

Flash Photography Buying Guide



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What To Look For In A Flash

Guide Number (GN)

The Guide Number is a measurement of how powerful the flash is.

- It is a number typically given as a measurement in meters or feet.
- Ideally you want a flash with a GN of 58 meters/190 feet.

Recycle Time.

The recycle time tells you how long it takes for the flash to recharge after being fired.

- It's typically given as a measurement of time in seconds
- It might be given as a range, something like 1-5 seconds.
- Ideally you want a flash with a maximum recycle time of 5 seconds or less.

TTL (Through The Lens)

TTL determines whether or not the camera can send complex instructions to the flash.

- TTL flashes are manufacturer specific. (ex. A TTL flash made for a Canon camera will only work as a TTL flash with Canon cameras.)
- If using radio triggers to fire a TTL flash off camera, you can use the flash with any camera (Nikon, Olympus, etc...), but you will not be able to use the TTL functions.
- TTL can be a useful feature, but it is not necessary. For example, I never use TTL when using my flashes.

Flash Recommendations

All prices in this guide are as of 04/15/2018 as priced on amazon.com

Amazon Basics VT560 Flash

Price: \$27.99 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Very affordable
- 8 stop power range (full (1/1) to 1/128) in full stop increments
- Sturdy and well built
- Sync port for use with radio triggers
- 5 second recycle time

Cons:

- Lower GN of 33 meters/108 feet
- Can only change power in full stop increments
- Can't zoom flash head

If you're on a tight budget, this is a perfect flash. It's durable, affordable with a great power range and recycle time. I own this flash and use it regularly, and it has never failed me.

Godox TT600

Price: \$65 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Affordable
- GN of 60 meters/197 feet
- 8 stop power range (full (1/1) to 1/128) in 1/3 stop increments
- Built in radio receiver (compatible with Godox X system triggers (see radio trigger section for options))
- Supports HSS (High Speed Sync)
- Supports flash grouping

Cons:

- No TTL

Not only are these flashes fantastic, but the Godox system allows for room to grow with a full series of flash options that are all cross compatible with the same X series triggers.

Godox TT685

Price: \$110 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Affordable TTL Flash (Canon, Nikon, Fuji, Olympus/Panasonic)
- Offers full manual operation
- GN of 60 meters/197 feet
- 8 stop power range (full (1/1) to 1/128) in 1/3 stop increments
- 5 second recycle time
- Supports flash grouping
- High Speed Sync

Cons:

- TTL isn't really necessary

As I explained in the video, you don't really need TTL when you're shooting off camera flash. If you do want a TTL flash, this is a great option.

Wireless Trigger Recommendations

The trigger is what allows you to fire the flash without having it connected to the camera. Radio triggers are the standard for wireless flash triggering.

Neewer 4 Channel Wireless Remote Trigger

Price: \$12.99 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Very affordable
- Can connect to any flash via sync port or flash hot shoe

Cons:

- Shorter (but still very adequate) range of 30 meters/98 feet
- Not the greatest overall design
- Only four channels

If you're on a tight budget, you can't beat the Neewer radio triggers. They work, and with radio triggers that's the most important thing. The design could be better, but these will get the job done without killing your budget.

Godox X1t Trigger

Price: \$46 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Affordable
- Available for all major camera brands
- Supports High Speed Sync
- Can remotely control flash power levels
- Can trigger any Godox flash compatible with their X system
- Can group flashes

Cons:

- The LCD display can be a little hard to see

Godox have created a great system that supports all major brands, and the X1t trigger is their entry level trigger. I use this trigger and it works great.

Godox Xpro Trigger

Price: \$69 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Available for all major camera brands
- Great LCD and interface
- Supports High Speed Sync
- Can remotely control flash power levels
- Can trigger any Godox flash compatible with their X system
- Can group flashes

Cons:

- A bit more expensive

If the budget allows for it, the additional \$20 for the Xpro trigger is worth it for the upgrade to both the controls and the LCD for controlling all your Godox flashes.

Light Stand

To hold your flash so you don't have to! 😊

Amazon Basics 7 Foot Light Stand 2 Pack

Price: \$24.99 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Affordable
- 2 stands for a low price
- Will hold your flash

Cons:

- Not the greatest quality
- a bit bulky
- Can't go very low

A light stand is a pretty straightforward affair. It needs to hold your flash. This will get the job done. It's not the best stand in the world, but if you're on a budget, it'll work just fine.

Phoenix Compact Light Stand P200 MK II

Price: \$49.95 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Very well built
- Compact
- 7 feet/2.13 meters tall
- Can get quite low to the ground
- Built in foot stakes for solid positioning outdoors

Cons:

- Expensive

Though expensive, the P200 Mk II is worth every penny. It's solidly built, collapses to a compact size for easy transportation, and is my light stand of choice. I have and regularly use these stands and I love them.

Umbrella Bracket

Works with the light stand, allows you to use an umbrella with your flash, and to easily change the angle and position of your flash.

