

Working with your Camera

Topic 4 – Cleaning the Lens

Learning Outcomes

In this topic, you will learn about how you should clean the lens on your DSLR camera.

One of the most common fears with a DSLR camera for users is the cleaning of the lenses. This is something that makes even experienced photographers anxious so don't worry if this is something that you have felt before. We're going to look at some simple and relatively cost effective ways for you to clean your lens.

Why Do We Need To Clean The Lens?

Cleaning your camera's lenses should be a pretty regular aspect of any camera owner's maintenance. Of course, you don't need to do this after every shoot. Once you've done it once, you'll be much more comfortable with the routine. It is the best time to clean a lens, when it's noticeably dirty.

Use a UV or Skylight filter

For each lens that you have in your selection, you should consider purchasing a UV or skylight filter. In addition to it cutting out UV light these filters will protect your lens from scratches or even breakage. When it's time to do the cleaning, you'll just be cleaning the filter instead of the actual lens (unless dust gets in of course).

Lens Hoods

Lens Hoods can also help protect the end of your lens as do the lens caps for both the front and back end of your lens that come with it. You should always use them! They prevent any unnecessary dust and/ smudges.

Lens Cleaning Fluid



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In most camera stores you'll find an alcohol based lens cleaning fluid that can be useful when you want to clean your lens. This will help you to remove any fingerprints or smudges without leaving dirty streaks on your lens or filter. Please remember that you don't need too much of this fluid when using it. Never apply the fluid directly to the lens. Apply it to a cleaning cloth or tissue and go from there.

Cleaning Tissues

Cleaning tissues are important if you want to use cleaning fluid when removing dust or smudges from your lens or filter. They notably very thin paper that will allow you to wipe your lenses without scratching them. These tissues are for 'once off use', meaning that you should dispose of them after use. Standard facial tissues should never be used because they are generally too rough and will only scratch your lens.

Cleaning Cloth

The cleaning cloth is a simple alternative option to cleaning tissues. It is now seen as the more modern microfiber cleaning cloth. These are washable cloths which is very useful.

Blowers

Blowers can be very useful when cleaning the outside of your camera – including the lens and filters in your inventory. The trick with these blowers is ensuring that you remember to squeeze it a few times before using it to get any dust that might be inside it.

Brushes

If you have left your cleaning on the long finger and ignored all the dust that has built up, brushes are a good tool for getting rid of larger quantities of dust. Please ensure that you acquire one that has fine and soft hair (also known as camel hair) to avoid



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scratching your lens. There are also lens cleaning pens available today. These are basically a retractable brush on one end and a cleaning pad on the other.

Silica Gel

Silica Gel is one of the commonly forgotten methods of cleaning when we talk about lens maintenance. The little sachets draw any moisture in a camera bag to them to save your lenses and DSLR from being impacted by dampness. These are a very useful and simple method for your camera's maintenance. Naturally, you need to keep changing these sachets over time as they'll attract too much water and become useless.

Much of the cleaning gear we have looked at is relatively inexpensive and is well worth educating yourself in the use of it.

Take Care When Changing Lenses

Of course, it goes without saying, take when changing your lenses. Cleaning the outside elements of your camera and lens is a lot easier than cleaning the inside where the features are much more sensitive and fragile. When changing lenses, it's important to turn off your camera first. In addition, it's helpful if you try to get into the habit of pointing your camera and lens to the ground when doing this. If possible, try to do it inside or out of the wind as the wind can blow dust on your camera's sensor. Learn to do these things quickly and you'll have less dust and dirt to clean off your camera and lenses.



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What have we learned today? A Summary

We've learned all about the tools you need when cleaning your lens.

We've also noted how important this is for you as a photographer and how a dirty lens can negatively affect your work.

