

10 Best Free Online Photography Courses in 2024

🕒 UPDATED JAN 16, 2024

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With every year that goes past, photography becomes more and more accessible to the average person. Compared to even a decade ago, even the most basic cameras – including those on your smartphone – produce excellent images. Moreover, you can find plenty of free resources and classes that give you all the information you need to succeed.

Online learning has grown into a huge industry over the past couple of years, and many photographers with significant experience in their field have chosen to share their wisdom with the masses. While you have to pay for many of the best digital photography courses, you can find plenty that don't require you to part with your hard-earned cash.

If you don't have a lot of money to spend on online classes, or you simply don't want to, we're here to help. In this article, we'll identify the 10 best places to learn more about photography online. You'll find courses related to the basics of digital picture-taking, along with others that focus on specific genres.

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Stanford's Digital Photography Course

In Spring 2011, Stanford University hosted a series of lectures designed to help students learn more about digital photography. And while the art has evolved dramatically since then, you will still find a lot of use in the information shared in this course.

The course features 18 lectures, each of which you can watch in [a YouTube playlist](#).



To supplement the lessons, you can also complete various homework assignments given on a weekly basis; you can find them [here](#).



Popularization of photography

- ✦ before George Eastman, photographers were skilled, photographs were posed, and images were “crafted”
- ✦ the Kodak camera was cheap, portable, and easy to use
- ✦ photography became casual, spontaneous, and popular
- ✦ concentrated on documenting everyday life
- ✦ word “snapshot” invented by Herschel
- ✦ privacy became an issue (it still is)
- ✦ women started taking pictures - so subjects changed
- ✦ Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935)



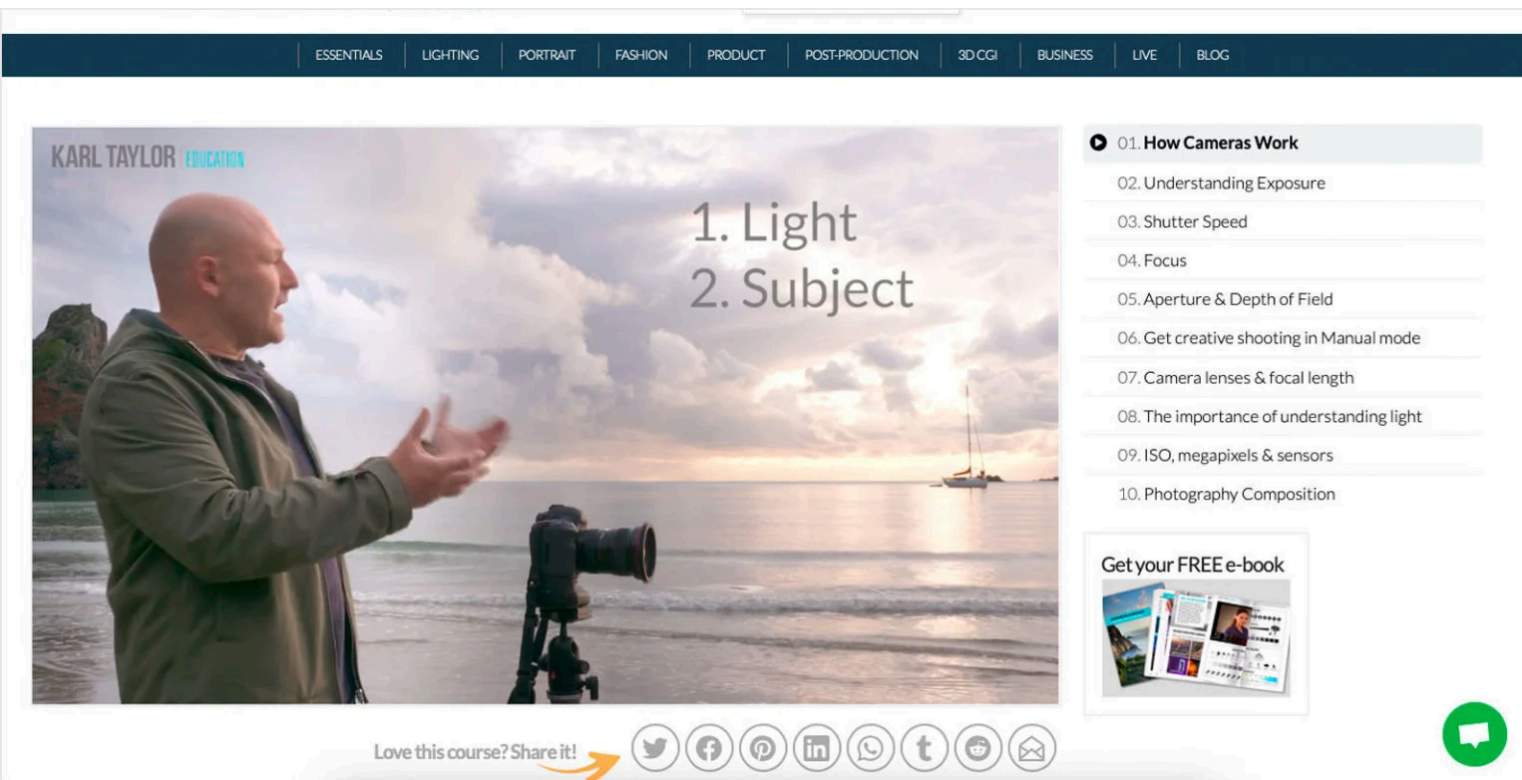
During Stanford's photography course, you will learn about several photography genres – such as how to take better pictures of sporting events. Others include architectural photography and [capturing beautiful landscape shots](#).

