

Club News

October Meeting

- Tuesday, 10/5/21 6:30 pm at St. Stephen’s Church!

Note: Masks are required, and everyone must sign a COVID-19 liability waiver to attend (the form will be available at the meeting)

- Program: "Lighting Tips" by LCC members
- Digital Competition—Assigned Subject: Fences



Educational Photo Series—Focus

What is Focus? In every photo you take, there will be a plane of focus. This is the region in space with the potential to be as sharp as possible in a photo.

Some people find it useful to think of the plane of focus like a window intersecting with the scene you’re photographing. Any object in your photo that touches this window is said to be “in focus.” When you move the plane forward and backward to achieve your intended image, usually with your subject at maximum sharpness, that’s called *focusing*.

With modern equipment, focusing typically takes place within your lens, which has glass elements inside that can move forward and backward to change the optical path of light. Along the same lines, if you physically move your lens farther from the camera, you’ll change where the plane of focus is positioned.

Focusing happens either automatically or manually. Automatic focus, or autofocus, is when the camera system drives a motor to move elements in your lens to change focus. To focus manually, you need to turn a ring or similar mechanism on the lens instead.



Manual Focus vs Autofocus In the early days of photography, every single lens was manual focus only (and many lenses today are the same way). Autofocus is a comparatively new invention in the history of photography, first appearing on the market in 1977. Still, it’s an important one.

Autofocus systems use a motor in the camera or lens to focus on a subject you’ve selected manually or automatically. So, just press a button on your camera, and it will focus on your chosen subject.

Most photographers use autofocus more often than manual focus. The main reason is simply convenience; it’s easier than focusing manually. Autofocus also tends to be faster, and, in many cases, it’s also more accurate (such as tracking focus on a moving subject). This is why sports and wildlife photographers tend to rely on autofocus so heavily.

2021 Assigned Subjects

- October: Fences
- November: Scenic

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Focus continued

Still, manual focus stuck around for a reason. If your camera is having trouble focusing, such as in dark conditions, manual focus lets you override any issues, or make precise adjustments that the camera may have missed. And if you set your lens to manual focus, you can lock focus for a series of photos in a row. Although most photographers use autofocus more than manual focus, it's a good idea to be familiar with both.

In order to use autofocus, at least your camera or your lens must have an autofocus motor. That seems simple enough – but “autofocus” lenses don't always have a built-in motor, and neither does every camera on the market! Specifically, if you shoot with the Nikon D3500 or D5600 (or an older model in the same lineup), pay attention to your lens purchases. You'll want one that is designated AF-S or AF-P if you need autofocus; avoid AF-D.

Phase Detection vs Contrast Detection How does autofocus work at a technical level? You don't need to know the science behind it unless you're interested, but you still should be familiar with the two main types of autofocus systems today: phase detection and contrast detection. Each one has its own strengths and weaknesses:



Phase detection is very fast and good at tracking moving subjects, since it doesn't require much computational work from your camera. However, it is also more prone to errors and internal misalignment issues. Some cameras let you calibrate your phase detection system to minimize errors.

Contrast detection requires your camera to process more data, which means it generally takes longer to lock focus. As a result, it isn't good at tracking moving subjects. However, contrast detection does tend to be more precise,

since the autofocus system is directly measuring the data from your camera sensor. This is good when your subject isn't moving as fast, like landscape photography.

On most DSLR cameras, phase detection occurs any time you autofocus via the viewfinder. Contrast detection occurs any time you autofocus via the rear LCD screen. So, just use viewfinder or live view accordingly. (Most mirrorless cameras only have one system, usually a hybrid, so you can't switch between.

Keep in mind that there is always an “ideal plane of focus” in a photo – usually, intersecting with your main subject. Both phase detection and contrast detection can get you there. It's just that phase detection tends to do it more quickly and with better tracking, while contrast detection may do it with more accuracy for nonmoving subjects.

Continuous vs Single-Servo Autofocus Another important decision you must make when using autofocus is to pick your *focusing mode*. The two most important and common options are continuous-servo and single-servo autofocus:

- **Continuous-servo** is also known as AI Servo (Canon) and AF-C (Nikon). Essentially, it means that your camera continuously adjusts focus whenever you hold down the focusing button. This is ideal when you are photographing a moving subject and trying to track its position.

Single-servo is also known as One-Shot (Canon) and AF-S (Nikon). In this case, once your camera acquires focus, it doesn't readjust until you let go of the focusing button and try again. This is ideal when your subject and camera are completely still, and there is no need to keep adjusting from moment to moment for proper focus.



Some cameras have a third mode – Auto-Servo Autofocus – that analyzes the scene and automatically picks between these two options. Even if your camera does have this, though, it's still important to know what each one does, since it's always possible that the automatic selection will make a mistake.

