How To Take Tack Sharp Photos

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Taking Tack Sharp Photos

Calculate Your Depth of Field

You will need:

1. A Depth of Field Calcuator
    1. Web App: https://goo.gl/68ZE
    2. iOS App: https://goo.gl/t4BSvY
    3. Android App: https://goo.gl/fL6HKZ
2. A tape measure *(this is not absolutely necessary, as you can estimate distances, but if you want precision a tape measure will give you exact measurements)*

Using the Depth of Field calculator:

1. **Choose Your Camera** *(It doesn't have to be your exact camera, as long as it's in the same camera family)*
2. **Input the focal length you'll be using for the photograph** *(Input the exact focal length as marked on your lens. Do NOT convert to the 35mm equivalent if you are using a crop sensor camera.)*
3. **Input the aperture you intend to use**
4. **Input the distance from the camera to the subject** *(For precision use a tape measure and measure from the tripod mount to the point on the subject you'll be focusing on. Estimating the distance is fine if you don't have a tape measure)*

Using the measurements provided by the Depth of Field calculator insure that everything you want in focus is in the depth of field area.

If everything you want in focus is not inside the Depth of Field area, adjust your Depth of Filed to expand the area. If everything is in the Depth of Field area, proceed.

Maximize Your Lens Sharpness*

1. Prime lenses typically will give you better overall sharpness and image quality as compared to zoom lenses.
2. Zoom lenses generally give maximum sharpness and image quality at the mid point of the zoom range (example, on an 18-55mm lens, maximum sharpness would be at around 35mm).
3. Prime and zoom lenses typically have a specific Aperture that yields the best sharpness and image quality. It varies from lens to lens but is generally somewhere between f5.6 and f16.

To determine the best focal length and aperture to use on your lens you can self test, or search google for "my lens sweet spot" to find it. (e.g. Canon EF-S 18-55mm IS STM sweet spot)

Minimize All Possible Camera Motion

1. If possible use a tripod with a cable/shutter release to take the photo.
2. If you have a DLSR you can also enable the mirror lockup function to further eliminate any camera shake. *(Check your manual for instructions)*
3. If hand holding make sure you are using a fast enough shutter speed to avoid any camera shake (*1/focal length or faster. E.g. with a 70-200mm lens zoomed to 200mm, use a shutter speed of 1/200 or faster)*
4. If hand holding, take a solid stance with your elbows in and both hands supporting your camera and lens as you shoot.

Match Your Shutter Speed To Your Subject*

- **Still Subject:** use the guidelines in point 3 above
- **Kids Playing/Kid's Sports:** 1/200 or faster
- **Adult Sports:** 1/500 or faster
- **Wildlife:** 1/1000 or faster

 * *These are all guidelines to get you started. Be sure to test your shutter speed on any moving subject before shooting for keeps.*

Conclusion

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this guide. Getting sharp photos is one of the more frustrating things that photographers deal with and I'm glad to be able to help you with that task. And, if you're still struggling with your camera and how to get the photos you want with it, take a moment to check out my Guide to Shooting in Manual Mode video course. It has everything you need to help you take control of your camera so that you can start taking photos that are so good people will stop scrolling past them on Facebook and Instagram and just stare. Click here to check it out…

…and then

GET OUT THERE AND TAKE SOME DAMN PHOTOS!