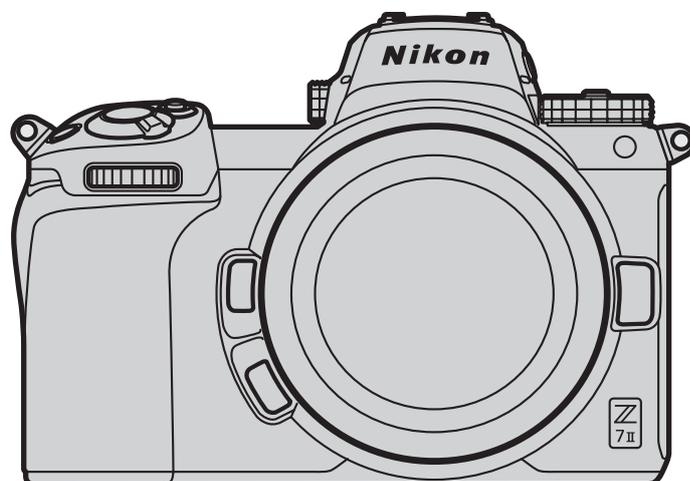
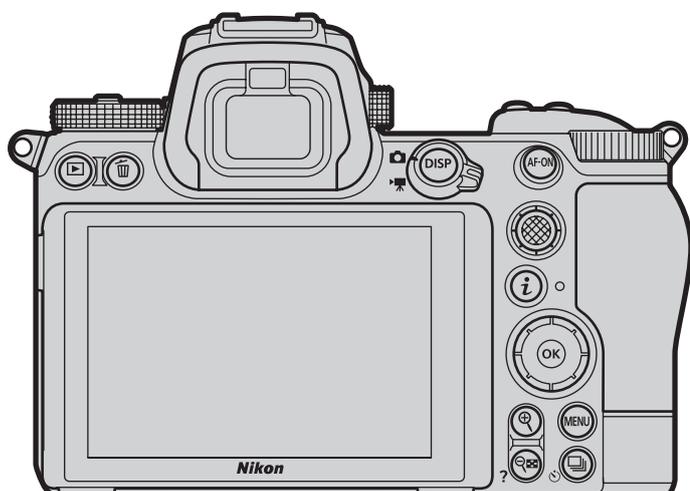


# ***Nikon***



## **Z 7 II / Z 6 II Professional Portrait and Wedding Photography Guide**



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## Getting Ready

### Before You Begin

---

Before embarking on portrait or wedding photography, you'll need to:

#### Decide What You're Taking Pictures For

The number and types of shots you'll need and their composition and presentation depend on where and how the photos will be used, whether it be (for example) as prints or in an album or anthology.



#### Plan Locations, Shot Types, and Poses

Think about the location and the types of shots and poses you'll be aiming for. It's a good idea to storyboard or take notes.



#### Share Your Ideas with Your Models

Share your ideas about the shoot with the people who will be your subjects. For wedding photos, it's vital to consult with the bride and groom.



#### Adjust Camera Settings

Adjusting camera settings in advance is a must. Choosing the right settings helps ensure that the shoot proceeds smoothly and minimizes the amount of retouching required in post. See ["Camera Settings" \(page 6\)](#) for more information.



## Things to Bring

The main items of equipment you'll need for portrait and wedding photography are:



*a camera,*



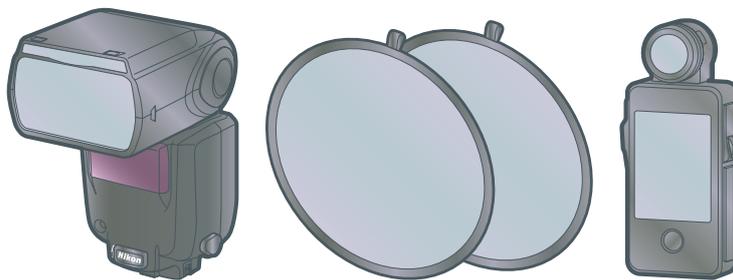
*lenses,*



*a battery,*



*memory cards, and*



*a flash, reflector panels, a light meter, and other lighting equipment.*

### **Bring Spare Batteries and Memory Cards**

Bring extra fully-charged batteries and empty memory cards. If you're planning an extended shoot lasting several days, it's also a good idea to bring a battery charger.

Getting Ready, Continued

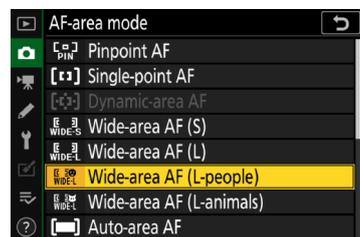
## Camera Settings

The core settings for portrait and wedding photography are:

<b>AF-area mode</b>	Wide-area AF (L-people)
<b>ISO sensitivity</b>	ISO 200
<b>Picture Control</b>	Portrait
<b>White balance</b>	Auto
<b>Image quality</b>	NEF (RAW) + JPEG normal
<b>Photo shooting menu</b>	
<b>Portrait impression balance</b>	Adjust hue and brightness for portraits as desired
<b>Custom Settings</b>	
<b>f2 Custom controls</b>	Assign [Playback] to the Fn1 or Fn2 button

### AF-Area Mode: Wide-Area AF (L-People)

This mode uses a wider area for focus than single-point AF. Another benefit is that the camera detects the faces and eyes of human portrait subjects automatically. You still have the option of focusing on a specific subject if, for example, you want to single out the bride in a photograph of the wedding couple.



### Improving Focus with Single Subjects

An AF-area mode of [Auto-area AF (people)] is recommended for more accurate focus on individual portrait subjects.



