



SHUTTER SCHOOL

Pocket Cheat Card

Manual mode, made simple
YOUR KIT

Nikon D90

18–105mm VR kit lens

THE ONE RULE

Get the light meter to 0, then pick the look you want. That is the whole game.

flip over for lesson skills →

THE 3 CONTROLS

Aperture

f/3.5–f/22

more light: small # (f/3.5)

less light: big # (f/22)

LOOK: blurry vs. sharp background

Shutter

1/1000–1s

more light: slower (1/15)

less light: faster (1/1000)

LOOK: freeze vs. blur motion

ISO

100–1600

more light: higher (1600)

less light: lower (100)

LOOK: clean vs. grainy

LIGHT METER — aim for



SET UP MANUAL (M)

- 1 Mode dial → M.
- 2 Set ISO: low if bright, high if dim.
- 3 Set shutter (rear dial). Start 1/125.
- 4 Set aperture: hold +/- button, spin front dial. Start f/5.6.
- 5 Half-press: read the meter.
- 6 Adjust until the marker hits 0. Shoot!

NOT AT 0? CHANGE IN THIS ORDER

- **Aperture:** pick the look (blur or sharp)
- **Shutter:** keep it fast enough to be sharp
- **ISO:** raise last, only to reach 0

VR ON handheld → sharper at slower speeds. Keep ≥1/125 zoomed to 105mm.

SCENE RECIPES

Portrait

105mm f/5.6

1/200 ISO 200

close up, soft background

Sports / pet

any f/5.6

1/1000 ISO 400

freeze the action

Landscape

18mm f/8

1/125 ISO 100

sharp near to far

Indoors / dim

18mm f/3.5

1/100 ISO 1600

widest + VR on + high ISO

Sunset

18mm f/8

1/125 ISO 200

aim meter to -1/2 for color

Trust the meter over the numbers.

Nikon D90 · 18–105mm VR

04 · NAILING FOCUS

- AF-S = still subjects (focus locks once).
- AF-C = moving subjects (keeps tracking).
- Put the single focus point on the EYES; half-press to lock.
- Lens A-M switch stays on A (autofocus).
- Tack-sharp: fast shutter + VR on + steady + breathe out.

05 · COMPOSITION

- Rule of thirds — subject off-centre, on a line or crossing.
- Leading lines (roads, fences) pull the eye to your subject.
- Frame it — shoot through a doorway, window, or branches.
- Fill the frame — step closer.
- Change your angle — get low or high.
- Check the background before you shoot.

06 · WORKING WITH LIGHT

- Direction: front = flat, side = shape & drama, back = glow.
- Soft light flatters: golden hour, window light, overcast.
- Avoid harsh midday sun on faces.
- Ask "where is the light coming from?" then place your subject in it.

07 · WHITE BALANCE

- Light color: cool / blue <-> warm / orange.
- Auto WB usually works — switch when colors look off.
- Incandescent fixes orange indoor bulbs.
- Cloudy / Shade add warmth outdoors.
- Shoot RAW to fix white balance later.

See the light -> compose -> expose to 0 -> focus on the eyes -> shoot, check, adjust.

Lesson 08 — put it together on your capstone photo story. Keep shooting.