


Get great detail  
in your subjects!

# Canon EOS 70D

From Snapshots to Great Shots



Learn the best  
ways to compose  
your pictures!

**Nicole S. Young**

Canon EOS 70D:  
From  
Snapshots to  
Great Shots

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Peachpit  
Press

## **Canon EOS 70D: From Snapshots to Great Shots**

Nicole S. Young

### **Peachpit Press**

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## **Dedication**

To Brian, my husband, best friend, and biggest fan. I love you!



## Acknowledgments

There are a lot of things that go on behind the scenes when creating a publication, such as this book. This being my fifth print book with Peachpit, I've come to really appreciate the efforts and contributions that everyone puts into making things come together beautifully. With that said, I'd like to thank each and every one of the team who helped put together this book: Valerie Witte, Katerina Malone, Emily K. Wolman, Patricia J. Pane, WolfsonDesign, Valerie Haynes Perry, Aren Straiger, and Mimi Heft. Thank you all so much for your hard work!

I would also like to thank all of my readers for sticking with me through all of these years. I teach and write about photography because I truly want all of you to become skilled photographers and enthusiastic memory collectors, and also so that you may further enjoy the act of creating a photograph that you are proud of. Without you I would not be writing this book, so thank you!

And, last but not least, I'd like to thank my husband, Brian. It's an amazing thing to have a partner who is as passionate about photography and education as I am. Brian, you've given me so much creative freedom, and also made some amazing sacrifices, and I know we have our best years yet to come. I love you!

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# Introduction

If you are reading this book, there's a pretty good chance that you have read other "how-to" photography books. Many of those books will be either camera-specific (how to use the settings on your camera) or about the methods and techniques used to create specific types of images (landscape, portrait, HDR, etc.). In this book you get the best of both worlds—you learn how to use your 70D and its specific features as well as the different methods and photography techniques to capture those images.

Here's a quick Q&A about the book to help you understand what you'll see in the following pages:

**Q: What can I expect to learn from this book?**

A: My goal in writing this book is to help owners of the Canon 70D learn more about the camera's specific settings and features, and put that knowledge to use to make great images. You'll also find a ton of general and advanced photography tips and tricks in each of the chapters to push your photography to the next level.

**Q: Is every camera feature going to be covered?**

A: No. I wrote about what I feel are some of the 70D's most important features, but don't worry! There's a lot of information in here. This is more than just a book on simple steps to get you started ... I really dig into some of the advanced features to make sure that you get as much as possible out of your 70D.

**Q: So if I already own the manual, why do I need this book?**

A: Your manual does a great job of explaining *how* to use the camera's features, but it doesn't necessarily tell you *why* or *when* to use them. I tried my best to do both so that not only do you know about the 70D's knobs, buttons, and settings, but also what the best situations are to make use of the camera's features and settings.

**Q: What are the challenges all about?**

A: At the end of each chapter, I list a few exercises you can do to practice and solidify some of the techniques and settings you learned about in that chapter. Feel free to try them out if you like, and if you do, be sure to check out the Flickr group and share what you've learned!

**Q: Should I read the book straight through or can I skip around from chapter to chapter?**

A: Well, both! The first few chapters are going to give you a lot of basics about your 70D and digital photography in general, so if you don't quite have a grasp on either of those yet, it's a good idea to read through them before heading on to the rest of the book.





ISO 160 • 1/125 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 40mm lens

# 4

## Say Cheese!

### **Settings and features to make great portraits**

Photographing people is challenging, rewarding, and fun all at the same time. When you photograph a person, you are capturing a memory, a moment in time. Images of friends and family often become our most cherished possessions. The people you photograph are depending on you to make them look good—and while you can't always change how a person looks, you can control the way you photograph that individual. In this chapter, we will explore some camera features and techniques that can help you create great portraits.



## Poring Over the Picture

Whenever I visit my family back in Nebraska, my nieces and nephews end up being the main subjects of my photographs. Oftentimes I bring them outside and have them smile for me, or just play around, in order to get photos for the family. For this photo, the front yard was shaded, which gave me a good opportunity to get some nice images of my nephew playing in the grass. Overall, the kids are always good sports and give me just enough time not only to get nice, smiling images of them, but to let their personalities shine through as well.

— I used a wide aperture to blur the background.

ISO 100 • 1/750 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 40mm lens



I positioned his face in the upper-right third of the image for a pleasing composition.

Because my nephew was on the ground, I got down low to photograph him at eye level.



## Poring Over the Picture

It was a cloudy day, so I was able to achieve a balanced exposure with nice, soft light throughout the entire scene.

Her brightly colored pink shirt was very complementary to the green fields in the background.

ISO 400 • 1/3200 sec. •  
f/5.6 • 70–200mm lens





I used a very fast shutter speed to “freeze” the dirt in midair.

A wide aperture combined with a long lens allowed me to blur the background, giving separation between the woman and the fields behind her.

While on a trip to Vietnam, I decided to be adventurous and hire a man with a motorbike to drive me around the countryside. I was hoping to find authentic images of local people doing everyday things, and so when I spotted this woman clearing out chunks of dirt from a rice paddy, I immediately asked the driver to stop so I could go out and photograph her. After asking her permission, I used a long lens and a fast shutter speed to freeze the action of her movements and made several beautiful photographs.