### Face- and Eye-Detection AF

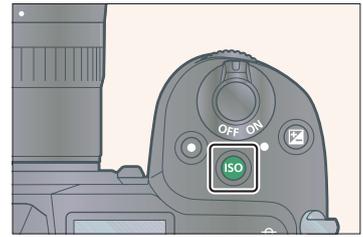
The camera detects the faces and eyes of human portrait subjects when [Wide-area AF (L-people)] or [Auto-area AF (people)] is selected for [AF-area mode] in the photo shooting menu (face/eye-detection AF).

- When the camera detects a human face, a yellow border indicating the focus point will appear around the subject's face. If the camera detects the subject's eyes, the yellow focus point will instead appear over one or the other of their eyes.
- If **AF-C** is selected for focus mode, the focus point will light yellow when faces or eyes are detected. If **AF-S** is selected, the focus point will light green when the camera focuses.
- If the subject looks away after their face is detected, the focus point will move to track their motion.
- During playback, you can press **OK** to zoom in on the face or eye used for focus.
- If more than one human face or eye is detected when [Auto-area AF (people)] is selected, **◀** and **▶** icons will appear on the focus point. You will be able to position the focus point over a different face or eye by pressing **◀** or **▶**.



### ***ISO Sensitivity: ISO 200***

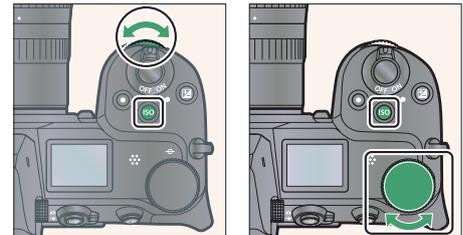
When choosing a value for ISO sensitivity, you'll need to consider such factors as ambient lighting (natural or designed) and whether your subject is static or in motion—try starting with values between ISO 100 and 800. You can always use auto ISO sensitivity control if you have trouble deciding.



### ■ **Subject on the Move? Try Auto ISO Sensitivity Control**

Enabling auto ISO sensitivity control lets the camera adjust ISO sensitivity automatically.

- In modes **P**, **S**, **A**, and **M**, you can select from **ISO AUTO** (auto ISO sensitivity control enabled) and **ISO** (auto ISO sensitivity control disabled) by holding the **ISO** button and rotating the sub-command dial. In **AUTO** mode, auto ISO sensitivity control is enabled by default. To switch to a manually-selected value, hold the **ISO** button and rotate the main command dial.



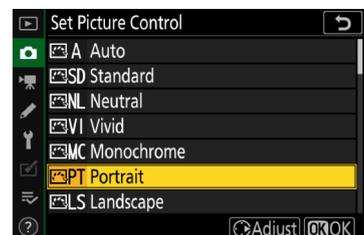
P, S, A, and M modes

AUTO mode

- One effective way of preventing motion blur is to select **[Auto]** for **[ISO sensitivity settings]** > **[Auto ISO sensitivity control]** > **[Minimum shutter speed]** and choose a fast value for auto minimum shutter speed selection.
- Custom Setting e4 **[Auto ⚡ ISO sensitivity control]** can be used to choose how the camera adjusts flash level when auto ISO sensitivity control is enabled.

### ***Picture Control: Portrait***

This choice smooths complexions for natural-looking portraits.



### ■ **Custom Picture Controls**

Picture Control parameters can be fine-tuned and the results saved as custom Picture Controls using **[Manage Picture Control]** in the photo shooting menu. It's a good idea to use the **[Portrait]** Picture Control as a starting point when creating custom Picture Controls for portrait photography.

#### **🔧 Using Picture Controls to Soften Skin Texture and Make Eyes More Visible**

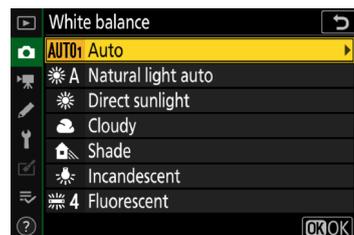
Picture Control settings for softening skin tones while leaving the eyes clearly visible can be found under 'Step 2: Fine-Tune "Sharpening", "Mid-Range Sharpening", and "Clarity"' in the *Z 7/Z 6 Professional Technical Guide: Images*, available for download from <https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/>. The *Technical Guide* uses the **[Standard]** Picture Control as an example, but this has no effect on the techniques described.

### Getting Ready, Continued

#### White Balance: Auto

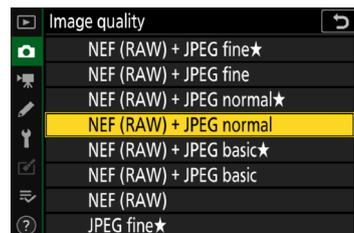
White balance will be adjusted automatically for optimal results with most light sources. If an optional flash unit is used, white balance will be adjusted in accord with the conditions in effect when the flash fires.

- **[Auto]** may not produce the desired results when used with non-Nikon flash units.



#### Image Quality: NEF (RAW) + JPEG Normal

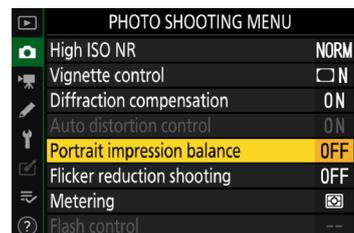
The camera will record two copies of each picture, one in NEF (RAW) format and the other a normal-quality JPEG copy.



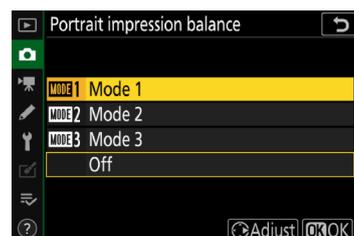
#### Portrait Impression Balance: Adjust Hue and Brightness

Use **[Portrait impression balance]** to fine-tune hue and brightness for portrait photos and save the results as **[Mode 1]**, **[Mode 2]**, or **[Mode 3]**. The saved modes can be applied to new pictures. The steps involved are as follows:

- 1 Select **[Portrait impression balance]** in the photo shooting menu.

