

## **Guide to event photography**



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## **Guide to event photography**

Many people, feel “event photography”, consists of fancy gatherings like award shows, corporate fundraisers, weddings, proms, or any manner of so-called black tie affair. But in reality — as far as a photographer should be concerned, — as long as you have a gathering of people doing something you have an event on your hands.

It could be an elementary school fundraiser, a community bake sale, a family reunion, a photography meet-up. It doesn't matter how the people are dressed or whether there are any celebrities in attendance; introducing your camera to a crowd of people represents a lot of interesting possibilities and observations, in terms of both human behavior and photography.

Regardless of whether you're shooting in a very formal atmosphere like a wedding, or a more laid back, casual setting like a birthday party, there are a few universally applicable tips for successfully photographing any event.

### **Key tips for a successful event photo shoot**

#### **Be Prepared for Anything.**

Because anything can happen anytime people are freely mingling amongst one another. Unlike a studio portrait shoot where you, as the photographer, exercise control over the situation, shooting an event is not going to afford you that luxury. Yes, you might get a few posed group shots, but generally speaking, you're going to have to go with the flow; whatever happens...happens. Your job is to be ready to click the shutter.

#### **Capture a New Perspective**

. Create images that alter the way we normally see things. Events are interesting, one way to make interesting photos is to change perspective.

- wide angle shots
- Shoot from up high or from ground level.
- Do not abandon the standard straight-on shot,
- Add variety.

#### **Shoot a Lot.**

Don't shoot haphazardly, hoping to get lucky and get great shots. But with so much going on around you, there's going to be a lot to capture. Given the spontaneous nature of the environment, multiple exposures will be a great asset to you; but catching someone mid-yawn or mid-sneeze or in some other unflattering fashion isn't what you're going for. The idea is to capture the people and the action at their best. You will need observational skills, a quick trigger finger, and maybe a little luck.

**Keep it Simple.**

Don't go in to an event with the mindset of an abstract photographer. Keep things simple in terms of composition and framing. As with books, people tend to read photographs from left to right; action should move similarly in an image whenever possible. And be sure not to crowd your image with too many shapes and colours as this can distract from the importance of your subject. Basic lines and shapes that take the viewer's eye through a natural progression around the photo are all you need.

**Pay Attention.**

At any event, the range of human behavior on display can be astounding. Observe closely. Notice the subtleties, focus on the details, and extract stories. By telling a story in pictures you can convey what an event is all about without even having to express explicitly what the event

. It's easy to look at photos of people of a certain age, dressed a certain way, and conclude that they're attending Comic-Con or some similar event. Photographed the right way — with context and attention to detail — a family reunion is as easily recognized by any viewer.

Details are important while people are indeed the center of attention at a wedding, there are many other things that play a major role in the day — the rings, the flowers, the cake. Make sure to capture the little but meaningful things.

**Be Properly Equipped.**

Unless you're shooting an outdoor event, you should expect the lighting conditions of the location to be less than ideal in terms of both quantity and quality of light. Concert venues, school gymnasiums, hotel conference rooms, wedding reception halls -- they all present something of a challenge. So use your fastest lens and don't be afraid to boost the ISO level. Using a flash shouldn't be your first course of action; some places won't allow it, but even if flash isn't prohibited, using it might be more of a distraction than anything else.

## Equipment you will need

### **A camera,**

Accurate focus under taxing (dark) conditions is paramount, a DSLR is highly recommended.

### **A tripod.**

Given the long shutter speeds required to capture fireworks, a tripod is a must. No two human hands are a suitable stand-in for a tripod in this situation Set up Your Tripod.

*Again, the tripod isn't optional.* If your aim is for sharp images, a stabilized camera is the only way to achieve that when working with long shutter speeds

### **A zoom lens.**

It doesn't have to be a zoom lens, but it will give you far more latitude in terms of experimenting with composition. A fixed focal length lens — wide angle or telephoto — will serve you just as well.

### **A shutter release cable/remote.**

Not an absolute necessity, but a “hands off” approach will further aid in keeping the camera still.