## Using Aperture Priority Mode

In the previous chapter, you learned about the different shooting modes, and that when photographing people you're likely to be most successful using Aperture Priority (Av) mode. With portraits, we usually like to see a nice, soft, out-of-focus background, and you can only guarantee that you'll achieve those results if you have control of the aperture setting (**Figure 4.1**). You'll also be letting more light into your camera, which means that your ISO can be set lower, giving your image less noise and more detail.

Now, don't think that you have to use a crazy-fast lens (such as  $f/1.2$  or  $f/2.8$ ) to achieve great results and get a blurry background. Often an f-stop of 4.0 or 5.6 will be sufficient, and you might even find that having an extremely wide-open aperture gives you too little depth of field for a portrait, since you want most of the face to be in focus. In fact, I shoot many of my portrait photographs with a lens that has a maximum aperture of  $f/4$ , and I always achieve the results I'm looking for.

**Figure 4.1**  
For this image, I used a large aperture combined with a long lens to decrease the depth of field and make the background blurry.

ISO 100 • 1/50 sec. •  
 $f/4$  • 70–200mm lens



## Go Wide for Environmental Portraits

Sometimes you'll find that a person's environment is important to the story you want to tell. When photographing people this way, you will want to use a smaller aperture for greater depth of field (which will put more of your background in focus) so that you can include details of the scene surrounding the subject.

Also keep in mind that in order to capture the person and their surroundings, you'll need to adjust your view and use a wider than normal lens. Wide-angle lenses require less stopping down of the aperture to achieve greater depth of field. This is because wide-angle lenses cover a greater area, so the depth of field appears to cover a greater percentage of the scene.

A wider lens might also be necessary to relay more information about the scenery (**Figure 4.2**). Select a lens length that is wide enough to tell the story but not so wide that you distort the subject. There's nothing quite as unflattering as giving someone a big, distorted nose (unless you are going for that sort of look). When shooting a portrait with a wide-angle lens, keep the subject away from the edge of the frame. This will reduce the distortion, especially in very wide focal lengths.



**Figure 4.2**  
A wide-angle lens and a small aperture allowed me to show as much detail as possible in the room.

ISO 400 • 1/10 sec. •  
f/7.1 • 18–50mm lens

## Lighting Is Everything

Photography is all about capturing light, so the most important thing in all of your images is the quality of the light on your subject. When you photograph people, you typically have a lot of control over when and where the image is taken, so you can manipulate your environment and find the best-possible light for your subject.

Before I get into what you should do, let me first talk about what *not* to do. It's a common misconception that bright sunlight is great for portrait photographs. Of course, this is not entirely untrue, since there are some creative and amazing ways to use harsh natural sunlight and make great portraits. The problem is that when the sun is at its highest point, in the middle of the day, it's going to cast some very harsh shadows on your subject and probably make them squinty-eyed as well.

There are several easy ways to achieve beautifully lit portraits in an outdoor setting, and here are my two favorites. The first is to find shade. It might not seem like it at first, but on a sunny day an extraordinary amount of light fills shaded areas, for example, on the side of a building or underneath a covered patio. This is diffused sunlight and will give a very soft, even light on your subject's face (**Figure 4.3**).

**Figure 4.3**

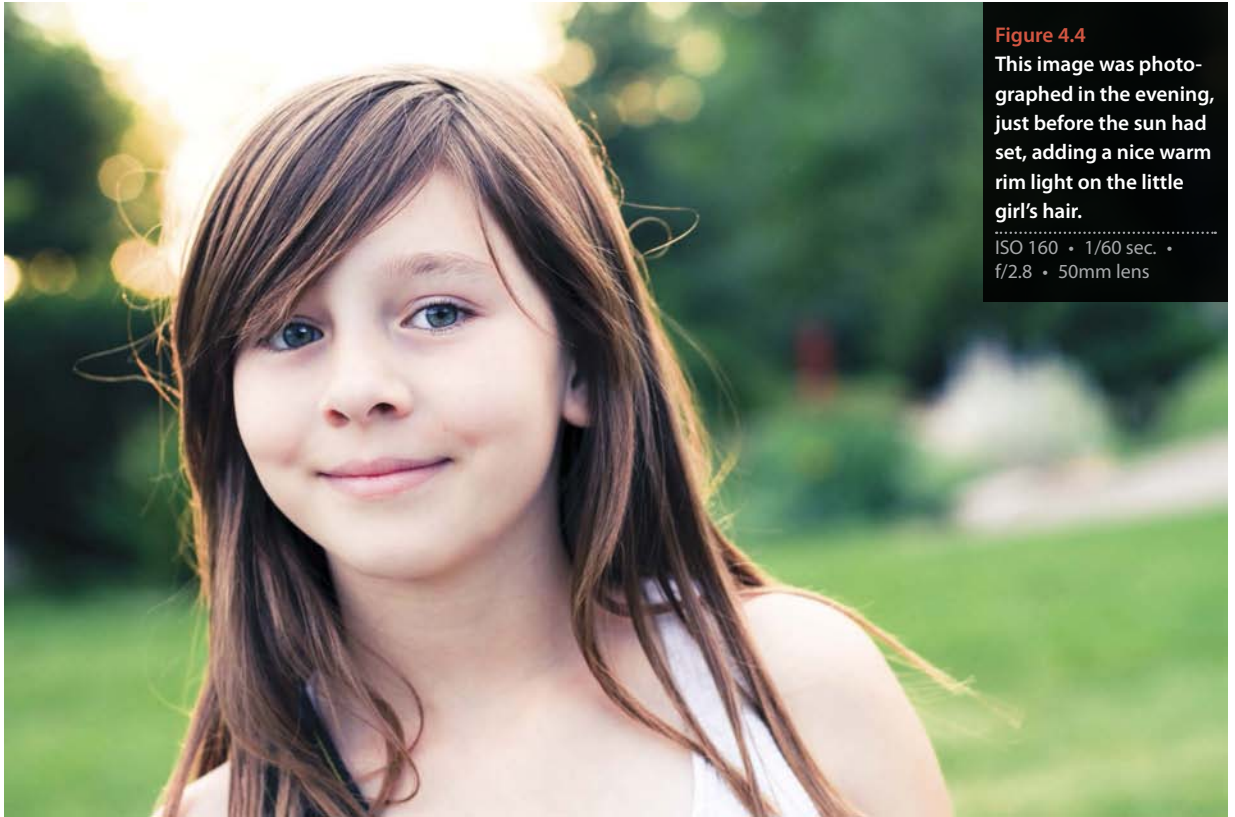
The light was diffused evenly across the little boy's face in this image, taken in a shady area in the grass.

