

MadisonPhotoPlus the Photo Summit **e-Photo Newsletter**

August, 2007

The following articles have appeared online recently, and cover noteworthy topics. This month's ePHOTO newsletter will be an aggregate of helpful articles which have caught your editor's eye. This was published on www.cameraporn.net on May 23, 2007:

Hot and Sticky is not Always Sexy... Humidity and Digital SLR Photography

Being that I'm currently a mere 10.5 degrees north of the equator, this seems to be the proper time to discuss how humidity can be a major pain when shooting in tropical regions if you don't recognize the issue and plan ahead. I'm sure I'm not the only one whose run out from a nicely air conditioned room with my camera in hand to get a quick shot, and all I came back with was a hazy, blurry mess or a missed opportunity...

Considering that before residing in the arid city of Los Angeles, I was a long-time resident of the muggy and sticky Miami, Florida, and though when shooting in wonderfully dry southern California, humidity is an afterthought, my current trip to Trinidad has renewed my bad memories of shooting in humidity before I learned from my mistakes. To be perfectly clear, I must say humidity in and of itself, is not the biggest problem. The problem lies with the extreme temperature changes that are frequently experienced when moving from the comfort of an air conditioned building or vehicle to the disgustingly sticky outdoor environment of a place like Trinidad or Miami.

Please keep in mind I bring you this information out of experiences....well...mistakes I've made and not as an expert in shooting in humid environments. That said, I present you 5 tips to avoid the humidity monster:

1. Plan ahead for severe temperature and humidity changes

Keep your gear as close to the temperature you will be shooting the night before. If that's not possible, allow at least twenty minutes to an hour for your gear to come up to temperature before shooting. Though an hour might seem a bit much to some, keep in mind that the internal parts of the camera are sealed.....If you neglect this step, you will find your lens completely unusable for a decent period of time, with fogged internal and external glass elements.

2. Never, EVER try to clean your sensor if your camera has not fully adjusted to temperature

Duh! I know this is a no-brainer for most, but I made the mistake in my early days of DSLR, so it's worth sharing for all the other newbies out there. I bring this out of learning from a big mistake I made during a trip to Tobago last year. Not only did I remove the lens, I tried to use a blower to remove some dust from the sensor. OOPS! I thought the camera was up to temperature, because the front of the lens was no longer fogging up, (this was prior to me learning to follow #1) but being that the internal parts of the camera had been sealed with the lens, they were still significantly cooler. When I switched the camera to sensor cleaning mode, the sensor and everything inside the locked-up mirror were quickly coated with a layer of condensation. This is BAD. I not only let moisture into the most critical area of my camera, which electronics and sensors tend not to like, I was out of commission until I could equalize the temperature and get the moisture to dry. Luckily, I was able to get into some air conditioning and let the camera sit for a while. Afterwards, the condensation left some streaks on the sensor plate, so I then had to take the time to swab the sensor. All in all, I was on hold for over an hour.

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3. Be more careful than normal when switching lenses

Although I am extremely careful to avoid dust entering the camera any time i swap lenses, in humid environments I'm pretty obsessive about it. Why? Because in humid environments dust and debris tends to be sticky, meaning if debris get inside the camera body and makes its way to the sensor, a hand blower or brush likely will not remove it all. This means you'll have to swab your sensor, a more intrusive cleaning method than most people are comfortable with. Another issue with swabbing when traveling, is that the highly flammable, ethanol-based cleaning solution you must use is a big no-no on planes, therefore you either have to buy it on location, which can be a pain, or do without.

4. Keep your kit cool and dry when not in use

In humid environments, especially if you live in one, this is key. Aside from the fact that electronics do not like moisture, long term moisture exposure to your lenses can lead to lens mold and fungus. Yuck. If this happens, you will have to have your lenses sent away to be professionally cleaned, and there is always a chance it can return. To avoid this store your camera and lenses in as dry an environment as possible and throw a couple of those silica gel packets or dry rice into your bags.

5. After shooting in humidity, let your gear "dry out"

After a trip to a tropical area, or a lengthy shoot in any humid environment, I try to let everything dry out. My method is simple. Prior to storing everything away in a closet or bag, i let the gear sit out in a cool, air conditioned environment to insure that any remaining moisture left over from the humidity has enough time to dry, usually just to be safe, I let it go for a day or two.

Well I guess that's about it, hopefully it has been useful and my past mistakes have been able to give some insight in what not to do in humid environments with expensive camera gear. If you have a humidity story to share, or any additional insight, let us know in the comments

The following Ivan Bereger article was published in *the New York Times* on June , 2007

Wading Through Formats: JPEG, TIFF and Friends

A DIGITAL camera can save photos in a file format called JPEG, and sometimes in other formats like TIFF or RAW. A computer's photo software offers even more choices. While the options can seem bewildering, it pays to know something about them. Format choice can make a big difference, depending on what you want to do with your pictures.

For most people, JPEG is a good format. It's universal, compatible with all digital cameras, all photo software and all commercial print services. It also makes compact files that don't hog space on a camera's memory card or take long to download.

