

Chapter 1 : How To "Read" Light In Photography - Part 1 | Fstoppers

The narrower the source, the harder the light. A broad light source lessens shadows, reduces contrast, suppresses texture. A narrow light source does the opposite. This is because, with a broad source, light rays hit your subject from more directions, which tends to fill in shadows and give more even illumination to the scene.

Importance of Lighting in Photography Written by Photo Staff March 25, Photography lighting can be the difference between a breathtaking photo and a terrible one. The science behind photography lighting is really what photographers use each time they take a picture, whether they know it or not. Without good lighting, a photograph can be grainy and blurred. Professional photographers understand the relationship between their camera settings and the light that they have available. Different kinds of light can create different effects in a photograph. If a photographer knows how the light will change the picture, he or she can create the exact photo that they want.

Sunlight at Different Times of Day Natural sunlight is one of the best light sources a photographer can use. On a clear day it is bright and covers everything equally from the same direction. Photos taken during the middle of a sunny day will have sharp, bright colors and plenty of detail. Sunlight creates a different effect during the first few hours of the day and the last few hours before it sets. When the sun is low on the horizon it shines through the atmosphere at a different angle. Photographs taken in early morning and late afternoon will be permeated with a soft and hazy atmosphere because of the quality of the sunlight.

Low Light Situations Taking photographs in low light can be a challenge. If you use a typical flash, the subject of the photo may be too washed out because of the harsh lighting. Taking a photo without a flash in low light can give you a grainy image that is blurry and filled with indistinct objects. When you know you need to take photos in a dimly lit room or at night, you can change the settings on your camera to compensate for the dim lighting as much as possible. Set the ISO to a higher setting so that the camera shutter will be able to take advantage of any available light in the room. If possible, mount your camera on a tripod to avoid any camera movement. Before you take your pictures, though, you should understand that it is very difficult to get sharp images in dim light.

What Reflected Light Does to a Photograph Reflected light is a tool that photographers use to avoid glare in photos. When the light shines directly on someone or something, there is always a chance that there will be a bright "hot spot" in the picture. Reflected lighting is created by shining the light onto a white wall or board so that the light bounces toward your subject and covers the subject in an even, diffused lighting. You can adjust the angle of the light so that it creates the exact look that you want. Moving the light closer and further away from your subject will change the quality of the shadows and create a different atmosphere for your photograph. Many photographers who specialize in taking portraits prefer the control that they have when they use reflected and diffused lighting instead of sunlight.

Chapter 2 : The Basics of Light for Photography - Pinkbike

Now that you know how to read your light meter, you need to understand how the different settings on your camera affect the light itself. Aperture is an adjustable opening inside your camera lens that adjusts the amount of light that can travel through the lens.

Understanding a little bit about it can really help to improve the quality of our photos and videos. Natural Light is what allows us to see. It is what shapes and colors every object we can see with our eyes, it creates depth, mood, and color. The objective of this tutorial is to learn how to see light and use it to our advantage and create interesting and exciting photos. At the end of this tutorial you should have a basic understanding of the following fundamentals of light: Exposure - how bright a scene is and how it affects our image. Quality - how focused or diffuse light is. Color - the color of the light in an image. Direction - where is the light coming from? Highlight - the brightest part of the image. Shadow - the darkest part of the image. Contrast - The difference between the bright part of an image and the dark part of an image. How we see When we see an object we are seeing the light reflected off of it. Sunlight contains light of every color and when it illuminates an object we are seeing certain colors of light reflected by that object that then travel into our eyes. Red objects reflect red light, and green objects reflect green light. Dark objects reflect less light than bright objects. For the purposes of this lesson the most important thing we need to know is that what we see is created by light reflecting off of everything and traveling into our eyes. A photograph is created by capturing the light that is reflecting off of our scene and traveling into our camera, where it is captured by film or a digital sensor. There is at least one entire field of physics devoted to the study of light and how it behaves, however this type of in depth study is beyond the scope of this tutorial.

