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[Home](#) > Photography: Camera maintenance

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[Return to article list](#) [1]

# Photography: Camera maintenance

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What is the key to extending your camera's life? Regular maintenance! Here are a few simple rules to follow.

## 1. Body and lenses

When operating your camera in environments where dust or moisture are present, it is worth taking a few precautions:

- use gaffer tape to protect buttons and compartment openings,
- never change the lens in such environments,
- put your camera away as soon as it starts to rain to prevent streaks of water from getting on to the front lens.

Where there is a sudden change of temperature (e.g. if you take shelter while up a mountain), wait at least 1 1/2 hours before getting your camera out: this will prevent condensation from forming on the internal lenses (which can contribute to the formation of mould).

### Tip: preventing dust

Put some double-sided sticky tape inside your lens caps and cases. This will capture the dust, preventing it from getting on to the lens or **sensor of your SLR**. **And above all, remember to change it regularly.**

## **2. Memory cards**

- Always put back in their case.
- Never handle with moist or wet hands.
- Take care when inserting into your camera: avoid forcing so, otherwise you run the risk of bending the contacts.

## **3. Bags and pouches**

- Empty them on a regular basis and give them a good Hoover out.
- Take out any movable partitions and remove any dust that may have gathered in the corners.
- Slip a pouch of silica gel into one corner to absorb moisture.
- Always close, especially in dusty environments.

# **Cleaning your digital camera**

Get into the habit of taking care of your equipment: that way, you will avoid any nasty surprises! And even better, it will last longer!

## **1. Must-have care and maintenance equipment**

- microfibre cloths
- 1 dust blower
- 1 soft-haired brush
- 1 can of compressed air
- 1 digital sensor cleaning kit (SLRs only)

### **Focus: paper handkerchiefs**

- Can be used to absorb moisture or liquids that have sprayed on to the camera body or lens barrel
- Never use to clean the eyepiece or front lens as they are highly abrasive and will damage the fragile lens coating.

## **2. Cleaning an SLR body**

Whenever your camera has been subject to use in an extreme environment, remove any dust from the camera body using compressed air (hold the can upright).

- The best way to remove spots of grease is to use a damp sponge or microfibre cloth.
- Cleaning the sensor: while many SLRs are fitted with an anti-dust mechanism, these have their limitations. Before proceeding any further, ensure your battery is fully charged. Then look through your camera menus to find the manual cleaning option, which will expose the SLR's mirror.

#### **For dry dust:**

- use a dust blower (available from pharmacies) with the reflex chamber pointing downwards to release any dust. Do not touch the sensor while blowing.
- Sensor cleaning swabs.
- Compressed air canisters suitable for blowing or vacuuming any dust off the lens.
- Special dust removal styluses for removing dust from the corners.

#### **To combat greasy dust:**

- pre-saturated swabs for cleaning the sensor.
- cleaning kits with spatula tools for wet-cleaning (with cleaner liquid included)

Follow the instructions, which will depend on the specific cleaning system in question. If you are unsure about performing the cleaning yourself, a camera specialist will be happy to provide this service.

### **3. Lens cleaning**

- Barrel and buttons: use a compressed air canister
- Glass: ideally use a dust blower or brush, but whatever you do, avoid using dry (and cold) compressed air
- Electrical contacts: use a microfibre cloth soaked in alcohol
- Front lens: remove persistent stains using a slightly damp microfibre cloth

**Remember:** even the thinnest layer of dust will have an impact on image quality. But there is no point in going crazy over a single speck of dust.

#### **See also**

**Photography: Cleaning your digital camera**

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**Get into the habit of taking care of your equipment: that way, you will avoid any nasty surprises! And even better, it will last longer!**

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[DISCOVER](#) [6]

### **Choosing a digital camera**

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**Digital cameras fall into one of four categories. Each is designed with a specific type of use in mind, with specific advantages and disadvantages. Let's focus on each in turn...**

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### **Links**

[1] <https://www.cansonstudio.com/photography>

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[5] <https://www.cansonstudio.com/art-material>

[6] <https://www.cansonstudio.com/photography-cleaning-your-digital-camera>

[7] <https://www.cansonstudio.com/choosing-digital-camera>