Filters for photography

Filters are as important as the camera or lens; filters are to photography what adjectives are to writing.Browse When using filters; images have colour and excitement. Also filters allow film and digital to see things more like our eyes see a scene. Your eyes see more than a film or digital sensor’s so we are able to accurately render the scene as our eyes see it with the aid of filters at source not using photo editing software.Search

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Lens Filters are used for a number of different reasons such as reducing the light entering the lens allowing the shutter to stay open longer for slow shutter speed effects, adjusting the strength of reflections on the surface of water or simply adding more colour to an image.

**Polarizing Filter: -** A polarizing filter can be used to darken skies increasing the contrast between the clouds and the sky.  Heat haze and reflected sunlight are reduced, and in color photographs saturation is increased. Polarizers can be used when taking images involving reflection’s, such as those of water or glass as the reflections can be reduced. For example, on over cast days it will not turn the skies blue but it will help saturate colours. This in my estimation is the one filter that all good photographers should carry especially when doing Landscape photography.

There are two types of polarizing filter, linear and circular, both give essentially the same result but use different mechanisms; what you really need to know is which one will work with my camera. Check your camera manual, see what the manufacture recommends; Most polarizers will have a bit of a blue cast, this more noticeable in slide film, some manufactures have made a warm toned filter (slightly yellow/red).

I must recommend that you buy a good polarizing filter in the first instance, it will not be cheap but it will be a long term investment. Rule of thumb; Auto–focus and digital cameras need circular due to the metering in cameras, older cameras can generally use a linear polarizing filter.

**NEUTRAL DENSITY FILTER**

Before we go into ND filters, there are four sizes, A series, P series, Z –pro series, and X pro series; I would recommend the P series, which will fit up to 77mm front thread diameter with the use of an adapter holder unless you could afford going up to the Z-pro series, you will have less vinetting, when using a wide angle lens.

**ND (Neutral Density) Filter: -** [ND **filters**](http://www.freephotoresources.com/neutral-density-filters-explained/) reduce the amount of light and colours that enter the **lens**in equal amounts giving you a greater choice of aperture and shutter speed.  This is particularly useful when trying to achieve slow shutter speed effects during the day or in lighter conditions as the shutter speed can be slowed without over exposing the image.  ND **filters**can be obtained in a number of different ’strengths’ for use in different conditions they will cover all the scene not like graduations which will give you partial.

An example of how an ND filter can be used; an image taken during the day at a shutter speed of 8 seconds or longer; this would have completely over exposed the photo if the ND filter(s) had not been used.  Using the ‘Cokin/Lee/Black & White /Hoyer/Hightec or Kood’ filter attachment you can also use 1, 2,3,4,6,or 8 even a 10 ND filter strength at once to give greater flexibility of your aperture and shutter speed settings.

ND filterscan also be graduated (GG filters) and used for conditions where part of the scene is brighter than others, this can be hard or soft. The soft will blend in better than the hard; the hard GG will leave a noticeable line across the picture, not unlike a ND filter which will cover all.

Filters can be purchased in a variety of colours, They can be of solid colour or graduated, hard or soft as used by the Black & White photographers for film; I can see no reason why they cannot be used by digital photographers today especially when you can see the image instantly on your screen; It is far better than manipulating in editing software, the colours, tones will be there.

**Coloured Filters**

Orange: - This increases the contrasts between the reds and yellows; it darkens skies, accentuates clouds and strongly subdues the ambient light.

Red: - Used for extreme contrasts, by changing the contrasting blues to almost black, it gives your image a dramatic character.

Blue: - Used mainly at night giving a blue colour over your image also used for a cold toned image.

Green: -It lightens the nature and especially the greenery scenes, improves the depth of field.

**Yellow**: - This is a great filter to be used outside or for portrait using tungsten lights. It improves skin tone hides freckles and highlights blonde hair; emphasizes the feeling of liveliness. Also recommend for shooting landscapes on which this filter will improve the contrasts between sky and clouds.

There are many variations of yellow ( warming up filters 81,83 and 83a) and all coloured filters come in many varied graduated variations too numerous to list all.

**UV (Ultra Violet) Filter: -** UV filters are used to reduce haziness created by ultraviolet light. A UV filter is mostly transparent to visible light, and can be left on the lens for nearly all shots. A strong UV filter cuts off some visible light in the violet part of the spectrum, and can produce a pale yellow color cast.  Strong UV filters are also sometimes used for warming color photos taken in shade with daylight-type film; also used to protect the front of your lens.

**Filter (Infrared) Filter: -** An IR filter will block visible light and only allow infrared light to pass through to the camera **lens**.  The part of the spectrum that infrared uses is referred to as near infrared, this is different from far infrared, which is used in thermal imaging.  Infrared **filters**will turn the sky very dark, greens can appear almost white

**Star Filters: -** Star **filters** (or cross screen **filters**) create points of light, streaking outward from a central source of light.  This can make lighting within the scene take on a more dramatic appearance.  This effect is produced by a series of thin lines etched onto the surface of a clear filter.

# **What is the difference between a Linear & Circular polariser?**

There is no difference in the effect on the final image. The difference is in the technical way that the filter manages the light at wavelength level. Linear polarisers provide standard polarised light with all lightwaves vibrating in the same plane, whereas circular polarisers will polarise and then spin the lightwaves. The internal optics that control focussing or metering in some modern cameras cannot work with standard polarised light and therefore a circular polariser is required. The information on which type is needed can normally be found in the instruction book for your camera.

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	+ [I.O.T.M](http://www.freephotoresources.com/category/gallery/i-o-t-m/)
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