

Taking sharp photographs: By Mike.

There are many factors that reduce the sharpness of a photograph.

Other than “be steady, don’t move and make sure the subject doesn’t jump or run away”.

There are others factors we can control.

Best way to see if your image is going to be sharp, switch to LCD screen and enlarge the image.

A hood loupe is best and it helps to see the LCD, even in bright sun light.

For Sharp images, let’s start with hand held or tripod use.

Hand holding requires that the camera is compensated with speed.

A rule is that the speed should be almost twice as the lens size.

Example using a 28 or 35 mm lens, the speed should be 60th of a second.

Using 200 mm lens, speed should be 400th of a second or faster. More speed or faster, the better.

Using the tripod: here the speed is not as important; but even on a tripod, other factors can affect sharpness.

Pressing the shutter motion, is one. This can be prevented in 3 ways:

A. By using a cable release. B. Setting the camera timer. C. Mirror lockup.

(Mirror Lockup is set in the menu of most cameras).

It is best when using B. and C.

Set you camera to ‘Burst Mode’ (continuing shooting) will help as the first shot raises the mirror.

Lenses and/or cameras have a switch called ‘vibration reduction’. (VC) It is used to stabilize camera movements while hand held. If using a tripod, it is best to turn it off.

Tripod Stability: Even when using a heavy tripod, it may not hold the camera steady.

Try adding additional weight. At home try to hang a milk bottle filled with water.

On the road make provisions to hang the camera bag or carry a plastic shopping bag that you can fill with a water bottle or rocks or anything around that can be a bit heavy.

Lenses aperture are important. The aperture can a be a factor. Most lenses are sharpest at mid aperture range. Usually 8.0 or 11.0 aperture settings are sharper than 2.8 or 22.0.

Aperture setting can influence the ‘depth of field’. So you may get a sharp picture, but part of it may be out of focus. That in itself is another area of learning.

Fixed lenses are usually sharper than zoom lenses.

Monopods are good, but not as good as tripods. In areas where tripods are not allowed, maybe monopods will help.

Pressing the shutter, do it gently and slowly. Hold your breath and concentrate.

No tripod? Try to hold yourself to the wall or use a fence, a tree branch or any stable object.

When shooting from the ground place the camera on top of the water bottle, assuming you carry one with you.

ISO settings should be the lowest.

Take off all filters in front to the lens. (If possible)