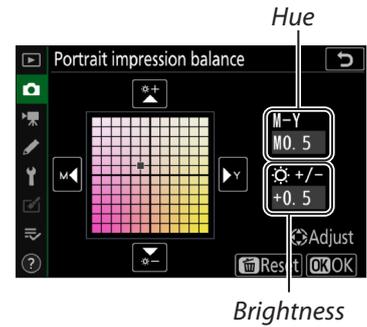


- 2 Highlight a mode from **[Mode 1]** through **[Mode 3]** and press **[Adjust]**.



**3 Adjust and save hue and brightness settings.**

- Press or to adjust brightness and or to adjust hue on the magenta (M)–yellow (Y) axis. Adjustments change hue and brightness as shown below.



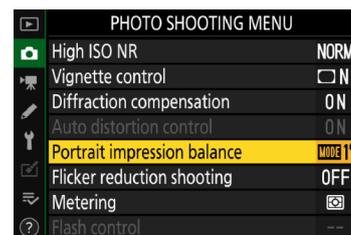
↑ +

	M-Y: M3.0 ☀ +/- +3.0	M-Y: 0.0 ☀ +/- +3.0	M-Y: Y3.0 ☀ +/- +3.0	
<b>M</b> ←				<b>Y</b> →
	M-Y: M3.0 ☀ +/- 0.0	M-Y: 0.0 ☀ +/- 0.0	M-Y: Y3.0 ☀ +/- 0.0	
	M-Y: M3.0 ☀ +/- -3.0	M-Y: 0.0 ☀ +/- -3.0	M-Y: Y3.0 ☀ +/- -3.0	

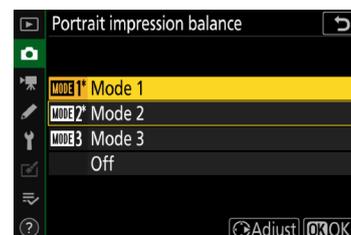
↓ -

**Getting Ready, Continued**

- Press **OK** to save changes and return to the photo shooting menu.



- 4 Highlight the desired mode in the **[Portrait impression balance]** display and press **OK**.



### **⚠ Cautions: Portrait Impression Balance**

- **[Portrait impression balance]** will not be available if:
  - **[Monochrome]** or **[Creative Picture Control]** is selected for **[Set Picture Control]**, or
  - **[N-Log]** or **[HDR (HLG)]** is selected for **[HDMI] > [Advanced] > [N-Log/HDR (HLG) output options]** in the setup menu.
- The values selected for portrait impression balance cannot be viewed in the camera playback display, in the **[NEF (RAW) processing]** display in the retouch menu, or in Nikon's NX Studio software.
- Portrait impression balance settings for existing pictures cannot be altered using NX Studio or the **[NEF (RAW) processing]** item in the retouch menu.

### **Assign Playback to the Fn1 or Fn2 Button**

Assigning this role to the Fn1 or Fn2 button lets you start playback without taking your eye from the viewfinder.



### **⚠ Playback Zoom Using the **OK** Button**

Pressing **OK** during playback zooms in on the active focus point (assuming that the default setting—**[Zoom on/off]**—is selected for Custom Setting f3 **[OK button] > [Playback mode]**). Pressing **OK** a second time cancels zoom. A single press of the **OK** button zooms in a preselected amount, a feature that comes in handy for quick focus checks and the like.

### **⚠ Assigning Related Functions to the Fn1 and Fn2 Buttons**

Assigning related functions to the **Fn1** and **Fn2** buttons—for example, assigning **[Playback]** to the former and **[Protect]** or **[Rating]** to the latter—makes for smoother shooting and helps speed post-shooting review.

## Lenses

The correct choice of lens is very important. Choose a lens according to your goals and the kind of pictures you want to take.

### *Recommended Lenses for Portrait and Wedding Photographs*

Lens	See
NIKKOR Z 14-24mm f/2.8 S	<a href="#">Page 11</a>
NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S	<a href="#">Page 12</a>
NIKKOR Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S	<a href="#">Page 13</a>
NIKKOR Z 35mm f/1.8 S	<a href="#">Page 13</a>
NIKKOR Z 50mm f/1.2 S, NIKKOR Z 50mm f/1.8 S	<a href="#">Page 14</a>
NIKKOR Z 85mm f/1.8 S	<a href="#">Page 14</a>

#### ■ NIKKOR Z 14–24mm f/2.8 S



Choose this wide-angle (14–24 mm) zoom lens for striking images with beautiful, dynamic backgrounds.

- Generally with wide-angle lenses, distortion increases toward the edges of the frame. When composing shots, you'll need to pay attention to ensure a natural balance between your subject and the rest of the frame.

■ NIKKOR Z 24–70mm f/2.8 S



© Marie Bärsch

This standard (24–70 mm) zoom lens can be used for a wide variety of scenes.

■ **NIKKOR Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S**



Use this telephoto (70–200 mm) zoom lens to blur and soften backgrounds, helping draw attention to your photos' main protagonists.

