

# The Digital Photography

The step-by-step secrets for how to make your photos look like the pros!

Book

PART  
2



Scott Kelby

The world's #1 best-selling digital photography author

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The step-by-step secrets for how to make your photos look like the pros!

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PART  
2



Scott Kelby

# The Digital Photography Book, part 2

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*To Jean A. Kendra  
for coming along with us  
on this crazy ride, and for  
being such a great friend  
to our family for all these years.*

*We love you!*

## Acknowledgments

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## Other Books by Scott Kelby

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*Scott Kelby's 7-Point System for Adobe Photoshop CS3*

*The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Book for Digital Photographers*

*The Photoshop CS5 Book for Digital Photographers*

*The Photoshop Channels Book*

*Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks*

*Photoshop Killer Tips*

*Photoshop Classic Effects*

*The iPod Book*

*InDesign Killer Tips*

*The Digital Photography Book*

*Mac OS X Tiger Killer Tips*

*Getting Started with Your Mac and Mac OS X Tiger*

*The Elements 8 Book for Digital Photographers*

*The iPhone Book*

## About the Author

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**Scott Kelby**

Scott is Editor, Publisher, and co-founder of *Photoshop User* magazine, Editor-in-Chief of *Layers* magazine (the how-to magazine for everything Adobe), and is the host of the top-rated weekly videocast *Photoshop User TV* and the co-host of *D-Town TV*, the weekly videocast for DSLR shooters.

He is President of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP), the trade association for Adobe® Photoshop® users, and he's President of the software training, education, and publishing firm, Kelby Media Group, Inc.

Scott is a photographer, designer, and award-winning author of more than 50 books, including *The Photoshop CS5 Book for Digital Photographers*, *Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks*, *The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Book for Digital Photographers*, *The Photoshop Channels Book*, *Photoshop Classic Effects*, *The iPhone Book*, *The iPod Book*, and *The Digital Photography Book*, volumes 1, 2 & 3.

For six years straight, Scott has been honored with the distinction of being the world's #1 best-selling author of all computer and technology books, across all categories. His books have been translated into dozens of different languages, including Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Korean, Polish, Taiwanese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Swedish, Turkish, and Portuguese, among others, and he is a recipient of the prestigious Benjamin Franklin Award.

Scott is Training Director for the Adobe Photoshop Seminar Tour, and Conference Technical Chair for the Photoshop World Conference & Expo. He's featured in a series of Adobe Photoshop training DVDs and has been training Adobe Photoshop users since 1993.

For more information on Scott, visit his daily blog at [www.scottkelby.com](http://www.scottkelby.com)

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Using Flash Like a Pro</b>	
<i>If You Hate the Way Photos Look with Flash, You're Not Alone</i>	
10 Things You'll Wish You Had Known...	2
... Before Reading This Book!	3
Here Are Those Last Three Things	4
Pop-Up Flash: Use It as a Weapon	5
The Advantages of a Dedicated Flash	6
Get Your Flash Off Your Camera	7
Making Your Flash Wireless	8
Going Wireless (Nikon), Part I	9
Going Wireless (Nikon), Part II	10
Going Wireless (Canon), Part I	11
Going Wireless (Canon), Part II	12
"Drag the Shutter" to See More Background	13
How to Soften the Light from Your Flash	14
Softer Light by Bouncing It	15
Softbox-Quality Light from Your Flash	16
Tip for Shooting Through a Diffuser	17
Putting That Nice Twinkle of Light in the Eyes	18
Why You Might Want a Stand for Your Flash	19
Mounting Flashes Anywhere	20
Rear Sync Rocks (& Why You Should Use It)	21
The Fourth Secret to Pro Flash Results	22
Using Gels (& Why You Need Them)	23
Using Gels to Get That <i>S!</i> Look	24
If You Have to Use Pop-Up Flash, Do This	25
Using a Second Flash	26
Controlling Your Second Flash (Nikon)	27
Controlling Your Second Flash (Canon)	28
How Far Back Can You Stand Using Flash?	29
How to Stand Back Even Farther	30
Controlling Your Light to Add Drama	31
Shooting Sunset Portraits with Flash	32

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter Two</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Building a Studio from Scratch</b>	
<i>It's Much Easier and Less Expensive Than You'd Think</i>	
Studio Backgrounds	36
Using Studio Flash (Called Strobes)	37
Softening Harsh Studio Strobes	38
Why I Prefer Softboxes to Umbrellas	39
What a Speed Ring Does (& Why You Need It)	40
Using a Modeling Light	41
Firing Your Studio Strobe	42
Firing Your Studio Strobe Wirelessly	43
Using Continuous Light Instead	44
Choosing the Size for Your Softbox	45
Why You Really Need to Use a Light Meter	46
How to Use a Light Meter	47
Adding a Hair Light	48
Where to Position Your Hair Light	49
Testing Your Hair Light's Position	50
Keeping Your Hair Light from Spilling	51
Which Mode Should You Shoot In	52
Where to Position Your Main Light	53
Using a Fan for Windblown Effects	54
Want Softer, More Even Light? Feather It!	55
What That Extra Panel in Your Softbox Does	56
Using a Pop-Up Collapsible Background	57
The Least Expensive Extra Light	58
Three Backgrounds for the Price of One	59
Using Off-Camera Flash to Light Backgrounds	60
The Advantage of Shooting Tethered	61
Getting Super-Saturated Background Color	62
Lighting a White Background	63
Which Color Reflector to Use	64
Where to Position a Reflector	65
Reflectors Without an Assistant	66
Seeing the Light from Your Reflector	67
Keep Light from Hitting the Background	68



## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter Three</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Shooting Portraits Like a Pro</b>	
<i>More Tips to Make People Look Their Very Best</i>	
Don't Leave Too Much Headroom	72
Shoot in Portrait Orientation	73
Shooting Portraits? Get a Battery Grip!	74
The "Sun Over Your Shoulder" Rule Is Bogus	75
Shoot Wide and Push in Tight	76
Shoot Profile Shots in Horizontal	77
Shoot Long for More Flattering Portraits	78
Why Diffusers Rock for Outdoor Portraits	79
Making a Better Background for Portraits	80
Trendy Composition Tip	81
Cropping Off the Top of Their Head	82
Group Photos Are Easier Outdoors	83
Tip for Posing Group Portraits	84
Great Tip for Casual Group Shots	85
Don't Light Your Entire Subject Evenly	86
Want Better Portraits? Don't Count Down!	87
Window Light: Where to Position the Subject	88
Window Light: Where You Should Shoot From	89
Window Light: Where to Position the Reflector	90
Six Quick Tips for Fixing Facial Challenges	91
Don't Shoot with Their Shoulders Straight On	92
Making Your Subject Look Slimmer	93
Using a Posing Chair	94
Keeping Your Subject "In the Zone"	95
Avoid Dappled Light	96
Get Couples Really, Really Close	97
Which Color Reflector to Use	98
Shoot Outdoor Portraits Shallow	99
Minimizing Shadows Under the Eyes	100
<b>Chapter Four</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Shooting Landscapes Like a Pro</b>	
<i>More Tips for Creating Stunning Scenic Images</i>	
The Secret to Shooting Sunsets	104
Cutting Reflections in Water	105

