



Tips on Using a “Point and Shoot” Digital Camera in the VRC Portfolio Studio

by Jennifer Kirschke

1. Make sure your camera is **5 megapixels** or **greater** in resolution. **Keep the camera on the highest resolution setting.** You can always decrease resolution later in Adobe Photoshop, but you cannot increase it after the fact.
2. Most cameras record the image as a JPEG file. JPEG compression is controlled by a setting called **Image Quality**. To get the best resolution image with the least compression select **Fine** versus Normal or Basic. To alleviate any loss of information due to compression when opening a JPEG file, **save the file as a TIFF** the first time you open it.
3. Make sure that your camera has an **Aperture Priority Setting**, usually labeled **A** on your camera dial. Set the camera on A and you will be able to adjust the f-stop, thereby increasing the depth of field in your image. Set the f-stop to the highest number allowable (preferably a larger number than f5.6.) **Do not use the camera on auto or program settings!** A digital “point and shoot” camera in auto or program mode will automatically set the f-stop to the least depth of field, causing your images to have very little area that is in sharp focus.
4. Set the camera’s **White Balance** to **Incandescent** (usually a symbol that looks like an ordinary household light bulb with dashes coming off of it). Make sure that the overhead fluorescent lights are turned off and only the incandescent studio lights are turned on.
5. **Turn off the flash.** This is done by selecting the symbol that looks like a **lightning bolt with a “not” symbol** over it.
6. Most cameras will have an **Exposure Compensation** setting that looks like a (+/-) plus/minus symbol. When shooting images of **models** you should take 3 different exposures of each image. In the Exposure Compensation mode you should take one image with the camera set to 0 (auto exposure), the same image with the camera set to +1.0 (overexposure) and then set to -1.0 (underexposure). When you open the images later on a computer you will select the best of these 3 exposures and throw the other 2 exposures away. When shooting images of **drawings** you should take one image at +1.0 and the same image at +2.0.