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Photo Gear Essentials: What You Need to Get Started as a Photographer

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Are you ready to take your hobby of photography and turn it into a career? If so, you're going to need some essential camera gear. But what do you really need?

Let's review the must-haves that every [budding photographer](#) needs in their arsenal.

What Gear Do You Need to Be a Photographer?

To be a photographer, you need the proper gear:

- A long-lasting digital camera is essential and should have a long battery life, functions such as manual control and focus, as well as a wide aperture lens.
- Other important items include a reliable tripod, extra memory cards and batteries, backup storage device, and various lenses of different types and focal lengths to capture desired photos.
- Also, there are photography accessories that make life easier while on the job such as reflectors or [flashes for artificial illumination](#), filters to enhance colors, light meters to gauge exposure levels, and other small items such as microphones to capture sound with your video footage.

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With all these tools at hand, you can make sure your photographic needs are met in any kind of situation so you can make beautiful photographs that you will love long-term.

Now that you know some of the essential photo gear you need, it's time to learn how to use it! [Sign up for photography lessons](#) and learn more about the benefits of doing so by watching the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDtA3qZB27s>

Photo Gear Essentials for Any Photographer

Photo gear choices are seemingly endless these days. Camera equipment and accessories, made for every conceivable [photography](#) pursuit and use, may leave you with too many questions.

What should I buy first? What comes next? Then, what are the “nice to have” but I could live without? Should I purchase professional camera equipment?

Depending on the style and subjects you want to photograph, the photo gear has different priorities. Here's what they are:

First Purchases

A camera, two batteries, a strap, two memory cards, and a camera bag are the minimum image-capturing requirements. My suggestions for essential photo gear are listed at www.PhotoTravelWrite.com/My-Recommendations. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about these.

A computer for processing your photographs is also a requirement. Photographers must enhance every image created in a digital camera. It's easiest to do it on a computer. However, you can perform some basic functions on an iPhone/Android and iPad/tablet.

Basic photo editing software comes with Apple Photos and Windows Media. The industry standard is [Adobe Photoshop](#) and [Adobe Photoshop Lightroom](#). Here are links to articles already published on the [TakeLessons Blog](#).

These basics allow you to photograph many things in many genres. Keep your investment low until you are comfortable and are sure you want to continue learning this craft.

Camera Models

Film Cameras (nostalgic look and feel; require developing and film costs); Medium Format Cameras (uncommon; larger film/sensor size, bigger than full-frame sensors; Hasselblad is a recognizable name; uses bigger lenses; very high resolution); 360 Cameras (similar to action cameras; water-resistant; used on helmets and drones; uses back-to-back lenses; good for adventure photo and video, reality-style), and Action Cameras (used for video and outside sports; think GoPro) are more specialized and deliver a particular style.

If you are serious about photography, Compact Cameras (Point and Shoot, automatic, and lightweight), while handy and convenient, don't measure up to the mirrorless and DSLR models discussed below.

Essential photo gear centers around either of two models. That is Mirrorless Cameras (lighter than DSLR, outstanding quality images and video, and now becoming

professionals' choice; limited camera shake, quieter, limited lenses right now), and DSLR Cameras (pro-level, lots of excellent lenses, full-frame or APS-C sensor).

Buy Used

You might consider making your first purchase a used camera. A previously-owned camera may help you decide which manufacturer to select. Look for refurbished gear. Canon USA and Nikon offer refurbished cameras and lenses on their websites. I have purchased refurbished cameras with “low mileage” and have been delighted with the cost savings and performance.

Low mileage in this reference means the number of shutter clicks. Cameras are built to withstand at least 150,000 shutter clicks. Ask the camera manufacturer how to determine how many shutter clicks your camera (or a refurbished one) has experienced.

Buy Only What You Need to Get Started

Don't rush to buy an entire system. Buy the camera body and one lens – usually a kit lens. While it's not the best quality glass, it is a perfect way to get started. As your skills improve, you will know better what future purchases to make.

Consider Renting Photo Gear

Consider renting at least two different manufacturer's products, e.g., Canon, Nikon, or Sony. They are the major players, especially today, with mirrorless cameras taking over the landscape. Your local camera store with a rental department or www.BorrowLenses.com are good options. When you can touch and feel the equipment in your hands, you can make a more informed decision.

Online Photography Courses

Online photography courses should be on your purchase list. Lessons will speed up your learning process. While you can learn many things on YouTube, there are just some things you need to speak to [someone](#) in live training.

Camera Lenses

The best lenses for beginning photographers are the kit lenses that come with the camera. They are not expensive and provide adequate results. You won't feel so bad if you drop the camera/lens while learning how to take pictures.

Used lenses for sale are another option for first purchases. Be cautious, however, and check the lens thoroughly. If you know the person/photographer selling the lens and know they treat their equipment well, that is a good thing. If you don't know the seller and can't see and test the lens before purchase, you might want to wait for a better opportunity.

Considerations When Selecting a Camera

- How does it feel in my hands? Is it too big, too small?
- How comfortable are the controls to use?
- Is it intuitive?
- Is the manual easy to understand?
- What do other people say about their cameras?

Types of photography you can accomplish with only the basics include nature, wildlife, people, action, macro, and landscapes.

Second Purchases

- Tripod
- More batteries, more memory cards
- Cardholder
- External flash
- External hard drives to store images
- Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom
- Online photography courses – Digital Workflow

With the photo gear listed here as second purchases, the types of photography you can add to your skills are events like weddings, casual business photography, and family portraiture. With this style of photography, you might earn serious money.

Third Tier Purchases

As you try more advanced techniques and difficult lighting situations, filters should be added to your arsenal. Specialized filters (not haze or UV) like Circular Polarizing Filter, Graduated Neutral Density Filter, Neutral Density Filter will allow for long exposures, darkening skies, and removing glare. Using these filters will allow you to accomplish what you cannot do in Photoshop.

Studio Lights – Strobe or Constant

Learning to use and master studio lighting is a skill for serious photographers. There is a significant investment in equipment and training to do commercial work, fashion and products, actors/dancers/performers headshots.

Other Essential Photo Studio Gear

Having the right gear can make all the difference when it comes to setting up a successful photo studio. From backdrops and lights to tripods and reflectors, there is an array of essential equipment that you will need in order to [create amazing images](#).

It really depends who you ask when it comes to studio gear, but do some research and add items one at a time as your budget allows. Be sure to get everything you need so that your studio setup is efficient and well-equipped. With the right tools, you can take your photos to the next level!

Essential Travel Photo Gear

On a guided tour, you have limited time to photograph because of the itinerary and other travelers. Go on a photography tour where you will be with like-minded individuals whose primary purpose is to capture images.

A travel camera bag might be different than your regular camera bag, and it will be beneficial because you might not take all of your photo gear on a trip. I've pared down considerably since my trip to China, where I carried all my photo gear up the Great Wall. You learn what's essential when you do something crazy like that.

What Must Be the Most Essential Thing When Taking Pictures?

In this article, we learned what photo gear is essential to create and produce an image. We also learned what accessories are required to make better pictures. The third tier buys make our jobs as photographers (or hobbyists) easier. By the time you need professional camera equipment, you will know what photo gear works best for you.

Online photography courses, such as [photography for beginners](#), is the best way to jump-start your photography journey.

All right, now that we've gone over the essential camera gear items every photographer should have in their arsenal, let's get out there and start taking some [great shots](#)!

Whether you're just getting started or are already an experienced pro, having quality gear on hand will help bring your vision to life—so don't forget these essentials!



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