The course also teaches you about useful theories and concepts, such as color theory and depth of field. On top of that, you'll find slides that summarize important points.

An Introduction to Photography by Karl Taylor Education

If you've never picked up a camera before, learning the basics before you go out to shoot is a good idea. We'll cover a selection of courses that enable you to do that in this article, and the first you'll learn more about is [An Introduction to Photography](#), which you can find on the Karl Taylor Education website.

This introductory course is relatively simple and walks through multiple concepts in photography. The first video is particularly useful; you'll learn about how cameras work and grab a sneak preview of what the rest of the course has to offer. The presenter discusses everything concisely, using as simple language as possible.



The screenshot displays the Karl Taylor Education website interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains menu items: ESSENTIALS, LIGHTING, PORTRAIT, FASHION, PRODUCT, POST-PRODUCTION, 3D CGI, BUSINESS, LIVE, and BLOG. The main content area features a video player with a thumbnail image of a man on a beach. The video title is "1. Light 2. Subject". To the right of the video player is a course menu with 10 items:

- 01. How Cameras Work
- 02. Understanding Exposure
- 03. Shutter Speed
- 04. Focus
- 05. Aperture & Depth of Field
- 06. Get creative shooting in Manual mode
- 07. Camera lenses & focal length
- 08. The importance of understanding light
- 09. ISO, megapixels & sensors
- 10. Photography Composition

Below the menu is a promotional box for a "FREE e-book" with a thumbnail image of the e-book cover. At the bottom of the video player, there is a "Love this course? Share it!" button with an arrow pointing to social media sharing icons for Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Telegram, Messenger, and Email. A green chat bubble icon is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

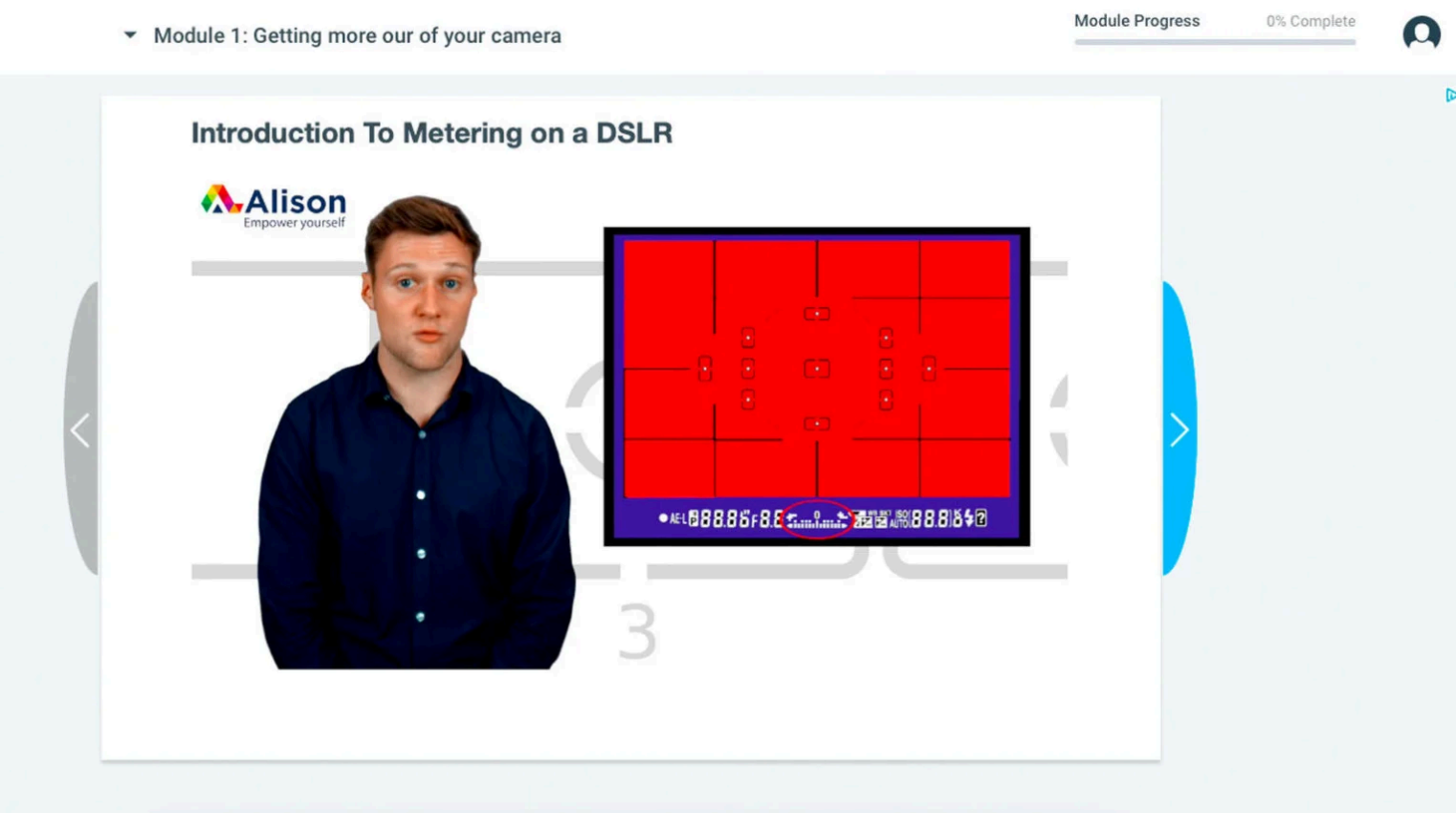
The other videos in this course discuss different aspects of photography, such as composition, focal length, and aperture. Manual mode is pretty daunting if you've never used a camera before, and many photographers stick to Auto; this course aims to get you off that.