## Table of Contents

For Landscapes, You Need a Clear Subject	106
Using Your LCD Monitor Outdoors	107
How to Shoot a Panorama That Works	108
How to Have Photoshop CS3 Put It Together	109
Shoot Fast When Shooting Landscape Panos	110
A Timesaving Pano Trick	111
The Trick for Using a Fisheye Lens	112
When to Shoot Streams	113
Don't Stop Shooting at Sunset	114
How to Shoot Fog	115
Getting Shots of Lightning (Manually)	116
Getting Shots of Lightning (Automatically)	117
A Trick for Shooting Great Rainbows	118
Removing Distracting Junk	119
Where to Focus for Landscape Shots	120
Find the Great Light First	121
How to Shoot on a Gray, Overcast Day	122
A Trick for Great-Looking Flower Shots	123
The Full-Frame Camera Advantage	124

## Chapter Five **127**

### Shooting Weddings Like a Pro

*How to Get Professional Results from Your Next Shoot*

Create a Shot List	128
Have Backups for Everything!	129
Silencing Your Camera's Beep	130
Backlighting Your Bride	131
Don't Change Lenses, Change Cameras	132
Bring a Stepladder for a Higher Vantage Point	133
Why You Want a Second Shooter	134
When to Shoot in RAW	135
Where to Aim Your Flash	136
Shoot in Lower Light Without Raising Your ISO	137
A Recipe for Balanced Flash in Church	138
Compose to Include the Church	139
Add B&W to the Album	140
The Advantage of a Flash Bracket	141
Tip for Posing the Bride	142



## Table of Contents



Keeping Detail in the Bridal Gown	143
Getting More Flashes Per Wedding	144
How to Lessen Noise in Your Photos	145
Tips for Shooting the Bride's Profile	146
Wedding Zoom Effect Made Easy	147
Read David Ziser's <i>Digital ProTalk</i> Blog Daily	148

### **Chapter Six** **151**

#### **Shooting Travel Like a Pro**

*How to Bring Back Photos That Really Make Them Wish They Were There*

In This Case, Less Gear Is More	152
Working People into Your Travel Shots	153
Getting People to Pose	154
What to Shoot on Overcast Days	155
Shooting from Your Hotel Room	156
The Magic Time for Cityscapes	157
Get These Shots Out of the Way First	158
Shooting Famous Landmarks	159
Air Travel with Photo Gear	160
Shoot the Food	161
Get a GPS for Your Digital Camera	162
Shooting Where They Don't Allow Flash	163
Look for High Vantage Points	164
Give Yourself a Theme	165

### **Chapter Seven** **167**

#### **Shooting Macro Like a Pro**

*How to Take Really Captivating Close-Up Photos*

Maximize Your Depth of Field	168
Why You Should Turn Auto-Focus Off	169
Don't Touch That Shutter Button!	170
Which f-Stop Works Best	171
Point-and-Shoot Macro Photography	172

## Table of Contents

A Trick for Visualizing Macro	173
Why You Might Want to Shoot Indoors	174
Buying a Macro Lens	175
Perfect, Even Light for Macro Shots	176
Making Your Lens into a Macro Lens	177

### **Chapter Eight** 179

#### **Pro Tips for Getting Better Photos**

*Tricks of the Trade for Making All Your Shots Look Better*

Which Mode to Shoot In	180
Choosing the Right ISO	181
Which Format to Shoot In (RAW, JPEG, or TIFF)	182
Which JPEG Size to Shoot In	183
WHIMS Will Keep You Out of Trouble	184
How to Lock Focus	185
Moving Your Point of Focus	186
Zooming in Close? Use a High Shutter Speed	187
When It's Okay to Erase Your Memory Card	188
Why You Need to Get in Really Close	189
What to Use Your Histogram For	190
Leave Your Lens Cap Off	191
Removing Spots and Specks After the Fact	192
What Looks Good in Black & White	193
Recompose, Don't "Fix It" in Photoshop	194
Want to Be Taken Seriously? Start Editing	195
Label Your Memory Cards	196
Go Square	197
Tip for Shooting at Night (Long Exposure Noise)	198
The Very Next Book You Should Get	199

### **Chapter Nine** 201

#### **More Photo Recipes to Help You Get "The Shot"**

*The Simple Ingredients to Make It All Come Together*

### **Index** 218





SHUTTER SPEED: 1/160 SEC

F-STOP: F/8

ISO: 100

FOCAL LENGTH: 16mm

PHOTOGRAPHER: SCOTT KELBY

## Chapter Four

# Shooting Landscapes Like a Pro

## More Tips for Creating Stunning Scenic Images



In volume 1 of this book, I had a chapter on shooting landscapes, and it turned out to be one of the most popular chapters in the book. So, when I started on volume 2, I knew right then I would have to include another chapter with even more landscape techniques. And the only way to come up with new landscape techniques is to (you guessed it) shoot more landscapes, and what better place to shoot landscapes than at a landscape photography workshop? So, since I published the last edition of this book, I've taught at photography workshops in beautiful locations like Yosemite National Park, Cape Cod, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Glacier National Park, and then I just did some shooting in Maine this summer, and some other amazing places like Utah's Monument Valley, and the Grand Canyon, and a half-dozen other incredibly scenic spots. But when it's all said and done, do you know what all these places really meant to me? Tax deductions. That's right, because I went to these locations on business (the images will be used by me to teach photography), I get some really juicy write-offs for these trips. For example, you see that photo on the facing page? That's The Wave, which is just outside Page, Arizona, and not only is access to The Wave tightly restricted by the Bureau of Land Management, it was a grueling two-hour hike in scorching 112° desert heat over rocky mountains and hot desert sand, lugging all my camera gear, tripod (and bottles of water), and I have to be honest with you—there were times when I almost gave up, but you know what kept me going? It was the fact that if I didn't get there, and get a decent enough shot to make it into this book, I couldn't write my trip off as a tax deduction. See, I really do care.