Basics of Light 1. Exposure

Exposure is the overall brightness or darkness of a scene. A neutral or normal exposure is one which creates an image that looks similar to how we see it with our eyes. A typical scene during the day has about 10 stops of light in it, and the average high end DSLR captures between 5 and 7 stops. Our eyes can take in somewhere around 20 stops. What this means for us is that what we see in real life is not what we get in the camera or on the screen or in print. I exposed the first shot for the flash, but the ambient light was really dark so in the second shot I extended the shutter speed a fair bit to brighten up the ambient light and also opened up the aperture a bit to brighten the flash. Both of these photos have exactly the same lighting, the only difference is the camera settings. Sequence strip of exposures showing my Nikon D3s range over 9 stops. The light is identical in all photos, all that changed was the shutter speed.

Quality

As well as being light or dark, light can also be soft or hard. This is primarily a function of how large the light source is compared to the subject. A large light source close to the subject creates a very soft light with soft shadows if any, the light wraps around the subject. A small bright light far from our subject creates a hard light with hard well defined shadows. Fog and cloud also do a lot to diffuse and soften sunlight. While a single ray of sunlight in the forest can be fairly hard, full late afternoon sun in a brighter location snow, concrete parking lot, dusty dirt lot is a lot softer. Part of this has to do with the angle the sunlight travels through the atmosphere. In the morning and evening the sun is at a low angle and travels through significantly more of the atmosphere than it does at mid day, this helps to make early and late light a lot softer than midday light. Evening light in developed areas of the world is also softer than morning light as air pollution builds during the day and helps to diffuse the sunlight further. This pollution normally dissipates a lot at night when temperatures are cooler and the world is asleep, making morning light crisper and cleaner.

Crisp early morning light 3. Color

Sunlight varies in color greatly and this color is measured as temperature in degrees Kelvin. Normal daylight film used to be calibrated at about 5000K which produced a nice image in the middle of the day but was much warmer towards the red side in the morning and evening. The diffusing effect of the atmosphere also colors daylight, and normally daylight can vary from a warm 3000K in the late evening to a cool 6000K on a cloudy day. Tungsten lightbulbs put out a light that is really orange at around 2700K and fluorescent bulbs can now vary greatly in color. Note that when you are adjusting the color of a RAW photo with the color slider it makes changes opposite to what you would think initially. Moving the slider to a lower number makes images appear cooler, while a higher number makes

images appear warmer. This photo was taken less than 3 or 4 minutes before the sun disappeared. Mike Kinrade, almost dragging bars in Utah 4. Direction Light travels in a direction for the most part. It may be hard or soft, but the sun is a single light source and that light travels in straight lines radiating out from it. It may bounce and reflect off of things, but try to keep in mind that it has direction. Because of this things can look quite different depending on which direction we view them from, they can be front lit, back lit, or side lit. And everything in between. Remember that this applies to all light sources as well and not just the sun. This image is a front lit shot of the exact same trail at almost the same time of day as the back lit shot below This back lit shot has a lot more punch to it than the front lit shot above. Same trail, almost the same time Highlight The highlight is the brightest part of an image. When we are dealing with a single light source this is normally a reflective surface or object facing the light source. Shadow Shadow is the darkest part of an image. When we are dealing with a single light source this is normally a non-reflective object or surface facing away from the light source or in the shadow of something else. This image has a lot going on as far as light. The backlit dust is really bright, almost too blown out in spots, but the rider in the trees is a complete silhouette. Solid clipped shadow, almost no detail at all except for some bits reflected off his helmet and goggles The blue areas are clipped shadows with no details, the red areas clipped highlights. Contrast Contrast in an image is the measurement of the difference between the highlights and the shadows. If there is a lot of range between the two there is very little contrast, if there is little range between the two then an image is said to have high contrast. Images shot on a cloudy day usually are low in contrast, and images shot in the bright sun are generally high in contrast. Things to consider when shooting 1. See the light - What does it look like? Learn to see what the light actually looks like before you shoot. Take a look around, is it bright or dark? Where is the light coming from? Are there shadows and highlights? How is the contrast? Take the time to evaluate the scene you are shooting and look at it from different angles, not just for composition but for light as well. Look at large areas of light and shadow and see if you can use them compositionally. Plants and greenery and other translucent objects often look better backlit. Control the light - Can you make the light work for you? Can you use a scrim to block unwanted light, or a reflector to add some light? The easiest way is usually to choose a different time of day when the light works for you. Light between two trees or buildings for example. This is late day sunlight, shining between two posts Read up on previous tutorials.

