

Do you have any idea how many people come into our stores after vacations, weddings, graduations, etc. and lament that their camera(s) did not work, and that they got no pictures? You'd never believe how many! So, here are some ways to check out your own cameras (when we're not around, that is).

First, look at the camera carefully without doing everything else. Look for cracks in the body, scuff marks, gouges and scratches on optical areas (the lens and viewfinder window[s]). Many people don't realize their camera has been impacted because they never take the time to *really* look at it. Next, open the battery compartment and look around. If there is a battery, take it out to make sure there is no leakage or sweating. Look carefully at the contacts, both in the camera and on the battery. (If there is leakage DO NOT throw the battery away – the battery manufacturer's warranty against leakage may pay for a very expensive camera repair.) If there is leakage on the battery, but not in the camera, do not put the battery back in, but replace it with a new battery. If there is leakage in the camera, try to clean the leakage with a pencil or typewriter (white) eraser. If you have a fiberglass pencil, use it. Do not use anything coarser! Do not spray or put any liquids (such as WD-40) into the battery chamber! Rub the contacts repeatedly using firm, but not hard strokes, and blow out the residue. Most cameras made in the past 15 years or so are electrical, so battery power is essential.

Turn the camera on and see that it is getting power from the battery(s). If it is, things are looking pretty good. Assuming the camera is empty, open the film chamber. If there is any sand, salt, hair, etc., it must be removed. Use tweezers for the hairs, and either canned air or a blower brush to clean out the rest. Again, use no liquids. **Cleanliness is essential!** If you have a 35mm SLR be very very certain not to touch the shutter blades or curtain. You can damage your camera just by touching them.

In compact cameras, look to see if there are any fingerprints or smudges on the rear element of the lens. Lens cleaning technique will be outlined below. Knowing the glass is clean, close the back. With SLR cameras with interchangeable lenses, you must remove the lens to see if it is clean.

If any of your outer lens surfaces are not clean, clean them with a microfiber cloth designed for photographic lenses. Never use "Sight Savers" designed for eyeglasses and are silicon treated, which is bad for camera or telescope lenses. Use vapor from your breath to moisten and warm any gunk on the lens's surface. Don't use your fingernail or a pencil point. Never use lens tissue that is flat or dry. If you have a filter over your lens, you should not have to clean the lens, only the filter.

Now look through your viewfinder. If you see anything that looks like dust, hairs, specks, etc. don't try to clean them. These are inside your viewfinder system where they are out of the light's path on the way to the film. They will not show

up on your pictures. They are especially annoying in SLR cameras, but cannot affect your pictures. Let this dirt annoy you, it's expensive to have a repair shop clean them out. Don't try to do it yourself.

If you have an older, mechanical SLR, with an automatic exposure system, such as a Nikon FE, Canon AE-1, Minolta XD-11, etc., make certain the lens or camera dial is set to the automatic position. In many cameras, especially Canons, Nikons and Konicas, the auto setting on the lens barrel is right next to the "22" number. Leaving it on the "22" (or other number) will cause the camera to use its smallest lens opening at all times, yielding pictures that are very under-exposed (dark), fuzzy, or both.

This entire procedure should take 5 – 10 minutes, and save many memories for you. You never know when your next picture will be a masterpiece.

It's that time of the year again. Shortly after Labor Day Kodak begins its Holiday Photo Greeting Card promotion. Don't wait until the last minute to order yours – you'll pay too much. Order early, save money, and address them at your leisure instead of being cramped for time after Thanksgiving.

Equipment News:

Epson has lowered the price of its entry-level photo realistic 6 color printer. The Model #780 does prints up to 8½ x 11" as well as standard documents for only \$99!

Konica, Pentax, and Minox have shipped their new pocket sized digital cameras for the holiday season. The Konica is our first to use Multimedia cards for its memory, making it especially compact. They are all easy to use. Olympus has shipped their Model C-4040, a 4+ megapixel camera for under \$1000.00

Fuji has announced discontinuation of several films, including most 100 speed color print films. The days of super sharpness are coming to an end, folks.

It's a good thing we elected not to have a field trip with Nikon this month. Last week our Nikon representative (Patty to those who met her on prior trips) resigned, and there would not have been anyone to run the trip or bring the cameras, lenses & accessories. Serendipity.

Our websites went down last week – big time. Parts of them are back up. In the next few days our newly revamped sites will go online. So, if things look strange for a few days... You'll find them at www.madisonphoto.com and www.photosummit.com.

Several of you have mentioned that you like these newsletters, and find them informative. Thank you very much for your kind words. It is really appreciated!

Jerry & Lynne