## The Secret to Shooting Sunsets

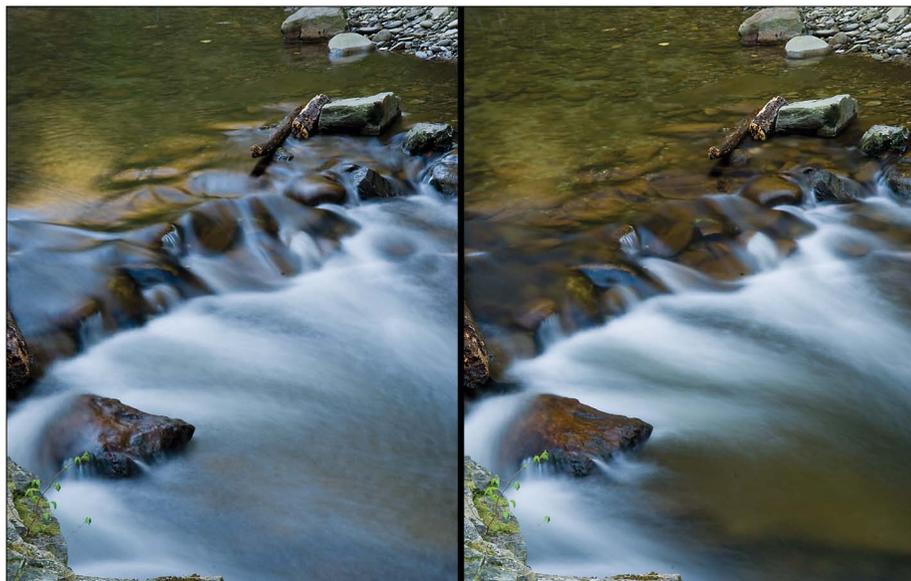


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Because you're shooting into the sun, it can really throw your camera's built-in light meter way off, and what looked so beautiful when you were standing there comes out...well...pretty lame. Luckily, there's a simple trick to getting perfect sunset shots every time. The trick is to aim just above the setting sun itself (but make sure you can't see the sun itself through your viewfinder), then hold your shutter button halfway down, which tells the camera to set the exposure for just what it sees in the viewfinder right now. This gives you a perfect sunset exposure, but don't let go of that shutter button quite yet (keep it held down), then you can move your camera and recompose the shot as you'd like it to look. By keeping that button held down, you've locked in that perfect exposure, and once everything looks good to you, just press the shutter button down the rest of the way and take the shot. You will have nailed the exposure and captured the scene perfectly.



## Cutting Reflections in Water



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If you're shooting streams or lakes, or really anything with water, there's a filter you're going to want to use that does something very important—it removes the reflection of the sky from the water and lets you see through the water. That way, things like rocks below the shore or in a stream, fish in a koi pond, etc., all suddenly appear crystal clear, and that can make for some very compelling images. The thing that surprises most folks is that it's a filter that most photographers use to get bluer skies—a circular polarizer. As I mentioned in volume 1 of this book, a polarizer is indispensable for getting those blue skies, but it's just as important for this overlooked double-duty of cutting reflections. Here's how it works: screw the filter onto your lens, aim at the water in front of you, and then rotate the circular ring at the end of the filter, and as you do, you'll almost magically cut through the reflections and see right through the water, as seen on the right here. It's one of those things you really just have to try to appreciate it, but believe me—you'll love it.



## For Landscapes, You Need a Clear Subject



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One of the things that kills a lot of landscape shots is that there's no clear subject, and for a landscape shot to really work, you have to be able to look at it and explain what you shot in one simple sentence. It's a lighthouse. It's that seagull on the beach. It's that old barn. It's the palm trees on the beach. If you can't explain your landscape shot in a short sentence like that, you don't know what the subject is, and if you don't know, people viewing your image won't know either, and if that happens, the photo just isn't working. Keep this in mind when you're composing your landscape shots, and ask yourself the question, "What's my subject?" If you can't come up with a solid answer immediately, it's time to recompose your shot and find a clear subject. It makes all the difference in the world.



## Using Your LCD Monitor Outdoors

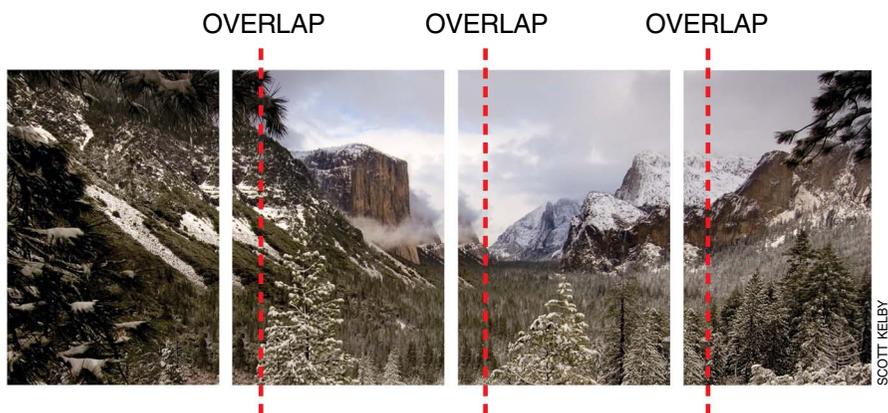


RAFAEL "RC" CONCEPCION

If it's bright outside, you're going to quickly run into one of the biggest challenges of shooting outdoors, and that is you can't see anything on your LCD monitor—the sunlight washes everything out. In fact, it's often so hard to see anything that you might as well turn off your monitor and save your battery, but then your LCD monitor becomes about useless. That's why I've fallen in love with the Hoodman HoodLoupe Professional. You wear this around your neck (when you're shooting outdoors), then you simply hold it up over your LCD monitor and its soft rubber enclosure blocks out the sun and gives you a crystal clear view of your monitor. I carry this with me to all my outdoor shoots, and after you use it even once, you won't want to be without it. (*Note:* Even though it's called a "loupe," it doesn't really magnify your image like a traditional loupe—it just blocks the sun out, but really, that's all we need.) It sells for around \$79 at B&H Photo.

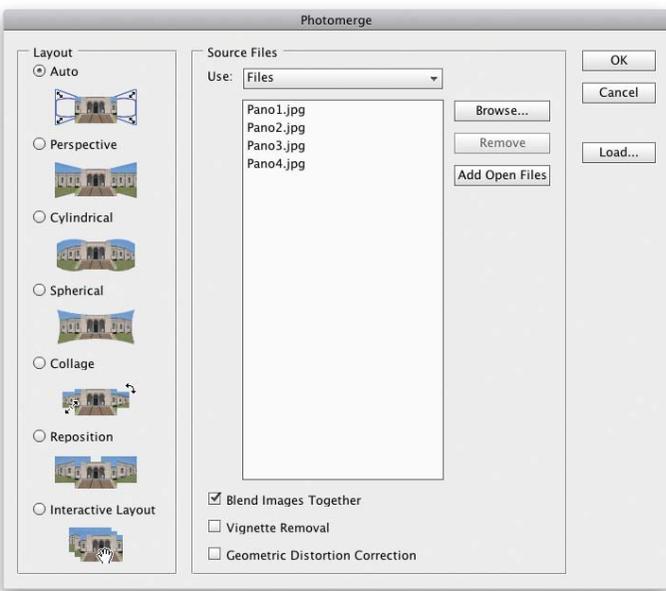


## How to Shoot a Panorama That Works



In volume 1 of this book, I told you some things you needed to do to shoot a wide panoramic image that would actually stitch together seamlessly inside Photoshop. But, that's all changed, because Photoshop's built-in panorama stitching feature (called Photomerge) has reached a point where it's so good that you can toss out half the old rules and loops we used to have to jump through to make a panorama. Now you can handhold your shots (no problem), use program mode or aperture priority (or whatever mode you like), you can leave your white balance set to Auto (or whatever you like), and you can pretty much just point-and-shoot, as long as you do just one thing: overlap each shot by around 20%. So, for example, if you're shooting a wide panorama, you'd start from left to right, taking one shot—let's say there's a tree on the far right side of your frame when you take that shot—then, when you move your camera over to take the next shot, that same tree should now be in the far left of your frame (so you're overlapping by at least 20%, as shown above). That's the key—overlapping—so I take a shot, move to the right, take another, and another (I've shot as few as three photos to make a pano and as many as 22), and Photoshop will put them together into one nice, wide pano for me (simply because I overlapped by around 20%).

