



Point, Shoot, Submit

A BYO-Camera Workshop for Easy Event Photography

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Tip!

You don't need expensive software such as Photoshop to resize your photos. Free downloads, such as IrfanView, give you basic resizing capabilities and photo editing tools.

"Point and shoot" digital cameras are affordable and easy to use, and while they may not be the ideal camera to photograph your events, they get the job done. Armed with default settings designed to capture the widest range of images, you can take it out of the box and start clicking.

In the average setting, you'll get an average photo. Make a few simple adjustments, however, and your photos will be ready for prime-time publication.

Image Size

The default setting for image size tends to be "medium." This makes a good 4x6 print and also allows a large number of photos to be saved on the camera's memory card.

Publications prefer a larger photo size, also referred to as a high resolution photo. This gives them a higher quality photo and allows them to crop as needed. Switch the photo size to "large" or "extra fine" and they will have what they need.

You may need to resize the photo to send to a publication for their use. As a rule of thumb, if a picture is going to be printed, resize the photo to have a resolution of 300. If the photo is going to be used online, a resolution of 72 is appropriate.

ISO Setting

The ISO setting determines the camera's sensitivity to light levels. The default setting is usually "automatic", which will generally work but can be improved.

Rule of thumb is the higher the light, the lower the ISO, and vice versa. Outdoor photos on a sunny day are best at 100 ISO. Indoor photos should be at least 400 ISO, and sometimes 800 ISO is better so the background isn't black.

Flash

In the default mode, the camera decides when to set off the flash. When you are taking event photos inside, find out how to force the camera to flash every time. Flash is only useful up to a distance of about 10 feet, so any pictures taken from further away will not see the benefit.

Point, Shoot, Submit

Before you head off to the event, be sure to check key things. First, make sure your battery is charged. A spare battery is a good investment - bring it along, too. Next, check the memory card to make sure you have enough memory capacity for the photos you plan to take.

Holding the Camera

Point and shoot cameras are easy to carry in a purse or pocket, and they can be challenging to hold without putting your finger in front of the flash or lens. Experiment with your camera to find the grip that feels solid, but leaves the lens and flash clear.

Aiming the Camera

Decide what you are taking a picture of and get just that in the frame. Leave a little room around the edges to make cropping easy - but stay relatively tight on your subject.

Ideally, the camera should be parallel to your subject. If you tilt your camera down, the subject is squashed - if you tilt your camera back, the subject is stretched. The effect is less obvious in horizontal shots and more obvious in vertical shots. With vertical shots, you might need to drop to one knee and keep the camera parallel.

Be Ready to Shoot Before You Approach

Think about what you are going to do before you approach your subject. Have your camera already set - make sure the camera is "awake". Pre-focus by pointing the camera at something from approximately the same distance as the shot you are going to take.

Learn your "Modes"

Modes are categories of photos for which settings are automatically selected to optimize the exposure of a certain type of picture. Usually found in the menu or dial, the names vary from camera to camera.

Examples of modes might be:

- Auto
- Sports
- Close-up
- Night-time
- Children, etc.

Learn what these modes can do, and how they might translate for a different photo. For example, "sports" mode might also work for a fashion show; "night" might work for a party.

Tip!

When photographing guests on their way into an event, have a spot in mind with an attractive background.

Tip!

Make sure attendees take off their nametags before you take their picture.

Tip!

Close-up modes work great for pictures of food and centerpieces.