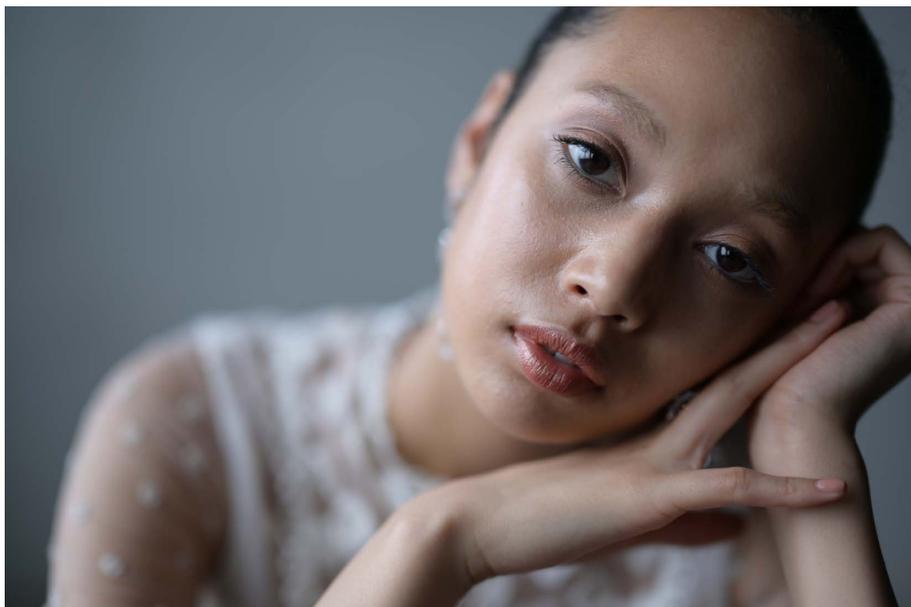
■ **NIKKOR Z 35mm f/1.8 S**



With a focal length of 35 mm, this lens ensures a good balance between your subject and the background.

## Getting Ready, Continued

### ■ NIKKOR Z 50mm f/1.2 S, NIKKOR Z 50mm f/1.8 S



© Kyoko Munakata

The beautiful smooth *bokeh* produced by these fast 50 mm lenses enhances expressions on the faces of portrait subjects.

- 50 mm lenses are available with maximum apertures of f/1.2 and f/1.8. Choose according to your budget and the desired lens size.

### ■ NIKKOR Z 85mm f/1.8 S



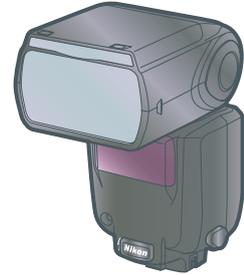
A focal length of 85 mm creates more striking portraits while keeping your subject at a respectable distance.

## Flash Units and Other Lighting Equipment

Your selection of lighting equipment will be based on such considerations as the type of results you want to achieve, the location, the weather, and the time of day.

### Flash Units

Flash units are recommended for effective lighting. For wireless flash control involving multiple flash units, choose the SB-5000. More information is available in the *Technical Guide for Radio-Controlled Advanced Wireless Lighting*, available from the Nikon Download Center SB-5000 product page (<https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/en/products/322/SB-5000.html>).



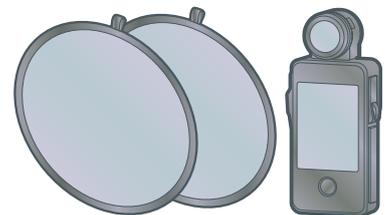
### **⚡ Nissin and Profoto Products**

Nikon has confirmed that features such as auto white balance can produce the desired results with Nissin products and the following Profoto accessories: Profoto A1, Profoto A1X, Profoto A10, Connect, and Air Remote TTL.

- Before using the products listed above, be sure to update to the latest versions of the firmware for the camera, lens, and flash unit.
- For product specifications and other information, contact the manufacturer.

### Reflector Panels, Light Meters, and Other Lighting Equipment

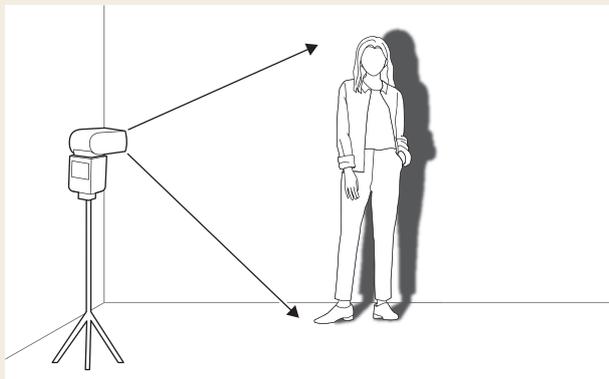
Reflector panels help illuminate the faces of back-lit subjects and other areas where light tends to be lacking. Reflector panels can also be used to soften complexions and facial expressions. Add a light meter to measure light levels and calculate exposure. Other choices for diffuse lighting include diffusers and softboxes. Bring what you'll need for the task at hand.



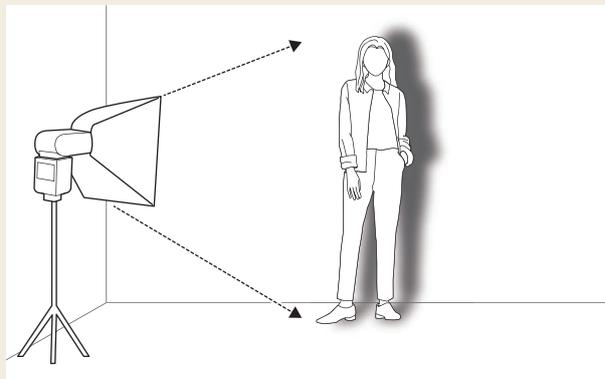
## Getting Ready, Continued

### Point Versus Area Light Sources

“Point” light sources are small and “area” light sources, large. Smaller sources naturally generate harder light and shadows with sharp edges. Larger light sources, on the other hand, produce softer light and shadows with blurred edges.