If you're using autofocus, it is recommended single-servo for typical landscape and architectural photography, and continuous-servo for most other images, such as wildlife or sports.

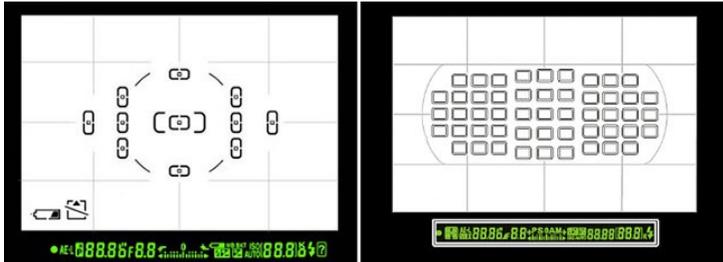
Autofocus Area Modes

A major part of focusing is choosing the right *autofocus area mode*. This is where you tell your camera which sort of focusing strategy you want to ap-

Focus continued

ply, so that it can make the best decisions on how to track and follow focus on your subject.

The important thing is that your autofocus system is made up of **focusing points**, which correspond to regions that your camera can focus on. For example, here are two separate maps of focus points on DSLRs today:



Usually, a greater number of focusing points is better. So is a larger spread (overall coverage area). It's easier to track a moving subject when your camera has several focusing points covering a large portion of the image. However, you still need to tell your camera *how to use those points*, or it won't be particularly helpful. This is where autofocus area modes come into play:

- **Single-Point autofocus:** The camera uses one focusing point to autofocus – the focusing point you've selected. This is good when your camera and subject aren't moving, and you don't need any tracking capabilities. It *can* work with continuous autofocus, but it doesn't track fast-moving objects across multiple points.

- **Dynamic autofocus:** You select a single focusing point for the camera to use. In this case, though, it can track your subject if it moves into some of the surrounding points (you usually can specify how many the camera pays attention to). This area mode is good for wildlife photography.

- **3D Tracking autofocus:** The camera follows your subject as it moves across focusing points. Unlike the standard Dynamic AF-Area mode, you aren't expected to pan your camera around to keep your subject as close as possible to the original point you selected. This is also good for wildlife photography, although it's not always as quick or accurate as the simpler Dynamic AF-Area mode.



- **Group-Area autofocus:** The camera uses multiple autofocus points simultaneously, usually five. It gives all of them equal priority, and focuses on the nearest object located on any of the five points. This is useful for tricky autofocus situations, such as a fast-moving bird in flight.

Auto-Area autofocus is when your camera automatically scans the scene and decides on your subject (often the closest object to your camera, or a face). We don't recommend this mode, since it gives you less control.

Photo Contests

- **Weekly Photo Challenge:**

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/weeklyphotographychallenges>

- **Various Photo Contests (Many Different Topics)**

- <https://www.photocontestinsider.com/>
- <https://photocontestguru.com>
- <http://www.voubs.com>
- www.greatamericanphotocontest.com
- www.viewbug.com/photo-contests
- <https://www.outdoorphotographer.com/photo-contests/>
- <http://www.photocrowd.com>
- <https://www.fanartreview.com>

Landscape and Nature Forum Photography Challenge—monthly theme and critique: [Click here](#)

PSA Events

- **PJ Story Book Competition—The Photojournalism Division is hosting a digital Story Book Competition! Beginning June 1st,** <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?divisions-photojournalism-photo-story-competition-for-instructions>
- **Photo Festival Rapid City Registration is still open, register today!** <https://psa-programs.org/photo-festival-2021/>

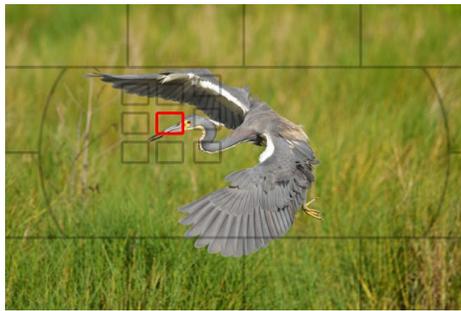
Focus continued

The AF-On Button By default, most cameras will autofocus when you half-press the shutter button. Although this is a nice feature, there are times when you will want the two actions – focusing, and taking a photo – to be separate from one another. Most cameras let you do this by assigning focus to a different button, often called AF-On, and removing it from the shutter release button. This is also called “back button focusing.”

AF-On is exactly like half-pressing the shutter release, but it’s just in a different location. That might not sound like a big deal, but there are plenty of situations where you won’t want the camera to refocus when you press the shutter release, so AF-On is a crucial feature. We recommend that you use it instead of the shutter button if at all possible. There are practically no negatives, and several potential positives.

