

U3A Hillingdon Digital Photo Group

“OUTDOOR EVENT” PHOTOGRAPHY

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“EVENT” PHOTOGRAPHY

- “Event” photography is like *most other* outdoor photography, and there are basically 2 sorts :
 - “Static events”
 - “Action events”
(*Excluding “general events” & specialist ones like music gigs in low light*)

“Static” Events – Little “Rapid Action”

- Such as:
 - Flower/garden shows, historical re-enactments, parades, *outdoor* theatre productions, etc.



“Action” Events – Lots of “Action”:

- Such as:

- Soccer/rugby matches, horse (etc.) racing, motorsports, cycle & foot racing, flying displays, rowing,



-> much faster movements &/or changes of direction.

Significant Common Things to Remember

- **Arrival timing** likely to be critical at sporting & events with schedules
 - *OTOH may not be at re-enactment events, country fairs, flower shows*
- **Common Sense**: *think about the subject & framing **before** firing the shutter!*
- **Often, “less in more”**: Main “objects” should be largest & “well placed”
 - Concentrate on these for “**Impact**” & don’t **lose them** in sky/buildings
- **“Main Objects” - “Zoom settings” &/or zoom lenses**: fill the “frame”
 - *or “zoom with your feet” by walking towards the subject if possible.*
- **Backdrops**: “bland”/low contrast/ “**complicated**” backdrops may fool camera metering -> *causes under/over exposure &/or autofocus errors.*
- **Lighting**: Keep Sun &/or strong artificial lighting behind/well to one side to illuminate subjects, and to avoid possible “**lens flare**” effects.

“Static” Events

- Venues may be crowded-> you could be close/very close to subjects
- Wide-angle settings/lenses are useful in such locations
- Identify “targets” & wait until you can get clear shots
- “Depth of Field” in shots may be limited
—>don’t use wide apertures unless you:
 - Have no alternative (*&/or use “High ISO” to compensate?*)
 - Want to “isolate” the subjects from the backgrounds

“Action” Events - General

- More challenging than “Static” ones!
- Arrival Timing is critical – arrive as early as possible!
- Venues are often larger than “Static” events & you are
 - Either very close to crowd-lines (*e.g. on public road & stadium events*)
 - > Probably needs wide(ish)-angle lens settings & high shutter speeds to freeze the action
 - Or relatively far from crowd-lines:
(*>20-100m+ – depends on the event*) :
 - > Needs long(ish) focal length lens &/or zoom-setting, & high shutter speeds for sharp images (*unless “panning”*)
- Track target **before** shooting & **carry on after it passes you!**

“Action” Events – Position

- Choose your location carefully & stay in defined spectator areas
→ you will be safer there than elsewhere (*and you won't annoy staff!*).
- Don't stand in crowd-line centres because:
→ *you will be jostled & get poor shots as subjects pass you rapidly past!*
- Go to the ends of crowd lines - generally fewer people
→ *better position & views choices of subject [approaching/departing](#).*
- If “track”/crowd-line has bends - Targets can change direction there
→ stand to one side and shoot approaching/departing targets!
- Shoot subjects “at an angle” showing a [side and front](#)/rear
→ *more effective than totally “[side-on](#)”/head-on/rear-on shots.*
- Out-of-doors with moderately cloudy skies can result in more “atmospheric” shots than totally blue or totally cloudy, skies.
→ *especially if subjects are [silhouetted against clouds](#).*

“Action” Events – Shutter Speeds

- Shutter speed is important for Action Photography:
 - Too *slow*! -> subjects will be blurred (*unless “panning”*)
 - Too *fast*! -> “sense of movement” can be lost
- For most shots: e.g. re-enactments, slow moving animals
-> Use $1/100^{\text{th}}$ - $1/500^{\text{th}}$ s,
- For fast-moving subjects e.g. birds, fast moving animals jet aircraft,
-> maybe $1/1000^{\text{th}}$ - $1/4000^{\text{th}}$ s
- OTOH, if “panning” with fast-moving subjects:
-> Use $1/60^{\text{th}}$ s (*possibly slower*) to $1/250^{\text{th}}$ s (*max!*)
=> sharp subjects & blurred backgrounds

