

LIGHT GUIDE

learn to see light like a photographer

These are 6 different natural light types to get you started & a short reminder about “proper” exposure. Tip: To really learn to see light, keep this in a central place. Set your phone to remind you, at various times, to stop what you’re doing and observe the light. Light constantly changes from morning to night. Learn to see how light plays in your scene and your photos will reach a whole new level!

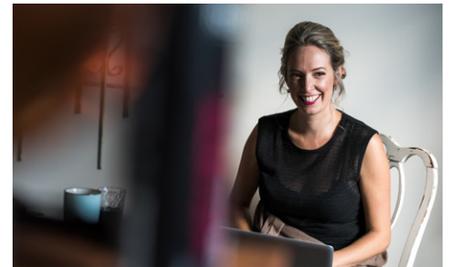
OPEN LIGHT OR OVERCAST

This can be also known as even or diffused light. It’s when your subject is out of direct light (like the sun or a lamp). It’s easy to achieve indoors with your subject facing a window, in vehicles, outside on cloudy days, or in a garage (near the opening) on a bright day. Shooting in open shade (near the edge) or with backlight achieves a similar soft, flattering look.



DIRECTIONAL LIGHT

Also known as side light. This light has a clear path in where it is coming from and where it falls in your scene. Depending on the intensity of the light, you may have to over or under expose your image slightly. This can make for amazingly dramatic images. It can also be unflattering in portraits, so watch where your shadows fall.



HAZY BACK LIGHT

This is a dreamy look caused by the sun being in your frame and shooting directly towards the sun. The sun can be placed anywhere in the frame, but must be included or directly next to the edge of the frame for the light to be welcomed into your lens. It can be difficult to focus on your subject with this light in your frame, but you can quickly block the light (with your hand or a lens hood), lock focus, and then let the light back in to take the shot.



RIM LIGHT

This is another way to use back light (which is simply light coming from behind the subject). Here, you set your subject against a darker background (or underexpose your image so the sky is dark) and the light source is usually not in the frame.



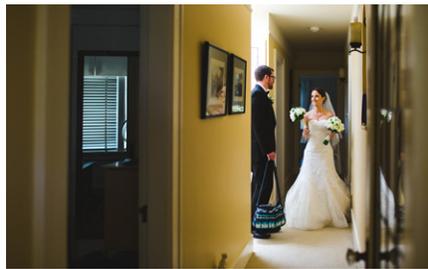
HARD LIGHT

You are usually shooting on a sunny day or in other intense light. The brightness can cause unwanted shadows or blown (totally white) highlights. These images are often vibrant and usually full of action. This light is great for candid photos and less flattering for portraits. Try to expose for the highlights to avoid blowing them out.



POOLS OF LIGHT

Also known as spot light. This is where there is only a portion of your scene that has light in it. Expose for highlights on your subject to make the spot of light be the first thing your viewer sees.



EXPOSURE TIPS



OVER-EXPOSED



UNDER-EXPOSED



JUST RIGHT

Watch for loss of detail and color in the highlights and shadows. Remember, be creative and don't worry about your entire image being perfectly exposed. Be unafraid to allow shadows to fade away, or the background to go white, to make the subject/message in your photo be the first thing your viewer sees (like the Pools of Light images above).