So, when does AF-On help a photo?

If you want to lock focus across several photos. You simply press the AF-On button to focus, and then don’t press it again until you’ve captured your desired set of photos. This is quicker than switching your lens to manual focus every time you want to lock things down for a series of images.



If you want to focus and recompose. Let’s say that you want a composition where your subject is at the extreme edge of the photo. In that case, it’s unlikely that your autofocus points will reach far enough. So, just focus using one of your existing points, then reposition the composition how you want. This is much more natural with the AF-On button – which you can let go of after you’ve focused – compared to half-pressing the shutter button the entire time.

If you need to wait a bit before capturing the photo. You might find yourself in situations where you need to focus, and then wait some amount of time before capturing the photo. For example, maybe you’re photographing a fox den, and you’re waiting for the fox to peek out its head. With the AF-On button, you can focus at the right spot and wait, then take the photo as quickly as possible when the right moment arrives – while still being prepared to refocus quickly if necessary. These reasons, among others, are why we strongly recommend switching your camera from shutter-release focus to AF-On focus. If you’ve always used the shutter button to autofocus, it might be a bit awkward for the first few days after you switch, but it is something you won’t regret in the end. (Some cameras don’t have an AF-On button, but you’ll almost always be able to customize one of the buttons for the same purpose.)

Where to Focus Most of the time, you should simply focus on your main subject. Typically, if you’re photographing a person, focus on one of their eyes. The same goes for wildlife photography, event photography, and so on. However, sometimes, you’ll have a bit of artistic freedom when you focus. Say that you’re photographing a flower. Should you focus on the nearest petal, or on the colorful center? Neither option is wrong. It comes down to the effect you want to convey in an image. The sharpest objects in your photo stand out. You can use this to your advantage. If you want, you can focus somewhere unexpected to draw attention to a specific part of your photo.

Focus Stacking One technique you might hear about from time to time is called **focus stacking**. With this method, you take several photos *focused at different points*, and then you combine the sharpest bits of every photo together. In a perfect world, the resulting image will be completely sharp everywhere you want.

Focus stacking can be useful, especially for macro photography and landscape photography, where it can be hard to get a sharp enough photo from front to back with any other method. However, it also has some issues.

If anything in your photo is moving, proper focus stacking can be almost impossible. Even in a best-case scenario, it still takes extra time in the field and in post-processing. But it sometimes will be the only way to capture enough depth of field in a photo, so keep it in mind for a rainy day.



Conclusion Focusing is a deep topic in photography that is very important to understand. When your photos are properly focused, they will be sharp and detailed, with a sense of intent and skill behind them. This applies to every type of photography, from sports to landscapes. It’s best to learn things the right way as early as possible so that you don’t fall into bad habits along the way.

Source: [Understanding Focus in Photography \(photographylife.com\)](http://photographylife.com) and [Focusing Tips for Beginners – Ways to Achieve Spot-on Focus in Photography \(digital-photography-school.com\)](http://digital-photography-school.com)

Photo Opportunities

Fall Foliage Weekends in Jim Thorpe – October 2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24

<https://www.jimthorpe.org/fallfoliagefestival>

October 4-8, Manheim Community Farm Show.

<http://www.manheimfarmshow.org/>

October 7-10, Covered Bridge Festival, Elysburg,

<https://uncoveringpa.com/visiting-covered-bridges-northwestern-columbia-county-pennsylvania>

October 9, Myerstown Dutchway Car, Truck and Bike Show, 3-7 pm

October 9-10, Harvest Days with the Pumpkin Patch, www.landisvalleymuseum.org

October 14-23, PA National Horse Show. Harrisburg Farm Show Complex, www.panational.org

October 16-17, Little Buffalo Apple Festival: <https://www.visithersheyharrisburg.org/event/detail/apple-festival/19757/>

October 17, Annual Stony Valley Driving Tour, <https://lebtown.com/2021/09/22/annual-stony-valley-driving-tour-through-state-game-lands-returns-oct-17/>

Photo Idea Calendar



October



Work 1	Folded 2	Rocks 3	Bedtime 4	Breast Cancer Awareness 5	Oktoberfest 6	Magic 7
Dolls 8	Simple 9	The Sky 10	Gate 11	Faceless Portrait 12	Nuts 13	Harvest 14
Dishes 15	O is for... 16	Metal 17	Food 18	Bones 19	Picture 20	Macro 21
Ball 22	Orange 23	Abandoned 24	Scary 25	Fence 26	Moon 27	Boo 28
Costume 29	Pumpkin 30	Cemetery 31				

Workshops

Apogee Photo Magazine

For more information log on to http://www.apogeephoto.com/photography_workshops.shtml

