

BETTER TRAVEL PICS

TIPS & TRICKS FOR CAMERAS AND SMARTPHONES

JOHN LECHNER ART





HOW YOU CAN TAKE BETTER TRAVEL PICS

Being on a holiday with your family is one of the most wonderful bonding experiences you can have. The memories from a holiday stay with you forever. But today in the age of digital, often the reminders of the trip are on our phone or a hard drive. Wouldn't it be great to have them on the wall?

Well, you absolutely can!

Taking amazing photos on your holiday and hanging those prints on your wall is one of the most nostalgic feelings you can ever experience.

You don't have to be a pro to do that. All you need is a camera or a good camera phone.

This eBook will teach you how to take the best possible photos you can, using the gear that you currently own. You may need to tweak a few things with your camera but that does not necessarily mean that you have to buy a brand new expensive camera or camera phone.

The image above was taken on an iPhone 6!

The primary goal of these tips that I will be sharing with you is to help improve your photography skills to a point where you will be proud to hang your shots on your wall.

What is a better way to remember a trip than by proudly telling your friends and family about your holiday with your very own beautiful print on the wall as an artwork.



This eBook will give you a straight-forward approach to learning the basics of landscape photography.

I am not going to tell you to buy things that are not needed or unnecessary.

I'm not going to tell you things that I have been taught that are not really essential when you are shooting.

I will be teaching you the tips and tricks that I use every day that help me capture the beautiful artworks that I create.

I believe that with these simple tips and tricks, you can create some fantastic art yourself. Something that you will be proud to hang on your walls. That's my promise, so let's get started.





1

TRIPODS

The first tip is all about tripods. We will be talking about the different kinds of tripods and the reason why it is best to have one when taking landscape photography.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a tripod is a three-legged device or stand used to support a camera or telescope.



Using a tripod helps us get a nice sharp image by avoiding camera shake.

Why do you really need to use a tripod when taking a good landscape?

The answer is simple. When shooting a landscape, you typically need a slower exposure to get a great shot especially when you are working on the either end of the day.

If you are shooting sunrise, sunset, in a forest, a waterfall or just generally low light conditions, in

order to get a slow exposure, your gear should be placed on a tripod.

So what is a slow exposure and why is it important?

A slow exposure is relative to your lens focal length, but for the sake of keeping it simple let's just say that anything below 1/125th of a second is slow. 1/125th of a second will show up as "125" on most cameras. Slower speeds include



60, 30, 15, 8, 4, 2, 1", 2", 4". Note the " as in 2" denotes seconds, so 2" is a two second exposure.

Why is a slow exposure important?

The main reason for slow exposures is to get correct exposure in low light conditions.

Secondly, slow exposures give a magical feel to water. From waterfalls to surf and the glassy surface of a lake, a slow exposure can give the impression of movement in a still image.

Using a tripod helps us get a nice sharp image by avoiding camera shake. Even a small amount of shake can result in a blurry image.

You don't necessarily need to spend big bucks for a tripod. To give you a comparison, I have four tripods. They are:

1. Brian - Three-Legged Thing (around AU\$700)

The one that I carry and use every day is called Brian from the Three-Legged Thing. This tripod is made from carbon-fiber and it's very compact. The reason why I love this tripod is because it is very sturdy and light. I can take it anywhere with me.

2. Manfrotto 190XB (around AU\$350)

This is a very common tripod. More people, especially camera enthusiasts,

have a tripod from this brand. It's made from aluminum and also sturdy. However, this tripod is a little heavier compared to the Brian.

It's also not that very compact, so it will not fit in your hand luggage if ever you decide to bring it for traveling. You have to either carry it or place it in a bigger bag when you want to take photos when you travel.

3. Inca (under AU\$50)

I also have another tripod which you can buy at a department store or camera shop. The brand is from Inca and you can buy this (or similar) for around \$20 - \$50 at most department stores.

Since it's a bit easy on the pocket, it's also a little less sturdy than the others mentioned above. But the truth is, an Inca could work just as well for you (if your gear is not too heavy).



4. iPhone or Smartphone Tripod (under AU\$20)

Now, if you don't own a camera yet or prefer shooting using your phone, there's also a little tripod for it. It's smaller compared to an ordinary tripod but this is very helpful when you're shooting a video or taking a photo. One thing that I like about this tripod is that it's very light, compact and easy to carry. You can even place it in your pocket if you've got your hands full.