ISO 160 • 1/180 sec. •  
f/6.7 • 40mm lens





The second way to light your images outdoors is to use the light that occurs during the “golden hour” of the day. This is the time period that occurs one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset (many photographers are more likely to use the evening light since it’s more convenient). The quality of this light is soft, warm-toned, and very pleasing for portraits (Figure 4.4).



**Figure 4.4**  
This image was photographed in the evening, just before the sun had set, adding a nice warm rim light on the little girl's hair.

ISO 160 • 1/60 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 50mm lens

## When to Use a Flash

I’m not usually a big fan of using the pop-up flash or any type of on-axis flash, which is a light source that comes from the same direction as the camera. It usually results in lighting that is very flat, and often adds harsh shadows behind the subject. But you won’t always have the perfect lighting situation for each photograph, so keeping an on-camera, ready-to-go flash on hand can be very practical. It’s also good for those moments when you just have to get the shot and there’s not a lot of light available, for example, if your baby takes his or her first steps in a darkened room. You wouldn’t want to miss that, and the pop-up flash is a handy tool to help capture those moments.

The flash can also be useful if you are in a situation where the afternoon sunlight is the only light available and you need to use a fill light. A fill light will “fill in” the areas in your subject that are not already lit by the main light—in this case, the sun. When photographing people outdoors in the direct sunlight, you don’t want them to face directly into the light. Try to position your subject so the sun is off to their side or behind them. This is a good situation in which to use a fill light, such as the pop-up flash on your 70D, to expose their face properly (**Figure 4.5**).

**Figure 4.5**  
I positioned this family with the sun out of their faces and filled in the shadows with a flash.  
.....  
ISO 100 • 1/250 sec. •  
f/5.6 • 70–200mm lens



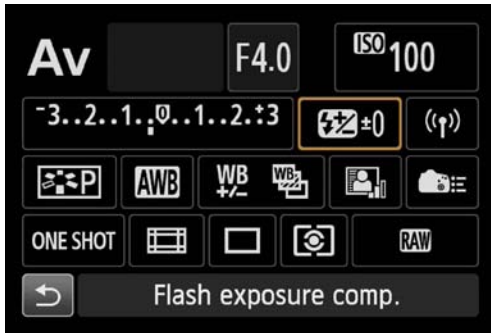
### Setting up and shooting with the pop-up flash

1. Press the Flash button on the front of the camera to raise your pop-up flash into the ready position (**A**). Take a photo with the camera at its current settings.
2. Press the Q button on the back of the camera to bring up the Quick Control screen.

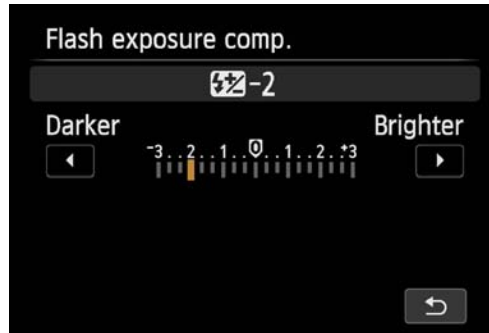


3. Use the Multi-Controller to select Flash Exposure Compensation (B), and then press the Set button.
4. Use any dial to increase or decrease the flash exposure (this is similar to exposure compensation, but you are affecting only the amount of light that your flash will generate for each shot). If your original image from step 1 was too dark, move the dial to the right to make the flash output more intense; if the image was too bright, move the dial to the left (C).

B



C



5. Take another photograph with these new settings and compare it with the original on the LCD monitor to see if it looks good. If not, try increasing or reducing the flash meter in one-third-stop increments until you get the correct amount of fill flash for your shot. For example, my first image (D) was overexposed, so I reduced the flash compensation by two stops and ended up with a nicer balance of light from the flash that wasn't too bright (E).

