

## Tech Tips on Digital Photography

Photography has become a favourite pastime for all ages with almost everyone now owning a digital camera. Digital cameras offer the convenience of immediately seeing what a photo looks like rather than having to wait to develop the film.

You need to look at several aspects of a camera when deciding which one is best for you.

Megapixel resolution defines the number of pixels available to record the image. The higher the number of megapixels the more detail you are able to capture in the image. A good camera will have a minimum of 5 – 10 megapixels to achieve a sharp 3D look.

Optical zoom uses the lens of the camera to bring the subject closer. The higher the optical zoom the further you can zoom in, with 3 x optical zoom meaning the subject will appear 3 times closer and larger. Digital zoom works by the camera cropping the image, to focus on the subject, and then enlarging the image back to size. As a result you lose image quality. If you have been using digital zoom and wondered why your pictures did not look great, this is why. Optical zoom is more important than digital zoom as basic software allows you to do everything digital zoom achieves.

Battery life is an important feature of a digital camera as you don't want a camera that goes flat quickly. If the camera doesn't have its own batteries you should invest in quality rechargeable batteries rather than continually buying expensive single use ones.

Digital cameras generally come with a small amount of memory which means you can only store a few pictures on the camera at a time. You will need to purchase a larger memory card when you buy your camera to make it more convenient to use, so you can store hundreds of images before needing to delete or download any. When taking a photo it is better to shoot in a large format, between 1MB and 3MB. This will allow you to enlarge your photos while maintaining picture quality. Photos of less than 100KB are only suitable for 6x4 prints or for websites.

Digital cameras have many modes to assist you with taking good photos. If you have lost your instruction manual and do not know how to select different modes on your camera, the manuals can be downloaded from a link on the tech tips web site [www.grenfell.org.au/techtips](http://www.grenfell.org.au/techtips)

Landscape photos are used to capture scenery. To take a good landscape photo you will need a tripod so you can take your time and keep the camera steady. If your camera has a landscape mode it will give your camera a narrower lens opening which captures a greater depth of field meaning more of the image will be in a sharp focus.

Action photos need a camera that will take 3 – 6 frames per second. Switch your camera to the sports or action mode. These modes attempt to freeze the action by increasing the shutter speed. When photographing a fast moving object pan the camera along with the object, or try to focus your camera on the spot where you want your subject to be when you take a photo.

Pets are difficult to photograph as they usually do not keep still. If your camera has a sports mode, use it to reduce the chance of a blur if your pet moves. Before you take their photo find a time of day where the animal is relaxed and less active. Put yourself on their level as you will get a better picture than if they are looking up at you.

For portrait photos switch your camera to portrait mode which will automatically blur the background and focus on the face of the subject. It helps to choose a neutral background. If your camera does not automatically blur the background you can do this with your computer software.

Digital cameras offer many options to improve photo quality but software programs offer even more assistance. Software is relatively easy to use and comes with your printer and camera. It not only allows your computer to communicate with your printer so you can print photos, but it allows you to touch-up your photos before you print them. Basic software tools include red eye removal, brightening or darkening, cropping, rotating and sharpening. Other more advanced programs such as Adobe Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro allow you to add layers, text, pen lines, shapes, crop to shapes, erase objects and colour replacement. You will require moderate computer skills and it can take some practice to make the most of these programs.

Digital photos can be printed in Grenfell however basic photo printers allow you to print photos in the convenience of your own home. When using a photo printer, generic photo paper and ink you will achieve quality prints for about 17c each. Some printers allow you to print straight from your camera without using the computer which makes digital photos nearly instant photos. However the photos cannot be edited.

At the CTC we stock a range of quality photo paper and inks, we can order genuine ink cartridges and we stock Calidad generic cartridges. Calidad cartridges are as good as genuine brands but are only half the price. The CTC can print, enlarge and enhance photos from your digital camera. We can save these photos on CD or DVD and create a slideshow to view in your DVD player or computer. We can enlarge, copy and repair old photos from prints. Some of the repairs we have completed recently include removing scratches and rips and repairing missing sections of colour.

There are regular photo competitions in Grenfell. There is currently one in the Grenfell Record and there are competitions in the Grenfell Show and Henry Lawson Festival. Grenfell has an active Camera Club with many experienced members. Julie Grattan from the Grenfell Camera club can be contacted on 6343 1659.

So why not get snapping and enter these competitions. You never know you may be the next Photography Statuette winner!