

Point and Shoot Photography Tips

by Lee Agnew

I have a folder full of articles cut out of magazines and printed from internet sources. I cut them out because my memory just can't keep up with all the things I would like to learn to do. Keeping them in magazines doesn't work. I tried that, but I could never remember which magazine has the article I want. So I started cutting them out and saving them in a manila folder. The following are excerpts from a PC Magazine article from 2003:

Zoom In Close: There's no better way to zoom than to use your feet. If you want a strong composition it's usually a good idea to fill the frame with your subject. The best way to fill the frame is to move in close with the camera. Sometimes, of course, you just can't get close enough and that's when a good optical zoom can be a camera's best feature.



Zoom in with your feet to fill the frame

Close Ups: For close up shots of small objects, the best composition is often to have the subject fill the frame. The way to do that is to use your camera's "Macro" function. On some Point and Shoot cameras the Macro button is defined by an icon of a flower. On other cameras, you may have to go into the menu to make the change. All cameras have a minimum focusing distance in normal mode, usually between a few inches and a few feet, so when you need

to get closer you have to adjust the way the lens focuses. Macro mode makes it easy to get tack sharp photos when your camera is really close to the subject.



Use the Macro setting for close-ups

Know where to Meter: It's easy to turn on the camera and press the shutter release, especially when "Auto-Everything" delivers pictures that are almost always perfect. There are situations though where the camera can be fooled and that's when knowing how to meter will really pay off. For example, when pointing the camera at a slightly backlit portrait subject (such as indoors near a window), or against a bright sky, the camera may see the bright backlight and misinterpret it as the overall illumination. This can lead to an under exposed subject, since the camera thought there was plenty of light. Thankfully, because of the camera's LCD display, it's easy to see the effects of a metering change as you make them.

Most cameras will lock focus and exposure when you press and hold the shutter button half-way down. Move close to your subject, aim the camera at the subject eliminating all the background light in your view finder, press the shutter release button half-way, and hold it while you re-aim your camera to properly frame your shot. Now press the shutter release the rest of the way and you'll have a good exposure. Sometimes the "Back Light" setting on your camera will do the trick, but don't depend on it to work every time.



Aim at the subject to properly expose, then re-aim for composition

Reset the Resolution: The cost of media cards is no longer a major consideration to taking pictures. A few years ago a 256 MB card was \$60.00 or more. Today you can get a good quality 2 GB card for much less than that. There is no longer a good reason to have your camera's resolution set to give you as many pictures as possible on a media card. Reset the camera to give you the highest quality it will provide. Get a bigger card if necessary, but if you want to take good pictures you need all the help you can get. If you want to send pictures by E mail the lesser resolution is fine, but you can't get a good print from a low resolution image. So take a better picture and when you want to send it by E mail, lower the size of the image in the computer and give it another name. Now you have a high res photo for making good prints and a low res pic for sending to your friends.