

# Photography Start-up Guide

For all MK Photography Lighting Systems



[www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup](http://www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup)



# ***Congratulations on your New Lighting System***

You have taken the first step to shoot  
quick and easy professional photos

This abridged photography startup guide will  
show you how to setup your digital camera and  
shoot high quality photographs in minutes.

**You may find the complete guide at:**  
[www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup](http://www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup)


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## Basic Camera Setup

### Did you purchase a camera from us?

If you did, your camera is already pre-set to the correct settings. But make sure to check that your camera has the following settings:

### Did not purchase a camera from us?

Please adjust your digital camera to the following settings:

### Connecting your Camera to the computer?

Please visit our website for detailed instructions: [www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup](http://www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup)

**Note:** The photos are for illustration purposes only. This guide goes into specific detail for setting Canon Powershot cameras, although the instructions may also be followed to set-up other digital cameras (See your camera's manual for specific information).

### Turn ON your camera's Macro Mode

The only setting you need to enable every time you turn on your camera is the macro mode (THE TULIP SYMBOL). Press the down key on the back of your camera (Canon A Series) or the tulip button (most cameras) until the flower/tulip symbol appears on your LCD screen.



Canon Powershot A650 IS



Canon Powershot S5 IS

### Set your camera to Manual Mode

The letter "M" (for "manual") should be selected in the mode wheel.



Canon Powershot A650 IS

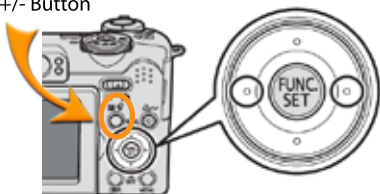


Canon Powershot S5 IS

### Fix your camera's aperture (F-Stop) at F8.0 - (See note below)

In most Canon cameras, the aperture may be changed by moving the ← or → button in the back of the camera while in shooting mode (when the aperture is selected). The aperture number "F8.0" should appear at the bottom of your camera's screen once you've selected it.

+/- Button



Circular button on back of camera



Camera's LCD Screen

*Notes: In order to modify the aperture in the Canon A640 & A650 cameras press the +/- button, which toggles between selecting the aperture or shutter speed. For the S5IS press up or down on the circular button in the back of your camera. By setting your aperture to F8.0 you increase your camera's depth-of-field, which allows you to focus all parts of your item (rather than only parts of it).*

### Verify the Close up Lens (+2) is attached to your camera lens.

When photographing items 4 to 12 inches away from the camera, a close-up lens is needed to focus properly. (A lens adapter is required)



Macro lens & lens adapter being attached



Camera with lens attached

### Make sure the FLASH is turned off.

The flash is turned off when you see the image of a lightning bolt crossed-out within a circle on your screen.



### Set the focus to "Spot"

Set your camera's focus option to "Spot". This will allow you to have total control of where you want to focus your items. This is found in most Canon cameras under the "Function/Set" menu.

*Note: Please refer to your camera's manual for specific information on how to do this.*

## 7. Adjust the Custom White Balance

If you purchased a camera from MK Digital, your camera's white balance has already been adjusted to the correct setting for fluorescent lighting. If you choose to photograph with halogen lighting you'll need to do a custom white balance adjustment once again. If you did not buy a camera from MK Digital, you still need to do a custom white balance adjustment.

*NOTE: Halogen lighting is used only for photographing certain gemstones such as rubies, amethysts, and other colored stones that are red, orange, or purple.*

### **Steps for performing a custom white balance adjustment:**

a) Make sure your camera's aperture is at F8.0 and the shutter speed is at 1/400 for a custom white balance using fluorescent lighting, or 1/100 for halogen lighting.

b) Find the menu in your camera that allows you make a custom white balance. For Canon Powershot Cameras: Press the FUNC/SET button, go down to the second option in the left menu (white balance) and then scroll right or left until you find an icon that shows a circle on top of two triangles (this is the custom white balance option) . *View image to the right.*



Function/Set menu of Canon Camera

c) Position your camera so that it is looking into the photography lighting system.

**Note:** *Make sure the lighting system is empty*

d) Finally, press the button indicated by your camera to evaluate the lighting and perform a white balance adjustment of the inside of the photography system.

**Note:** *In Canon Powershot Cameras press the MENU or SET button (depending on model) to evaluate and adjust the white balance, once in the correct menu.*



Camera positioned straight down

## Shooting High-Quality Photographs

The following steps will explain what you need to do with your camera in order to achieve high-quality photographs by using our lighting systems.

### **NOTES:**

- *If you bought a camera from MK Digital, the camera has been preset for use with fluorescent lighting (white light).*
- *Never use fluorescent and halogen lighting at the same time. Choose one or the other. LED lighting may be used alongside fluorescent, but not halogen light.*

## Steps to Follow:

### 1. Zoom In

Use your camera's zoom features to get a closer look of your item

**Note:** Zoom-in as much as you can, while making sure your camera is still able to focus. If you zoom-in too much your camera might not focus the item and you will lose depth-of-field. You should zoom-out and then crop your image to get the desired section of your photo.

