

## Introduction to Your Digital Camera

If you have recently acquired a digital camera, the following information will help you become familiar with its basic controls and go through the whole digital camera process.

### Batteries

Digital cameras use up batteries much faster than film cameras. So using rechargeable batteries saves you money. You need two sets of batteries for your camera, one in the camera and a spare charged set as a backup.

There are two types of rechargeable batteries used in most digital cameras, Nickel-Metal Hydride (NiMH) and lithium ion. NiMH batteries come in AA size and different capacities (1600 mAh-2400 mAh). A higher capacity means the battery stores more power and thus lasts longer; however, these higher capacity batteries also cost more. Be aware that NiMH batteries discharge their power if the terminals touch. Do not carry them loose in your camera bag or pocket; always carry the batteries in a case or wrapped with a rubber band to prevent them from going dead.

You also need a battery charger designed for your camera's type of batteries. Some cameras come with a separate charger; some charge batteries in the camera itself. If you are buying a separate charger, look for one that charges in 8 hours or less. Be cautious about purchasing a rapid charger that works in under 2 hours; read the charger instructions carefully.

Rechargeable batteries do not hold their power as long as regular alkaline batteries; they don't have a "shelf life" of years, only days. So be sure your batteries are fully charged before you go out shooting.

### Memory Cards

It is wise to have at least two memory cards to store pictures on. That way you don't have to quit shooting or try to decide which pictures to erase because you've run out of room to store images. Different camera models are designed around different sizes and shapes of memory cards. All of them work the same way to save your photos; no one kind of memory card is "better" than another. Purchase the type of memory card that fits in your digital camera.

The main difference among memory cards is their capacity, measured in megabytes (MB). A larger number of megabytes means you can store more photos on the memory card. It also usually means that the price per megabyte is lower (much like buying the larger box of cereal makes it cheaper per ounce).

**REMEMBER:** *Always turn off* the camera before changing either memory cards or batteries.

## Operating Modes

Your camera has three different ways of working:

- Record/shooting mode
- Playback/review mode
- Setup mode

Each mode allows you to do different things. If you are trying to change a particular camera setting, be sure you are in the correct camera mode for that setting to apply.

There are special controls on the back of a digital camera that are different from a film camera: Find the following on your camera:

- LCD monitor
- LCD/Monitor/DISP button
- Menu and/or Function button
- Arrow buttons or dial
- Set/OK/Enter button

## Using the Menus

Practice changing menu choices by setting the correct date and time on the camera. (If you have already set the date once, follow the directions for changing the date and time.)

1. Turn on the camera.
2. Choose Setup mode.
3. Turn on the LCD monitor.
4. Press the Menu button.
5. Find the entry for Date/Time.
6. Press the Set button to choose it.
7. Press the left/right arrow keys or turn the control dial to select the month, day, year, hour, minutes and date format in turn.
8. Press the up/down arrow keys or turn the control dial to change the number to a larger or smaller one.
9. Press the Set button to save each change.
10. When you are finished press the Menu button.
11. Turn off the LCD monitor.

## Taking Pictures

Turn on the camera and turn the Mode dial to automatic exposure. Set the lens to AF mode, if necessary, and remove the lens cap.

The *optical viewfinder* lets you frame what you want to take a picture of. Inside the viewfinder may be a pattern of little *squares, brackets, parentheses or plus*. Be sure the part of the picture you want in sharp focus falls under one of these symbols. *Zoom* the lens in and out until you have the composition you want. You can also use the LCD monitor on compact digital cameras

as a viewfinder. However, it can be difficult to see in bright sun and often lacks focus symbols like those described above.

Your camera lens has a *minimum focusing distance*, usually 2 ½ to 3 feet. If the lens is closer to your subject than this, it won't focus properly, resulting in a blurry subject and sharp background. Be sure to stand at least an arm's length away from what you are trying to photograph to ensure a sharp picture. Then zoom in if necessary. Compact digital cameras frequently come with a macro focus setting that allows you to be closer than the minimum focusing distance and still get a sharp photo.

The *shutter button* works in two stages. Press the button halfway down to ask the camera to set focus, calculate exposure, adjust the colors, decide whether to fire the flash, and allow for the amount of light available. When the camera is ready, it beeps. Then press the button the rest of the way down to take the photo.

Your picture appears briefly on the LCD panel on the back of the camera right after you take it while the photo is being saved on your memory card. When the flashing light goes out, the image is saved and the camera can take another photo.

**CAUTION:** The LCD monitor is the single biggest drain on your battery power. To make your batteries last longer, use the optical viewfinder to frame your pictures instead of the LCD monitor and set the amount of time for the instant review feature to a low number (e.g. 2-4 seconds).

## Reviewing Pictures

Locate the following controls on the back of the camera:

- Playback button
- Trashcan button
- Magnify button
- Index/Reduce button

To review the pictures stored on your memory card, press the *Playback* button.

Press the right *arrow key* or turn the *control dial* clockwise to see the next picture. Press the left arrow key or turn the control dial counter-clockwise to see the previous picture.

Press the *Magnify* button to zoom in on the details of your picture. Use the arrows or control dial to move around inside the picture. This feature can help you check to see if anyone in a group photo closed their eyes. Press the *Reduce* button to zoom out.

Press the *Index* button to see nine small images at once. A colored square appears around the current picture. Use the arrow keys or control dial to move the square to a different picture. By viewing several photos at once, you can more quickly find the picture you want without having to look at each one individually. To see the photo full size, press the *Magnify* button.



To delete a single picture, press the *Trashcan* button. Press the arrow keys or turn the control dial to select Erase or Delete and then press the Set or OK button to confirm.

To delete *all* the pictures on the memory card, press the *Trashcan* button. Press the arrow keys or turn the control dial to select All and press the Set or OK button. On some cameras you need to press the Menu button, then select Delete from the list to erase all the photos.

**WARNING: *Deleting pictures cannot be undone!*** Be sure you have already safely saved your images on the computer or a CD before doing this.

**CAUTION:** It is difficult to accurately judge focus and exposure on the LCD monitor. It is often better to wait until you can review the pictures on a computer screen before deleting them, unless the photo is obviously no good.

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