Chapter 3 : See How Photographers Use Creative Lighting Techniques To Capture The Perfect Shot

The use of light in a photograph can be the deciding factor of whether that picture will be spectacular or terrible. When you use your camera to automatically chose aperture and shutter speed, what your camera is actually doing is using the built in light meter and measuring how much light is being reflected to the camera.

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Chapter 4 : Photography Lighting: how to take control of everything from natural light to flash | TechRadar

Photography Lighting for Beginners: 3 Lighting Essentials For Creating Incredible Images. Summary: The word photography actually stems from Greek roots that mean "writing with light." In order to truly take control over your photography, you have to understand light and how it works.

Lighting is an essential building block of photography. Learning how to use light to your advantage can transform an ordinary photo into an extraordinary one. Many photographers begin their journey working with natural light and I firmly believe this is a great place to start. But depending on the circumstance, artificial light may be needed. When it comes to artificial light, there are many options to choose from. Speedlights, strobe lights and continuous lights are all at your disposal, not to mention the various light modifiers. The Difference Between Speedlights, Strobe Lights and Continuous Lights Speedlights are portable, battery operated lights that can attach to most cameras through the hot shoe mount. They can also be used off-camera by attaching them to a light stand and then activating them via wireless triggers. Strobes are larger and typically more powerful lights that are attached to light stands and activated through wireless triggers. Both speedlights and strobe lights emit a powerful burst of light when fired. Continuous lights emit light the entire time you have them on. Years ago these lights were commonly used in video production. I remember those days. Thankfully, continuous lights are now more powerful, more portable, and cool to the touch. When to Use Continuous Lights Continuous lights are often overlooked in the world of photography. In these cases, continuous lights may be permitted. Even if flash photography is allowed, you may still opt for continuous lights to avoid being a distraction. Continuous lights are also a viable option for portrait photography, especially for beginners. Because of this, they often take more time to set up and adjust. With continuous lights, you can see the lighting situation in real time, which helps you learn to see the best lighting situations and achieve your aesthetic goal. They generally emit an even stream of light onto your subject, allowing you to set them up once and then forget them. And many strobe lights need a moment to power up between shoots. Those few seconds could be the difference between a perfect shot and a mediocre one. Here are five photography tips to make using continuous lights easier and more effective. To ensure you get a nice light source, opt for more powerful lights. I recommend an LED with at least bulbs. Better to have more than you need in these situations. Soften the light We want a soft light on our subject to avoid unwanted harsh shadows. Continuous lighting is no different. Whether you use softboxes or umbrellas is up to you. I like using softboxes or scrims. Check the color temperature Unlike most photography lights, some continuous lights let you change color temperature. Turn off all other available lighting Because color temperature is so important, chances are the current lighting in the space will interfere and mix the color temperatures. The two front lights will be your key and fill, while the back light can serve as a hair light or be used to separate your subject from the background. Ready to Try Continuous Lights? The results may surprise you.

Chapter 5 : How to Use Light in Photography: 11 Steps (with Pictures)

Rembrandt lighting is an effective common example of this lighting type. Lighting sourced from the back of your subject gives an alternative effect. This time most of the light is hitting the side of the subject making it brighter, which creates a more distinctive and dramatic photo.