### 2. Choose the correct shutter speed to adjust brightness

Every time you take a picture you need to choose the correct light, by adjusting the shutter speed, according to what you think looks best. The shutter speed is represented by a fraction, like 1/100 or 1/250 of a second.

**Do the following:**

- Place an item inside the lighting system**
- Adjust the shutter speed** (by changing the fraction number to be greater or smaller) until you get an image on your screen that is the most appropriate balance between too light and too dark. Choose what image looks best and take note of the shutter speed number.
- Take a photo with the shutter speed number you chose.** This is your "Best looking image". **Note:** It doesn't matter which number you chose.
- Take two additional photos**, one with a slower speed (A lighter photo) and one with a faster speed (A darker photo) from the one you originally chose. *Take note of which shutter speed you use for each one. Read example below.*
- Judge your photos.** Transfer your images to the computer, then open them in full screen to make a better judgment of which one looks best. The best photo will often be the one that looks slightly darker, as this photo will look best after it's been properly edited. The slightly brighter photo is usually inadequate, as parts of your product will fade into the background. The slightly darker photo or the "best looking one" will often be the best to use for editing.

**Important Note:** Choosing an image with a slightly gray background is perfectly normal. You will later eliminate the gray by editing your image. View Page 9.

**Example:** Let's pretend you chose the shutter speed number 1/100 to be just the right balance between too dark and too light. Take a photo with 1/100, then a slower speed (let's say 1/50) which will take a brighter photo, and then a faster speed (let's say 1/125) which will take a darker photo.



**Image that looks best**  
Shutter speed you think is best



**Image that looks brighter**  
Slower shutter speed



**Image that looks darker**  
Faster shutter speed

**Notes:**

- Do not use the shutter speeds mentioned previously, they are just examples. You must choose the shutter speeds yourself.
- To adjust the shutter speed in Canon Cameras: Move the round button on the back of the camera left and right in order to increase or decrease the fraction. Make sure the shutter speed is selected (Not the F-Stop).

### 3. Focus your photos.

Press your camera's shutter button halfway until you hear a beeping sound and see a green square on your LCD screen, this means the camera is focusing properly. If the square is yellow or no square appears, the camera is not focusing properly. To fix this, move the camera away from the item or zoom out.



**Focused Image**  
Green Square Appears



**Unfocused Image**  
Yellow Square (or nothing) Appears

*Note: Not all cameras show a green or yellow square when the image is focused or not focused. Please read your camera's manual for specific information. Do not release the shutter button until your image is properly focused.*

### 4. Achieve Depth-of-field in your photos.

As mentioned on page 5, depth-of-field will allow you to focus your entire item, rather than just sections of it.

**To achieve depth-of-field:**

- a) Move the camera, so that the center of the screen appears on the side of the item (1/3 down from the top of the item – View Photo B on next page).*
- b) Press the shutter button half-way to focus the item and without releasing your finger, move the camera back to have the item on the center of the screen. (View Photo C)*
- c) Click the shutter button all the way down to shoot the image.*

*Please see images on the next page*

**Photo A**



Focusing at the center of the item  
(No depth of field achieved)  
**Bottom of ring is not focused**

**Photo B**



Focusing at the center  
and side of the item

**Photo C**



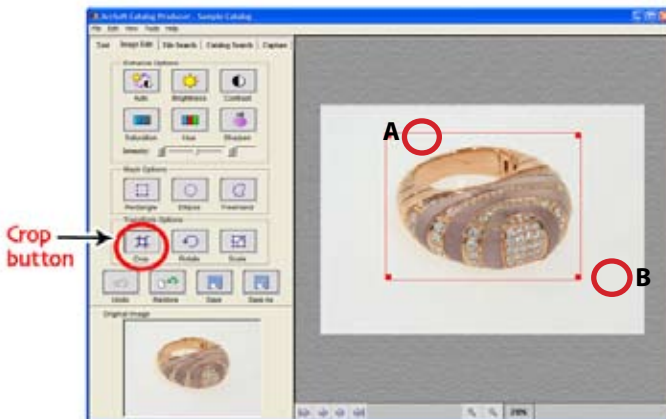
Focusing at the center of the item  
(Depth of field achieved)  
**Entire ring is in focus**

## 6. Adjust the brightness, contrast and sharpening of your photos.

Use the catalog producer software (included with every MK Photography Lighting System) to adjust your photographs and attain perfectly white backgrounds. At times, you may find that even after following all previous steps you will still get photos with slightly gray backgrounds. This may happen, but it can easily be corrected by adjusting the brightness and contrast of your photos.

### **Steps for editing your photos:**

- a) **Crop your photos** - If needed, crop (cut) your image so that you only use the section of the photo that features your item. (View Photo D). Do this by clicking on the "Crop" button under the Image edit tab of the Arcsoft Catalog Producer Software, and then select the area that you would like to crop. To select an area click, hold and drag your mouse diagonally to create a square or rectangle (shown in red). To crop area selected "right-click" your mouse.



**Photo D** - Screenshot of photograph being cropped in  
Arcsoft Catalog Producer Software - Image Edit Tab

*Example: Click and drag from point A to B in the image shown above*







## ***Product Photography Lighting Systems***

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