

SCSH Camera Club

Tip of the Month - How to Take Sharp Photos

The main causes for lack of sharpness:

Poor Focus: might be a result of focusing on the wrong part of the image, being too close to your subject for the camera to focus, selecting an aperture that generates a very narrow depth of field or taking an image too quickly without checking it is in focus.

Subject Movement: another type of 'blur' in shots is the result of your subject moving – this is generally related to shutter speed being too slow.

Camera Shake: you can get blur if you generate movement while taking the image – this often relates to either shutter speed and/or the stillness of your camera.

Noise: 'noisy' shots are ones that are pixelated and look like they have lots of little dots over them.

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Tips for taking sharper photos:

- **Hold Your Camera Well:** use both hands, keep the camera close to your body, support yourself with a wall, tree or some other solid object etc.
- **Tripod:** reduces and even eliminates camera shake. The result you'll get when you do go to the effort of hauling one around can be well worth it.
- **Lens Sweet Spot:** lenses have spots in their aperture ranges that are sharper than others. In many cases this 'sweet spot' is one or two stops from the maximum aperture. So instead of shooting with your lens wide open (ie where the numbers are smallest) pull it back a stop or two and you might find you get a little more clarity in your shots.

The Exposure Triangle

- **Shutter Speed:** the faster your shutter speed the less impact camera shake will have and the more you'll freeze any movement in your shots.
- **Aperture:** decreasing your aperture (increasing the number – say up to f/20) will increase the depth of field meaning that the zone that is in focus will include both close and distant objects.
- **ISO:** the third element of the exposure triangle is ISO which has a direct impact upon the noisiness of your shots. Choose a larger ISO and you'll be able to use faster shutter speed and smaller aperture (which as we've seen help with sharpness) but you'll suffer by increasing the noise of your shots.