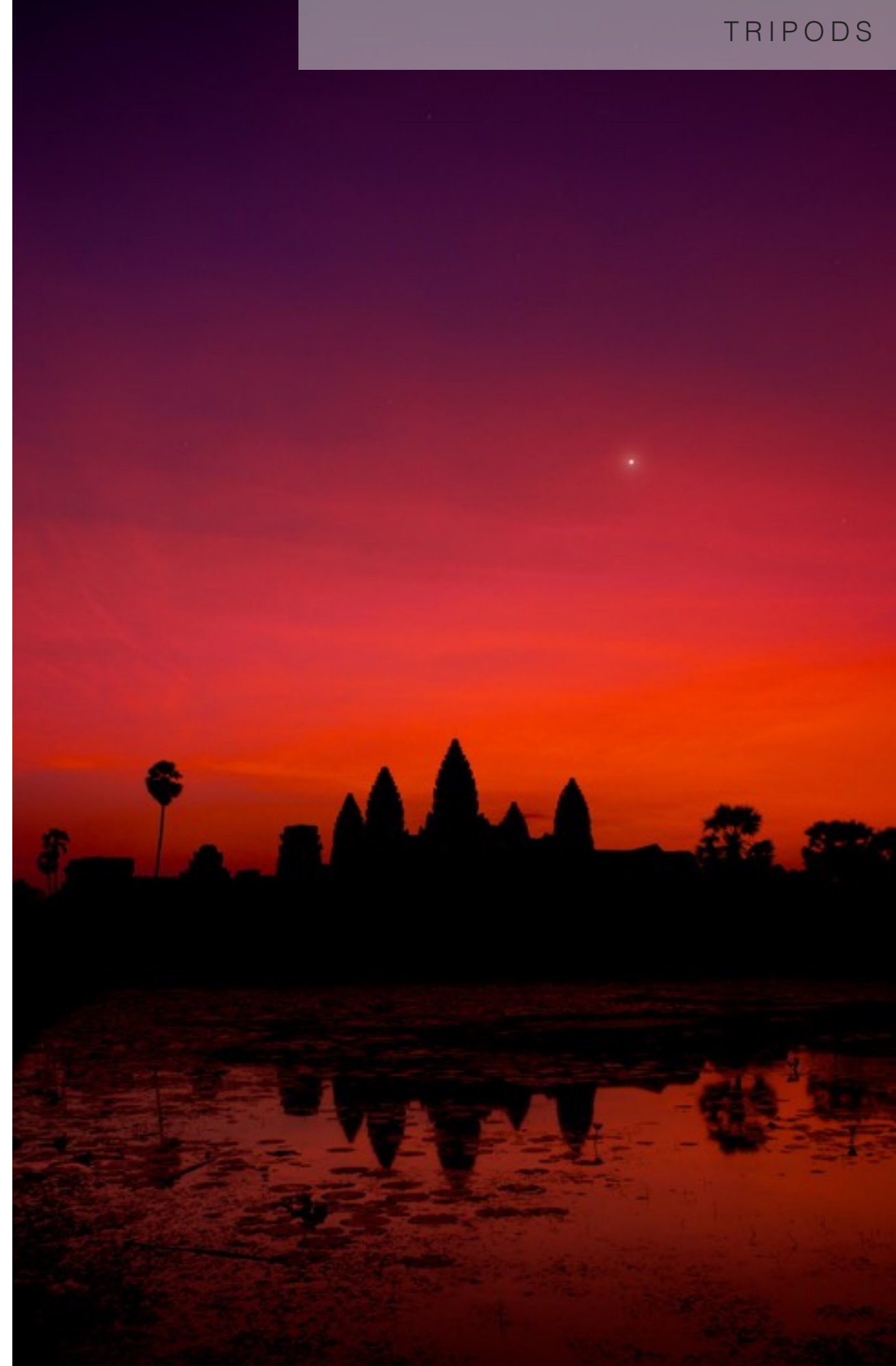
So, do you really need a tripod? The answer is yes.