*The smaller the light source, the harder the light*

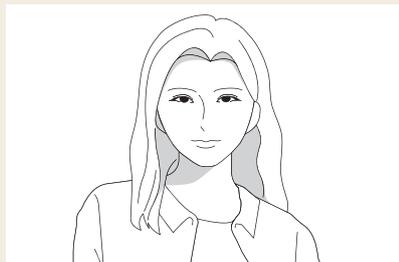
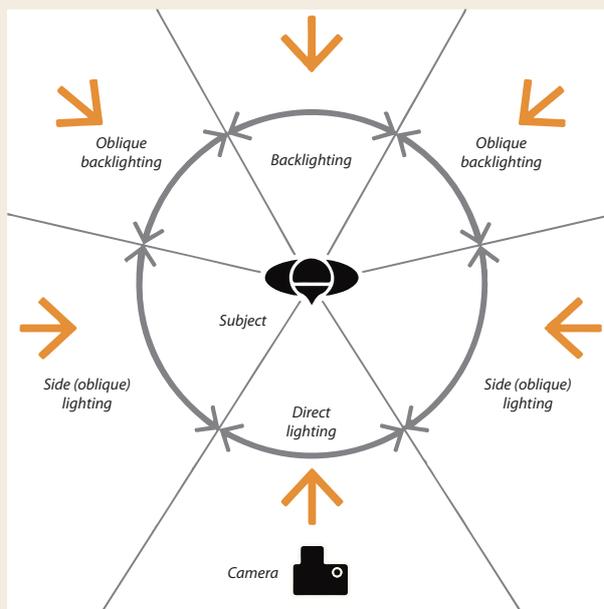


*The larger the light source, the softer the light*

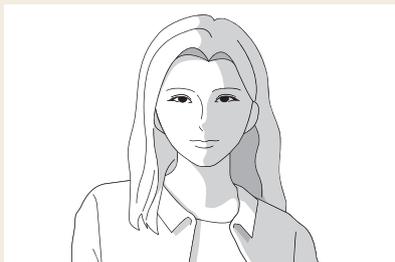
### Lighting Angle

The appearance of your subject changes according to where the light is coming from.

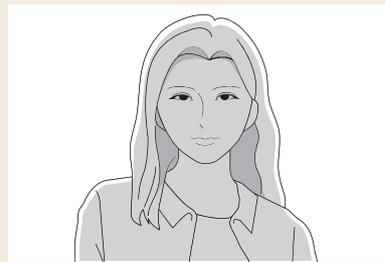
- **Direct lighting:** Light coming from the same side as the camera. Details will be clearly visible and colors vibrant. The lack of shadows does however tend to flatten relief.
- **Side (oblique) lighting:** Light coming from the left or right side. The term “side lighting” is sometimes reserved for lighting coming directly from one side, with “oblique lighting” used for light coming at an oblique angle from a source to the front and side. Side lighting follows contours to create areas of light and shadow that enhance relief.
- **Backlighting:** Light striking the subject from the side opposite the camera. Light coming at an oblique angle from behind and to the side is sometimes referred to as “oblique backlighting”. Although the light striking the subject from behind throws the side facing the camera into shadow, the edges will be bright. If the main part of the subject is too dark, you can brighten shadows using exposure compensation or a supplementary light source such as a flash or reflector panel.



*Direct lighting*



*Side (oblique) lighting*



*Backlighting*

## The Studio Workflow

This section takes you through the workflow for in-studio portrait and wedding photography.



[“Composing and Posing” \(page 18\)](#)



[“Test Shots” \(page 19\)](#)



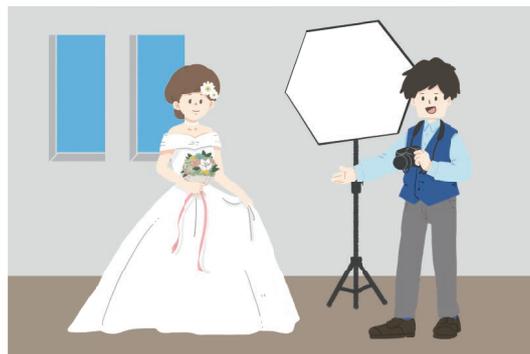
[“Taking Pictures” \(page 20\)](#)



[“Retouching Pictures” \(page 21\)](#)

## Composing and Posing

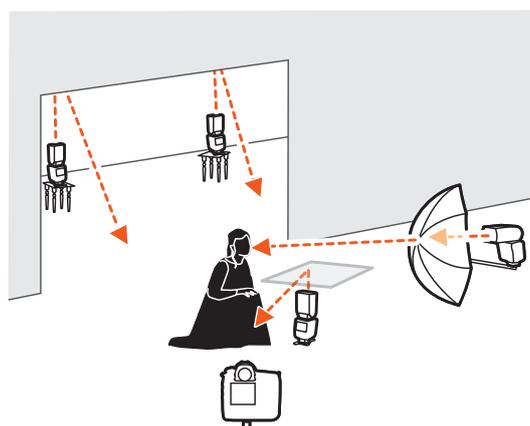
Before composing shots and requesting your subjects to take their places, tell them the sort of pictures and poses you have in mind. Communication is the key.



## Lighting the Shot

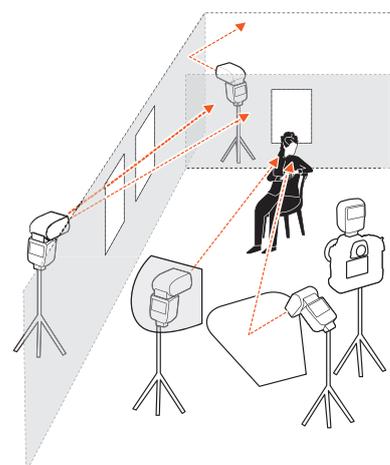
Light the scene for the pictures and poses you have in mind.