Main sources[edit] The main sources of light for photography are: Daylight, which varies with the weather and the time of day. Different techniques are necessary to take best advantage of, say, brilliant sunshine, and an overcast evening. Continuous artificial light , which may be normal lighting, or produced by special photoflood lights. The properties of different light sources vary; household incandescent lighting , fluorescent lighting , sodium discharge street lighting , etc. A bright and very brief photographic flash from a single position usually very close to the camera or, in a studio environment, from several. For special purposes lightning , electric sparks, fireworks , moonlight, or other light sources may be exploited. Perceptual cause and effect[edit] Lighting creates the 2D pattern of contrast the brain interprets to recognize 3D objects in photographs. In an in-person viewing experience the brain relies on stereoscopic vision, parallax, shifting focal in addition to the clues created by the highlight and shadow patterns the light on the object creates. When viewing a photo the brain tries to match the patterns of contrast and color it seen to those other sensory memories. The baseline for what seems "normal" in lighting is the direction and character of natural and artificial sources and the context provided by other clues. In the example the photographer added a warming gel on the flash of the woman standing in a field in late afternoon light. The viewer knows the time of day from the angle of the shadows and neutral color balance would have seemed odd in that context. But similarly the image of the woman if masked out and put on a plain white or neutral gray background would seem abnormally yellow. The goal in all photographs is not to create an impression of normality. But as with magic knowing what the audience normally expects to see required to pull off a lighting strategy which fools the brain or creates an other than normal impression. Light direction relative to the camera can make a round ball appear to be a flat disk or a sphere. The position of highlights and direction and length of shadows will provide other clues to shape and outdoors the time of day. The tone of the shadows on an object or provide contextual clues about the time of day or environment and by inference based on personal experience the mood of person. A skilled photographer can manipulate how a viewer is likely to react to the content of a photo by manipulating the lighting. Outdoors that can require changing location, waiting for the ideal time of day or in some cases the ideal time of year for the lighting to create the desired impression in the photo or manipulating the natural lighting by using reflectors or flash. In a studio setting there is no limit to options for lighting objects to ether make them look "seen by eye" normal or surreal as the goals for the photograph require. Mistakes less skilled photographer often make when mixing flash and natural lighting is not matching with the flash the highlight and shadow clues seen in the ambient lit background. The natural light baseline[edit] The sun hitting the front of objects facing the camera acts as "key" light creating highlights and casting shadows. We are able to see detail in the shadows because the sunlight reflects off water vapor and dust the atmosphere creating omni-directional "fill". In open shade 3D objects will also usually cast shadows because the downward vector of skylight is usually stronger than the sideways vectors illuminating the sides. When a photographer puts the sun behind an object its role in the lighting strategy changes from modeling the front of the object to one of defining its outline and creating the impression of physical separation and 3D space a frontally illuminated scene lacks. To differentiate that role from that of "key" modeling when a modeling source moves behind the object it is typically called a "rim" or "accent" light. In natural lighting the tone of the background is influenced by its reflective qualities and whether it is illuminated by the sun directly or skylight indirectly. So either the sun or sky, or a combination of both can be the "background" lighting. Creating natural looking artificial lighting[edit] Artificial lighting strategies which seem most "natural" duplicate the same contrast pattern clues seen on 3D objects is various lighting conditions. There are two significant differences between natural lighting and artificial sources. One is the character of the fill and the other is more rapid fall-off in intensity. In nature skylight fill is omni-directional and usually brighter from above. That

"wrap around" characteristic is difficult to duplicate with a directional artificial source. In a fixed studio location it is possible to bounce fill backwards off a white wall to flood the space with indirect reflected light similar to how the sun reflects off the atmosphere. Another way is to supplement a fill source from the direction of the camera with reflectors placed near the sides of the foreground subject. The Inverse-Square Law describes the predictable way a point light source radiates and changes in intensity with distance. Photographic light sources are not point light sources so the law does not strictly apply but it explains why distance of artificial sources affects the character of lighting and lighting strategies in ways not seen in nature. According to the inverse-square law if the distance of a light source is changed in the following distance increments 1, 1. In practical terms it means if one face in a group portrait is 4m from the "key" light and another is 5. In an outdoor portrait of a group of people taken on an overcast day the lighting all the faces will be equal. The same group photographed indoors would be far more difficult to light evenly. The simplest strategy requiring the least flash equipment would be to get above the group with the camera, have them look up and bounce the lighting off the ceiling so like an overcast day every face is as equidistant as possible to the apparent source of the light. The position of the fill source relative to the face will also affect whether the nose shadow is the lightest when fill is centered near camera darkest when fill is placed to the side one on the face. The distance of the key and fill sources to the face will affect the rate at which the shadows transition from light to dark on the face. Creating surreal lighting[edit] Natural and surreal are just different sides of the same cause and effect coin. Understanding what makes lighting seem natural makes it easier to understand how to create other desired reactions. Natural light usually comes from above, so strategies which place the key light below the face will appear to be unusual or unnatural. The brain adapts color perception in a way which makes color balance seem neutral on white clothing and faces. The eyes also adapt to brightness as they scan and usually perceive a full range of detail in most environments. Lighting a scene with a tonal range or color cast which is out of context with what would typically be expected will cause the viewer to notice the environment and make other than normal assumptions about it. It is also possible to create the impression of environmental context where none is seen in the photograph, such the look of a person standing under a streetlight at night by using a gridded flash attached to the ceiling of the studio with no fill source. Three light setup[edit] The three light setup is a standard method used in photography and, although is not the only method used, it is the most common. This method uses three separate positions that help the photographer illuminate the subject. It is formed by; the Key or main light, the fill light, and the back light.

