

Designed and written by

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The creators and
administrators of
the



Shutter Speed Priority

This information sheet is designed as a supplement to the GC2 Photo Club video on the same subject. It is provided to help reinforce learning and as a reference document for you to keep.



Figure 1

The Shutter Speed on your camera controls the amount of time, or how long, light is passed through the lens and onto your film or camera's sensor.

By controlling the duration of time that a camera is recording light, or images, we can either freeze motion, as in Figure 1, or blur motion for artistic and creative effect.

For example if an object is moving quickly, such as a car or sports person, and we want to record them sharply, we can set a fast shutter speed, such as $1/1000^{\text{th}}$ of a second to freeze the motion.

If we want to blur that motion in order to emphasize the speed and catch the essence of a fast moving object, such as a dancer spinning or to catch the atmosphere of moving water, as in Figure 2, we can use a slow shutter speed such as $1/2$ a second or more. For example, the image in Figure 2 was shot with a shutter speed of 6 seconds.



Figure 2



Figure 3

You can also pan your camera to keep a fast moving object sharp and blur the background at the same time, such as the image shown in Figure 3. A shutter speed of about $1/30^{\text{th}}$ of a second or $1/15^{\text{th}}$ of a second, as in this case, is a good starting point.

Panning means that you track an object with your camera as it moves across your view and gently pressing your shutter as you move the camera to follow your subject.

If I manually set the shutter speed on the large format lens in Figure 4 to 500^{th} of a second, the shutter only allows light to pass through it for that split second. When I set the shutter speed to 1 second, you can see clearly in the video how the shutter opens and closes for that duration.



Figure 4

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The benefit of using shutter speed priority is that you can make creative decisions about how you would like to record motion and then let your camera set an aperture and ISO setting to give you the correct exposure. This allows you to concentrate on capturing the movement in the image as you see it creatively, without having worry about the technicalities of taking light readings and manually adjusting the aperture.



Figure 5

You set your DSLR to Shutter Speed Priority mode (shown on the video for a typical Canon and Nikon - please refer to your cameras manual for setting shutter priority and shutter speed on your camera) and then select the required shutter speed, for instance 1/500th of second.

To sum up, by setting the shutter speed on your camera, you can control the way your image records motion - either as a blur or frozen motion.

By setting the shutter speed together with the cameras aperture, you can control the amount of time that light is passed through your lens and the amount of light that is passed onto your sensor, thus controlling the exposure for any given ISO.



Figure 6



Figure 7

By setting shutter speed priority the camera will automatically give you the correct exposure by setting the aperture that is needed for the ISO that has been set on your camera.

To understand more about ISO, aperture and manually controlling exposure, see our video tutorials on these subjects.

We hope you found this information sheet useful, visit our web site at www.gc2photoclub.com for more tutorials and information.

Don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter for the latest updates.

Bye for now

Geoff and Gary