- For wireless flash control involving multiple flash units, choose the SB-5000. More information is available in the *Technical Guide for Radio-Controlled Advanced Wireless Lighting*, available from the Nikon Download Center SB-5000 product page (<https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/en/products/322/SB-5000.html>).



### ■ Lighting Tips for Indoor Portrait Shots

- Small (point) light sources create sharp, deep shadows. For softer shadows like those often seen in women's portraits, make the lighting more diffuse by adding ceiling lighting or adjusting flash units to bounce light off the ceiling.
- If you're renting a studio, it might be a good idea to bring along diffusers or other light-diffusing accessories.

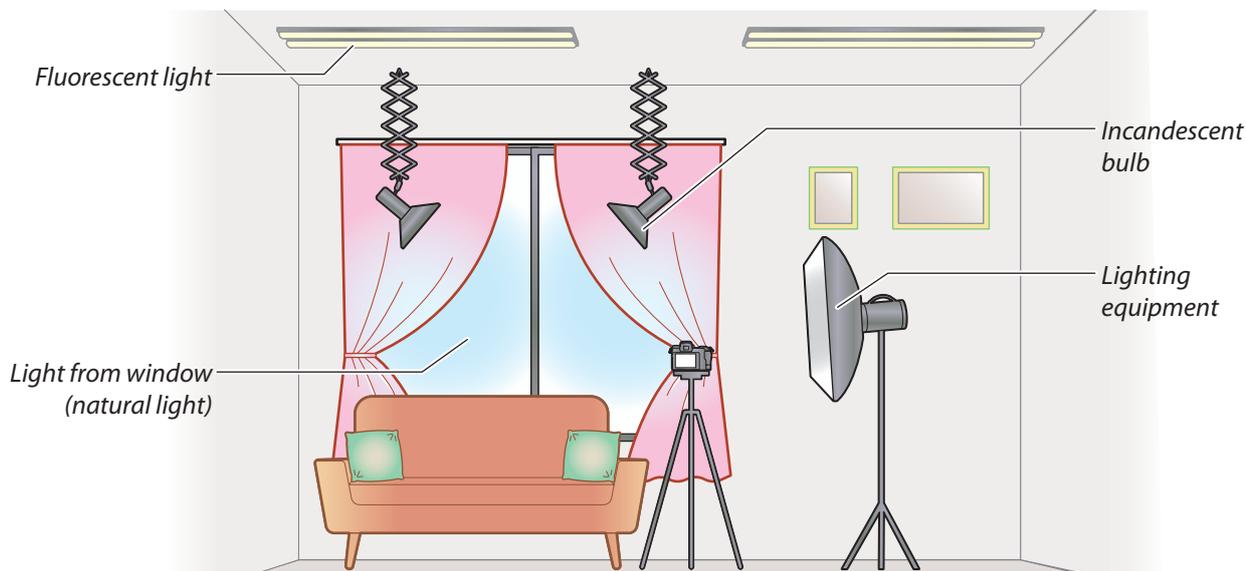


## Test Shots

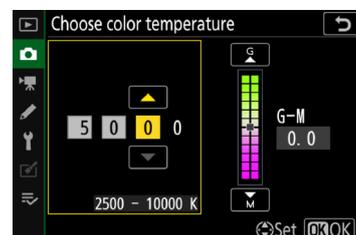
Take test shots before the main event to see if the look and colors match what you have in mind.

### Colors

- Check colors using studio lighting equipment, incandescent and fluorescent bulbs, light from windows (natural light), and mixed lighting.



- For more striking colors, switch from **[Auto]** white balance to **[Choose color temperature]** and select the color temperature manually.
  - Color temperature can be viewed in the playback photo info display.
  - Low color temperatures add a bluer, “cold” cast while higher values make pictures redder.
  - Shift white balance toward magenta (M) to reduce green casts or toward green (G) when faced with unnatural-looking reds.



### 🔧 Capturing the Original Colors

For colors closely matching those of the original scene, try using preset manual white balance. Preset manual meters white balance directly from a white or gray object lit the same way as your actual subject. It can be accessed using **[White balance] > PRE ([Preset manual])** in the **i** menu. For more information, see the camera *Reference Manual*, available via the Nikon Download Center (<https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/>).

### Fine-Tuning Picture Controls

Those who enjoy tweaking Picture Controls will find custom Picture Controls a useful tool ([page 7](#)). You can name and save them as you choose or copy them to memory cards for use with compatible software or other cameras of the same type.

### 🔧 Customizing Picture Controls

Raising **[Sharpening]** or **[Contrast]** too high may make portraits look harsh.

## Taking Pictures

Now on to the main event: taking the actual pictures.

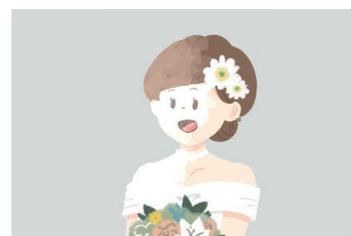
- Useful techniques for portrait and wedding photographs can be found under [“Shooting Techniques” \(page 30\)](#).
- Remember to take test shots and check the results after changing locations or composition ([page 19](#)).



### What If...

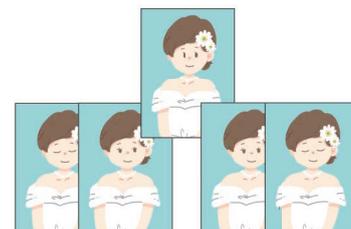
#### ■ ...I Need to Preserve Details in Highlights?

To preserve details in highlights or in light-colored objects (such as white wedding dresses), select [**Highlight-weighted metering**].



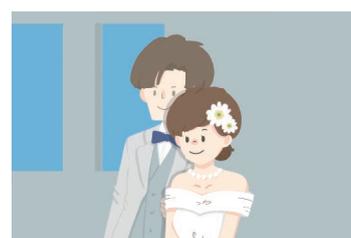
#### ■ ...My Model Tends to Blink?