Chapter 6 : Photography Lighting | Studio Lighting for Photography | B&H Photo

Photographic lighting is the illumination of scenes to be photographed. A photograph simply records patterns of light, colour, and shade; lighting is all-important in controlling the image. A photograph simply records patterns of light, colour, and shade; lighting is all-important in controlling the image.

Adding lighting gear to a photography kit opens up endless creative possibilities to play with shadows, create a glow, or add that sparkling light source. But understanding lighting is also one of the trickiest tasks for new and intermediate photographers to tackle. One of the first questions photographers need to ask before investing in lights is whether or not those lights need to be portable. Studio-based photographers are going to pick up different lighting kits than photographers that need to not only easily carry the lighting gear far from any electrical outlet. Wedding and sports photographers tend to favor speedlights because of that portability, as well as the flexibility since the same light can also be mounted on-camera. That last one is a tech spec referred to a recycle time. Studio style lights are larger, but with battery packs, many of them can be used in the studio or on site. Continuous or strobe lights are significantly larger than speedlights because along with packing the actual light, many require separate battery packs to bring along as well. But these lights answer many of the negatives of using a speedlight because they offer more power and have faster recycle times. Push yourself to incorporate new photography lighting techniques to expand your photographic style. Join photographer Chris Knight to learn more. Because strobe lights are only putting out light for a short burst, they tend to be more powerful than continuous lights. Continuous lights may be less powerful, but they are often affordable and a must if you are shooting videos rather than stills. For beginners, continuous lights are often easier to work with because you see the light in real time, rather than adjusting, taking a picture with flash, then adjusting again. Some strobe lights, however, do have a continuous mode to use while setting up the position of the light. Continuous lights are often popular for product photography. What about light strength or wattage? Speedlights, strobes and continuous lights all tend to have varying strengths, that is, they put out a different amount of light, measured in watts for studio lights and in the distance the light can reach for speedlights. But just how much light do you need your lights to actually put out? The answer depends largely on what you shoot. The most powerful lights are used for shooting with a telephoto lens, photographing large groups and creative lighting tasks like overpowering the sun. Photographers often tasked with those shoots often pick lights with at least watts per second, and for flash, some of the more pricier options. Powerful light is hard light with harsh shadows. Lights are just the beginning. To really get the most creative possibilities from your lighting kit, modifiers are necessary. Here are the options: Softboxes and other types of diffusers soften the light, creating a more gradual transition between the light and dark areas of the image. Diffusing the light makes it possible to take an image without that obvious flash look, yet still creates a catchlight, prevents a silhouette or any number of different scenarios. A shoot through umbrella is a type of diffuser, similar to the look of a softbox. Using a reflective umbrella, you point the light away from the subject and the umbrella sends a more concentrated beam of light back to the subject. By placing doors or panels on all four sides of the light, you can leave the doors open and get a wide light or focus the light down by closing any combination of doors. Grids and snoots These types of modifiers focus the light down to a smaller area. The light hits the subject but then quickly falls off to leave the rest of the scene dark. Gels Gels give light color. These can be used to troubleshoot like making a flash match the orange of the sunset in the scene or to get creative and add unexpected color. So what is the best lighting for photography? Recommended lighting gear Now that you have an idea of what you need, what kit should you put in your cart? There are many great lighting brands out there at many different price points. But, to get you started, here are a few favorites with a moderate price tag. For tighter budgets, look at the Impact brand. For modifying a speedlight, try the MagMod diffuser or kit, or, if you are on a tight budget, a small inexpensive flash softbox. For other modifiers, look at what the manufacturer of your studio light suggests to ensure you pick up something compatible. Learn how to manipulate light, and you can learn how to create nearly any kind of photograph. The best lighting for photography is going to be the best lighting for your style of photography one photographer may swear

by his flash while the next insists her battery-powered strobes are the best. Armed with information on the types of lights and modifiers and the most essential specs, you can choose the right tool for the shot.

