

Intro & Cheat Sheets

I have a bunch of buds who are camera experts. I am not. That said, I've been shooting with some camera or another, in a semi-professional way, for nearly two decades. I'm in that weird spot where I started getting interested in photo/video with digital photography before digital photography was actually good. I had some film things when I was a youth, but was an early adopter to very shitty early-digital cameras. Mini-DV (of 28 Days Later fame), and 3.4 Megapixel digital cameras were what I used early on.

Over time, I graduated to HDV (still a tape), then DSLR, then Digital Cinema, then Mirrorless systems. I believe Mirrorless systems are the best, accessible, camera system for semi-professional photo/video dorks. I've been a Fuji boy since 2020 and love their idiosyncratic X line. If you want to get into photo/video, the best you can do is just do it, a lot. There's a famous quote, that I'm paraphrasing, that goes something like "the best camera is the one you have on you." This is true. But it helps to like the tool and I refuse to believe that a mobile phone with a camera is all you need. Great cameras, but there's a massive difference between that and traditional camera systems with real optics. Again: no shade on Apple (or Google), it's just not the tool for making and doing everything. Also - tactile crafts are just a helluva lot more satisfying. Gimme those knobs and dials!

Camera Technique Cheat Sheet

- Shutter Speed - the speed that the shutter happens - faster = darker and more sharp. Faster looks like this 1/240. Slower looks like this 1/15. In general, the rule for video and your shutter speed is for it to be 2x the frame rate. For 23.976/24, you want to shoot at 1/48. 60fps, 1/120. Not following this rule is called shooting "off-speed".
- Shutter Angle - Shutter speed, but for video. A higher number has greater motion blur, a smaller number is sharper (less motion blur). 180* is basically equivalent to 1/50. I know there's a formula for ideal shutter angle but don't remember.
- Aperture - the amount of light that's let in through the lens by adjusting the iris blades - lower = shallower depth of field. Lower looks like this f/1.4. This is called a "wider" aperture. Camera people will say something like "hey let's open it up a little bit". This is what they're talking about. The opposite is "closing down" to make it "narrow." A higher number looks like this f/22. Film use "T" instead of "F" - I think it's basically the same thing. If you start saying things like "closing down", you might appear very smart.
- Frame rate or FPS - generally speaking, you want your frame rate to be half the shutter speed, so at 24 fps you shoot at a shutter speed of 1/48.
 - Standard frame rates are:
 - 23.976 (most frequently seen IMHO)
 - 24
 - 25 (BBC Mode)
 - 29.97

- 30
- 48
- 59.94
- 96
- 60 (most frequently used for projection media and animated content)
- 120 (fun)
- 240 (very fun)

Camera Mode Cheat Sheet

I'm embarrassed to admit how old I was before I realized what PSAM meant, and I'm even more embarrassed to admit how old I was before I realized what the letters meant.

P - "**Program**" use exposure comp. dial to change your photometry. If ISO is "auto" then this is considered "full auto".

S - "**Shutter Priority**" use exposure comp. dial to change your photometry. You manually set the Shutter here, and everything else is auto.

A - "**Aperture Priority**" use exposure comp. dial to change your photometry. You manually set the aperture here, and everything else is auto.

M - "**Manual**" - full manual baby

Revision #3

Created 2025-04-13 19:55:34 UTC by Cam Vokey

Updated 2025-04-14 14:52:14 UTC by Cam Vokey