■

D



E





There are other options for filling in areas of your image that need additional light. A reflector is a very common and inexpensive accessory that you can use to bounce light back onto your subject. You can buy these at any camera store, but you could even use a large piece of white foam core or anything that is reflective (like a sunshade for the windshield of your car) to get similar results.

## Metering Mode for Portraits

Your camera gives you four different metering modes that tell it where and how to meter the light. Each mode has a unique way of reading the scene, and which mode you use will depend on the environment you are shooting in.

I use the Evaluative metering mode for the majority of my work, and this mode is ideal for portraits. However, sometimes you'll run into situations where the background is much darker or lighter than the person you are photographing, which could give you an incorrect exposure. In these cases, you'll want to use Partial metering, which will meter a smaller portion of the center of the frame (**Figure 4.6**). The great thing about digital SLRs is that with instant feedback on the LCD, you are able to make adjustments as needed if the metering mode didn't measure the light properly.

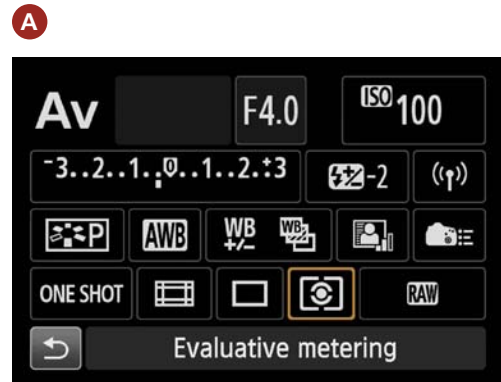


**Figure 4.6** The shaded circle in the center represents the area in your image from which the Partial metering mode will meter while you are looking through the viewfinder.

ISO 100 • 1/125 sec. • f/6.7 • 40mm lens

## Selecting a metering mode

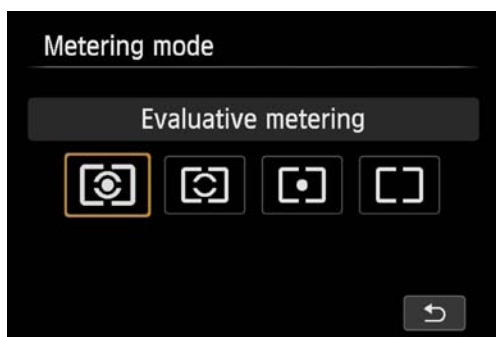
1. Press the Q button on the back of the camera to bring up the Quick Control screen, and then use the Multi-Controller to select the metering mode at the bottom of the screen (A).



2. Press the Set button, and then choose the metering mode that you would like to use (I recommend starting with Evaluative) (B).
3. You can also change this setting on the LCD panel on the top of the camera. Just press the Metering Mode selection button and use the Main Dial to scroll through the different settings (C).



B



C



## Shooting with the AE Lock feature

Once you select your metering, you can lock that setting in your camera temporarily if you want to recompose your image—for example, if you are in an environment where there is sufficient light on your subject but the background is significantly brighter or darker. The metering in your camera is continuous, meaning it will change depending on where the center of the viewfinder is pointed. If you want to compose the image so that the person is off-center, the camera will meter the wrong part of the scene.

To correct this, you can meter for one part of the image (your subject), lock down those settings so they don't change, and then recompose the scene and take your photo. Here's how to use the AE Lock feature on the 70D:

1. While looking through the viewfinder, place the center focus point on your subject.
2. Press the AE Lock button to get a meter reading and lock the exposure settings (Figure 4.7). You'll notice an asterisk just to the right of the Battery check icon inside of the viewfinder, which indicates that you have locked your exposure.
3. Now recompose your shot and then take the photo; your camera will maintain the exposure of the area where you originally locked it.



