to panic, "something must be wrong with my camera, lens, both?" I took the lens off and checked my camera and lens for quite some time, they didn't seem broken, but every time I put the lens back on and looked through, nothing but black. After about 30 minutes of an in-depth assessment of my camera gear, swearing and even more swearing I looked through once more. This time however my head was tilted, suddenly I could see through, it was dark, but at least I could see something. When I tilted my head to the original position, it went back to black, then I tilted again even more and the picture got brighter. I suddenly realized and felt quite stupid that my clip-on sunglasses were polarized and I was looking

Polarizer and Clip-ons at 0° (same direction)

Polarizer and Clip-ons at 45°

Polarizer and Clip-ons at 90° (perpendicular direction)

through my lens with a polarizer attached.

Polarizers work by filtering light and allowing only light through in a particular direction. If you stack two polarizers together they will still let light through provided they are both lined up to allowing light through in the same direction. If you turn the polarizers 90° to each other, the light allowed through by the first polarizer will be blocked by the second filter (because it's a different direction), light will not proceed and you will only see black. If you turn the second polarizer to an arbitrary angle (45°, 60°) you can vary the amount of light that passes through.

What does this have to do with the Vari-ND, well this story is the basis of how I think a Vari-ND can be created. My hunch is that the Vari-ND can be made using a circular and linear polarizer (finally a use for a linear polarizer!).

Take a look at the photos inset in this article, sure there terribly done, but the effect is what's important! The pictures are from a circular polarizer on my lens and my clip-on sunglasses (a linear polarizer). In one picture you can see through right through the clip-ons, but as you turn the dial on the circular polarizer and begin to change what light can pass through you reduce the amount of light that can pass to the camera. When the circular polarizer is turned so its perpendicular to the linear polarizer (90°) no light can pass and you are left with black.

This is why I think the variable neutral density filter will work, by turning the circular polarizer, you are allowing a certain proportion of light through, hence adding or subtracting stops needed for proper exposure. And since polarizing filters are already neutral colour, there are no colour casts or unwanted effects.

So here is the experiment: To make your own variable neutral density filter all you need is a circular polarizer (chances are you likely already own one) and linear polarizer, of the same size (so they can screw together). If you don't have the same size filters, then a stepping ring(s) can be used. That's all it takes, attached the polarizers together and put it on your camera. If my thinking is correct you should now have an affordable variable neutral density filter.

So does it work? Well, I actually don't know I haven't had the opportunity to purchase a linear polarizer yet. If it does work, the biggest issue I see with it is that since your camera is now looking through a linear polarizer, you may not be able to rely on auto-focus, particularly in modern cameras. If this is so, you would have to switch to manual for focusing. I don't think this is a big problem since most photographers who stop down appreciable amounts

are likely using the camera on manual already.

A request from you: I'm anxious to know if this really works, so if you try this out, I would be very interested in knowing how well it worked. So drop us a line describing your experience. We will include it in an up and coming issue.

Good Luck!

Multiple Exposures

A Couple of Different Techniques to Create Artistic and Eerie Photos

— Written by Jeff Tindall

I saw this effect in Nature Photography (written by Tim Fitzharris) and had to try it for myself. To get this eerie/surreal effect is actually pretty simple, it's just multiple exposures. There are two ways that I know of to make a multiple exposure.

The Overlay/Opacity Method

This method tends to darken all whole scene of the multiple exposure.

Camera Work:

Using a tripod or some other way of keeping the camera in a static position, you need to take two pictures (if using a DSLR) or perform a multiple exposure if using film. The first picture should be a clear, crisp picture, however for the second picture taken with identical settings should be slightly out of focus. I like to take a shot of my hand before and after taking the series of photos

to make sure I don't accidently erase the blurred photo, thinking it was just a bad picture (after all digital is free!).

Post Processing:

If your using a DSLR, overlay each photo in Photoshop or whatever graphic program you use. Then all you need to do is play around with the opacity of the layer until you get the desired effect your looking for. Flatten the image once your happy and Enjoy!

