

# BULB/LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY

The term bulb is a reference to old-style pneumatically actuated shutters; squeezing an air bulb would open the shutter and releasing the bulb would close it.

The bulb setting allows you to keep your shutter open for as long as you hold down the shutter release. This opens up all kinds of possibilities for creativity – particularly in low light situations.

The Bulb is great for capturing light trails (moving traffic at night, a friend drawing out a message with a torch or fireworks).

At the extreme end of bulb settings astro photographers will leave the shutter open for long periods of time (hours) to capture star trails. To do this you'll need a small ISO, small aperture and should be aware that on many cameras it'll drain your batteries significantly. If you want to try this you can, but this may be a better project for spring/summer when it's not so cold.



## IMPORTANT TOOLS

**TRIPOD USE:** The extra blur from camera movement will often ruin a great long exposure shoot. Use a tripod to eliminate this extra movement.

## CABLE RELEASE OR TIMER:

A cable release or the use of a timer will eliminate the shake of pressing the shutter release button. Yes, pressing the shutter release button shakes your camera which can also cause unwanted blur.

**TORCH:** This can be used to “draw” with light during a long exposure.

**TIMER:** Using the bulb setting means experiment with time (seconds of exposure) a watch or timer of some sort will help you keep track of how long the exposure is.

**ND FILTERS:** A neutral density filter acts like sunglasses for your lens and can reduce the amount of light coming into your camera so you can create long exposures even during full daylight.



## SOME POSSIBLE SUBJECTS:

The bulb setting is useful for the following types of photographic subjects:

- fireworks at night
- the night sky and celestial objects (see astrophotography)
- lightning
- streets at night (creating streaks from moving cars)



## GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND: Here are some things you should think about to really impress me...

- Creativity
- New interesting long exposure shots
- Think beyond the obvious
- Take a risk
- Try something new
- Think COMPOSITION first then work out the long exposure