Chapter 7 : The Importance of light in Photography

To use light in photography, start by figuring out where the light should come from to give you your best shot. For example, lighting from the front will give you a reliably bright shot, but lighting from the side can create flattering depth in a portrait.

As Ming Thein discussed in his posts, light is crucial to this process. No light, no photograph. Here in part one, Wenjie introduces exposure and three elements: Introducing Light At the heart of every photo is a story, and like ink and paper, many elements come together to tell that story. One of these key ingredients is light. Whether it sets the mood, creates depth, or highlights a subject, the light around you and how you respond to it can often make or break a photo. The fundamentals of seeing light: The amount of light captured in a photograph, and how to control it. The position of the light source relative to the scene. The darkest and brightest regions in a photo, where details become obscured. Exposure Exposure is essentially the amount of light that falls on film or the sensor of your camera, resulting in the overall lightness or darkness of a photo. It is common to hear exposures being discussed using stops, or exposure values EV. The difference between each stop is pretty noticeable, if you look at this sequence of the ArtScience Museum: Shutter Speed Shutter speed is the length of time the shutter of the camera remains open. All other factors constant, the longer this is, the more light is captured, and the blurrier moving subjects become. While walking on the streets of Shibuya, Tokyo, the brightly lit signboards and the bustling crowds caught my eye. Aperture Aperture is the size of the hole of the lens through which light travels, and is measured in f-stops. When the aperture opens up lower f-stops: More importantly, aperture also affects how blurred or sharp certain areas of the photo are, also known as the depth of field. For a uniformly sharp image especially in shots of landscapes or architecture a higher f-stop is used. This keeps both the foreground and background of the image in focus. Consider the picture of the Sydney Harbor Bridge below. As a result, the shutter had to be left open for 15 seconds to achieve a good exposure: At this point, you may be wondering why anybody would use the lower f-stops. After all, sharpness in an image is always welcome. And because the aperture is increased, less light is required to achieve a balanced exposure, making lower f-stops very useful in low-light situations. In the picture below of the golden ceremonial crown, using a f2. As an added bonus, the light reflected off the crown creates interesting circles, also known as specular highlights, which typically are associated with lower f-stops: In online photo editors like PicMonkey and Pixlr, you can experiment with blurring and forced focusing in post-production with various smudge, brush, haze, and other effects. With all other factors constant, a low sensitivity ISO results in darker images, while higher sensitivities ISO onwards result in brighter images. As a rule of thumb, ISO is set to the lowest possible value that can achieve the desired shutter speed and aperture. The exposure of an image is a combination of shutter speed, aperture, and ISO. Tips for getting the right or desired exposure: Always plan your shot and what you want to convey. Decide on a setting. It helps to first decide on a primary setting, whether it is shutter speed for movement or aperture for depth of field. Then, experiment with the other two elements of the trinity to see how the photo changes. Underexposed by one stop. Over time, balancing this trinity will become easier, leaving you to focus on the other aspects of photography. Get outside and start shooting! Here are a few simple exercises to put these techniques to use: For those with d SLRs and cameras with a manual mode: Put your camera into manual mode and select any ISO. Set the aperture the f-stop to f4, f8, and then f At each setting, adjust the shutter speed until you get the correct exposure. What relationship do you see? What exposure readings are you getting? Exercises for all cameras, including cameraphones, from The Daily Post editors: Consider apps that mimic these effects. Play around with the focus. On some cameraphones, you can achieve an out-of-focus photo by placing an object super-close to your lens, which may create blurry, unexpected, yet interesting images. You can often focus on something by tapping it on the screen, too experiment with the focal point and see what kinds of effects you can create. I have moved on to a full frame camera, and have the assorted backaches to show for it. My job keeps me chained indoor most of the time, where I tap on the keyboard all day and work on developing the fairest complexion known to humankind. Previous posts in our Photography

series:

Chapter 8 : Understanding Light :: Digital Photo Secrets

One of the first very important skills I acquired in my Australian Photography course was the ability to breakdown lighting and determine approximate camera settings in images taken by other.