Figure 4.7

## Focusing: The Eyes Have It

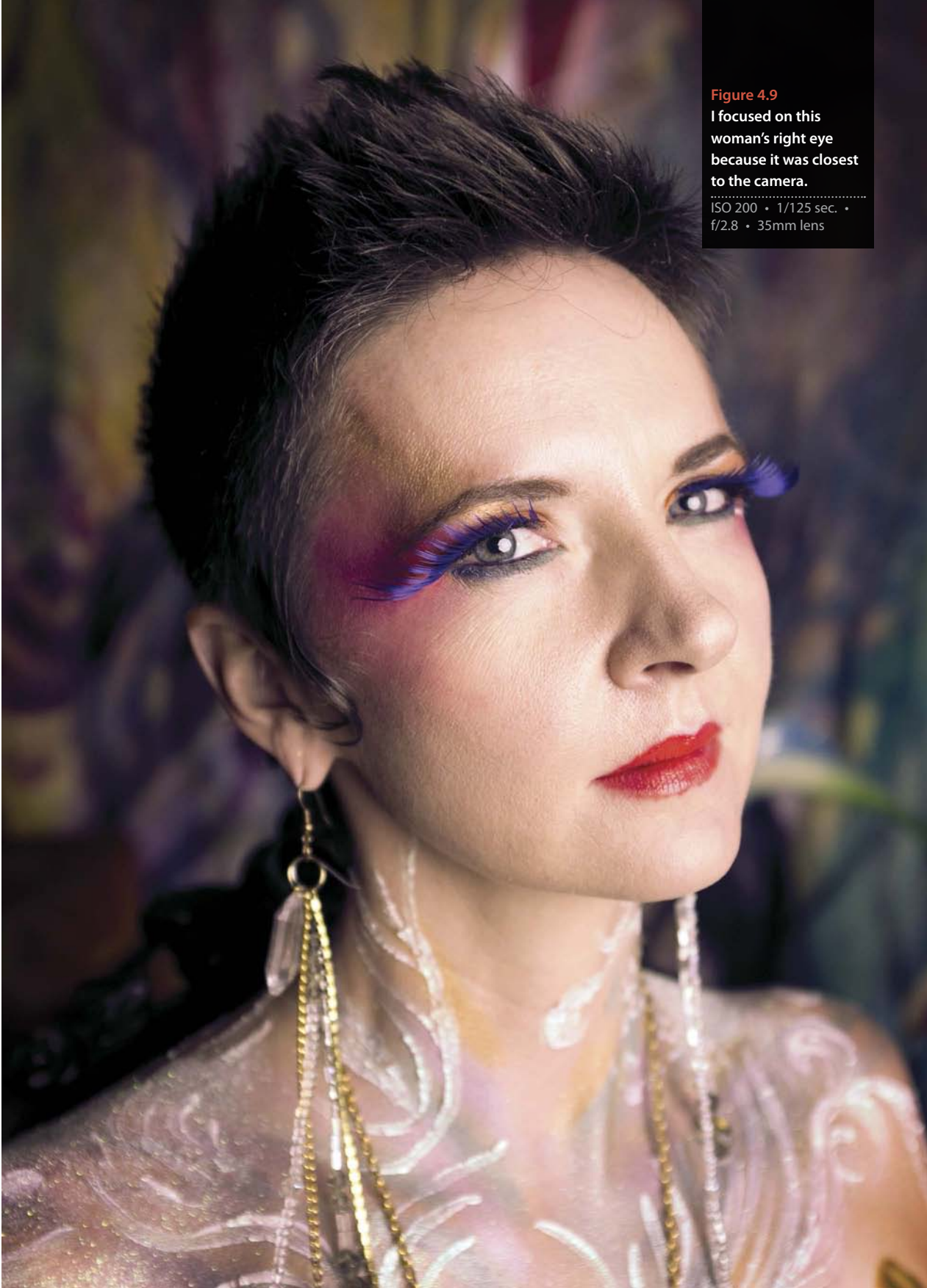
When you look at a person, probably the very first thing you notice is their eyes—it's just natural to make eye contact with other people, and we even do this with pets and other animals. This is extremely important when creating photographs, because you want to be sure that your focus is on your subject's eyes (**Figure 4.8**). Also keep in mind that if the subject is positioned at an angle, it's best to focus on the eye that is nearest the camera, since that's where we naturally tend to look first (**Figure 4.9**).

In Chapter 1, "The 70D Top Ten List," I discussed autofocus on the 70D. For the most control, the best option for portrait work is to pick one of the nine focus points and stay away from automatic selection. You can move the focus around within your viewfinder to find the eye, ensuring that you are focusing on the proper part of the image before taking your photo. Leaving the focusing decision up to the camera means you could end up with an in-focus nose and blurry eyes, or, even worse, it might try to focus on the background instead of the person.

**Figure 4.8**  
It's important to set your focus on the eyes when photographing portraits, which is important for both people and animal portraits.

ISO 2000 •  
1/1000 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 40mm lens





**Figure 4.9**  
I focused on this woman's right eye because it was closest to the camera.

ISO 200 • 1/125 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 35mm lens



## Focusing tip for portrait work

When focusing on your subject's eyes, do your best to focus on the iris (the colored part of the eyeball). This is especially important if you are doing a very close-up portrait where the person's face fills most of the frame, since the focus area will be much more noticeable. If you're shooting with a large aperture and have shallow depth of field, sometimes it's easy to miss focus and instead have the eyelashes in focus and the eyeball a bit blurry.

## Selecting and setting the AF point

1. Press the Q button on the back of your camera to bring up the Quick Control screen, and then scroll down to the AF area selection mode option (A). Then press the Set button.
2. Next, press the AF Area Selection Mode button on the top of the camera to cycle through the different AF options (B). Choose the one you want to use, and then use the Multi-Controller to select the area of focus. I set mine to an off-center Single-Point AF (Manual Selection) (C).
3. You can also make these changes by looking through the viewfinder and pressing the AF Area Selection Mode button; you'll see the same screen you would when using the Quick Control screen. Then follow step 2 to change your point or area of autofocus.

A



B



C



One easy way to work is to set the focus point location in the middle, find your subject's eye, and press the shutter button halfway to set focus. With your finger still holding the shutter halfway down, recompose and take the photo. The "focus and recompose" method is a quick way to photograph people and can work for many situations. Speed is important because people tend to move around during the shooting process, and keeping the focus point in the middle can simplify things for you.

### Catchlight

A *catchlight* is that little sparkle that adds life to the eyes (**Figure 4.10**). When you are photographing a person with a light source in front of them, you will usually get a reflection of that light in the eye, be it your flash, the sky, or something else brightly reflecting in the eye. The light reflects off the eye surface as bright highlights and serves to bring attention to the eyes. Larger catchlights from a reflector or studio softbox tend to be more attractive than tiny catchlights from a flash.