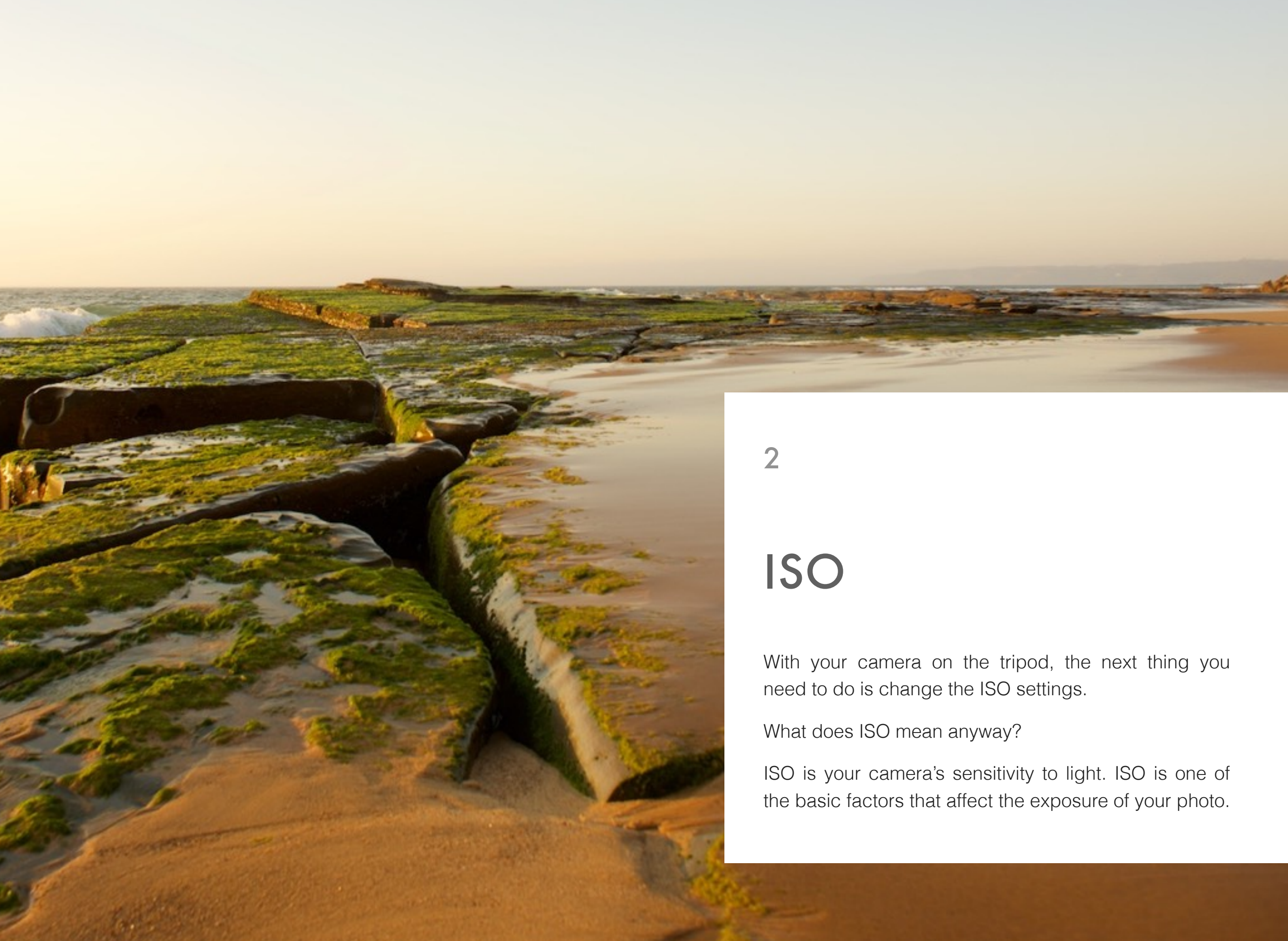
Do you need a \$700 tripod? NO.

Your tripod should be something that works well for you. It should be something you can happily carry around, especially when you're traveling. It should also be light and sturdy enough to handle the weight of your camera. One thing that you also need to consider is that your tripod should be within your eye height when extended.

Smartphone Tip

The head on most selfie sticks actually screws off and has the same $\frac{1}{4}$ inch screw mount as standard tripod plates. Screw the selfie stick head to your tripod plate (even better a spare plate) so you can mount your phone on a tripod.





2

ISO

With your camera on the tripod, the next thing you need to do is change the ISO settings.

What does ISO mean anyway?

ISO is your camera's sensitivity to light. ISO is one of the basic factors that affect the exposure of your photo.



