

# *Mastering* MANUAL MODE

## *Module 2* Shutter Speed

# Assignment Overview

## Setting up your First Assignment

Okay, so let's put this technique to the test. For the purpose of this exercise, you need to be in a very well lit environment. The reason for this is when we go to use the fast shutter speeds, they don't allow much light into the camera.

If you don't have a lot of light in your environment, you will find that your image will be too underexposed to really see what's happening or your camera might not even be able to take the shot on TV mode. So try to choose a time of day that you have maximum light available (ideally at around midday) for the fast shutter speed part of the exercise.

It's important to note that we're not looking to create a work of art here. We're just looking to explore this functionality and make sure that you understand the difference between fast and slow shutter speeds and that you start to understand how to achieve them yourself.

Later on, when we're putting all the functions together, we'll aim to create a beautiful image also. But for now, let's just see if we can get one shot with some motion blur and one shot with a frozen moment in time.

It would be fantastic to have an assistant to help you with this exercise.



It's pretty hard to be the model in the photo and the person taking the shot at the same time. If you have no choice, it's still possible, but you will find it a lot trickier to get the focus right.



Setup to shoot from front view, with one simple food item on a single plate. Your light source should be on one side of the table and you should have a vertical backdrop as well as a base background.

Make sure that the light isn't hitting directly onto the table that you choose to set up your subject on. You can position your table very close to direct light, but make sure that the direct light isn't actually hitting your table. Then you can set up a diffuser to soften the intensity of that light. (If you need to know more about diffusing please check out chapter 4 of *The Ultimate Guide to Natural Light for Food Photography*.) When you're working with slow shutter speeds (which will allow more light into the camera), you might find that you actually need to move a bit further away from your light source, to avoid any problems with overexposure.







Put your camera on shutter speed priority mode, (that is TV on Canon and S on Nikon.)

First choose a fast shutter speed, for example, 1/500 of a second and see if the camera will take a shot. If your selected shutter speed number starts to flash that means the camera isn't able to take the shot with the amount of light that is currently available. You have two options here. Option one, you can select a slower shutter speed (which will allow more light into the camera) and try again. You will probably need to stay within the range of about 1/200 of a second to about 1/500 of a second. If you choose slower than this, it might not be fast enough to avoid movement blur. If you choose faster than this you will probably not get enough light into your camera in an indoor environment. Option two, you can stay on your selected shutter speed but you will need to find more light. Get closer to the window, or even bring it outside, but make sure to shoot in a shaded place.



Important note: Make sure that you get your model to stand on the opposite side of the table to your light source or they will block the light!

Have your hand model move their hand slowly in and out of frame as though they are taking something from your food item (maybe grabbing a grape or a nut for example) and take the shot. Do this a few times until you are happy with the result.

Next, if you haven't already set up your tripod, you will need to do it now. Frame the shot in a similar way to the last shot. This time choose a slow shutter speed, e.g. 1/20 of a second. Ask your hand model to repeat the same action.

Compare your images from the slow and fast shutter speeds. The fast shutter speed result should show the hand in clear focus. The second should show motion blur. When you are on a slow shutter speed, ask your model to move their hand at different speeds, ie. slowly in one shot, and faster in another, you should notice a difference in the quality of the blur.

Finally pick your two favourite images, one with a fast shutter speed, and one with a slow shutter speed, and send them to me via the student assignment upload form on this page, and include any questions that might have come up for you as a result of this exercise.