Another option for photographing people is to use Live View's facial detection features. The Canon 70D has the ability to detect and track human faces, allowing you to focus on those faces quickly. Basically, the camera keeps a track on the faces it can find in your scene, and then once you press the shutter it focuses on the face onto which it is locked. This is great for fast-moving subjects, but I wouldn't recommend it for close-up work with a very shallow depth of field (such as an aperture set to  $f/2.8$ ), as you'll want to make sure that the focus is always set to the eyes instead of another portion of the face.



**Figure 4.10** The catchlights in this image add a sparkle to the little girl's somber expression.

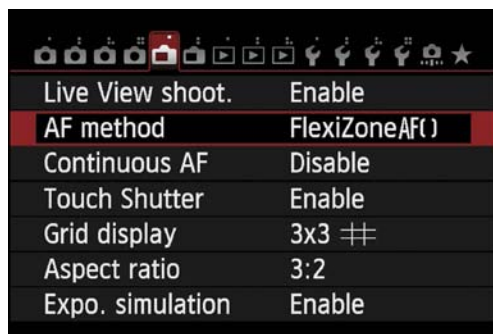
ISO 100 • 1/500 sec. •  $f/2.8$  • 40mm lens



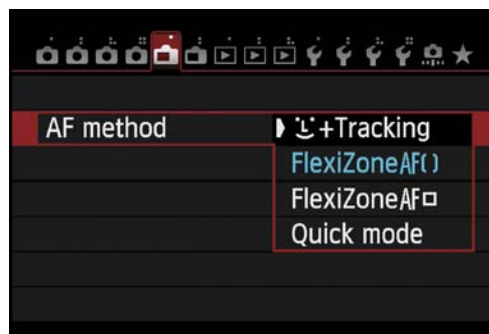
## Setting up face tracking in Live View

1. Click the Menu button and scroll to the first Live View shooting menu item (the fifth menu item from the left). Scroll down to the AF Method option and press the Set button (A). (Also make sure that your lens is set to AF.)
2. Scroll up to the Face Detection + Tracking option and press the Set button to lock it in (B).
3. Once you've chosen your subject, enter into Live View shooting by pressing the Start/Stop button on the back of the camera (make sure the knob is turned to the white camera icon) (C).
4. As your subject moves around, keep the camera positioned so that their face is in the frame, and watch the camera's facial detection at work as a broken white box follows their face (D). When you're ready, press the shutter button; the camera will focus on the subject's face just before you take the photo.

A



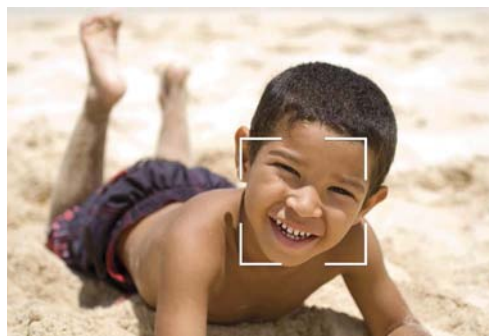
B



C



D



**Note:** If you have more than one person in the scene, the camera will recognize this and give you the option to select which face you would like to focus on and track (E). When this happens, two arrows will appear on either side of the white frame; to select a face, use the Multi-Controller to move the frame to the left or right.

E



## Composing People and Portraits

When photographing people, it can be easy to get carried away with focusing on their expressions and checking your exposure, but it's always crucial to consider how the photo is composed. The placement of the person, as well as the perspective and angle you are using, can make or break the shot. Here are a few simple tips to help you create some amazing portrait compositions.

### Rule of Thirds

One of the most basic rules of composition, the “rule of thirds,” is a very good principle to stick with when photographing people. It states that you should place the subject of your photograph on a “third-line” within the frame of your viewfinder. Imagine a tic-tac-toe board, with two lines spaced evenly down the center of the frame both horizontally and vertically (Figure 4.11). Your goal is to place the subject on one of the intersecting lines—basically, you’re trying to keep the person off-center without pushing them too close to the edge of the frame.

Another thing to keep in mind is that you want to fill the frame as much as possible with your subject. This doesn't mean that



**Figure 4.11**  
The little girl's face in this photo was positioned on one of the intersecting third-lines for a pleasing composition.

ISO 800 • 1/320 sec. • f/5.6 • 70–200mm lens

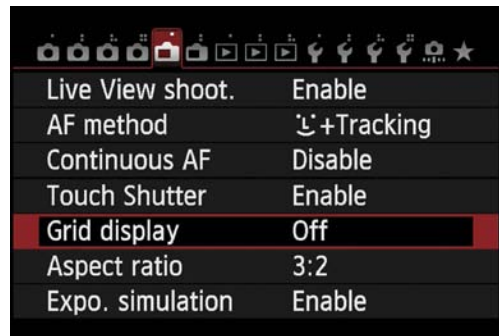
you should get in so close that you have nothing in the shot but your subject's face, but rather that you should be close enough so that you aren't adding anything to the image that you don't want to see. This is usually done by sticking to the third-line principle of framing the head near the top third of the frame. When I hand my camera to someone else to take my photo, I always chuckle to myself when I look at the image afterwards and my head is completely centered in the frame. I usually just go into editing software and crop out the excess headroom, making it look like it was composed properly. However, it's much easier and more efficient to do as much of the work in-camera as possible.