## How to Have Photoshop Put It Together



As long as you overlapped each frame of your panorama by 20% or more, Photoshop will not only stitch the photo together seamlessly, it will blend the color of the photos so they're consistent through the whole pano. Once you've taken your overlapping shots, open those images in Photoshop. Then go under the File menu, under Automate, and choose Photomerge. When the dialog above appears, click on the Add Open Files button, leave the Layout (on the left side of the dialog) set to Auto, then click OK. That's it. Sit back and relax because Photoshop will do the rest, and before you know it, you'll see a stunning, wide, perfectly stitched panoramic image.



## Shoot Fast When Shooting Landscape Panos

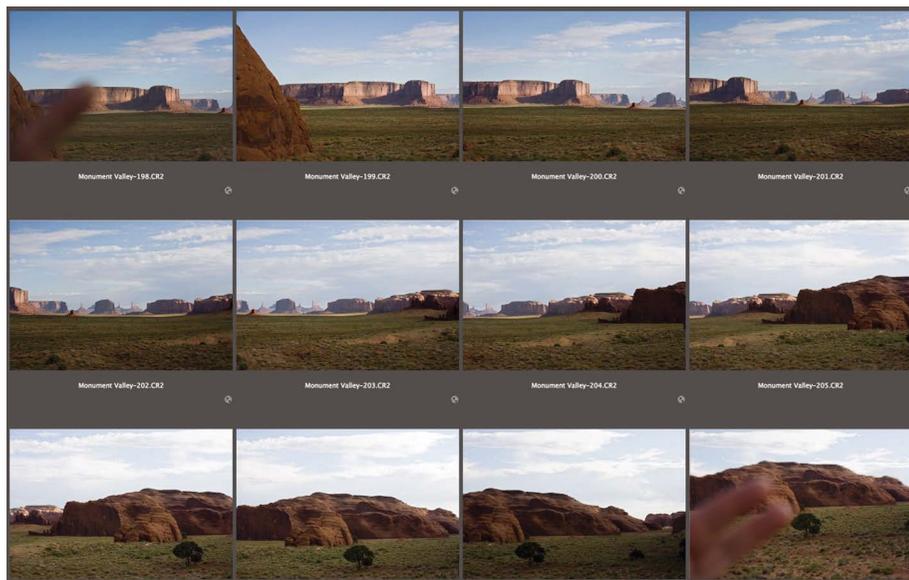


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If there are any clouds in your scene when you're shooting your pano, then you'll want to shoot fairly quickly (with only a second or two between shots), because the clouds may be moving, and if you let them move too much (by taking too long between shots), they won't line up exactly, and then you'll have to spend a bunch of time retouching and cloning them to make it look right. Basically, if you're shooting a seven-photo pano, it should take you only around 10 to 12 seconds to shoot it. It should go like this: shoot, move to the right, shoot, move to the right, shoot, etc. As soon as your camera gets in place for the next frame—shoot. It sounds hard on paper, but it's simple to do in person, and because it takes so little time, you'll wind up shooting more panos, which is a good thing.



## A Timesaving Pano Trick

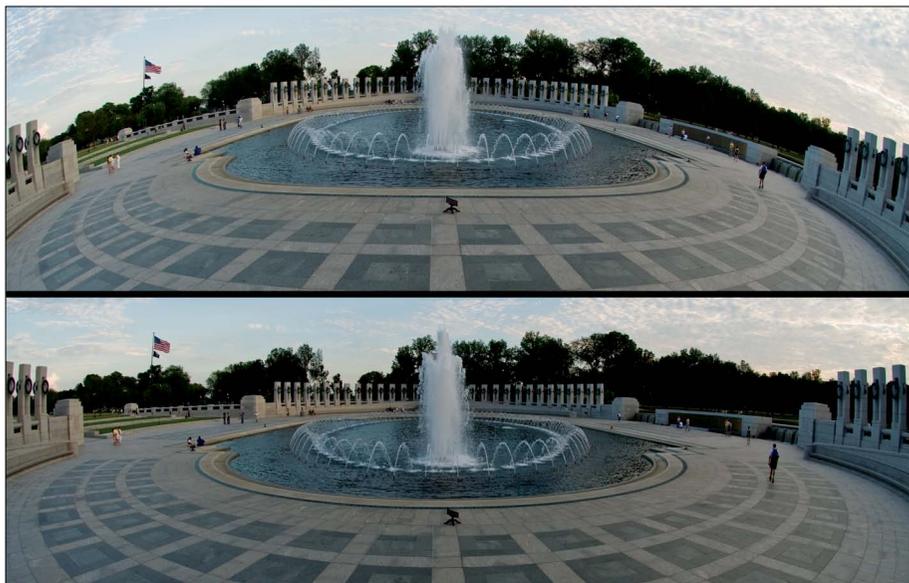


SCOTT KELBY

When you come back in from your shoot, if your shoot included some panos, you're going to quickly find out one of the hidden challenges of shooting panos: finding them. For example, when you open your images in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, or Adobe Bridge, or in iPhoto, etc., you're looking at thumbnails of perhaps hundreds of images from your shoot, and it's a bit of a challenge to figure out where your panos start and end. In fact, numerous times I've been looking through thumbnails from a shoot, and I look at a shot and think, "What I was thinking when I took this one?" Only to find out later it was one frame from a 10-frame pano. Worse yet, if I'm shooting on vacation, it might be a week or more before I get home to look at the images, and I completely forget that there's even a pano included in a particular shoot, because they just don't jump out at you. Luckily, there's a simple trick that makes finding your panos a two-second job: Before you shoot the first frame of your pano, hold your finger up in front of your lens and take a shot (as you see in the first frame above). Now start shooting your pano. Once you finish shooting the last shot of your pano, hold two fingers in front of the camera and take another shot (as seen in the last frame). Now, when you're looking at your photos in a photo browser and you see one finger in your shot, you know there's a pano starting there. So, select all the photos that appear between your one-finger shot and your two-finger shot—that's your pano. Open those in Photoshop and let it stitch them together for you.



## The Trick for Using a Fisheye Lens



SCOTT KELBY

Fisheye lenses are making a big comeback, and they actually can be very cool for a variety of landscape shots—you just don't want your final image to look rounded and distorted, like many fisheye shots you see. You only want a very wide field of view. The trick to doing that is to simply keep the horizon line in the center of your image. This limits the amount of fisheye-like distortion and makes a huge difference in the final look. The best way to test this is to actually tip your camera downward, then back up towards the sky, all while looking through the viewfinder. You'll see the edges of your image distort as you move up and down (as seen in the top image), but you'll notice that as your horizon line gets centered in the image, the fisheye distortion is at its very minimum (like in the bottom image), and it just looks like a really, really wide-angle lens. Give it a try—you'll see what I mean (by the way, this is the only time you really want the horizon line in the center of your image, as you learned in volume 1).



