

Capturing Movement or Moving subjects

Whilst many cameras have what I affectionately refer to as 'idiot modes' I shall avoid such here and concentrate, as is my personal norm, on Aperture priority although of course you *could* use Shutter priority or full manual.

As I have used Av for a number of years and as such am most familiar with this I cannot see any reason to change – and I have to say that I very much like the idea of choosing my depth of field.

The concepts to follow are actually very basic but may take just a little practice to perfect – you will be able to apply them to horses at the forthcoming Chaddesley point-to-point, to Motor Sports and even to birds in flight although that is a tad trickier.

As always I would recommend that you bank a few simple shots before attempting the slightly more interesting ones.

'Freezing' Action

We are probably all familiar and accomplished in this area but, for the record, here is a quick summary.

As always, weather and light conditions will give you an idea of where to set your ISO – taking into account the limitations of your camera – the vast majority will shoot at 400 ISO with no problem, and newer/better cameras at 800 or higher with little or no visible noise.

A suitable aperture is chosen based on *your* requirement for depth of field and of course subject to the limitations of your lens. Your requirement will be dependant upon whether you want a subject image or an environmental one.

Just in case you have forgotten, a larger Aperture means a smaller depth of field but just to confuse matters a larger Aperture is noted by a smaller f-number.

As such f2.8 will be a shallow d-o-f, whereas f16 will be a deeper d-o-f. Don't forget however to account for, and monitor, the effect that Aperture has on your shutter speed.

Those that have read my full tuition guide may recall the bath analogy -

Your aperture setting is equivalent to the amount that your bath taps are open, a smaller aperture or taps that are only open a little will mean less flow of light / water.

As such you can still achieve the required amount of light / water but it takes longer to do so.



For your initial images you will likely want a relatively fast shutter in order to capture the moving subject crisply and with no blur.



All of the normal 'rules' apply regards focus modes (AI Servo (Canon)/ AF-C (Nikon)) and focus points, if you have the option set your frame rate to a relatively high burst mode to capture the action.



Hopefully you will see that one of the issues with 'freezing' images is that it can be quite a challenge to acquire a reasonable background – the other of course being that the image is relatively boring.

Moving Images

Logically enough, if we wish to show movement of a subject within the frame then we will require a shutter speed slower than that used for 'freezing'.

Personally, the first thing I do is select a nice low ISO – most cameras will only go to 100, but if you have a high-end camera then select 50.

Back to bath logic - note how your shutter speed decreases as you reduce your Aperture. Do not worry about increased d-o-f as this will not be visible.

Simply choose a small enough Aperture value to give a shutter speed you are happy with, OR switch to Shutter priority and select your chosen speed – again your d-o-f is not relevant.

Now, the tricky bit. Ensure that you are positioned correctly so that your subject will pass you along a relatively level focal plane (ie if entering your frame at a distance of 30 feet away, it should also be at c. 30 feet when leaving your frame).



You now need to press your shutter button as you would normally to take the image, but pan your camera with the movement of the subject.

This will allow the subject to be captured with some clarity but your foreground and background should become nicely blurred – obviously the slower your shutter the more abstract the background but also the more likelihood of a blurred subject.

Your shutter speed and your panning will need to be appropriate to the speed of the subject movement and as such it may take a few shots before you get it right.

Hopefully it is obvious that the shutter for the horse above was slower than for the bike. We found that shutter speeds of c. 1/30 – 1/5 sec seemed to be well suited for the horse racing.