If you choose to take the course, you don't need to sign up for an account. In addition to the videos, which should take you a few hours to get through, you can download extra materials. Moreover, you can test your knowledge with a quiz.

Intermediate Digital Photography by Alison

Learning the basic theories of photography doesn't take too long, even though putting them into practice – and mastering them – does. Once you've mastered the fundamentals of capturing images with your DSLR or mirrorless camera, you might want to take an intermediate online course to further your knowledge.

Alison has several free online courses for you to enjoy, including one that focuses on [Intermediate Digital Photography](#). You'll receive a refresher on the basics you'll have learned in your early days, such as ISO and shutter speeds – before the presenter discusses more complex tools like camera meters and [lens filters](#).



The screenshot shows a course interface for 'Introduction To Metering on a DSLR' by Alison. At the top left, it says 'Module 1: Getting more out of your camera'. At the top right, it shows 'Module Progress' and '0% Complete' with a profile icon. The main content area features a video player with a presenter on the left and a camera's LCD screen on the right. The LCD screen displays a red metering pattern and camera settings: AE-L/AF-ON, 0, 1/2000, f/8.0, ISO 800, and a battery icon. A large number '3' is visible below the video player. Navigation arrows are present on the left and right sides of the video player.

The course is broken up into two modules. In the first, you'll learn specifically about intermediate photography related to the camera. Meanwhile, the second will talk more about editing software – and in particular, Photoshop.

Although the course is free to take, you'll need to sign up for an account. You will quickly notice that the ads can get quite annoying; to remove these, you'll need to purchase a paid subscription.

Photography for Beginners by PhotographyCourse.net

So far, all of the courses mentioned in this article are video-related. But if your learning style is a little different, you can choose other forms of media. For example, PhotographyCourse.net has put together a comprehensive learning experience that mainly features writing – though you'll find a few supporting videos as well.

[Photography for Beginners](#) is a comprehensive course that outlines several basics related to taking better pictures – such as the [exposure triangle](#) and [aperture](#). You'll also find a huge glossary with hundreds of common terms used in the field.

Besides outlining the fundamentals of photography, you'll also gain ideas and suggestions for projects that allow you to put your learnings into practice. For example, one of the latter modules discusses dozens of personal ideas you can try.

photography course.net

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Personal Photography Projects: 13 of the Best Ideas

Kevin February 10, 2021 0 Comments

- ✓ Connect with aspiring and professional photographers
- ✓ Learn how to improve any kind of photography
- ✓ Get access to exclusive discounts, courses, rewards, etc
- ✓ Find daily inspiration in a diverse community

Become a member →
Free membership

Personal photography projects are one of the best ways to help you improve your photography. Being focused on a particular topic you will develop more than if you photograph random subjects. Learning as you regularly take photos for your project will accelerate your progress even more.