## When to Shoot Streams



SCOTT KELBY

If it's a gray, cloudy, rainy day (I don't mean pouring rain—a light drizzle or soft rain), then head to a local stream, because you're about to make some magic. The overcast, cloudy, rainy sky does two things that make it ideal for shooting streams: (1) it makes the rocks, leaves, and everything sticking out of the stream nice and wet, which looks great in stream photographs, and (2) it makes the scene much darker (and the darker it is while still daylight, the better), which lets you use long shutter speeds, and it's those longer shutter speeds that give the stream that wonderful silky-water effect. Try shooting in aperture priority mode, and set your aperture (f-stop) to  $f/22$  (or a higher number if your lens has it). With this darker sky,  $f/22$  will leave your shutter open long enough to give you that silky-water look. The shot above was taken on a drizzly afternoon where there was literally nothing else to shoot, and shooting at  $f/22$  in the forest, under that dark, cloudy sky, left my shutter open for 13 seconds (in aperture priority mode, you pick the f-stop and then your camera will leave the shutter open for however long it takes to get the right exposure—in this case, I stood there in the gentle rain for 13 seconds. How do you like the way that phrase “gentle rain” made the experience sound? Actually, I was cold and wet, but cold, annoying rain just doesn't paint a pretty picture—but the camera sure captured one).



## Don't Stop Shooting at Sunset



SCOTT KELBY

More and more people have totally embraced the golden rule of landscape photography, which is to only shoot when that wonderful, magical light is available, and that only happens just before and during dawn, and just before and during sunset. However, a lot of folks pack up their gear just a few minutes after the sun has gone down, and the sad part is, they're about to miss what is often the most magical light of all. Around 20 to 30 minutes after sunset, sometimes the clouds turn bright orange, or deep red, or purple, or if you're lucky, a combination of all three, and some of my all-time best shots have been taken after everyone else has gone to dinner. Wait even longer (30 to 45 minutes or more after sunset), and the sky will often turn a vibrant, deep blue (not black, like the night—I'm talking blue—and it happens right before night). It only lasts for a few minutes (10 or 12 minutes usually), but what wonderful twilight photos you can get then. Try this blue twilight-hour shooting when you have a cityscape, or bridge, or other lit object in the background—it makes for a wonderful scene.

### Remember, Your Camera Has Similar Settings

If I'm talking about white balance, and I'm showing the Canon white balance menu, but you're not shooting with a Canon, simply breathe deeply and say to yourself, "It's okay, my [insert your camera name here] also has a white balance setting and it works pretty much like this one." Remember, it's about choosing the right white balance, not exactly which buttons to push on your camera.



## How to Shoot Fog



I love the look of fog or mist in images. To me, it adds mystery and intrigue to the scene, but one unfortunate side effect is that it also is very hard for your camera's built-in light meter to read properly, so you get what you're seeing with your naked eye. Of course, like so many things, there's a trick of the trade that helps you get a good exposure that keeps that foggy look. Start by aiming at the fog itself, and then hold your shutter button halfway down (which tells your camera to take a reading of that area). Now, go to your camera's exposure compensation control and increase the amount of exposure by one stop (basically, what you're doing is disagreeing with what the camera read for the fog, and overriding it by increasing the exposure by one stop). On Nikon cameras, you do this by holding down the exposure compensation button on the top right of the camera (just behind the shutter button), and while you're holding that button down, turn the command dial on the top back of the camera to the right until you see +1 in your camera's viewfinder. On Canon cameras, you'll hold the same button (it's in the same place—behind the shutter button), and then you'll spin the quick control dial (the big one on the back of the camera) to the right until you see +1 in the camera's viewfinder. Just one reminder: when you're done shooting your fog shots, set your exposure compensation back to zero, or you'll be shooting the rest of the day with every shot overexposed by one stop.



## Getting Shots of Lightning (Manually)



©ISTOCKPHOTO/MORITZ VON HACHT

Shots of lightning can be very dramatic, because usually we only see lightning for a fraction of a second. If you can freeze that moment, it makes for a fascinating photo, but like many landscape shots, it requires a certain amount of timing (and luck). Now, before I share how to capture lightning with your camera, I want to make sure you don't capture lightning with your body. Don't stand in the rain, or under a tree, etc. Shoot from a very safe distance (because lightning will see you as a portable lightning rod) and exercise the same caution you would if you weren't a distracted photographer. Now, on to the technique. First, put your camera on a tripod (this is a must). Then, set your mode to bulb (the B setting on some cameras), which leaves the camera's shutter open for as long as you hold down the shutter button. Now, you can't actually press the button on your camera—for this to work properly you need to use either a shutter release cable (a cable that attaches to your camera with a shutter button you hold in your hand) or a wireless shutter release (you can find these for most camera makes and models at B&H Photo). The reason is: any minor vibration while your shutter is open, and the shot will be so blurry, it will be unusable. So, set up on a tripod, compose your shot (aim your camera in an area where you've been seeing lightning), use  $f/8$  as a starting place, make sure your camera is set to bulb mode, then when you see a strike of lightning, press-and-hold the shutter release cable (or wireless) shutter button down and when you see a second strike, wait just a moment and then release the shutter button. It may take you a few tries at first, but you'll get it (hopefully the shot, not the lightning itself).



## Getting Shots of Lightning (Automatically)



©ISTOCKPHOTO/ALLEN JOHNSON

If you try some lightning shots and fall in love with this type of photography, you might want to consider buying a Lightning Trigger (they're not cheap—so make sure you're truly "in love" first). This unit sits on your camera and it has a sensor that detects the bright flash of light from lightning, so it opens the shutter at exactly the right moment and gets the shot for you. In fact, you can pretty much set up your camera, set your camera to shutter priority mode (with your shutter speed anywhere from  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a second), aim in the right direction, sit back with a cool drink, and wait for the magic to happen, knowing that your camera is doing all the hard work for you. Later, when you're showing off your amazing work, there is no obligation (from the manufacturer's point of view) for you to tell the people viewing your work that you used a Lightning Trigger. Hey, it's just another tool in your bag of tricks. Go to [www.lightningtrigger.com](http://www.lightningtrigger.com) for a model that works with most cameras (it runs around \$329 direct from the manufacturer. Hey, I told you it wasn't cheap).



## A Trick for Shooting Great Rainbows



SCOTT KELBY

Want to really bring out the vibrance and color of your shots that have a rainbow in them? Then use a circular polarizer (now we've got three reasons to have a polarizer: [1] bluer skies, [2] cutting the reflections in water, and [3] making your rainbows "pop!"). Just turn the circular end of the filter while you're aimed at the rainbow and stop when the colors look their most vibrant. Easy enough to do, and the results are worth it. Now, beyond that, there's a wonderful tip I learned from my buddy, and renowned landscape photographer, Bill Fortney. Bill says, "If you see a rainbow, drive like the devil until you find something interesting for the rainbow to come down in." He doesn't mean drive until you come to the end of the rainbow, or all you'll get is a shot of that pot of gold. Just drive until you can find a gorge, or a water source, or something—anything interesting—for it to end with. Do those two things and you'll wind up with a remarkable shot.