The Second Way (Blending Method)

This method tends to lighten up the exposure with the more exposures added.

Camera Work:

This is likely the more authentic way of performing a multiple exposure using a digital camera. The first thing that needs to be done is decide how many exposures you want in your multiple exposure.

Exposure	Stops
2	1
3	1.6
4	2
5	2.3
6	2.6
7	2.8
8	3

This will dictate how much each picture should be under exposed. The table within the article is a great guideline.

Photoshop Steps:

Open the image in Photoshop and add all the images to one file and arrange them appropriately. With all the images now in one document, change the blend mode on all but the bottom most layer to screen mode. This tells Photoshop to blend all the images into each other. Do what ever fine tuning is required and there you go.

Tips and Tricks Photography Critiques

A place to receive and give honest opinions about photographs

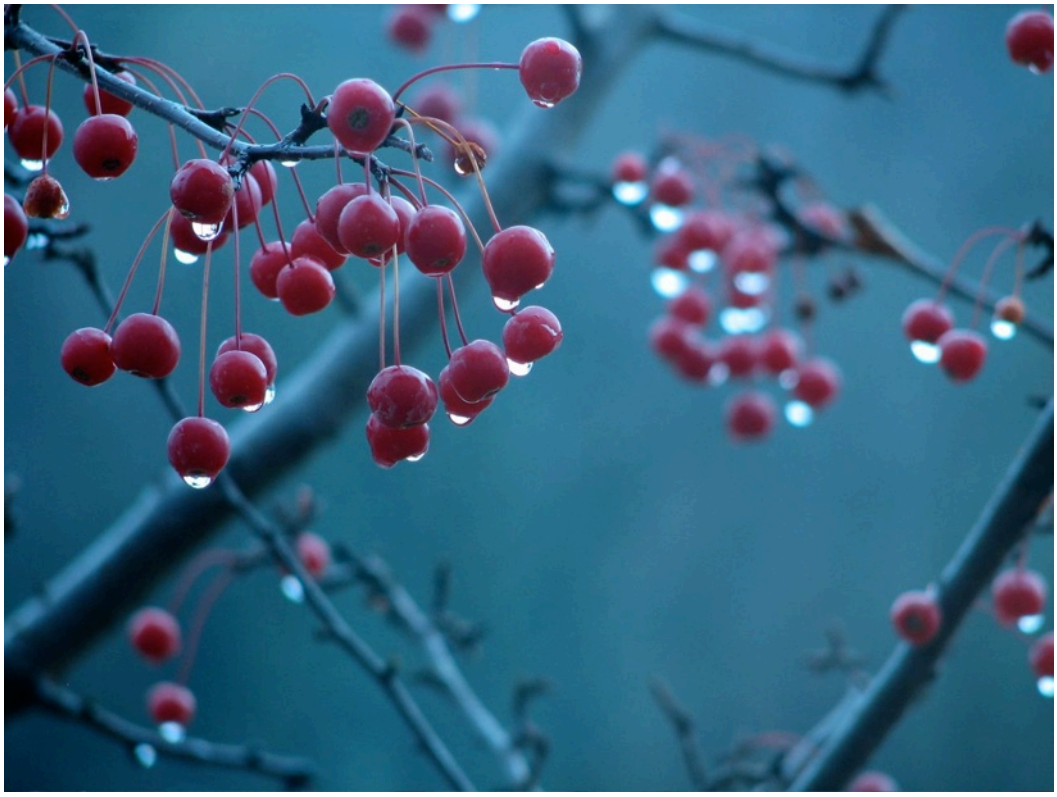
Send your photos or comments to tipsandtricksphotography@gmail.com and we will include them in the next issue.

Name: Ben Darfler

Title: Trickle

Skill Level: Intermediate

Other Info: Taken with a Canon S2 IS. I really enjoy the smooth texture of the water in this one.



Name: Ben Darfler

Title: Cold Berries

Skill Level: Intermediate

Other Info: Taken with a Canon S2 IS, used tungsten white balance to accentuate the blue color cast, very little post processing.