To make these files compact, though, the JPEG format compresses image data by discarding picture details (a process known as "lossy" compression), starting with ones that people notice least. So if you edit your JPEGs by cropping them, correcting their color, eliminating red-eye in flash photos, sharpening them or making other changes, more details will be thrown away each time you save a new version. Nothing is lost if you open a JPEG file and close it

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without resaving.

Another format, PNG, can use lossy compression like JPEG or “lossless” compression that does not lose any data. The size of PNG files varies with the software and compression settings you use. Microsoft has marketed its Windows Media Photo format, renamed HD Photo, as another alternative to JPEG. The company says it can make files half as big as JPEGs while preserving more image information. Many photo programs support PNG, while Windows Vista supports HD Photo, though no cameras use either yet.

Because JPEG doesn’t capture all the nuances, many cameras also let you save photos in a higher-quality format, called TIFF. A TIFF file holds more information than a JPEG. And because most TIFFs are uncompressed and the rest use “lossless” compression, you can edit a TIFF, save it and make more changes on the version you saved without losing any quality.

The catch is the file size. A TIFF file can be 4 to 10 times as large as a JPEG made from the same image. That means not only that fewer shots fit on a memory card, but also there’s a longer wait between shots while the camera processes them. Photographers who plan to edit and enhance their pictures often use the TIFF format, or make their edits on TIFF copies of their pristine JPEGs.

These formats all process the image data to reflect camera settings like exposure, white balance, color intensity and contrast. Which parts of the picture register as white, for example, will depend on the camera’s white-balance setting, as well as the subject and the actual illumination. If the settings were right, the image is ready to use as soon as you download it from your camera; if they were wrong, you can adjust the picture in your computer.

Many cameras can also store images as RAW files, which aren’t processed. Instead, they capture all the data, unchanged, that is picked up by your camera’s image sensor, with a list of what the camera’s settings were. When you download the images to your computer, you get a second chance to edit those settings; all you’re changing is the settings, not the picture data.

Once you have told your computer how you want these images processed, it will save the results in one of the standard formats, usually TIFF. This is a nondestructive process — unless you delete it, you will still have the RAW original, which you can re-edit any time.

Some cameras can save your shots in RAW and JPEG simultaneously, which lets you use the more convenient JPEG version for most shots and RAW on shots you want to edit.

But every camera maker has its own RAW format, sometimes more than one. Adobe has developed a RAW format, DNG (for Digital Negative), that it hopes will become universal. (It’s free to camera and software makers, and already used by several.) Because the format is open source, users can be confident that software to view and edit their old DNG images will always be available.

Two editing programs, Apple’s Aperture and Adobe’s Photoshop Lightroom, also work nondestructively. Like RAW and DNG, they add a packet of instructions to each image without actually changing the original. Your editing commands affect the image that you see on your computer monitor or print, and are incorporated into copies you export to JPEG, TIFF or other processed files. You can also copy the unmodified image and your editing instructions to a DNG.

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Even more flexible is the system used by image-editing programs like Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, Paint Shop Pro and PhotoImpact. They let you save edited images in a proprietary format (PSD, PSP and UFO, respectively) that includes the original, unaltered, image plus a list of all the changes you have made to it. You can undo the changes one by one, if you like. Not all programs can read other programs' proprietary formats, which can be a problem if you change software or send the files to someone else.

Coming Events

This coming October 7th, Madison PhotoPlus and the Photo Summit, in conjunction with Nikon, will hold 2 photo field trips. In conjunction with the Madison Historical Society and the Summit Historical Society, we will present a photographic walking tour of each community.

This is still in the planning stage. The exact routes being covered are being discussed with each Historical Society and our staffs. Nikon will be supplying cameras, lenses and flashes for your use. Memory cards will also be supplied. There will be a charge for the day, with a portion of the proceeds being donated to each community's Society. We are also planning a contest involving photos taken that day.

Newsletter readers will receive the first notice of this event via email, and will have the first opportunity to sign up for the trip. We do not have more information or sign up sheets yet, so please save your questions and don't call until you receive an additional notice.

Eric is almost finished with the syllabus for our fall B.I.P.S. offerings. As soon as the workshops and classes are finalized, you will also get an email with that announcement. If there are topics you would like to see covered, please contact Eric at kaz@madisonphoto.com.

The summer classes are winding down, with the following sessions having openings:

Using Nikon Digital SLRs (August 8)
Introduction to Digital Photography (August 15)
Sports Photography (August 29)

Of course we took photos during July. We hope you enjoy those on the next page. See you Soon!

Lynne & Jerry

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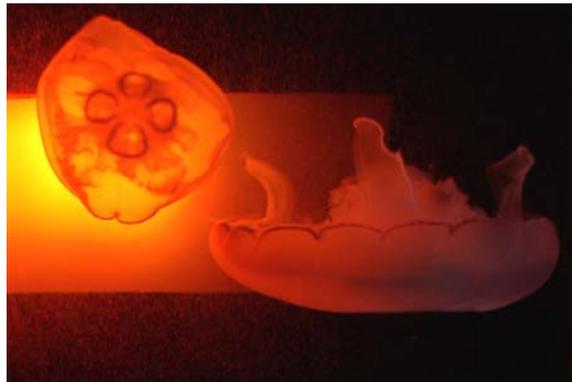
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