## Removing Distracting Junk

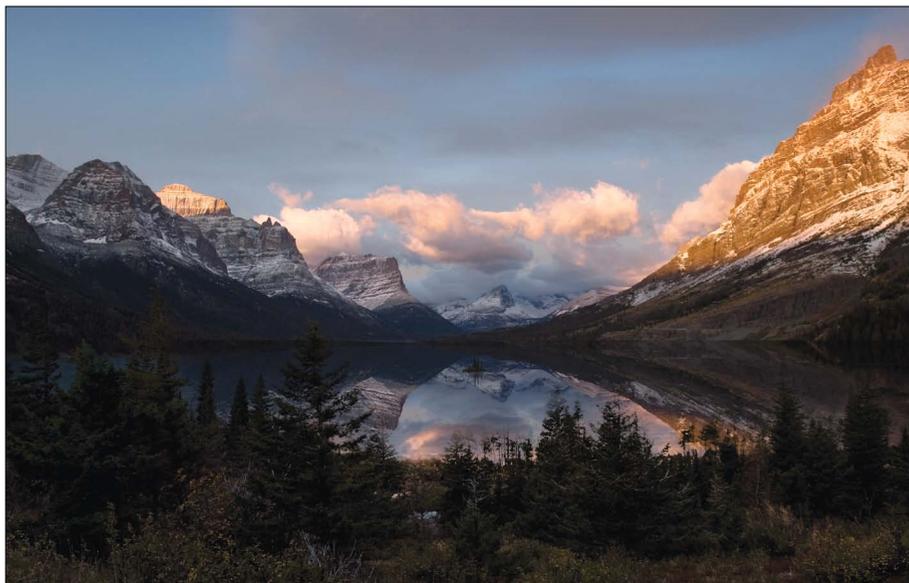


SCOTT KELBY

In some of my landscape photo workshops, we do a class critique of shots from the participants in the workshop (the person who took the image always remains anonymous during the critique, unless we all really love the shot, then they usually stand up and shout, “Hey, I took that!”). Anyway, one thing that always stands out as a spoiler of some otherwise great images is that the image has a distracting element (also known as “some distracting junk”) in the photo. It can be a road sign, a sign on the beach (as you see above), an empty beer can, some telephone wires, or even a tree branch extending into the photo, and I’ve always felt if it doesn’t add to the photo, it takes away from it. There are three different ways you can deal with this “junk” that creeps into your photos: (1) Compose around it. When you’re shooting, be very aware of what’s in your shot, especially in the background. Check all four sides of the frame (top, left side, right side, and bottom) for anything that you’ll wish later wasn’t there, and if you see something, change your composition to eliminate it. (2) Physically remove the distracting element (as long as you’re not a photojournalist). If there’s a beer can, a twig, some trash, etc., pick it up and move it out of the frame (be careful not to damage anything in nature—period!). Or, (3) remove it later in Adobe Photoshop using either the Healing Brush tool, Patch tool, or the Clone Stamp tool. I’ve done a quick video clip for readers of this book to show you how to use these three tools, and you can watch it at [www.kelbytraining.com/books/digphotogv2](http://www.kelbytraining.com/books/digphotogv2).



## Where to Focus for Landscape Shots



SCOTT KELBY

When you're taking a landscape shot, where do you focus your camera's focal point (that red dot in the center of your viewfinder. Well, its default spot is in the center, but you can move that spot, so if you moved yours, get it back to the middle for this)? With landscape shots, the rule is: you want to focus about one-third of the way into the image. This gives you the widest possible range of focus throughout the image. Also, another trick you can use is to shoot big, sweeping landscape shots at  $f/22$ , which gives you the most focus from front to back in your shot.

### Getting the Clearest Landscapes Possible

Have you ever seen a landscape photo that just has incredible clarity throughout the image? I'm not talking about sharpness—I'm talking clarity (like a total lack of haze, or fog, or any other atmospheric effect). Well, there's a technique for getting that amazing clarity, and it's simple: shoot in winter. The air is the clearest during winter time, and it's the perfect time of year to get those amazingly clear shots that you just can't get any other time of year.



## Find the Great Light First



SCOTT KELBY

A few years ago, my friend, and landscape photography hero, Bill Fortney said something that really had an impact on my photography and I'm going to pass it on to you. Bill feels that the single most important thing in a shot of any kind is the quality of light, and that the quality of light is so important that he'll search for great light first, and then once he finds that great light, he'll find a subject—something or somebody to shoot in that wonderful light. Essentially, if the light is great, you'll find a subject, but if you've found a great subject, you have to be very, very lucky for great light to just magically appear. In short: "It's all about the light." Once you get that, everything else falls into place. It's deeper than it sounds.



## How to Shoot on a Gray, Overcast Day



This one might sound kind of obvious when I say it, but I can't tell you how many times I've been out shooting with a group and one or more people in the group has come up and said, "Well, the sky is totally messing up our shoot today." While a gray sky definitely stinks, there is something you can employ for shooting on gray-sky days, and that is simply to compose so little (or none) of that gray sky winds up in your shots. If you go into the shoot knowing that you're going to do your best to avoid seeing the sky in any of your shots, you can then get all of the benefits that a gray sky usually brings, which are colors that are actually fairly saturated and softer shadows throughout your images. You probably won't be able to fully eliminate the sky from your photos, so just compose your shots so the amount of sky you do see is kept to a minimum. This simple technique has saved many a shoot.



## A Trick for Great-Looking Flower Shots



SCOTT KELBY

Want a great quick trick for some interesting-looking flower shots? Get down low, and shoot the flowers so they're backlit, with the sun behind them. The sunlight shining through the translucent petals creates a beautiful effect, and this is a popular trick employed by serious flower shooters that works every time. Don't forget to get down low (so low that you're either shooting straight on or up at the flowers) to get the most from this effect.



## The Full-Frame Camera Advantage



The vast majority of today's digital cameras have a built-in magnification factor because of the size of the sensors in the camera. For example, most Nikon cameras have a 1.4x magnification factor, and what that means is if you put a 100mm lens on a Nikon digital camera (like a D3000, D5000, D90, or D300s), that 100mm lens becomes a 140mm lens because of the sensor's magnification factor. Most Canon cameras have a 1.6x magnification (like the Rebel XS, Rebel XSi, Rebel T1i, Rebel T2i, 50D, and 7D), which makes a 200mm lens more like a 320mm lens. Many sports shooters, birders, and a host of other photographers who routinely use zoom and telephoto lenses love this added reach from digital sensors, but when it comes to the wide-angle lenses landscape photographers use, it can somewhat work against us. For example, a 12mm wide-angle Nikon lens becomes a less-wide 16mm lens. For Canon shooters, a 14mm wide-angle lens becomes a 22mm equivalent. That's why some landscape photographers are drooling over the new full-frame digital cameras, like Nikon's D3s or Canon's 5D Mark II (shown above), both of which are full-frame, and when you put a 12mm on the Nikon, it's that same, beautifully wide 12mm aspect ratio we used to enjoy back in the film days. When you put a 14mm on a Canon 5D Mark II, it's the same thing—a real 14mm with no extra magnification. I'm not saying you need to switch, or that you bought the wrong camera, I just want you to know what all the fuss is about for landscape photographers and other people who "go wide."