Wildlife and Nature Travel

www.wildlifeandnaturetravel.com

Art Wolfe Photography Workshops

www.artwolfeworkshops.com

Don Smith Photography

www.donsmithphotography.com

Brenda Tharp

www.brendatharp.com/

M&M Photo Tours

<http://www.mmphototours.com/>

Arizona Highway Photo Workshops

<http://www.friendsofhighways.com/>

John Shaw 2-Day Nature & Digital Photography Seminar

<http://www.photosafaris.com/>

Jack Graham Photography

<http://jackgrahamphoto.com/>

Rocky Mountain Reflections

www.rockymtnrefl.com/photographyworkshops.html

Slonina Photography—Explore Wild America

<http://www.sphotography.com>

Photo Workshop Adventures

www.photoworkshopadventures.com

Michael Francis Photo Shoots

www.michaelfrancisphoto.com

Osprey Photo Workshops & Tours

www.ospreyphoto.com

Horizon Photography Workshops

www.horizonworkshops.com

Valerie Hoffman

<https://www.valeriehoffmanphotography.com/treks/>

Photo Editing Feature—Fundamental Photo Editing Checklist

◆ GET THE IMAGE READY

- CROP THE IMAGE** Use cropping to establish composition
- NOISE REDUCTION** Check for **Chromatic Noise** and **Luminance Noise**

◆ WORK THE DETAILS

- GLOBAL EXPOSURE ADJUSTMENT** Use the individual adjustments of: Highlights, Shadows, Whites, and Blacks
- CLIPPING – BLACK POINT**
Set your Black Point so that just a tiny bit of the Clipping Indicator shows up in a non-important location of the image
- CLIPPING – WHITE POINT**
Set your White Point so that just a tiny bit of the Clipping Indicator shows up in a non-important location of the image

◆ GET THE COLOR RIGHT

- COLOR TEMPERATURE & COLOR TINT**
Use the White Balance Tool to set Color Temperature & Tint, or use a visual check if doing special color effects
- CLARITY ADJUSTMENT**
Use Clarity to improve the “effective sharpness” of the image, and watch the Histogram so that you don’t go too far
- SATURATION ADJUSTMENT**
All digital images can be improved with slight saturation adjustments- resist the temptation to go too far

OPTIONAL: APPLY THE DEHAZE FUNCTION / APPLY A VIGNETTE

◆ FINAL DETAILS

- LOCALIZED EXPOSURE & SHARPENING**
Use the Adjustment Brush in Photoshop and Lightroom. Use the Smart Brush Tool in Elements
- GLOBAL SHARPENING**
Use a light touch with Global Sharpening

Random Idea of the Month-Polaroid Now+ Camera

Review: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/13/cnn-underscored/polaroid-now-plus-review/index.html?iid=CNNUnderscoredHPcontainer>

Polaroid web site information: https://us.polaroid.com/products/now-plus-polaroid-camera?gclid=Cj0KCQjw18WKBhCUARIsAFiW7JyxviXV6P2uGf3rdaFVom43bxypBld3rhFxa-uxtONoYrlcbilYX8aAodCEALw_wcB



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Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month!

If you would like to do a program on anything digital related or know someone who would, please let us know.

Or

If you have something of interest for our members, please email them to the Newsletter Editor, Connie at Lebanon-camera@gmail.com.

Everyone is invited to attend our regular monthly meetings.

Unless otherwise noted we meet the first Tuesday at 6:30PM in St. Stephen's Christian Fellowship Church, 1100 Hunter Chase Lane, Lebanon PA.

The club is a member of the Photographic Society of American (PSA).

Cancellation or last minute changes of events will normally be sent to members via email and broadcast on radio station WLBR, AM 1270.

Only members may enter competitions. Dues are \$25 per year and include the newsletter and monthly meeting minutes.

Digital Competition entries are due at least one day prior to the scheduled competition.

Competition Committee will keep winning Print entries for the end of year competition unless the member requests return of entries before then. In that case, the member would be responsible for re-submitting them for the end of year competition.

Directions: From Rt 72 N of Lebanon where N 12th St becomes Jonestown Road at the McDonalds, follow Jonestown Road north past the Turkey Hill. Jonestown Road will become Sandhill Road. Keep on Sandhill road until it branches to the left into Grace Avenue. Church is on the left 3/10 of a mile from the split *before* you pass Youth for Christ and Fisher Bus.

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Microsoft Corporation, the club, or as marked.

Dates and times of events may change. Please check local listings.

**Below are links of
online pdf files from
past workshops and
monthly meeting
presentations:**

[http://
www.lebanoncameraclub.org/
newsletters](http://www.lebanoncameraclub.org/newsletters)

[https://
www.lebanoncameraclub.org/links](https://www.lebanoncameraclub.org/links)