We all like to get better at the things we enjoy doing. How we approach our photography has a direct effect on whether we

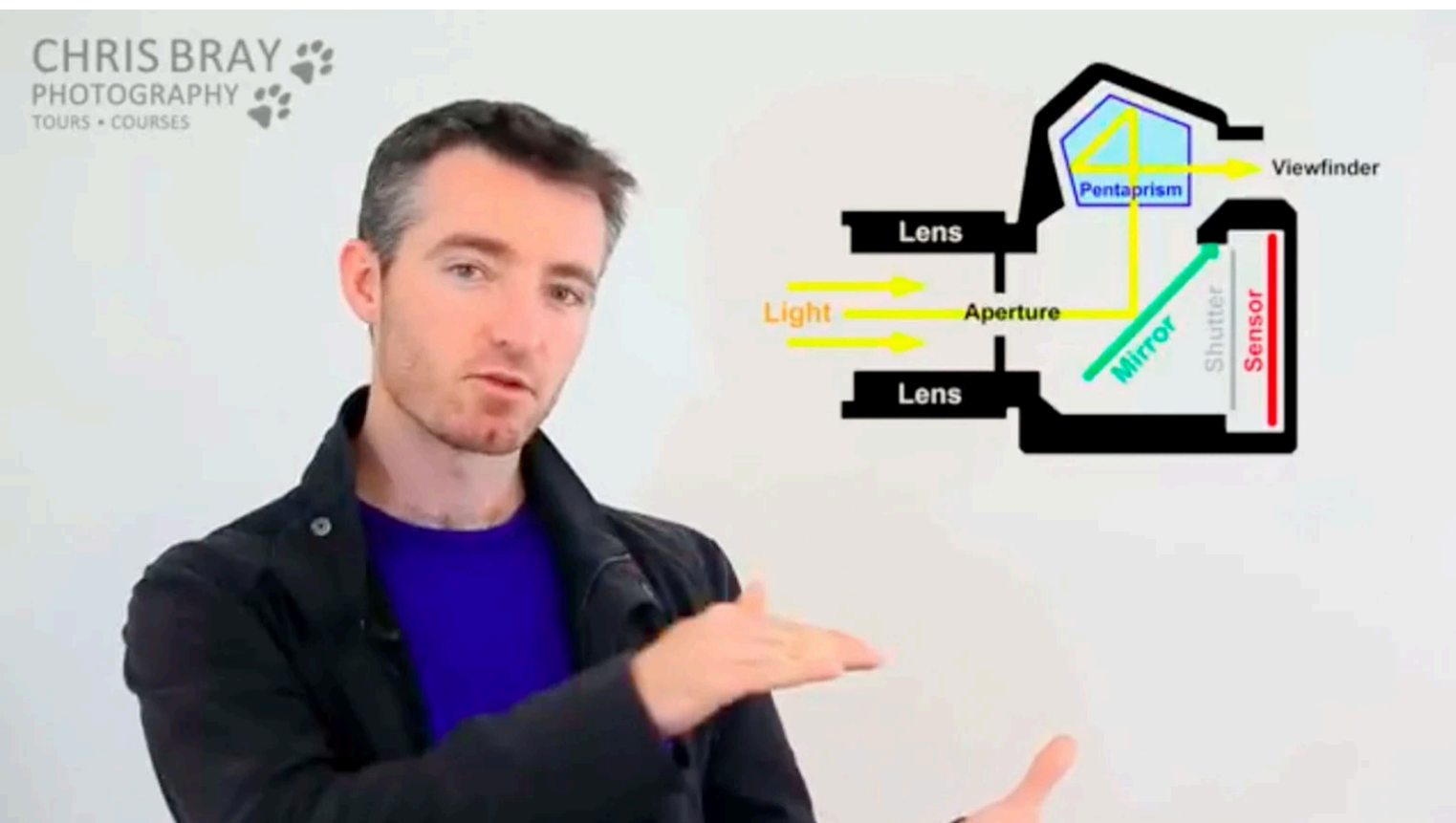
You can sign up for an account on PhotographyCourse.net, but you don't have to for this course. The website has several extra courses for you to try, too – some are free, but you'll have to pay for others.

Introductory Photography Course by Chris Bray

Chris Bray is a photographer from Australia who has won various awards during his lifetime. Having gained significant experience in his field, Bray now has a significant offering of free online resources to help you learn more about photography.

One of the most comprehensive is the [Introductory Photography Course](#), which he used to sell for \$480 but now doesn't cost you anything. You'll find 10 videos as a part of this, all of which are also available on YouTube if you'd rather view them there instead.

In his photography course, Bray talks about the various aspects you need to understand before taking your camera out and about. You'll learn about composition and movement, along with lighting and lenses.



Perhaps the most useful module is “Practical Photography”, where Bray discusses things like storage and how you can carve your way in the photography industry.

