

CLEANING LENSES

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It's the one task that's done millions of times each year by literally every amateur and professional photographer in the world. What is it? Cleaning a lens. But here are two frightening facts for you: 27% of all repair problems and 19% of all pictures with poor image quality can be attributed to improperly cleaned lenses. (Stats courtesy of the Federal Agency of Consumerism, U.S.)

Cleaning your lenses is not a difficult task. It is not glamorous task either, but it must be done. Cleaning a lens is a simple three step process that can be performed in a minute or two.

When you're on the go always carry a lens cleaning kit. The kit should consist of a blower brush, lens cloth, cleaner and a Q-Tip or two. Many photographers use lens tissue, but I prefer the microfiber lens cloths available. They can be washed when dirty and have less tendency to scratch a lens if you bear-down to remove stubborn grime.

To properly clean any lens follow this three step process.

- 1) Blow off dust with a blower brush. **Do not use compressed air. Compressed air actually has enough force to blow dirt and dust into the inside of the lens. If this happens the dust will adhere itself onto one of the inside elements and you'll never get the lens clean.**
- 2) If you find stubborn particles still on the lens use the brush side of the blower to GENTLY whisk them away.
- 3) Spray the surface of the lens glass with cleaner and GENTLY wipe the lens in a circular motion with the microfiber cloth. Use just one finger to press gently but firmly onto the glass surface with equal pressure.

That's all there is to it. If that doesn't get off the grime then take your lens to a professional repair shop to have it cleaned. Don't forget to clean the rear element of the lens too.

(See the article on Formula MC for the lens cleaner I recommend and use).

ATTENTION: Many photographers use acetone to clean their lenses. Acetone has been found to cause lung cancer, birth defects, respiratory illness, blindness, coma and death. I do not recommend the use of Acetone to clean lenses.