The other factors that determine your image's exposure are shutter speed and aperture. But we will talk more of that later.

Why does ISO matter?

There are two factors which are important for taking better travel pics.

1. A higher ISO, say 800-6400, will make it easier to take a well exposed photo in low light conditions without a tripod.
2. A high ISO, including 400 on some cameras can introduce noise (a grittiness or blotches of colour).

If we are using a tripod, which we should be in low light conditions, then we use a low ISO such as 100 and compensate with a longer exposure, sometimes seconds or even minutes. This is why a sturdy tripod is critical.

In practice, we want to avoid as much noise in our images as possible as noise shows up quite unpleasantly in large prints. So ISO 100 is the best way to avoid that noise in our end product.

If you've got an iPhone or another type of phone, sometimes you cannot set your ISO. There are ways that you can do it using

other apps available. For now, let's just focus on a handheld camera. You should be able to manually set your ISO on any camera.

As a general rule I suggest you use ISO 100 when on a tripod and ISO 400 when you have the camera in your hands and doing street or action photography.

To understand the relationship between the three factors that affect exposure - Aperture, Shutter Speed and ISO, it best to provide an example. So in my tutorials I recommend putting your camera in Aperture (A or Av) mode and setting your Aperture between 4-6.3.

In this example I set the Aperture to 5.6 and then adjust the ISO.

ISO	Shutter speed
100	1/125th
400	1/500th
800	1/1000th
1600	1/2000th
3200	1/4000th
6400	1/8000th





For the purpose of this exercise we won't get too technical but the short answer is, when using a lower ISO, say 100, you need a longer exposure to get a correctly exposed shot. A higher ISO will need a shorter exposure, but it will also add noise, which we don't want in our final image.

Smartphone Tip

Using a free App such as VSCO (iOS & Android) allows you to manually set your ISO to 100 on your phone.

Set your ISO to 100 when using a tripod, and 400 when handheld.



3

IMAGE STABILISATION

Image stabilisation helps your camera's ability to capture clear and sharp photos at slow shutter speeds.

Image stabilisation buttons differ from camera to camera. It can be VR (Vibration Reaction) on a Nikon



camera or IS (Image Stabilisation) on a Canon hand held. It can also be on the lens itself.

If you put a camera on a tripod, putting image stabilisation on is actually going to give you more blur than not. So you want to turn image stabilization off when you've got the camera on a tripod. That's one thing you really need to remember.