### **Extras that are optional:**

- Bug Spray
- A remote shutter release (reduces the risk of motion blur)
- Water Bottles (need to stay hydrated depending how long you will stay out)
- Snacks (if you plan to be out for a while)
- Flashlight (to see where you are going and see camera buttons and dials)
- Bring a Friend
- Remember to stay safe and use common sense
- Stay vigilant of any wildlife that could possibly be in the area

## **Business Sense**

### **Be Efficient.**

Move around and work the room without being intrusive; be polite and don't ruin anybody's fun. Don't stress over individual shots, don't get hung up on trying to get one particular type of shot. Shoot everyone and everything around you from different angles. Think as you shoot and you'll fall into a groove soon enough.

### **Have Fun.**

Event photography can be hard work. You're on your feet the entire time, operating at a heightened state of alertness, trying to navigate the crowd of people around you and capture interesting images. It is stressful. But there's no reason you can't also have fun while photographing an event. In all likelihood, the event itself will be fun which means the attendees will be having fun — as a photographer you're allowed to have fun, too. Keep a positive outlook and enjoy the quickly unfolding display of human nature before you. You will forget that you are even working. Some of these guidelines will apply more to some events than to others, but the essence of each is such that it can — to one degree or another — have universal application. Event photography can be a bit overwhelming at first, but in time you will be able to synthesize all the various components you need to make photographing not only a breeze, but fun.

## **Photographing Fireworks and Stars**

Anyone who has tried it knows that you can't just point your camera at the sky and end up with a perfect photographic reproduction of the light show above you.

Successfully photographing fireworks involves, a significant shift in how you think about light and exposure. The approach is you need to treat light as a subject instead of treating it as a source of illumination.

Accurate focus under taxing (dark) conditions is critical which means point-and-shoots and mobile devices aren't suited to the task at hand.

### **Scout Out a Prime Location.**

Do the best you can. As you'll have large numbers of people to contend with; get there early to get dibs on the spot you want. Otherwise, just work with what's available to you and don't overthink things. If you can't set up exactly where you'd like, use your lens/tripod combo to help compensate. People aren't the only things you might have to take into consideration

- If it is a windy night, you'll want to position yourself in such a way to avoid smoke from the fireworks blowing towards you.
- while nearby buildings can make for an interesting backdrop,
- Try to avoid too much ambient light, as this will overexpose your shots.
- Safety first: make sure that wherever you set up you're not posing a danger to the people around you. It's dark and there's sure to be someone in the crowd who has had one too many So be vigilant, and if you have someone there with you, use them as a bodyguard of sorts to help keep skyward-looking passersby at a distance.
- To maximize stabilization don't fully extend your tripod's legs and center column.

### **Preparing Your Camera.**

- Remove any filters attached to the lens you're using.
- If your lens has an image stabilization feature, , turn it off. Most forms of image stabilization are not designed to be used in conjunction with a tripod; doing so can actually cause blurry images.
- Switch your lens to manual focus (focus on infinity) and leave it there; autofocus, even with high end gear, is not going to work reliably.
- Use a small aperture; f/5.6 should suffice — it's small enough to keep the background dark while being wide enough to allow for low ISO.
- Set the ISO level to 100. If your camera allows ISO 50, you might even start there.
- Set the shooting mode to bulb B4.
- Frame the Shot. During the first few explosions of light, take a look through the viewfinder to make sure your camera is trained on the right area of the sky.
- Heck that there are no distracting elements in the frame.



## **Manually adjust your camera settings.**

In automatic or any other pre-set, the camera will want to raise the flash, and use a shutter speed that it believes is capable of being handheld, this means that your images will be pitch black dark, and useless. Even in Program, Aperture Priority or Shutter Priority, your camera will want to alter the settings for what it thinks are the best results. You need to know the settings, and force the camera to shoot the exposure that you want it to.

Slow things down. The key to good star photos is using a very slow shutter speed and in your actions. If you rush yourself, you will not get the results you want. Sit down, look at the stars, watch and decide which direction you want to aim the camera.

