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GET OUT THERE AND TAKE SOME DAMN PHOTOS!
SELFHELPHOTOGRAPHER.COM

Portrait Settings Cheat Sheet



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Printable Cheat Sheet 1

Fixed Settings Checklist:

- ☐ Focus Point*: **Single point, targeted for subject's eye**
 - ☐ Focus Mode: **Single Shot**
 - ☐ White Balance**: **Choose preset based on lighting conditions**
 - ☐ Metering Mode: **Spot**
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Managing Depth of Field

There are three factors that affect depth of field. Those are:

- Aperture
- Camera to subject distance
- Focal length

For Shallower Depth of Field:

- ☐ Use a larger aperture (ex: f1.8, f2.8, etc...)
- ☐ Get closer to the subject with the camera
- ☐ Use longer focal length lenses

For Greater Depth of Field:

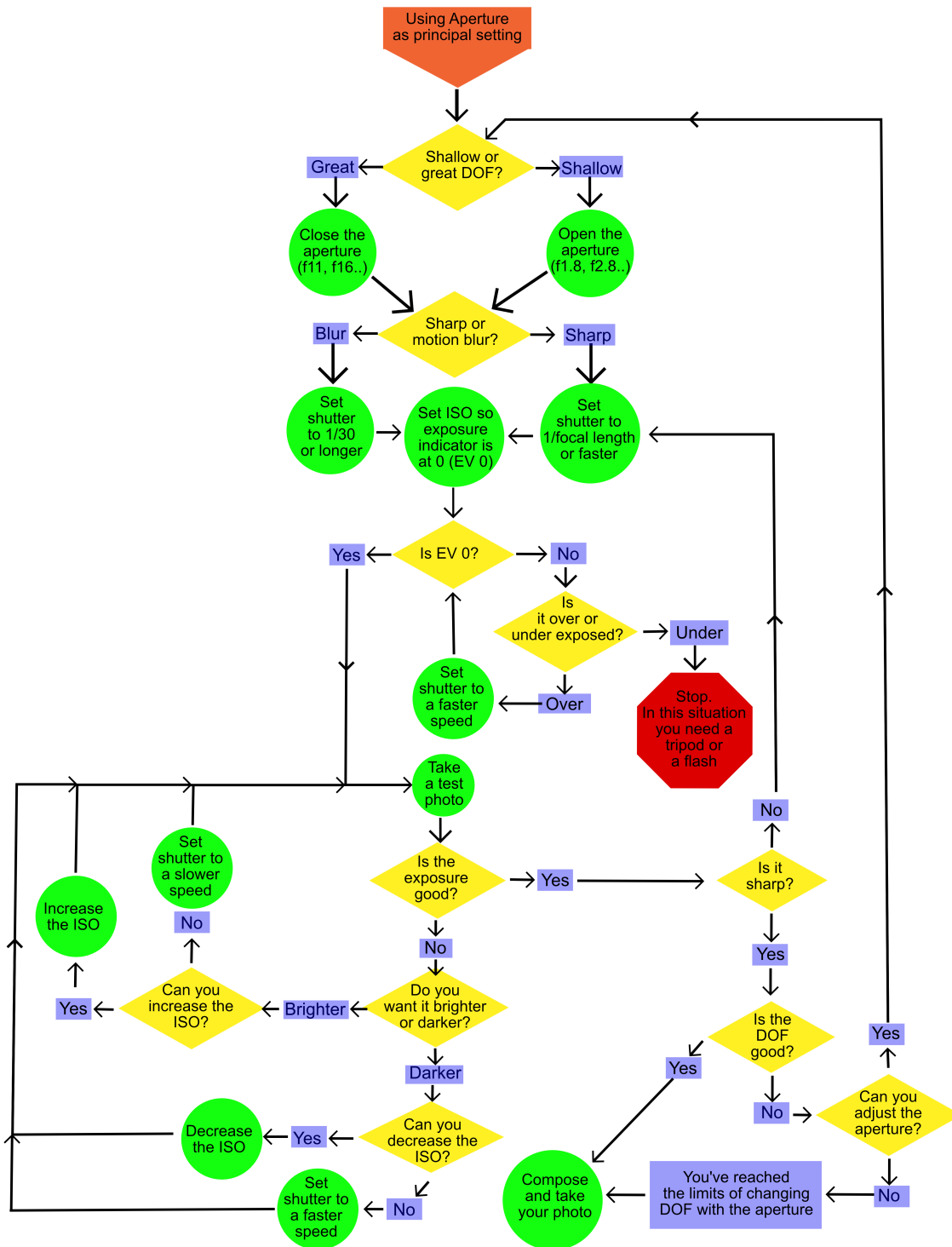
- ☐ Use a smaller aperture (ex: f11, f16, etc...)
- ☐ Get farther away from the subject with the camera
- ☐ Use wider focal length lenses

**If your camera offers face/eye detection, this can work too, but test it first!*

***If a preset white balance doesn't work, use custom white balance*

Printable Cheat Sheet 2

(Use this flowchart to set your exposure settings)



Why These Settings?

Focus Points

When shooting a portrait, you want to guarantee that the eye(s) of your subject in focus.

To do that, you need to select a single focus point and place that point on the subject's eye. This guarantees that the camera will focus on the eye, and the eye only.

Alternatively, if your camera offers a face/eye detection focus mode, you can use that, but I HIGHLY recommend you test this before relying on it to insure it works as you expect it to.

Focus Mode

Portrait subjects are generally still, and as such, you want to use a focus mode that will acquire and lock focus quickly and accurately. For this you want to use single shot focus.

Continuous or tracking focus mode is great for moving subjects, but it's prone to error by its nature. It's best to avoid using it unless your subject is actually moving.

White Balance

White balance affects how the colors in your image look. If you want accurate colors, without ugly color casts, you need to set your white balance for the lighting you're shooting in.

With white balance, you can use a preset, which often will do a fine job. Just choose the preset that matches the lighting you're shooting in.

If however that's failing you, keep a grey card in your bag and use the custom white balance setting, which will insure accurate colors in all but the most difficult of lighting.

Metering Mode

You want your subject exposed properly. To guarantee proper exposure for your subject, you want to make sure the camera is metering off of the subject, and the subject only.

Spot metering is the only way to guarantee this. Just make sure you find out if your camera locks the metering point to the center focus point, or if it allows it to move with your focus point.

Conclusion

I am excited to help you in your your photography journey, and I am really looking forward to seeing what you can do with your camera, but using your camera for amazing portraits is much more than just using a checklist, so if you want to truly master your camera and use it to take amazing photos that will match the vision you see in your mind, check out my [Guide to Shooting in Manual Mode](#).

The Guide expands upon what we've covered in this book, and much more, including:

- How cameras work, including more in depth explanations of ISO, Aperture, and Shutter Speed
- Exactly how to change your ISO, Aperture, and Shutter Speed settings
- An in depth look at exactly how changing ISO, Aperture, and Shutter Speed will change your photos
- Exactly how to get Shallow Depth of Field when you want it
- The secret to my I Am Shooting method, which will help you choose the right settings for the photo you want to take every single time
- How to take sharp photos and avoid those crappy blurry photos we never want to take
- and much more...

[Go check it out](#), and then...

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