If conditions are making it hard for your model not to blink, try shooting bursts with [**Continuous L**] or [**Continuous H**] selected for release mode and picking the best shots.



#### ■ ...I Want to Photograph a Group in Profile?

If your subjects are at different distances from the camera (as may be the case, for example, when you're photographing the newlyweds together in profile), try stopping aperture down to increase depth of field.



## Retouching Pictures

This section introduces you to the art of retouching pictures using Nikon's NX Studio computer software. Available only from Nikon, NX Studio can be used to view and edit pictures and process NEF (RAW) photos. An installer is available from the Nikon Download Center (<https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/>).



### Color Control Points: Targeted Changes to Brightness and Color

Color control points can be used for targeted adjustments to brightness, color, or the like.



### Color Booster: Making Colors More Vivid

The color booster tool optimizes saturation to make colors more vivid.

#### ■ "People"

Choose [**People**] to boost colors without affecting the look of portrait subjects.



■ **“Nature”**

Choose [**Nature**] to boost the colors of all elements in the frame, including portrait subjects.



## The Outdoor Workflow

This section takes you through the workflow for outdoor portrait and wedding photography.



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[“Composing and Posing” \(page 24\)](#)



[“Test Shots” \(page 25\)](#)



[“Taking Pictures” \(page 27\)](#)



[“Retouching Pictures” \(page 28\)](#)

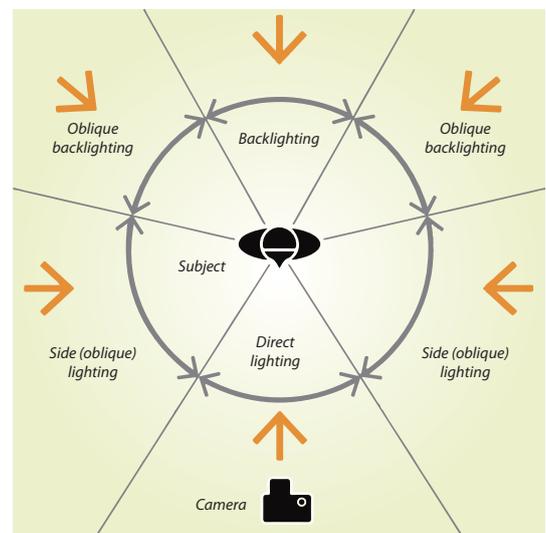
## Composing and Posing

Before composing shots and requesting your subjects to take their places, tell them the sort of pictures and poses you have in mind. Communication is the key.



## Capturing Light

You'll generally find yourself using natural light for outdoor shots. Among the factors you'll need to consider when composing shots and choosing poses are where the light is coming from, the time of day (and position of the sun), and the weather.



### **🔦 Oblique Lighting Is Best**

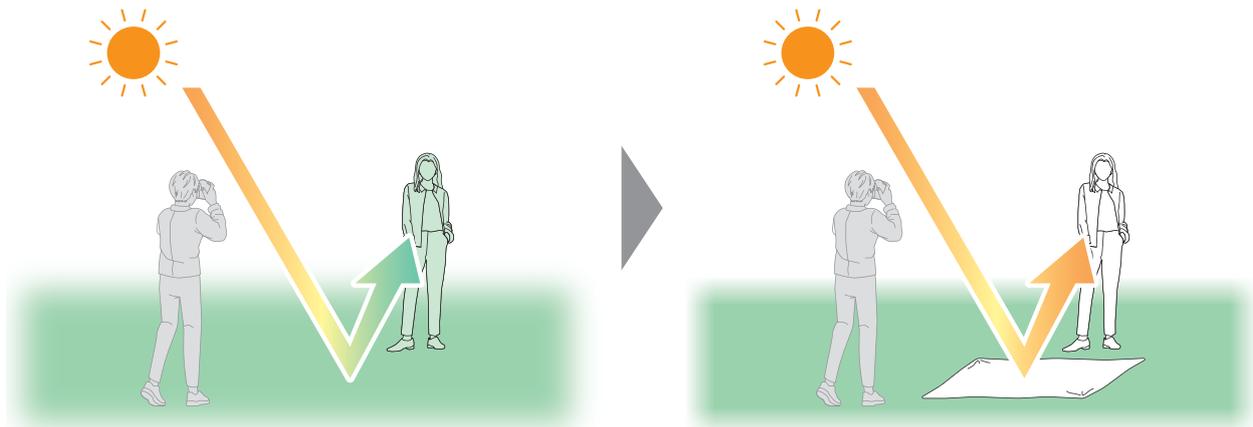
Positioning your subject with sunlight coming from the front at an angle of 30° to 45° adds catchlights to their eyes and life to their countenance. The shadows created by lighting faces from one side add just enough relief to further enhance facial expressions.

## Test Shots

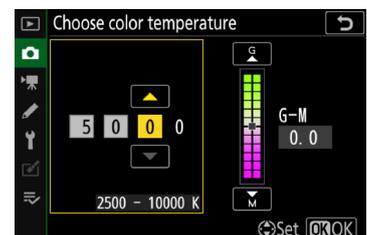
Take test shots before the main event to see if the look and colors match what you have in mind.

### Colors

- Tints added by colored lighting, such as the green tint added to the faces of subjects standing on a lawn, are called “color casts”. Color casts can be corrected using reflector panels or by placing a white cloth at your subject’s feet. Be sure to position reflectors or cloths out of the frame so that they aren’t visible in photos.