Hard Disk Drives (HDD)



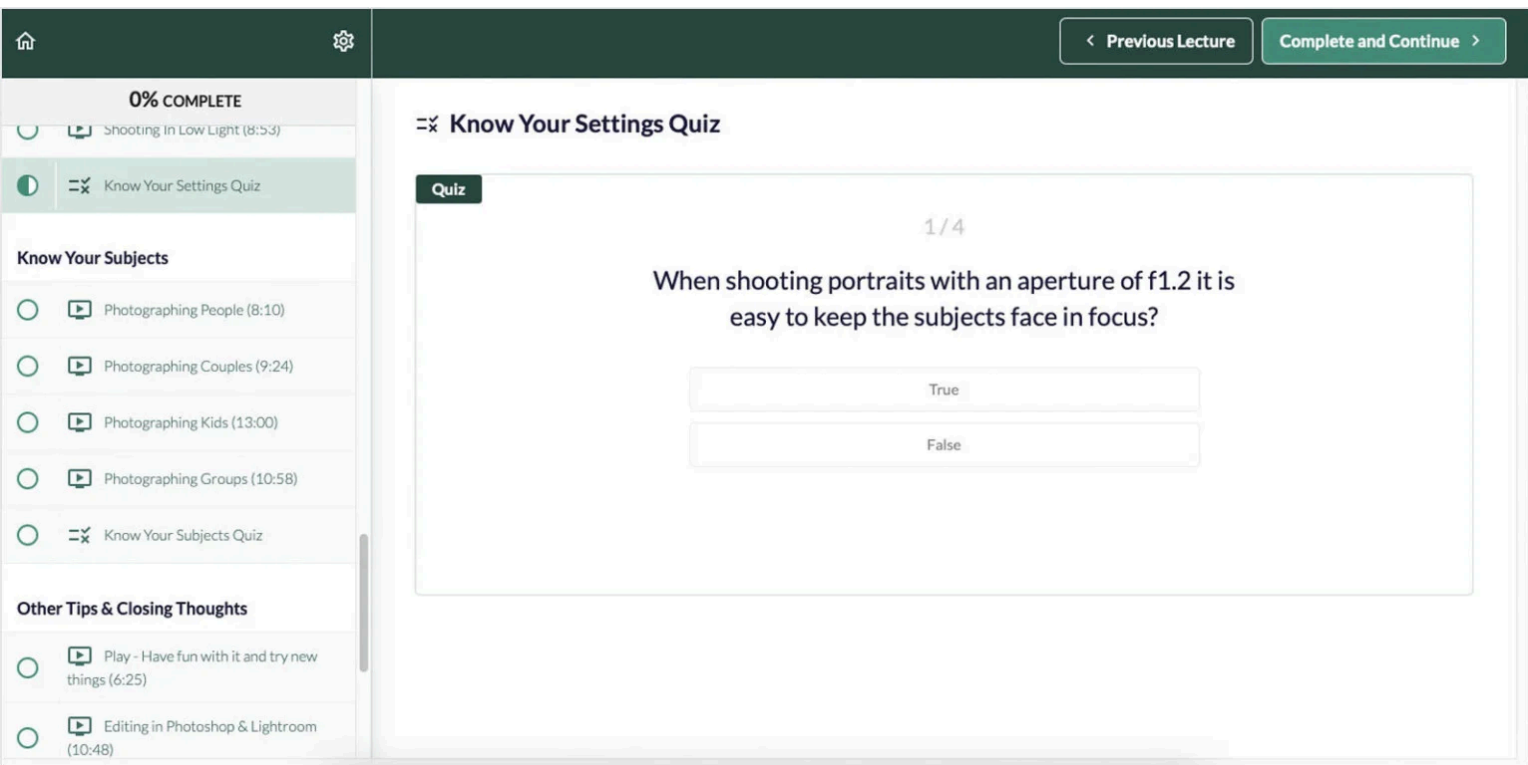
To take this course, you don't need to worry about signing up for anything. All you have to do is view the videos (and be sure to take notes for points you think are particularly useful).

Photography: Ditch Auto – Start Shooting in Manual by Jerad Hill

If you want to get off Auto mode but you don't feel like one module will provide sufficient enough information, you can find a complete course on shooting in Manual mode by Jerad Hill titled [Ditch Auto – Start Shooting in Manual](#). Jerad is a photographer, entrepreneur, and marketer – among doing several other things.

As you probably expected, this course is pretty comprehensive. Hill talks about how to photograph in different scenarios, such as groups and couples. You'll also learn about camera flash and how it impacts your results, along with photography in low light and a comprehensive look at getting your exposure right.

At the end of every module, you can test your knowledge in a quiz before moving on to the next set of videos.



To take this course, you'll need to sign up on Jared Hill's website. You can choose to complete the entire program for free, but you'll also have an option to pay \$5 if you want to show appreciation.


Once you've signed up for an account, you'll need to verify your email address.

10 Dos and Don'ts in Photography by Beyond Photography

Udemy has a huge suite of online courses, many of which are free. If you're looking to expand your photography knowledge without paying, you'll find a selection of programs – including one, titled [10 Do's & Don'ts in Photography](#), that discusses the biggest dos and don'ts when you're taking pictures.