The great thing about the 70D is that you can add a grid overlay to your LCD monitor when shooting in Live View to help you with the composition.

### Setting up the grid display for Live View shooting

1. Press the Menu button and go to the first Live View shooting menu tab (fifth tab from the left).
2. Use the Quick Control Dial and scroll down to the Grid Display menu item (A).
3. Press the Set button and select the grid of your choosing (B). I prefer the 3x3 grid because it clearly shows the third-lines on the frame without too much distraction. Press the Set button to lock in this change.

A



4. Press the Live View shooting button, located on the back of your camera, and you'll see a grid overlay on your LCD monitor (C).



B



C



## Perspective

When shooting with your 70D, it's very easy to take all of your images from a standing position. This of course will vary in height from person to person, but so will the people you are photographing. I usually carry a small stepladder when I go on location so I can vary my height with the people I'm photographing, especially since I'm shorter than most other people. The basic rule to follow is to try to stay at eye level with your subject, which could mean flopping down on your belly to photograph a child or baby (**Figure 4.12**).

Another technique I like to use is to shoot my photos three different ways—vertical, horizontal, and slanted. I will often do one of each with the subject I'm photographing, and these are all very good ways to angle your camera for portraits. Sometimes you don't realize what will make a pleasing image until you try it out, so it's good to experiment a little bit to see what works best. One fun angle to use is a slanted angle, also referred to as the "Dutch angle" (**Figure 4.13**). I find that doing this gives my images a sense of motion and uniqueness, since our eyes want to see things straight up and down.



**Figure 4.12** Photographing your subjects at eye level can give your image a friendly and more approachable quality.

ISO 100 • 1/160 sec. • f/11 • 100mm lens



**Figure 4.13**  
This image was photographed from a position sometimes referred to as the "Dutch angle."

ISO 100 • 1/60 sec. • f/4 • 70–200mm lens



## Break the Rules!

So now that I've given you all of these great rules to follow when composing your image, the last rule I'm going to tell you is to break all of them! Don't think that you always need to keep an image off-center or that you have to photograph children at their level all the time (**Figure 4.14**). Experiment and find new ways to capture your images—you just might find that breaking the rules was the best thing you could have done for your image.

**Figure 4.14**

Breaking rules can sometimes yield great results—this image was photographed from high up, a perspective from which usually you would not photograph children.

ISO 100 • 1/1000 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 40mm lens



## Beautiful black-and-white portraits

Sometimes a portrait just looks better in black and white—we see more of the person and their expression rather than their surroundings or the color of their clothing (Figure 4.15). You can change the picture style to Monochrome in your camera so that you are photographing the image in black and white, but when you do this and shoot in JPEG-only mode, you are giving yourself only one option. If you decide you liked it better in color, you have no way to change it back.

I prefer to do all of my black-and-white conversions while editing the photo on my computer, and I encourage you to do the same. You can make black-and-white conversions, along with many other types of adjustments to your images, using the Canon Digital Photo Professional software on the disc included with your camera. Another option is to play with the 70D's "Grainy Black and White" Creative filter. More info on this feature is detailed in Chapter 10, "Advanced Techniques."



**Figure 4.15** A black-and-white portrait eliminates the distraction of color and puts all the emphasis on the subject.

ISO 100 • 1/125 sec. • f/5.6 • 50mm lens

## Quick Tips for Shooting Better Portraits

Before we get to the challenges for this chapter, I thought it might be a good idea to discuss some tips that don't necessarily have anything specific to do with your camera. There are entire books that cover things like portrait lighting, posing, and so on. But here are a few pointers that will make your people photos look a lot better.

## Avoid the Center of the Frame

This falls under the category of composition. Place your subject to the side of the frame (**Figure 4.16**)—it just looks more interesting than plunking them smack dab in the middle.

**Figure 4.16**  
An off-center image creates a pleasing composition.

ISO 100 • 1/125 sec. • f/4 • 70–200mm lens

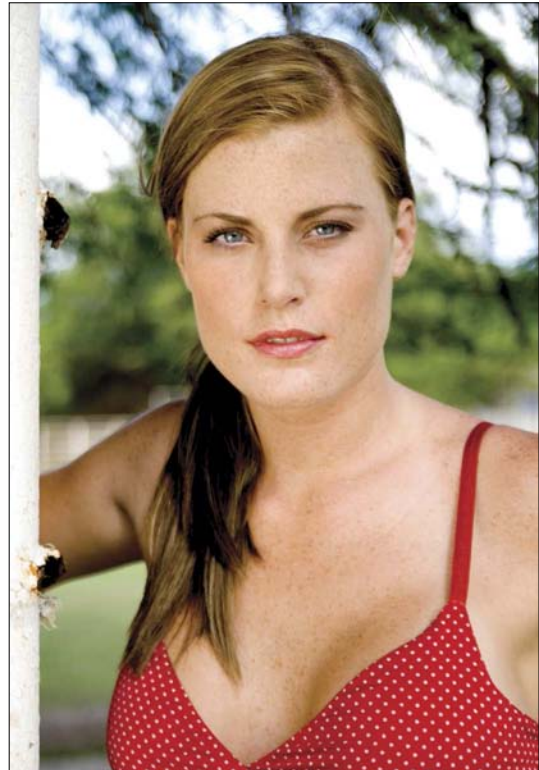


## Choose the Right Lens

Choosing the correct lens can make a huge impact on your portraits. A wide-angle lens can distort the features of your subject, which can lead to an unflattering portrait. Try to use a standard or long focal length, such as 50mm to 200mm, if you want to photograph a head-and-shoulders portrait (**Figure 4.17**).

