

have macro modes with different capabilities including different focusing distances (usually between 2-10cm for point and shoot cameras). When you use macro mode you'll notice that focusing is more difficult as at short distances the depth of field is very narrow (just millimeters at times). Keep your camera and the object you're photographing parallel if possible or you'll find a lot of it will be out of focus. You'll probably also find that you won't want to use your camera's built in flash when photographing close up objects or they'll be burnt out. Lastly - a tripod is invaluable in macro shots as the depth of field is so small that even moving towards or away from your subject slightly can make your subject out of focus. (I'll write a full tutorial on Macro Photography in the coming weeks).

Landscape Mode



This mode is almost the exact opposite of portrait mode in that it sets the camera up with a small aperture (large number) to make sure as much of the scene you're photographing will be in focus as possible (ie it give you a large depth of field). It's therefore ideal for capturing shots of wide scenes, particularly those with points of interest at different distances from the camera. At times your camera might also select a slower shutter speed in this mode (to compensate for the small aperture) so you might want to consider a tripod or other method of ensuring your camera is still.

Sports Mode



Photographing moving objects is what sports mode (also called 'action mode' in some cameras) is designed for. It is ideal for photographing any moving objects including people playing sports, pets, cars, wildlife etc. Sports mode attempts to freeze the action by increasing the shutter speed. When photographing fast moving subjects you can also increase your chances of capturing them with panning of your camera along with the subject and/or by attempting to pre focus your camera on a spot where the subject will be when you want to photograph it (this takes practice).

Night Mode



This is a really fun mode to play around with and can create some wonderfully colorful and interesting shots. Night mode (a technique also called 'slow shutter sync') is for shooting in low light situations and sets your camera to use a longer shutter speed to help capture details of the background but it also fires off a flash to illuminate the foreground (and subject). If you use this mode for a 'serious' or well balanced shot you should use a tripod or your background will be blurred - however it's also fun to take shots with this handheld to purposely blur your backgrounds - especially when there is a situation with lights behind your subject as it can give a fun and experimental look (great for parties and dance floors with colored lights).

Movie Mode



This mode extends your digital camera from just capturing still images to capturing moving ones. Most new digital cameras these days come with a movie mode that records

both video but also sound. The quality is generally not up to video camera standards but it's a handy mode to have when you come across that perfect subject that just can't be captured with a still image. Keep in mind that moving images take up significantly more space on your memory storage than still images.

Other less common modes that I've seen on digital cameras over the past year include:

- **Panoramic/Stitch Mode** - for taking shots of a panoramic scene to be joined together later as one image.
- **Snow Mode** - to help with tricky bright lighting at the snow
- **Fireworks Mode** - for shooting firework displays
- **Kids and Pets Mode** - fast moving objects can be tricky - this mode seems to speed up shutter speed and help reduce shutter lag with some pre focussing
- **Underwater Mode** - underwater photography has it's own unique set of exposure requirements
- **Beach Mode** - another bright scene mode
- **Indoor Mode** - helps with setting shutter speed and white balance
- **Foliage Mode** - boosts saturation to give nice bold colors

Semi Automatic Modes

Aperture Priority Mode (A or AV)

This mode is really a semi-automatic (or semi-manual) mode where you choose the aperture and where your camera chooses the other settings (shutter speed, white balance, ISO etc) so as to ensure you have a well balanced exposure. Aperture priority mode is useful when you're looking to control the depth of field in a shot (usually a stationary object where you don't need to control shutter speed). Choosing a larger number aperture means the aperture (or the opening in your camera when shooting) is smaller and lets less light in. This means you'll have a larger depth of field (more of the scene will be in focus) but that your camera will choose a slower shutter speed. Small numbers means the opposite (ie your aperture is large, depth of field will be small and your camera will probably choose a faster shutter speed).

Shutter Priority Mode (S or TV)

Shutter priority is very similar to aperture priority mode but is the mode where you select a shutter speed and the camera then chooses all of the other settings. You would use this mode where you want to control over shutter speed (obviously). For example when photographing moving subjects (like sports) you might want to choose a fast shutter speed to freeze the motion. On the flip-side of this you might want to capture the movement as a blur of a subject like a waterfall and choose a slow shutter speed. You might also choose a slow shutter speed in lower light situations.

Program Mode (P)

Some digital cameras have this priority mode in addition to auto mode (in a few cameras Program mode IS full Auto mode... confusing isn't it!). In those cameras that have both, Program mode is similar to Auto but gives you a little more control over some other features including flash, white balance, ISO etc. Check your digital camera's manual for how the Program mode differs from Automatic in your particular model.

Fully Manual Mode

Manual Mode

In this mode you have full control over your camera and need to think about all settings including shutter speed, aperture, ISO, white balance, flash etc. It gives you the flexibility to set your shots up as you wish. Of course you also need to have some idea of what you're doing in manual mode so most digital camera owners that I have anything to do with tend to stick to one of the priority modes.