

Macro Photography

White balance is key for ensuring you get the best colour reproduction in any given light situationist. The following pre-sets are a guide as to when and where to use them for better colours

Gear needed

Close-up filter: The best close-up filters are a cheap and simple alternative to macro lenses. If you're starting out - get one

Reverse lens adaptor: If you want to up your game and have a good lens these can get some great results for little money

Extension tubes: They have no optical elements, but work by moving the optics of your lens. Tubes can produce the results of very expensive macro-lenses and a fraction of the price

Macro lens: If you are serious about macro photography you'll need a macro lens that specialises in close up shots. But they can sky-rocket in price astronomically

Tripod: If you're going to buy a tripod, get a decent one, don't go budget options either. Get a good quality, heavy duty stand

Focusing rail: Used for image stacking to move your camera or subject smoothly to obtain images at different focal points

Close up light: Ring lights are the most popular but there's more and more specialist lights available that will give you a well lit scene at very close distances

Process

Know what you're shooting: Some close-up subjects need to be researched first. Especially if it's alive, more so if it moves

Run tests: It's often the case that you need to revisit a site multiple times. Test shoots always improve the final result

Check weather: You don't have to just check the weather in advance - you have to keep a constant eye on it. Changing light levels can ruin a shoot

Take your time: You can't rush macro photography. It's a slow process so learn to progress slowly and move steadily

Take an assistant: Many shots require the work of a second person to facilitate the shoot, if you need help, get it

Compose the results: If you're shooting multiple shots you need a solid process for editing groups of shots together

Print large: Macro photography works best when the results are printed and displayed large

Techniques to learn

Minimise shake: At such tiny sizes even the smallest, almost imperceptible shake can ruin a shot. Take every precaution

Macro lighting: Lights are mostly designed to light things from a few feet to many. Macro lighting is a fine art, especially when your subject is alive or reacts to close lighting

Focus stacking: Focus stacking is a skill you can do with any photography, but with macro it's taken to a higher level

Texture macro: Close up, textures can become small worlds that reveal detail we often overlook.

Flower macro: Flowers are a popular subject matter, they're the go to subject matter especially if things are living on them

Eye macro: Eyes are always interesting, capturing the fine detail and controlling the reflections takes a lot of skill

Insect macro: One of the main subjects that wins awards from Wildlife Photographer of the Year to the Close-Up Awards is insect photography. It's one of the hardest disciplines to master

Macro Photographers

Ole Bielfeldt of Macrofyng is known for his deep zooms into everyday objects.

Andrey Savin is an underwater macro photographer who specializes in capturing the amazing beauty and subtle details of the underwater world.

Levon Biss is regarded as one of the leading macro photographers of his generation whose work concentrates on natural history and science.

Javier Rupérez, an award-winning photographer specializes in capturing the extraordinary beauty of insects through extreme macro photography. Rupérez is widely regarded as one of the world's best extreme macro insect photographers.

Timothy Boomer is a California-based natural history photographer with a special interest in smaller flora and fauna. His favourite subjects are windflowers, mushrooms, and plant galls.

Quotes from the greats

The biggest difficulty in macro photography is focusing and it's one problem that can put off newcomers and many times the experienced photographers too. **Bruno Militelli**

The small world of animals is one we often overlook and so often take for granted. **Karine Aigner**

Macro photography is all about nature, patience and sharing. **Frank Deschandol**

There are so many science and conservation stories that need to be shared. And I think photography is an effective tool to tell those stories in a way that has impact. **Samantha Stephens**