Make sure you have a good tripod that can securely and safely support the weight of your camera. The last thing you want is for your camera to fall over and smash. A sturdy tripod will also prevent motion blur from any wind that may cause your tripod to vibrate during the long exposures your camera will be capturing.

Avoid star trails. Star trails may be cool, and it could be the look you are going for, but, if you wish to capture an image of the meteor shower, while also still being able to see the Milky Way, you need to watch how long you make your exposure. A good way to avoid star trails and get the results you want is by following the “500 rule“. The simplest explanation of this is if you take 500, divided by the focal length of your lens, and the result is the longest exposure you can achieve before getting star trails.

Forget everything you learned about adjusting the aperture of your lens to get the most depth of field possible. When you are shooting the stars at night, you want the maximum amount of light possible to reach the sensor.

To do this, you need to

- Open up your aperture as wide as possible.
- , set the lens to “infinity” focus and leave it there in manual focus. This will ensure that your lens will capture “infinity” and the stars should be perfectly focused in your images.
- Address your ISO. If you set it too low, your camera will not pick up enough light to capture any detail out of the sky. Too high, and you will create so much noise, there will be 10x more “stars” than what you actually saw while you were out. Depending on the camera you are using, you may be able to get a bit more out of your camera’s ISO capabilities than others.
- The safest place is often about ISO 1600, but, if you are on a full-frame platform, or a specialized low-light camera, you may be able to get away with up to ISO 6400 or higher!

Once you have a wide lens, with a fast aperture, understand your camera’s manual setting and capabilities and a sturdy tripod you are basically ready to go!

**Capturing the Shot.**

- Whether you judge by sight or by sound, try to open the shutter as soon as a new rocket is propelled into the night sky;
- Leave the shutter open until all the brilliant sparkles begin to fade away — usually about 4 seconds.
- Feel free to experiment with different shutter speeds; exposure time is what determines whether you capture single bursts or multiple bursts.

The same principles can be applied to shooting other types of light bursts, such as those associated with welding. The same principles can be applied to shooting other types of light bursts, such as those associated with welding.

## **Stellar Photography Tips**

If you enjoy the stars at all, or are simply just fascinated by them and the beauty they possess, If you have not captured the stars before, or tried with limited success, here a few useful tips to help you make the most of it

Regardless of how expensive or how good you may think your phone may be, they are not capable of capturing images of the night sky

- due to the small size of the sensor,
- the limited ISO range,
- the lack of full manual controls.
- Even if you have an app or alternate method of capturing long exposure images with your phone,
- the noise will be beyond use
- the exposure will have to be so long that you will begin to see star trails.

### **Post Processing Your Shots.**

As always, post processing consists of whatever suits your particular tastes, but a few adjustments that you will likely want to make include

- Boosts to black level, contrast, vibrancy, and sharpness/clarity.
- The more you get right in-camera, the less you will have to do in post.
- A few of the steps involved in photographing fireworks may seem counterintuitive, but it'll all start to make sense eventually.

## **Conclusion**

Regardless of whether you're shooting in a very formal atmosphere like a wedding, or a more laid back, casual setting like a birthday party

### **Be Prepared for Anything.**

Because anything can happen anytime people are freely mingling amongst one another

### **Capture a New Perspective**

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### **Keep it Simple.**

Keep things simple in terms of composition and framing

### **Pay Attention.**

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## **Legal notice**

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## **Bio**

My name is David Wright.

I have many years' experience writing procedures on how to test high tech electronic equipment. Re wrote technical manuals so that the average person could understand them.

Set up numerous training programs to train junior techs.

My documenting skills are excellent paying attention to details satisfying the toughest ISO auditors.

I have enhanced my writing skills by successfully completing a course in Writing for Children's literature.

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I have had a Camera in my Hand since 1965 gone pro In 1999

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I am now at a point in life I would like to share my knowledge with the world and the best way I know how is by Print either electronically or Hard copy paper.

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