

White Balance

Definition – “White Balance is a setting in which the camera measures a scene’s color temperature and adjusts it so that white subjects don’t take on extreme color casts.”

(Definition from Digital Nature Photography by Jon Cox)

White Balance

Most photographers never set their white balance, but prefer to let the camera do their thinking for them. The difference between setting the camera to AWB, (auto white balance) and the actual setting can mean drastic color swings in your images.

You must set your white balance if you use JPG. If you shoot RAW you may leave the setting on AWB because the white balance may be changed in Photoshop or other photo editing programs.

White Balance

Your eyes automatically adjust the white balance as you view scenes, but a digital camera needs help adjusting for the light in the scene.

If a scene is cooler, then you need to warm it up by adding warmer light

If the scene is warmer, then you need to cool it down by adding cooler light

Setting White Balance

There are several ways to set white balance correctly. The most common way is to use the setting that the manufacturer has placed on the camera menu for each type of white balance setting. The common ones are:

Auto White Balance or **AWB** – This is good for average scenes with average lighting and contrast. Can be used all the time with RAW capture

Setting White Balance

Tungsten-(light bulb symbol)-This setting is used for shooting indoors under incandescent lighting such as a light bulb. This setting cools down overly warm colors of light bulbs

Fluorescent - (bar with rays)-This setting compensates for the cool light of fluorescent light and warms up the overall color temperature

Setting White Balance

Daylight/Sunny – (sun symbol)-Use this setting on sunny days.

Cloudy - (cloud symbol)-Use this setting on overcast days when the light is diffuse. This setting may be used in deep shade to warm up the overall look of the image.

Setting White Balance

Shade– (house symbol)-normally found on DSLR's to warm bluish colors in shade to a more normal color rendition

Flash – (lightning bolt symbol)-mimics daylight indoors or outdoors on dark cloudy days or at night

Types of Light



Tungsten/Incandescent



Cool Fluorescent



Daylight Fluorescent



Daylight/Sunny



Cloudy



Flash