In classical portraiture there are several things you need to control and think about to make a flattering portrait of your subjects, including: I suggest you get to know these basics inside out, and as with most things, then you can break the rules. What shape is the shadow on the face, in simple terms. There are four common portrait lighting patterns, they are: Split lighting Rembrandt lighting Butterfly lighting There are also Broad and Short lighting which are more of a style, and can be used with most of the patterns above. Split Lighting Split lighting is exactly as the name implies – it splits the face exactly into equal halves with one side being in the light, and the other in shadow. It is often used to create dramatic images for things such as a portrait of a musician or an artist. Split lighting tends to be a more masculine pattern and as such is usually more appropriate or applicable on men than it is for women. Keep in mind however, there are no hard and fast rules, so I suggest you use the information I provide here as a starting point or guideline. To achieve split lighting simply put the light source 90 degrees to the left or right of the subject, and possibly even slightly behind their head. Watch how the light falls on them and adjust accordingly. In true split lighting, the eye on the shadow side of the face does pick up light in the eye only. Just keep in mind that your light source must follow the face to maintain the lighting pattern. If they turn their head the pattern will change. So you can use that to your advantage to easily adjust the pattern just by them rotating their head a little. It shows up as a little white spot, but if we look closer we can actually see the shape of the light I used in this portrait. See how the bright spot is actually hexagonal with a dark centre? Without the eye of the subject catching this light, the eyes will appear dark, dead and lifeless. You need to ensure that at least one eye has a catchlight to give the subject life. Notice it also lightens the iris and brightens the eye overall. This also adds to the feeling of life and gives them a sparkle. Loop Lighting Loop lighting is made by creating a small shadow of the subjects noses on their cheeks. Look at this image to see where the shadows fall, and on their left sides you can see a small shadow of their noses. In loop lighting the shadow of the nose and that of the cheek do NOT touch. Keep the shadow small and slightly downward pointing, but be aware of having your light source too high which will create odd shadows and cause loss of the catchlights. Loop light is probably the most common or popular lighting pattern as it is easy to create and flatters most people. In this diagram the black backdrop represents the bank of trees behind them. The sun is coming over the trees but they are completely in the shade. Just play with the angles, by changing the placement of the reflector you can change the lighting pattern. For Loop lighting it will need to be somewhere around degrees from the camera. It also needs to be slightly above their eye level so the shadow or loop of their nose angles down towards the corner of the mouth. That is one mistake I often see beginners make with reflectors is to place them down low and angle it up. Rembrandt Lighting Rembrandt lighting is so named because the Rembrandt the painter often used this pattern of light in his paintings, as you can see in his self portrait here. Rembrandt lighting is identified by the triangle of light on the cheek. Unlike loop lighting where the shadow of the nose and cheek do not touch, in Rembrandt lighting they do meet which, creates that trapped little triangle of light in the middle. Rembrandt lighting is more dramatic, so like split lighting it creates more mood and a darker feel to your image. To create Rembrandt lighting the subject must turn slightly away from the light. The light must be above the top of their head so that the shadow from their nose falls down towards the cheek. If they have high or prominent cheek bones it will probably work. If they have a small nose or flat bridge of the nose, it may be difficult to achieve. If you are using window light and the window goes down to the floor, you may have to block off the bottom portion with a gobo or card, to achieve this type of lighting. Butterfly Lighting Butterfly lighting is aptly named for the butterfly shaped shadow that is created under the nose by placing the main light source above and directly behind the camera. The photographer is basically shooting underneath the light source for this pattern. It is most often used for glamour style shots and to create shadows under the cheeks and chin. It is also flattering for older subjects as it emphasizes wrinkles less than side lighting. Butterfly lighting is created by having the light source directly

behind the camera and slightly above eye or head level of the subject depends on the person. It is sometimes supplemented by placing a reflector directly under their chin, with the subject themselves even holding it! This pattern flatters subjects with defined or prominent cheek bones and a slim face. Someone with a round, wide face would look better with loop or even split to slim their face. This pattern is tougher to create using windowlight or a reflector alone. Often a harder light source like the sun or a flash is needed to produce the more defined shadow under the nose.

