

STM PHOTO- GRAPHY

Types of Light

Natural Light

Light is the primary ingredient in photography. While most photographers know that logically, they still go on a photo shoot thinking of what subject they want to shoot rather than the conditions under which they will be shooting. This is why photographers often turn away from a scene because the light isn't right.

1. Backlight



The direction of light is named for how the light hits your subject, not where it is in relation to your camera. When the sun is in front of you, lighting your subject from behind, is it called backlight.

2. Sidelight



When the light hits the side of your subject casting a long shadow on one side, it is called sidelight. Sidelight can range from somewhat subtle when the sun is low in the sky to creating deep shadows and hard edges when the sun is high in the sky. Either way, the high contrast that results from sidelight can add dimension and depth to your photographs

3. Frontlight



When the sun is behind you and is hitting the front of your subject, it is called frontlight. Frontlight can be great for saturating colour, but if it is too intense it can wipe out texture and have a washed out dull look. Front light works best when the sun is not high in the sky and too harsh.

4. Reflected light



Light can be reflected from one surface to another. It can reflect off of water, glass, rock and just about anything else. Reflected light tends to be soft and takes on the colour of the material it has bounced off of.

5. Diffused light



The lack of shadows present in diffused light is an opportunity to crop the sky out of your composition and move in closer to photograph the details. The result will be a soft low contrast scene. Diffused light can also take the form of a shady spot on a sunny day

6. Dramatic light



While going out in bad weather can sometimes result in coming home empty the opportunity for a dramatic photograph is much greater than if you stayed inside. Being in the right location just as a storm clears can have great rewards.

7. Twilight



It happens about 20 minutes after the sun goes down or 20 minutes before the sun comes up. In the period between day and night, there is plenty of usable light rich in colour. While our eyes will often see black, our camera's sensor will see deep cobalt blues and rich pinks

8. Night



City lights, the moon and stars all provide a great source of dramatic light. You need to be able to set your camera to keep the shutter open for long exposures. Sometimes exposures up to an hour long!

In Conclusion

With a heightened awareness of light, not only can you seek out the best quality of light for your subject, but you can decide what subject to shoot based on the quality of light that is present.

The next time you go out to photograph, instead of looking for subjects, look for light. Let the light that is available to you tell you what kind of photograph to make.