LimoStudio Flash Bracket

Price: \$8.99 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Inexpensive
- Decent design and build quality

Cons:

- Knob designs could be better for easier use

This bracket is not fancy, but it will get the job done.

Dot Line Umbrella Bracket

Price: \$22.74 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Superb build quality
- Excellent design for easy use

Cons:

- More expensive

Though costly as compared to the Neewer brackets, this Dot Line bracket is worth every penny. Super solid and easy to use, it's my preferred bracket. I have five of them and I love them.

Umbrella

The umbrella allows you to modify your light, giving you nice, soft lighting for when you want it.

Neewer 33" Shoot Through Umbrella

Price: \$9.99 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Inexpensive

Cons:

- Smaller diameter

The 33" Neewer umbrella is a decent umbrella, especially for the price. I prefer a larger umbrella myself, but if you're on a budget, there's nothing wrong with this umbrella

Wescott 43" Shoot Through Umbrella

Price: \$20.50 ([amazon link](#))

Pros:

- Larger diameter
- Relatively inexpensive
- Great built quality

Cons:

- None

This is a great umbrella. At slightly over twice the price of the Neewer umbrella it is more expensive, but definitely worth the price. I've been using these umbrellas for years and they've been fantastic.

Full Kit Suggestions

You can mix and match from these recommendations just about any which way you want, but I decided to put together a couple of “kits” to make it easier for you to choose.

The “Absolutely Got To Be As Inexpensive As Possible Kit”

TOTAL PRICE: \$84.95

This kit will be perfectly serviceable, and while it won't be the greatest quality in the world, you'll be able to work with off camera flash and create the photos you want to create without breaking the bank.

Suggested gear:

- Amazon Basics VT560: \$27.99 ([amazon link](#))
- Neewer Trigger Set: \$12.99 ([amazon link](#))
- Amazon Basics Light Stand 2 Pack: \$24.99 ([amazon link](#))
- LimoStudio Umbrella Bracket: \$8.99 ([amazon link](#))
- Neewer 33" Umbrella: \$9.99 ([amazon link](#))

The “Best Value For The Money” Kit

TOTAL PRICE: \$154.97

If you want to put some extra money in your kit, the place to put it is in your flash and your triggers. This kit combines the best price to value flash and trigger, with the most inexpensive stand, bracket and umbrella for a kit that will serve you very well.

Suggested gear:

- Godox TT600: \$65 ([amazon link](#))
- Godox X1t: \$46 ([amazon link](#))
- Amazon Basics Light Stand 2 Pack: \$24.99 ([amazon link](#))
- LimoStudio Umbrella Bracket: \$8.99 ([amazon link](#))
- Neewer 33" Umbrella: \$9.99 ([amazon link](#))

The “Ideal” Kit

TOTAL PRICE: \$227.19

Great products that you can count on that will get you shooting off camera and creating fabulous images

Suggested gear:

- Godox TT600: \$65 ([amazon link](#))

- Godox Xpro: \$69 ([amazon link](#))
- Phottix P200 Mk II Stand: \$49.95 ([amazon link](#))
- Dot Line Umbrella Bracket: \$22.74 ([amazon link](#))
- Wescott 43" Umbrella: \$20.50 ([amazon link](#))

The “I Gotta Have TTL” Kit

TOTAL PRICE: \$272.19 or \$199.97

If you want the ability to shoot TTL flash on camera, and manual flash off camera, this is your kit. Priced with the better light stand, bracket and umbrella. If you're on a tighter budget, swap those out for the budget options to save \$72.22

Suggested gear:

- Godox TT685: \$110 ([amazon link](#))
- Godox Xpro: \$69 ([amazon link](#))
- Phottix P200 Mk II Stand: \$49.95 ([amazon link](#))
- Dot Line Umbrella Bracket: \$22.74 ([amazon link](#))
- Wescott 43" Umbrella: \$20.50 ([amazon link](#))

Conclusion

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this guide. Selecting the right flash gear for a well rounded and functional kit can be a hugely overwhelming task, and I'm happy to have the opportunity to help you choose the kit that best fits your needs.

Once you get your gear, the next step is learning how to use it! Working with flash is a whole new level of photography, and to help you get up and running as quickly as possible I created my [Understanding Flash Photography Video Course](#).

Understanding Flash Photography will help show you the two critical components of successful flash photography.

The first is to understand how the flash works, and how it works with your camera. This unlocks your ability to control your light, and when you have control, you can begin to create AMAZING photos...

...but to really harness the power of flash, you need the second critical component, which is how to think about flash photography.

Because when you have control of the light, YOU decide how to use the light and what the light does to your photo. That's where things get REALLY fun and REALLY creative.

So if you want to get up and running with your new flash equipment [check out Understanding Flash Photography now](#) so that you can master your flash and then....

**GET OUT THERE
AND TAKE
SOME DAMN
PHOTOS!**