- For more striking colors, switch from **[Auto]** white balance to **[Choose color temperature]** and select the color temperature manually.
  - Color temperature can be viewed in the playback photo info display.
  - Low color temperatures add a bluer, “cold” cast while higher values make pictures redder.
  - Shift white balance toward magenta (**M**) to reduce green casts or toward green (**G**) when faced with unnatural-looking reds.



### 🔧 Capturing the Original Colors

For colors closely matching those of the original scene, try using preset manual white balance. Preset manual meters white balance directly from a white or gray object lit the same way as your actual subject. It can be accessed using **[White balance] > PRE ([Preset manual])** in the **i** menu. For more information, see the camera *Reference Manual*, available via the Nikon Download Center (<https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/>).

### 🔧 Easy Exposure Compensation

To adjust exposure compensation using only a command dial, choose **[On]** for Custom Setting b2 **[Easy exposure compensation]**. The selected value will not be reset when the camera is turned off or the standby timer expires.

### ***Fine-Tuning Picture Controls***

Those who enjoy tweaking Picture Controls will find custom Picture Controls a useful tool ([page 7](#)). You can name and save them as you choose or copy them to memory cards for use with compatible software or other cameras of the same type.

#### **Customizing Picture Controls**

Raising [**Sharpening**] or [**Contrast**] too high may make portraits look harsh.

## Taking Pictures

Now on to the main event: taking the actual pictures.

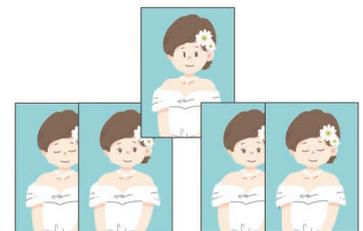
- Useful techniques for portrait and wedding photographs can be found under [“Shooting Techniques” \(page 30\)](#).
- Remember to take test shots and check the results after changing locations or composition ([page 25](#)).



### What If...

#### ■ ...My Model Tends to Blink?

If conditions are making it hard for your model not to blink, try shooting bursts with [**Continuous L**] or [**Continuous H**] selected for release mode and picking the best shots.



#### ■ ...I Need to Be Quiet?

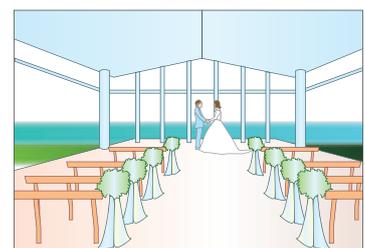
If you're worried that sounds from the camera may disturb those around you, select [**On**] for [**Silent photography**] in the photo shooting menu to eliminate the noise and vibration from the mechanical shutter.

#### 🚫 Cautions: Silent Photography

- Selecting [**On**] for [**Silent photography**] does not completely silence the camera. Camera sounds may still be audible, for example during autofocus or aperture adjustment, in the latter case most noticeably at apertures smaller (i.e., at f-numbers higher) than f/5.6.
- Flash photography is disabled.
- Long-exposure noise reduction is disabled.
- There is no limit to the number of photos that can be taken in a single burst, regardless of the option chosen for Custom Setting d2 [**Max. continuous release**].
- The electronic shutter is used, regardless of the option selected for Custom Setting d5 [**Shutter type**].
- Regardless of the settings selected for [**Beep options**] in the setup menu, beeps will not sound when the camera focuses or while the self-timer is in operation.
- Enabling silent photography changes the frame advance rates for continuous release modes.

#### ■ ...The Scene Has Depth?

Stopping aperture down or opening it up to increase or reduce depth of field changes the amount of *bokeh* and thus the impressions your photos create.



## Retouching Pictures

This section introduces you to the art of retouching pictures using Nikon's NX Studio computer software. Available only from Nikon, NX Studio can be used to view and edit pictures and process NEF (RAW) photos. An installer is available from the Nikon Download Center (<https://downloadcenter.nikonimglib.com/>).



### Color Control Points: Targeted Changes to Brightness and Color

Color control points can be used for targeted adjustments to brightness, color, or the like.



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## Shooting Techniques

Here are some techniques you may find useful for portrait and wedding photography.



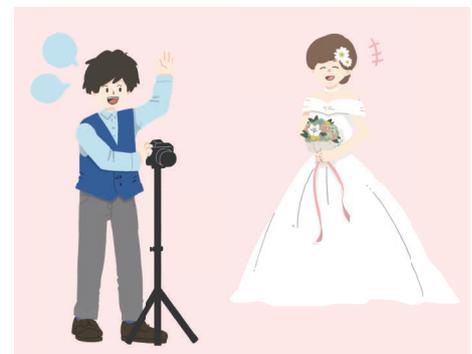
### Communicate

It's important to talk with your models. Provide appropriate direction during shooting. It can also be a good idea to show them some shots from time to time as the session progresses so they can see how they look.



### Liven Things Up

Your subjects' expressions are what makes or breaks portraits. Your mood will communicate itself to your models, in turn affecting how your pictures come out, so you should make an effort to liven things up. Take care, however, not to come across as pushy or ill-mannered.



## Shoot More Than Portraits

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In addition to portraits, take photos of the background and other bits and bobs.

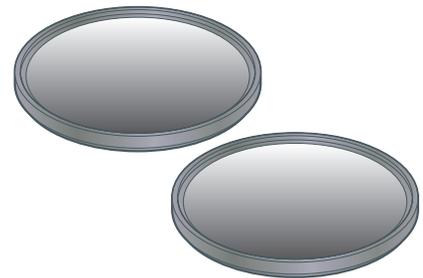


## Use Filters

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For softer pictures, use neutral-density or soft-focus filters.

- Neutral-density (ND) filters, which regulate the amount of light entering the lens, can be used where slower shutter speeds are desired.
- Soft-focus filters are fine-tuned using a special process to produce a soft effect. They are noted for softening photos just enough for beautiful *bokeh*.



***Nikon***