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## Index

### A

- about this book, 2–4
- air travel, 160
- aperture priority mode, 180
- auto-focus
  - moving the AF point, 186
  - turning off, 169

### B

- B&H Photo store, 66
- backgrounds
  - black, 62
  - collapsible, 57
  - color saturated, 62
  - lighting, 59, 60, 63
  - macro photography, 173
  - out-of-focus, 99
  - portrait, 80, 99
  - studio, 36, 57, 59
  - white, 59, 63
- backlight
  - bridal portraits and, 131
  - flower photos and, 123
  - outdoor portraits and, 75
- battery grips, 74
- battery packs, 144
- beams of light, 212
- Black, Dave, 24
- black backgrounds, 62
- black flags, 68
- black reflectors, 64, 68
- black-and-white images
  - shots conducive to, 193
  - wedding photos converted to, 140
- bounce card, 18
- bouncing light, 15, 90
- bridal portraits
  - backlighting, 131
  - bridal gown in, 143
  - photo recipe example, 209
  - posing the bride, 142
  - profile shots, 146
  - See also wedding photos
- business cards, 139

### C

- Camera Raw, 135
- cameras. See digital cameras
- Canon wireless flash, 11–12, 28
- Capa, Robert, 189
- Captured by the Light* (Ziser), 148
- casual group shots, 85
- chairs for portraits, 94
- cityscapes, 157
- clamshell lighting, 210
- clipped highlights, 190
- close-up lens attachment, 175
- close-up photography. See macro photography
- collapsible background, 57
- colors
  - background, 62
  - reflector, 64, 98
- composing photos, 194
  - portraits, 81, 82
  - wedding pictures, 139
- continuous light, 44
- couple portraits, 97
- Cross, Stephanie, 205

### D

- Dantzig, Stephen, 67
- dappled light, 96
- dedicated flash, 6
- depth of field
  - macro photography and, 168, 171
  - outdoor portraits and, 99
- diffusion dome, 14
- diffusion panel, 16–17, 79
- digital cameras
  - full-frame, 124
  - orientation of, 73, 77
  - silencing beep on, 130
- Digital ProTalk* blog, 148
- directional light, 7
- drag-the-shutter technique, 13

### E

- editing your photos, 195
- egg crate grid, 51



equipment. *See* gear recommendations

exposure compensation, 115, 190

extension tubes, 177

eyes

minimizing shadows under, 100

twinkle added to, 18

## F

facial fixes, 91

famous landmarks, 158–159

fans, studio, 54

fast lenses, 137, 163

feathering light, 55

filters, polarizer, 105, 118

fish-eye lenses, 112

flash, 1–32

battery pack, 144

bounce card, 18

dedicated, 6

distance for using, 29–30

drag-the-shutter technique, 13

dramatic light from, 31

gear recommendations, 6

gels used with, 23–24, 25, 62

ISO adjustment for, 30

lowering power of, 22, 25

mounting, 20

natural looking, 22

off-camera, 7, 60

pop-up, 5, 25

Rear Sync, 21, 25

ring, 176

second units, 26–28

snoot for, 31

softening, 14–17, 25

stand for, 19

studio, 37–43

sunset portraits and, 32

wedding photos and, 136, 138, 141

wireless, 8–12, 26–28

*See also* studio strobes

flash bracket, 141

flash head, 41

flower photography, 123

focusing tips

landscape shots, 120

locking focus, 185

macro shots, 169

moving point of focus, 186

out-of-focus backgrounds, 99

fog or mist photography, 115

food photography, 161, 203

Fortney, Bill, 118, 121

f-stops

for blurring backgrounds, 99

for low light conditions, 137, 163

for macro photography, 171

for silky-water effect, 113

full-frame cameras, 124

## G

gear recommendations, 3

battery packs, 144

dedicated flash, 6

hair lights, 48

light meters, 46

ring flash, 176

softboxes, 45

studio strobes, 37

gels

how to use, 23, 25, 62

*S/* look with, 24

gold reflectors, 64, 98

GPS units, 162

gray skies, 122, 155

Greenwell, Andy, 50

group portraits, 83–85

casual shots, 85

clustering people for, 85

outdoor light for, 83

posing people for, 84

## H

hair

blowing, 54

lighting, 48–51

hair lights, 48–51

gear recommendations, 48

positioning, 49

preventing spill from, 51

testing position of, 50

headroom in portraits, 72, 82

high vantage points, 164

highlight clipping, 190

histogram, 190

Hobby, David, 17, 25

Hoodman HoodLoupe Professional, 107



**horizontal orientation**, 73, 77, 146  
**hotel room views**, 156

## I

**image size setting**, 183  
**image stabilization**, 168  
**ISO**

choosing correct, 181  
flash distance and, 30  
light meters and, 47

## J

**JPEG mode**, 135, 182, 183  
**Justin clamp**, 19, 20, 26

## K

**kelbytraining.com website**, 2

## L

**landmark photography**, 158–159  
**Landscape orientation**, 73  
**landscape photography**, 103–124  
choosing subjects for, 106  
distracting elements in, 119  
fisheye lenses for, 112  
flowers and, 123  
focusing for, 120  
fog and mist, 115  
full-frame cameras and, 124  
LCD monitors and, 107  
lightning and, 116–117  
overcast days and, 122  
panoramas, 108–111  
photo recipes, 202, 207  
quality of light in, 121  
rainbows and, 118  
removing “junk” from, 119  
streams, 105, 113  
sunsets, 104, 114  
twilight images, 114  
water reflections, 105  
winter time, 120  
**LCD monitor accessory**, 107  
**lens cap**, 191  
**lens compression**, 78

## lenses

extension tubes, 177  
fisheye, 112  
macro, 175  
super-fast, 137, 163  
telephoto, 78  
wide-angle, 76

## light

beams of, 212  
bouncing, 15, 90  
continuous, 44  
dappled, 96  
directional, 7  
dramatic, 31  
feathering, 55  
hair, 48–51  
modeling, 41  
outdoor, 75, 79, 96  
positioning, 53  
softening, 14–17  
strobe, 37–43  
window, 88–90

*See also flash*

**light meters**, 46–47

## lighting

background, 59, 60, 63  
landscape photography, 121  
macro photography, 176  
portrait, 75, 79, 86, 88–90

## lightning

automatic shots of, 117  
manually shooting, 116

**Lightning Trigger**, 117

**Lightroom**, 135, 162

**locking focus**, 185

**Long Exposure Noise Reduction**  
feature, 198

**loop lighting pattern**, 53

## M

**macro photography**, 167–177  
backgrounds for, 173  
depth of field in, 168, 171  
equipment for, 175  
extension tubes for, 177  
focusing for, 169, 170  
f-stop used for, 171  
indoor setup for, 174  
lighting for, 176  
magnifying glass for, 173



- photo recipes, 203, 215
- point-and-shoot, 172
- shutter button and, 170
- tripods used for, 168
- water drops in, 175
- magnification factor**, 124
- magnifying glass**, 173
- manual mode**, 52, 180
- McNally, Joe**, 76, 199
- memory cards**
  - erasing, 188
  - labeling, 196
- Merriam, Doug**, 159
- modeling light**, 41
- Moment It Clicks, The*** (McNally), 199
- monolight**, 41
- music for travel photos**, 164

## N

- nighttime photography**, 198
- Nikon wireless flash**, 9–10, 27
- noise reduction**, 145, 198
- Noiseware Professional**, 145

