

# CAMERA BASICS FOR MENTORS THAT MATTER PROJECT

## I. Camera controls and settings

On and off: To save batteries, the camera will automatically shut off when not used for several minutes. If this happens, just turn it back on.

Mode dial: The mode dial is just behind on/off button; it's the one with icons and abbreviations. For this project, keep it set on "**AUTO**" (which is in green). This way, the camera will do most of the thinking for you.

Shutter: The shutter is the large button, just to the right and front of the mode dial. You *press* it down to take a picture. But here's one of the most important things you need to remember **every time** you take a picture: **first press the shutter down half way** and hold it there for a few seconds. This sets the focus. **Then keeping your finger on the shutter** (do **not** take it off!), press the shutter down the rest of the way. You must follow these steps for the focus on your photos to be sharp. In the rush to take a picture, it is easy to forget to depress the shutter half way, give the camera a chance to focus, and then depress it the rest of the way.

Extra note: When you are taking pictures outdoors, in the sunlight, you can often get away with pushing the shutter down in one stroke. But if you are taking pictures indoors, the lower light conditions absolutely require that you press the shutter in two steps.

Zoom: There is a ring around the shutter that controls the zoom lens. Move it to the right and the zoom lens moves in; move it left and the lens moves back out. It is tempting to use the zoom to get close up to the subject of your picture; it's less intrusive than "sticking" the camera in a person's face. But when you zoom in, especially indoors where the lighting isn't as strong, the picture loses sharpness and focus. It's always best to move *yourself* as close to the subject as you can. Then, if you want to get closer still, zoom in a bit.

Flash: When you set the mode dial on "AUTO," the camera's internal flash automatically goes off when you are taking pictures inside or under low light conditions. Sometimes, the flash is necessary. More often, it is not—this is one area where the camera's thinking isn't right on. Pictures taken with a flash tend to have a cool (blue-ish) rather than a warm tone. And sometimes the white light from the flash shows up in the picture, something you don't want.

So when you are taking pictures inside—which will probably be the case for most of the mentor photos—you need to take the extra step of **turning off the automatic flash every time your camera comes on.** (Unfortunately, whenever your camera shuts off, it will automatically go back to the "flash on" setting, so you'll need to turn it off again.)

How to turn off the automatic flash:

- Press the icon that looks like a lightning bolt (just above the "Func Set" button).
- Then press it again. On the LCD screen, the lightning bolt icon will show up in the middle of the screen with a line through it, then move to the top of the screen. This

tells you the flash is off. When the flash is on, it shows up at the top of the screen with an “A” next to the lightning bolt.

## II. Steady and level

The other factor that affects the focus—the sharpness—of a picture, beyond pressing the shutter correctly, is holding the camera steady. If the camera moves when you take the picture, the image will come out blurry. When people press the shutter, they often unconsciously move the camera (down) too. **You must hold the camera steady and still!**

Also do your best to hold the camera level, so the pictures don’t slope to the left or right instead of looking even. Before you snap the shot, look at the LCD screen and make sure the image appears level.

Extra note: Most people take horizontal pictures. But there are times when what you are photographing will come out better if you rotate the camera and take a vertical shot. This way you can capture the length of what you are shooting. You will probably have to take a few steps back when shooting vertically, so that you don’t cut off the top or bottom of what you are photographing.

## III. Composition

When taking pictures of your mentor:

- Snap a variety of shots (at least 20).
- Be sure to get some close ups, taken from different angles (not all head on, like mug shots).
- Ask your mentor to move around and pose in front of different backgrounds. When picking a background, pay attention to what it contains. Things to avoid: unattractive colors, wires, mess, soda bottles, distracting objects.
- Try to get some pictures of your mentor in the setting that goes with his/her mentoring. For example, if the person is a basketball coach, get some shots of her/him on a basketball court or holding a basketball. Remember, though, that you will still need to be pretty close up to the person—you want him/her to be in the foreground, not the background.
- Don’t take pictures of your mentor directly in front of or near a window. The light coming in from the window will throw off the camera’s automatic exposure, and the person will come out too dark in the photo.

As you take your photos, be sure to check them out in the LCD screen to see if they’re coming out well. Make adjustments based on what you see.

**TAKE LOTS OF PHOTOS AND HAVE FUN!**