

Is Underexposing or Overexposing Better?



If you're in a tricky situation and you suspect your exposure might be out I'd advise you bracket your shots (most cameras have a function that will do this for you, taking shots quickly in succession at slightly different exposures).

However if bracketing wasn't an option I'd go for a *slightly* underexposed shot rather than an overexposed one.

The reason for this is that it is easier to adjust an under exposed shot in photo editing software than to adjust an over exposed one. Under exposed shots still record most (if not all) of the detail of your shot (even though you can't always see them) and with a little tweaking in photoshop you can bring them out.

On the other hand overexposed shots tend to record less of the detail and you end up with less to work with in your post processing of images.

Of course - ultimately you'd rather get your exposure just right when you actually take the picture - but if you've got access to some photo editing software to do some tweaking later on the underexposure will in most cases be easier to fix.

A word of caution here. While traditional wisdom dictates that you should underexpose to retain the detail, too much underexposure will result in a lot of 'noise' when you go into post production. In the days of film, it was always recommended that you underexpose versus overexpose – that is not necessarily true with digital cameras. The final decision rests with what you, the photographer, are willing to live with. If you find yourself in this kind of difficult

situation often, I would suggest that you invest in a camera that offers the bracketing capability if the one you are currently using does not.