Broad Lighting Broad lighting is not so much a particular pattern, but a style of lighting. Any of the following patterns of light can be either broad or short: This produces a larger area of light on the face, and a shadow side which appears smaller. Most people however want to look slimmer, not wider so this type of lighting would not be appropriate for someone who is heavier or round faced. To create broad lighting the face is turned away from the light source. Notice how the side of the face that is towards the camera has the most light on it and the shadows are falling on the far side of the face, furthest from the camera. Simply put broad lighting illuminates the largest part of the face showing.

Short Lighting Short lighting is the opposite of broad lighting. As you can see by the example here, short lighting puts the side turned towards the camera that which appears larger in more shadow. It is often used for low key, or darker portraits. It puts more of the face in shadow, is more sculpting, add 3D qualities, and is slimming and flattering for most people. In short lighting, the face is turned towards the light source this time. Notice how the part of the face that is turned away from the camera has the most light on it and the shadows are falling on the near side of the face, closet to the camera. Simply put short lighting has shadows on the largest part of the face showing.

Putting it all together Once you learn how to recognize and create each of the different lighting patterns you can then start to learn how and when to apply them. Someone with a very round face that wants to appear slimmer in a grad portrait, will be lit very differently than someone that wants a promo shot for their band that makes them appear mean or angry. Of course it is much easier to change the lighting pattern if you can move the light source. So what you will need to do instead of moving the light, is to have the subject rotate in respect to the light to change the direction it falls on them. Or change your camera position. Or change their position. So basically move the things you can move in relation to the light, if you cannot move the light source itself.

Practice Exercise Corral yourself a subject as in a real live person, not your dog and practice creating each of the lighting patterns we just discussed including: Show us your results please and share any challenges or problems you encountered.

Chapter 9 : 6 Portrait Lighting Patterns Every Photographer Should Know

Lighting plays a crucial role in photography. It can bring a photograph to life, it can generate effects, including spectacular shadows or silhouettes, or it may have a distinctly negative influence by creating unwanted glare and reflections. This is a quick guide to introduce the beginner to one of.

Lighting determines not only brightness and darkness, but also tone, mood and the atmosphere. Therefore it is necessary to control and manipulate light correctly in order to get the best texture, vibrancy of colour and luminosity on your subjects. By distributing shadow and highlights accurately, you can create stylized professional looking photographs.

Positioning Light The source your light is coming from has a huge impact on how it falls on your subject. Light originating from behind the camera, and pointing directly onwards gives you very flat lighting. It will also cause shadows to fall in the background of the image. Side lighting produces a far more interesting light, as it shows the shape of the subject much more and cast it in partial shadow giving it a more dramatic look. Rembrandt lighting is an effective common example of this lighting type. Lighting sourced from the back of your subject gives an alternative effect. This time most of the light is hitting the side of the subject making it brighter, which creates a more distinctive and dramatic photo.

Shaping Light Adding a diffuser to your light source can reduce glare and harsh shadows and also diminishes blemishes on your subject. It gives your artificial light a softer more natural looking result. You can diffuse light numerous ways. Using soft boxes, umbrellas and sheer heatproof material work really well to achieve this result.

Manipulating Light Light can be manipulated to fall on a particular area of interest on your subject. This can be achieved through the use of diffusers and reflectors. Spot lights can also be covered in light shapers that enable you to have more control over the direction the light will fall and how broad the light spans. This software has the capability to enhance and improve your digital photographs. Lighting can be the difference between a breath-taking photo and a poor one. Mastering how to use light to your advantage and getting the best possible result out of your setup will also separate your work from your contemporaries and put you on the path to achieving professional looking imagery. To learn more about light in photography , join Shaw Academy today! More Posts Like This One.