

Muck On Your Lens? It Isn't Always Easy To Remove

Lenses seem to attract dirt magically. Tromp across a dusty campus with your lens exposed and you'll get a fine coating of dust. Fiddle with the camera and, inevitably, you'll have a nice greasy thumbprint on the lens or finder. Use a dirty lens and you'll get soft pictures and probably lens flare as light hits the muck and bounces around inside the lens and camera instead of traveling straight to the film.

In years past, when no one was looking, many a lens was cleaned with the end of a tie or the corner of a handkerchief (sometimes not too clean). That spread the dust or grease around nicely. Luckily, few students today wear ties or carry cloth handkerchiefs.

Ivory for lenses? A touch in water makes ideal lens cleaner. Other ingredients for good camera housekeeping include Kleenex tissue, lens chamois and lens brush.



Lens tissue is always being recommended for cleaning lenses: who but the constant gadget-bag toter carries it? Even pros can't find it in their camera bags when they need it. Small lens brushes available at photo stores are very handy for removing non-clinging dust from lenses, but you may have forgotten the brush too or probably can't find it. (Hint on buying brushes: Don't buy a paint brush thinking it's cheaper than a lens brush. Some paint brushes are treated with oil to preserve them or to maintain their

shape. You need a pristinely clean brush for a lens.)

For removing surface dust, facial tissue works well. (We can vouch for Kleenex as a brand with less lint than many others.) Replacing dust with lint fibers is a step in the right direction but a dustless, lintless lens is even better.

To remove dust, roll up a small piece of facial tissue and use it on the lens surface like a brush, in a circular motion. Don't apply pressure on the lens surface with your finger behind the tissue. That will only serve to grind the dust into the glass surface.

A grease spot such as a fingermark on a lens is not so easy to remove completely. Buy some lens cleaner and keep it around your room for whenever it's needed or, if you're around a chem lab, a touch of alcohol will do it when applied with the facial tissue or a wad of cotton. Don't moisten too much. The lens surface should not become wet or moisture may seep underneath the lens ring and into the lens.

Water with a touch of a liquid detergent soap is another way to go for lens cleaning. Remember to wash off the detergent afterwards with a damp tissue.

One of our favorite materials for lens cleaning is chamois, the softened skin of a special sheep. You can usually get a small chamois at an optician. Use it like you would a facial tissue. Keep it clean in a plastic bag. Chamois and a tiny bit of alcohol or lens cleaning fluid makes a good grease-removing combination.

What about eyeglass tissues? There has been a great deal of argument even among optical experts as to whether the silicon in eyeglass tissues damages coated lens surfaces. If you use it constantly, we think there may be some chance of lens damage, but we would have no compunction about using it gently very occasionally.

Reminder: Lenses have two exposed ends—the front, which you will remember to clean, and the rear, which you won't. Rear lens elements, especially if you have an interchangeable-lens camera, need almost as much attention as the front. Since they are within the camera, you can be lulled into thinking they are clean when they are not. Never put a lens on a camera without looking at the rear for dust or grease.

Don't neglect the camera's viewfinder. They collect eyelash grease constantly (also fingerprints) and make clear, sharp viewing a near impossibility.



How do viewfinders get dirty? Greasy eyelashes! Clean with tissue.



Ideal dirt remover, but who remembers to keep one handy? You should.

Holding Steady And How?????

Whether you've got a simple pocket 110 or a super camera, you'll get blurred pictures unless you learn to hold the camera steady.

Even a fast shutter speed won't guarantee you sharp shots. Here's how pros get them. (Beware of drawings or pictures in some camera instruction book purporting to show how to hold a camera. Many are wrong!)

With a 110 pocket camera, grasp the ends between thumbs and first and second fingers. Hold to your eye. Place the most convenient finger over the shutter release. Press your thumbs upwards against the center of camera while pulling down slightly on the ends with your other fingers—as if you were going to snap the camera in half.

For verticals, it's everyone for himself! Few pocket cameras are easy to hold for verticals so try various two-handed positions until you find a comfortable one. Suggestion: Use your forehead to brace the camera. Press the shutter release gently with a smooth, even pressure.



Hold pocket camera firmly; braced against forehead for vertical shots (right)



Herbert Keppler



For SLR, support camera with left hand, use right hand for shooting.



Easy Ways To Better Pictures

Move in close: Many pictures are taken from too great a distance so that the main subject—and the point of the picture—is lost. Try taking pictures of people at distances from about six to eight feet for full figures, three feet or less for faces. And don't forget to shift your camera to vertical from horizontal to make the most use of the length of your area.

Move up or down: Don't always shoot from eye-level. Maybe a low viewpoint would dramatize your subject and remove cluttered background. Before you snap, move around to find a more interesting approach.

Avoid the noon-day sun: Direct sunlight is, perhaps, the worst possible lighting, especially for pictures from different angles and distances. With human subjects it's hard to capture the best expression with one photo.

Keep backgrounds simple: Unless you are looking for a specific effect, examine your backgrounds carefully to avoid trees and telephone poles growing out of heads.

Squeeze the shutter gently: Regardless of the camera you use, s-q-u-e-e-z-e the shutter release gently. Don't rock the camera. Above all, don't jerk the camera as you press the release.