This course was developed by the user Beyond Photography. Before you learn about the specific dos and don'ts, you'll pick up a couple of basics – such as cleaning your camera and changing your lenses. The program refers largely to DSLR devices, but much of what you learn is also applicable if you have a mirrorless camera.

udemy 10 Do's & Don'ts in Photography ★ Leave a rating Your progress Share



Beyond Photography Academy

Course content

Section 1: Camera care
1 / 4 | 18min

- 1. Changing Lenses & Cleaning Your Camera
7min
- 2. Holding Your DSLR
3min
- 3. Accessories Part 1
4min
- 4. Accessories Part 2
4min


Section 2: 10 Do's & Don'ts in Photography
0 / 9 | 24min

Overview Notes Announcements Reviews Learning tools

About this course
Camera Care & Accessories

Once you've gone through the first few modules, you'll move on to the biggest dos and don'ts in photography. The teacher is entertaining and informative in equal measure, making it easy to follow along.

udemy 10 Do's & Don'ts in Photography ★ Leave a rating Your progress Share



Beyond Photography Academy

Course content

Section 2: 10 Do's & Don'ts in Photography
3 / 9 | 24min

- 5. True Stops
6min
- 6. Flash
3min
- 7. Prime Lenses
2min
- 8. RAW
2min
- 9. Holding Your Camera
6min
- 10. Tilts
2min
- 11. High ISO
1min
- 12. Cube
1min
- 13. Look at Photos
1min

Overview Notes Announcements Reviews Learning tools

About this course
Camera Care & Accessories

Unlike many of the courses we've mentioned so far, this one doesn't have any extra reading or learning materials. However, you can refer to it whenever you want – along with watching the videos

on your smartphone or tablet if you'd rather not use your computer.

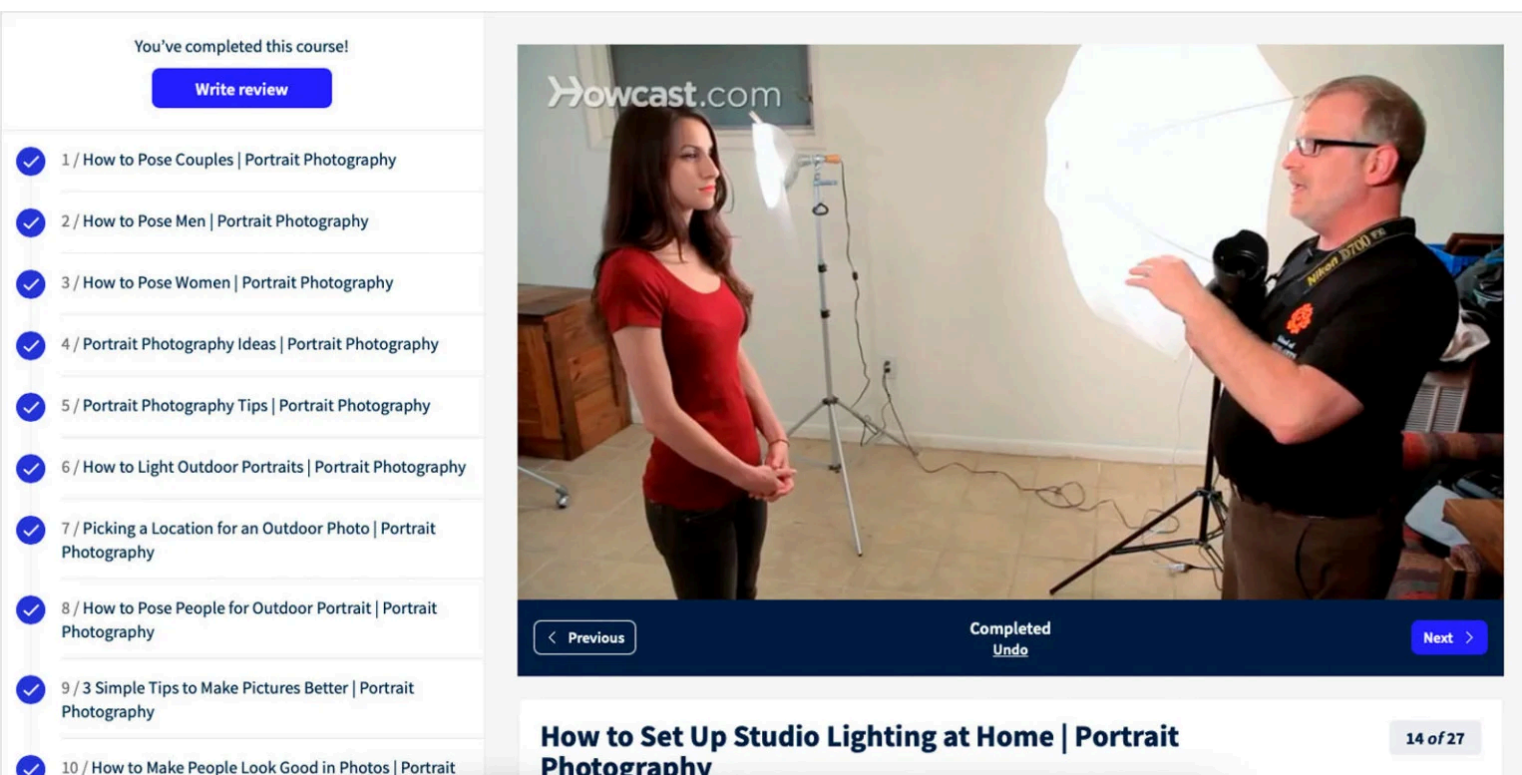
The course is pretty straightforward and only lasts for 42 minutes, making it a gentle introduction for beginners.

