

QUICK TIPS

Understanding Exposure



A picture is nothing more than a recording of light. There are three elements that go into getting the right amount of light recorded.

The three elements are:

ISO – How sensitive is the camera to light?

Aperture - the size of the opening in the lens

Shutter Speed - the amount of time that the shutter is open

All three work together to get the right amount of light into the camera. If you decrease one or two of the values, then the remaining value(s) must be increased to compensate. Likewise for increasing one or more values.

The window analogy

Imagine your camera is like a window with shutters that open and close.

Aperture is the size of the window. If it's bigger more light gets through and the room is brighter.

Shutter Speed is the amount of time that the shutters of the window are open. The longer you leave them open the more that comes in.

ISO is how sensitive your eyes are to the light.

Now imagine that you're inside the room and are wearing sunglasses (hopefully this isn't too much of a stretch). Your eyes become desensitized to the light that comes in (it's like a low ISO). So in our example, the room may seem too dark.

There are a number of ways of getting the right amount of light in the room. You could increase the time that the shutters are open (decrease shutter speed), you could increase the size of the window (increase aperture) or you could take off your sunglasses (make the ISO larger).

While it's not a perfect analogy, you get the idea. A good photo needs the right amount of light, and these three elements are how we control that light.