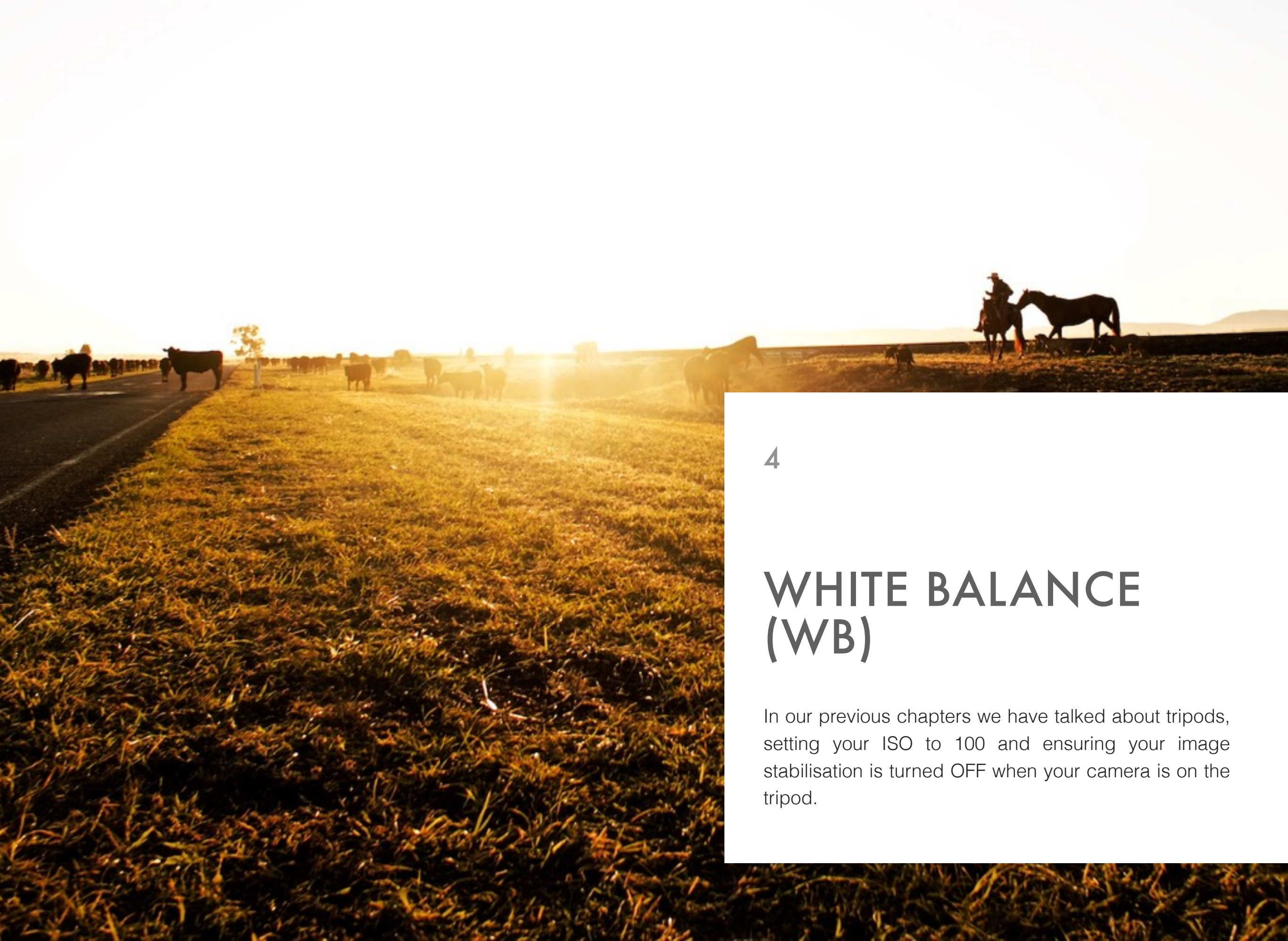
In short, if your camera is on a **tripod** please **turn off** your VR, IS or image stabilisation on your camera or lens.

If you are holding your camera in your **hands** then turn the VR, IS or image stabilisation **on**.

Smartphone Tip

At this time only a handful of phones have Image Stabilisation. They include the iPhone 6+ (6s+ too) and the Galaxy S6. You should turn this feature off when your phone is mounted on a tripod.

If your camera is on a tripod
please turn off your VR, IS or
image stabilisation on your
camera or lens.



4

WHITE BALANCE (WB)

In our previous chapters we have talked about tripods, setting your ISO to 100 and ensuring your image stabilisation is turned OFF when your camera is on the tripod.




The next step? We want to adjust our white balance.

White balance is something you've probably never thought about before. What it does is change the balance of colours in your shot to suit the prevailing light. For instance, indoors under fluorescent lights is different to outdoors in the sun. Likewise, a cloudy day is different to a sunny day.

Your camera has a bunch of different white balance settings pre-programmed which you can use to get the best possible result.

On the top of your camera it might be there as WB or it will be in your settings under White Balance or WB.

I tend to do one of two things with my white balance;

1. I put it in AUTO (AWB) and let the camera work it out. If you're not sure, then that's a great default position to use. You don't want it in one of the specialised light modes or flash mode or anything like that.
2. The other mode that I use is the cloudy mode. It looks like this. It's basically for a day when the clouds are  out. When you use the Cloudy WB you get a warmer, more yellow shot. It works really well for sunsets and sun rises.

Use White Balance (WB) Auto or Cloudy

The key difference between the AWB and using a pre-programmed setting like Cloudy is that AWB will adjust as the light changes where as a pre-programmed setting won't.

I will often leave my camera in cloudy WB as it allows me to make sure that throughout the morning my white balance is the same.

NOTE: As I shoot in RAW I can make endless changes to my WB in post production. This is not the case with JPG, you need to get it right when you shoot it.

My suggestion is that you try the Cloudy mode and get a feel for the difference it makes to your shots compared to AWB. You will either like it or not. But remember, once you are finished your shoot put your camera back into AWB or all your daytime shots will look yellow.

Smartphone Tip

Your phone will default to AWB. To get a look similar to cloudy WB, set your WB between 6000-8000k in an app such as VSCO.



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