How to Take Portraits by Howcast

Portrait photography is one of the most popular genres, and if you decide to turn your passion into a career, you'll find several gigs that require you to take pictures of others. However, photographing people is trickier than many non-photographers believe – and you'll have to consider several aspects if you want to achieve the highest level of success.

Howcast has put together a comprehensive guide to taking portraits titled [How to Take Portraits](#), and the modules are useful for both complete beginners and seasoned professionals looking for a refresh. The course consists of 27 videos, and you'll learn how to pose both men and women and receive tips on much more.

The course also identifies how to take better portraits both outside and indoors, in addition to discussing light and various other things.



The screenshot displays the user interface for the 'How to Take Portraits' course on Howcast. On the left, a sidebar lists 10 lessons, all of which are marked as completed with a blue checkmark. A 'Write review' button is visible at the top of the sidebar. The main area features a video player showing a man in a black shirt and glasses demonstrating studio lighting setup to a woman in a red top. The video player includes navigation buttons for 'Previous', 'Next', and 'Undo', along with a 'Completed' status indicator. Below the video player, the title 'How to Set Up Studio Lighting at Home | Portrait Photography' is displayed, and a progress indicator shows '14 of 27'.

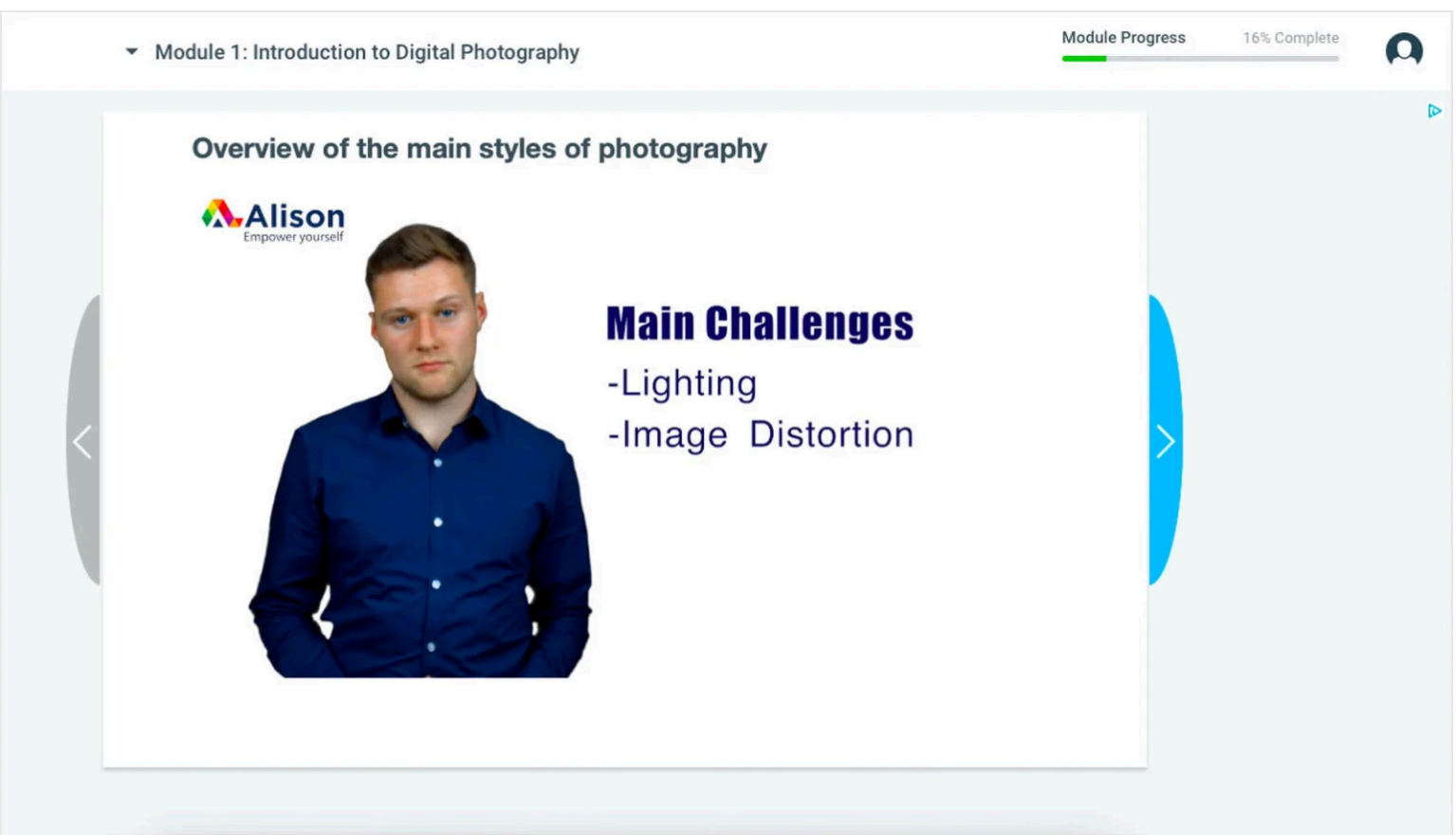
You can take this course on Class Central. Signing up for an account is easy, and you don't need to submit credit card details.