## O

- off-camera flash**, 7, 60
- outdoor portraits**
  - depth of field for, 99
  - group photos as, 83
  - lighting for, 75, 79, 96
- out-of-focus backgrounds**, 99
- overcast days**
  - landscape photos and, 122
  - travel photos and, 155

## P

- panoramas**, 108–111
  - shooting photos for, 108, 110
  - stitching in Photoshop, 108, 109
  - time issues when shooting, 110
  - trick for finding, 111
- people**
  - moving in close to, 189
  - in travel photos, 153–154
- photo recipes**, 201–217
- Photomerge feature**, 108, 109

## Photoshop

- black & white conversions, 140
- distracting “junk” removal, 119
- noise reduction plug-in, 145
- panorama stitching, 108, 109
- spot/speck removal, 192
- white balance adjustments, 135

## Photoshop Elements

, 140

## Photoshop Lightroom

, 135, 162

## point-and-shoot macro photography

, 172

## polarizer filter

, 105, 118

## pop-up flash

, 5, 25

## Portrait orientation

, 73

## portraits

, 71–100

- angled shots, 81
- backgrounds for, 80, 99
- battery grips for, 74
- bridal, 131, 142, 143, 146
- camera orientation for, 73, 77
- composition of, 81, 82
- couple, 97
- dappled light in, 96
- depth of field for, 99
- diffusers for, 79
- eye shadows in, 100
- facial fixes, 91
- group, 83–85
- headroom in, 72, 82
- lighting, 75, 79, 86, 88–90
- moving in close for, 189
- natural-looking, 87
- outdoor, 75, 79, 83, 96, 99
- photo recipes, 204–206, 208–210, 217
- profile view, 77, 146
- reflectors for, 90, 98, 100
- seated subjects in, 94
- shoulder angle in, 92
- slimming subjects in, 93
- sunlight and, 75, 79, 96
- sunset photos and, 32
- talking to subjects of, 95
- telephoto lenses for, 78
- uneven light for, 86
- wide-angle lens for, 76
- window light for, 88–90

## product shots

, 214

## profiles

- bridal portraits as, 146
- horizontal orientation for, 77, 146

## program mode

, 180



## Q

quality settings, 183  
Quantum flash units, 8

## R

racked out lens, 78  
rainbow shots, 118  
RAW mode, 135, 182  
Rear Sync flash, 21, 25  
recipes for photos, 201–217  
reflectors, 64–68

- black flag, 68
- colors of, 64, 98
- extra light from, 58
- portraits and, 90, 98, 100
- positioning, 65
- stands for, 66
- testing, 67

ring flash, 176

## S

seamless background paper, 36  
seated portraits, 94  
second flash units, 26–28  
self-timer, 170  
shooting tethered, 61  
shoulder angle, 92  
shutter priority mode, 180  
shutter release cable, 170  
shutter speed, 187  
silver reflectors, 58, 64, 98  
slimming subjects, 93  
snoot for flash, 31  
*Softbox Lighting Techniques for Professional Photographers* (Dantzig), 67  
softboxes

- flash, 16
- gear recommendations, 45
- internal panel of, 56
- size of, 45
- strobe, 38

softening light, 14–17

- bouncing light for, 15
- diffusion dome for, 14
- diffusion panel for, 16–17
- Soft Screen for, 25
- softboxes for, 16, 38

speed rings, 40  
*Sports Illustrated* look, 24  
spot/speck removal, 192  
square photos, 197  
stands

- background, 36
- flash, 19
- reflector, 66

stepladders, 133  
Story, Derrick, 142, 196  
streams, photos of, 113  
strobes. *See* studio strobes  
*Strobist* website, 17  
studio, 35–68

- backgrounds in, 36, 57, 59, 62–63
- black flags in, 68
- continuous light in, 44
- fans used in, 54
- feathered light in, 55
- flash lighting in, 37–43
- hair lights in, 48–51
- light meters used in, 46–47
- manual mode used in, 52
- off-camera flash in, 60
- positioning lights in, 53
- reflectors in, 58, 64–68
- resource on lighting in, 67
- shooting tethered in, 61
- softboxes in, 38, 45, 56

studio strobes, 37–43

- firing, 42–43
- gear recommendations, 37
- modeling light and, 41
- off-camera flash vs., 37
- positioning, 53
- softboxes for, 38
- speed rings for, 40
- types of, 41
- umbrellas for, 39
- wireless, 43

*See also* flash  
sunlight, 75, 79, 96  
sunsets

- flash portraits and, 32
- secret to shooting, 104
- twilight photos and, 114

super-fast lenses, 137, 163  
sync cords, 7, 43

## T

- telephoto lenses**, 78, 175
- tethered shooting**, 61
- theme assignments**, 165
- TIFF mode**, 182
- travel photos**, 151–165
  - background music for, 164
  - batteries for, 160
  - cityscapes, 157
  - famous landmarks, 158–159
  - food shots, 161
  - GPS units for, 162
  - high vantage points for, 164
  - hotel room view for, 156
  - minimizing gear for, 152, 160
  - overcast days and, 155
  - people included in, 153–154
  - shots of yourself in, 162
  - super-fast lenses for, 163
  - theme assignments for, 165
- tripods**
  - camera bags used as, 163
  - macro photography and, 168
  - travel photography and, 152
- twilight photos**, 114

## U

- umbrellas**, 39

## V

- vertical orientation**, 73, 74
- vertical shutter button**, 74
- vibration reduction**, 168
- video training clips**
  - black & white conversions, 140
  - Canon wireless flash setup, 12
  - distracting “junk” removal, 119
  - Nikon wireless flash setup, 10
  - See also* **Web resources**

## W

- water**
  - filtering reflections on, 105
  - macro photography and, 175
  - shooting streams of, 113
- weather**
  - landscape photos and, 113, 122
  - travel photos and, 155

## Web resources

- about this book, 2
  - Digital ProTalk* blog, 148
  - gear recommendations, 3
  - Quantum flash info, 8
  - Strobist* website, 17
  - travel photography, 153
  - wedding shot lists, 128
  - See also* **video training clips**
  - wedding photos**, 127–148
    - backlighting, 131
    - battery packs for, 144
    - black-and-white, 140
    - bridal portraits, 131, 142, 143, 146
    - church setting in, 139
    - creating a shot list, 128
    - equipment backups for, 129, 144
    - flash used for, 136, 138, 141
    - info for professionals, 148
    - low light lens for, 137
    - outdoor wedding tip, 145
    - RAW mode used for, 135
    - removing noise from, 145
    - second shooter of, 134
    - silencing camera beep for, 130
    - stepladder for, 133
    - two-camera strategy, 132
    - “unofficial” shooters of, 142
    - zoom effect, 147
  - WHIMS acronym**, 184
  - white backgrounds**, 59, 63
  - white balance setting**, 114, 135
  - white reflectors**, 64
  - wide-angle lenses**, 76
  - windblown effects**, 54
  - window light**, 88–90
  - winter time photos**, 120
  - wireless flash**, 8–12
    - Canon camera, 11–12, 28
    - channel settings, 12
    - Nikon camera, 9–10, 27
    - second flash units, 26–28
    - studio strobes, 43
- Z**
- Ziser, David**, 139, 142, 143, 146, 148
  - zoom effect**, 147
  - Zucker, Monte**, 90