“Action” Events – Aperture & Focus

- High shutter speeds require Wide Apertures in poor lighting
-> restricts Depth of Field:
- Thus w.r.t Aperture settings:
 - **Too large** -> subjects could be out-of-focus
&/or autofocus can't cope quickly enough
 - **Too small** -> limits usable fastest shutter speeds
- **For most shots** -> Use F4-F8 + high shutter speed
- **OTOH**, Autofocus may not work well with fast moving targets,
-> switch to Manual focus
&
Pre-focus on point/ distance where target is expected to be

“Action” Events – Viewfinders!

- I'll say this again, & it will “annoy” many, but success is difficult to achieve using camera rear screens (& *screens on phones!*) !
- *Epecially* when subjects move rapidly to Left/Right (or v/v) as :
 - the screen is *close to your eyes* and they are focused on that!***BUT***
 - Subjects are often quite distant -> *small & difficult to focus on*
&
 - Our eyes & brains aren't “built” to focus at 2 very different distances at the same time - *and that gets worse as we get older!*
- Thus, if the camera has an **optical or electronic viewfinder**
(*older electronic viewfinders are often quite poor, but modern ones are generally better*)
-> try to use **that** *instead* of the rear screen! “

Preparation – BEFORE “The Day”

- Plan **WELL** in advance and check:
 - Event website, &/or “event-specific” webpages - check
 - Photo kit restrictions (e.g. *camera size, lens size, tripod/monopod?*)
or “No cameras allowed” (especially at sports stadium events) !!
(*& if taking dogs then check for any relevant restrictions/prohibitions*)
 - Buy tickets in advance – saves money & time,
- *pay-at-gate is usually not possible for most events this year.*
 - Plan your journey - Traffic controls/parking restrictions/
diversions, car park locations - *especially if carrying “heavy” stuff!*
 - You know how to set & use your camera/phone correctly!
 - **NB:** If the camera takes interchangeable lenses
-> **check the sensor for dust & get it cleaned if needed**

Preparation – ON “The Day” – Photo Kit

- Your photo kit:
 - Camera/Phone batteries are fully-charged
(ensure *internal battery is fully charged +spares if appropriate*))
 - Spare formatted & empty memory cards
-> *formatted in the camera/phone is best!*
 - The camera takes interchangeable lenses?
-> take ***appropriate*** lenses, and *lens hoods* - & ***USE*** them!
 - Tripod/monopod?
-> often more hindrance than help & *banned at many events!*
 - Flashgun & batteries?
-> probably not necessary & *usually banned at indoor events*

Preparation – ON “The Day” – “Other Stuff”

- Other useful stuff, e.g.:
 - Snacks/drinks - on-site catering IS expensive, & may be far from likely shooting locations.
 - Folding chairs/stools - if you will be standing a lot
 - Good bags for above & right clothes/shoes (+ covers if rain likely!)
 - Sunshades/hats/brollies & sunscreen - if likely to be hot & sunny
 - Paper towels/tissues to wipe things clean/dry, & plastic bags for rubbish (or dispose of safely)!
 - Possibly a trolley to carry that stuff,
but many are too heavy or fragile (although that can sometimes be fixed!)

Finally, ON “The Day”

- There **WILL** be delays & queues **everywhere, and so:**
 - Allow **plenty of extra time for:**
 - Transport & Traveling (*avoid “popular”/sat-nav routes!*), entry to car parks, security/ticket-checks, loos(!), food queues, & finding shooting locations (*& how to exit at the end of the day!*)
 - *Thus, arrive as early as you reasonably can!*
 - **And then enjoy the event** and take some good shots & then show us what you have managed to capture! 😊