**Figure 4.17** I used a standard focal length to minimize the distortion in this photograph.

ISO 100 • 1/250 sec. • f/2.8 • 50mm lens



## Use Your Surroundings

Close-up portraits are always nice, but don't forget about what's all around you! Including a person's surroundings and environment can add a lot to a portrait image, and even tell a story or help portray a person's personality (**Figure 4.18**).

## Sunblock for Portraits

The midday sun can be harsh and can do unflattering things to people's faces. If you can, find a shady spot out of the direct sunlight (**Figure 4.19**). You will get softer shadows, smoother skin tones, and better detail. This holds true for overcast skies as well. Just be sure to adjust your white balance accordingly.



**Figure 4.18** My niece was so excited to see sparklers set up in the lawn, so I included them in the shot to give a better explanation for her expression.

ISO 160 • 1/125 sec. • f/2.8 • 40mm lens



**Figure 4.19** A shady area will give you beautiful, diffused lighting for portraits.

ISO 100 • 1/180 sec. • f/6.7 • 40mm lens



## Keep an Eye on Your Background

Sometimes it's so easy to get caught up in taking a great shot that you forget about the smaller details. Try to keep an eye on what is going on behind your subject so they don't end up with things popping out of their heads. You can also use a wide aperture to blur the background, which will help eliminate distractions (**Figure 4.20**).

## More Than Just a Pretty Face

Most people think of a portrait as a photo of someone's face. Don't ignore other aspects of your subject that reflect their personality—hands, especially, can go a long way toward describing someone (**Figure 4.21**).



**Figure 4.20** The background in this image was very busy, so I used a wide aperture to help blur it and keep the image distraction-free.

ISO 100 • 1/125 sec. • f/2.8 • 50mm lens



**Figure 4.21** A person's hands can tell a story all on their own, just like the hands of this potter in Vietnam.

ISO 800 • 1/40 sec. • f/5.6 • 70–200mm lens

## Get Down on Their Level

If you want better pictures of children, don't shoot from an adult's eye level. Getting the camera down to the child's level will make your images look more personal (Figure 4.22).

## Don't Be Afraid to Get Close

When you are taking someone's picture, don't be afraid of getting close and filling the frame (Figure 4.23). This doesn't mean you have to shoot from a foot away; try zooming in and capturing the details.



**Figure 4.22** Children look their best when photographed from their level.

ISO 100 • 1/30 sec. • f/13 • 14mm lens



**Figure 4.23**  
Fill the frame to focus the attention on the person rather than their surroundings.

ISO 100 • 1/500 sec. • f/2.8 • 50mm lens

## Find Candid Moments

Sometimes the best images are the ones that aren't posed. Find moments when people are just being themselves (**Figure 4.24**) and use a faster shutter speed to capture expressions that happen quickly (**Figure 4.25**).

**Figure 4.24**  
Sometimes the best photos are the ones that weren't planned—find these moments in your models and you can capture their true selves.

ISO 100 • 1/60 sec. •  
f/4 • 70–200mm lens



**Figure 4.25**  
Be sure to create photographs of moments that are spontaneous!

ISO 100 • 1/80 sec. •  
f/2.8 • 24–70mm lens



## Find Different Angles and Perspectives

Portraits don't always need to be photographed at eye level. Try moving up, down, and all around to find unique ways to photograph people (**Figures 4.26 and 4.27**).





**Figure 4.26**  
Try photographing  
portraits from  
different angles  
and perspectives.

ISO 100 • 1/30 sec. •  
f/13 • 14mm lens



**Figure 4.27** Unique points of view can make a photograph fun and exciting.

ISO 100 • 1/1000 sec. • f/4.5 • 18–50mm lens



## Chapter 4 Assignments

### Play with depth of field in portraits

Let's start with something simple. Grab your favorite person and start experimenting with using different aperture settings. Shoot wide open (the widest your lens goes, such as  $f/2.8$  or  $f/4$ ) and then really stopped down (such as  $f/22$ ). Look at the difference in the depth of field and the important role it plays in placing the attention on your subject. (Make sure your subject isn't standing directly against the background, or you won't see much of a difference in your photographs. Give some distance so that there is a good blurring effect of the background at the wider f-stop setting.)

### Discover the qualities of natural light

Pick a nice sunny day and try shooting some portraits in the midday sun. If your subject is willing, have them turn so the sun is in their face (they may want to close their eyes!). Then ask them to turn their back to the sun. Try this with and without the fill flash so you can see the difference. Finally, move them into a completely shaded spot and take a few more shots.

### Pick the right metering method

Find a very dark or light background and place your subject in front of it. Take a couple of shots, giving a lot of space around your subject for the background to show. Now switch metering modes and use the AE Lock feature to get a more accurate reading of your subject. Notice the differences in exposure between the metering methods.

*Share your results with the book's Flickr group!*

*Join the group here: [flickr.com/groups/canon70dfromsnapshotstogreatshots](https://www.flickr.com/groups/canon70dfromsnapshotstogreatshots)*

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