Digital Photography Diploma by Alison

If you're looking for a full course to give you a complete understanding of the basics of photography, the Digital Photography Diploma on Alison's website is worth checking out. The program lasts for over 10 hours, and you can decide to complete it in whichever way suits you best.

The course will teach you several important skills and concepts, such as the [rule of thirds](#) and the differences between full frames and crop sensors. You'll also learn about different styles and how to use editing software to achieve the results you want.

Throughout the diploma, you will have the opportunity to test what you've learned by participating in assignments. However, you can't skip ahead; you're required to complete all of the modules prior to the task before you can unlock it.



Module 1: Introduction to Digital Photography

Module Progress 16% Complete

Overview of the main styles of photography

Alison Empower yourself

Main Challenges

- Lighting
- Image Distortion

You'll have to deal with ads on the free course, but you will still have access to all the material without a paid subscription. If you want to remove the ads, you'll need to upgrade to a paid plan.

The Reddit Photoclass

Rounding out our list of the best free photography courses is the [Intro to Photography Class](#), which you might already have heard referred to as the Reddit Photoclass. Unlike most of the courses we've included in this article, the Intro to Photography Class requires you to read instead of watch.

The Reddit Photoclass is pretty in-depth for a basic introduction to photography, and you'll learn about a broad range of concepts. The course will teach you about focal length, [shutter speed](#), aperture, and ISO. You'll also learn about white balance, plus the difference between shooting in RAW compared to JPEG – plus much more.

Welcome to this Introduction to Photography Class!



Introduction

01 - On Photography (it's not rocket science)

The Gear

02 - What is a camera?

03 - Different Types of Cameras

04 - Focal Length

Exposure

05 - Exposure, Pipes and Buckets

06 - The Histogram

07 - Shutter speed

08 - Aperture

09 - ISO

10 - Metering Modes

Focus

11 - Autofocus

12 - Manual Focus

13 - Depth of Field revisited

Using the camera

14 - Flash

15 - Tripod

16 - Filters

17 - White Balance

18 - Scene modes vs. PASM

19 - RAW vs. JPG

20 - Film vs. Digital

21 - The Decision Process

Post Processing

22 - Digital Workflow

23 - DAM and Backups

24 - Levels and Curves

25 - Layers and Masks

Vision

26 - Composition Basics

27 - Break the Rules!

28 - Be Inspired

29 - Share your work

Conclusion

30 - How to go further

The corollary of this is that you should only break rules once you have learned and mastered them. It is very important to understand why they exist and why they are generally considered good.

To take an example, if you don't understand why people compose with the rule of thirds, then you won't realise that breaking it and putting your subject dead centred is a way to suggest symmetry and harmony.



This is why, even if you only shoot centred subjects in high key with motion blur introduced by low shutter speeds (which I guess would be a personal style), time spent mastering proper exposure and composition will be well spent.

Take [Martin Parr](#). He belongs to the very prestigious Magnum agency, had major solo exhibits and published countless books. His particular style is quite special, using on camera flash and what would be considered poor composition. In many cases, his photos could be mistaken from tourist snapshots on flickr. Yet they are great art and are justly celebrated, because he uses these imperfections to tell us something (about ourselves and about our societies). And there is no doubt that he could take a greatly exposed, greatly lit, greatly composed image any time he wants to.



To complete this course, you don't have to sign up for an account; all of the content is readily available on the website. You can also join [the photoclass subreddit](#) if you want to expand your learning and connect with others once you've completed each module.

Bonus: PetaPixel's Educational Photography Articles

For a less structured education in photography, be sure to check out PetaPixel's ever-growing [Learn Photography](#) section, which features [free, in-depth educational articles](#) that cover everything from the basics of photography for beginners to advanced tutorials on individual topics and genres for advanced and professional photographers.

Plenty of Free Online Photography Courses for Aspiring Photographers

If you want to improve your knowledge as a photographer, you'll find several places online to do so. Moreover, you'll almost certainly find a course that helps you improve the exact skills you want to level up within. Our guide has covered a pretty extensive range, but you'll find plenty elsewhere too.

Once you've completed the courses, it's important that you go out and practice with your new knowledge in mind. So, why not get started and begin improving your image-making?