

How We Got It

In this lesson, we'll be taking a look at
How We Got It.

*Estimated Completion Time: **13 minutes.***

How We Got It

In this lesson, we are going to look at a number of sample photographs, and a little about how we took it, and the story behind it.

Sometimes the art is in the setup, not just the way the photo was taken. But you don't need to be a professional, with all the lights and tripods and reflectors to get great shots, as you'll see...



For this shot, we went down to the creek, and simply had a good look around. When we saw this beetle, we decided to take it so that the water was in the background. We used an aperture of F/3.5 to ensure the background was out of focus.

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Again, we got this shot just by looking around. We took a number of shots, not having a tripod on us, to ensure at least one came out in focus. No macro was used, we just moved in as close as we could. The large aperture also helped to keep the focus on the spider and its prey. The final image was cropped so that only the interesting parts remained.

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This shot was taken of a pet frog, behind glass. The shot was deliberately underexposed a little so that the background was as dark as possible. A flash was also used, at an angle so as not to get a reflection off the glass. This image was then brightened in PhotoShop, and any background elements that remained were removed.

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When you are photographing a pet, use a toy, a person, or some food, to get them to look where you want them to look.

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We were lucky enough to find this gecko in the background on a rock near this location. We took a number of shots, and when it ran onto the leaves, we thought the camouflage would make an interesting shot. No tripod, normal overcast lighting.

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When you are trying to photograph insects, especially ones like bees, sometimes you have to wait. Our preferred method is to set up on one particular flower that looks popular, using a tripod. Because we wanted to freeze any movement, we used 1/1000 of a second shutter speed using shutter priority.

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There was not much light around when we found these ants, so we had to take a lot of shots to get one in focus. The camera was balanced on the ground to keep it from moving. No flash was used, although we did try it. We ended up using a 1/30 second shutter speed. Hence, not many turned out without some blurry movement.

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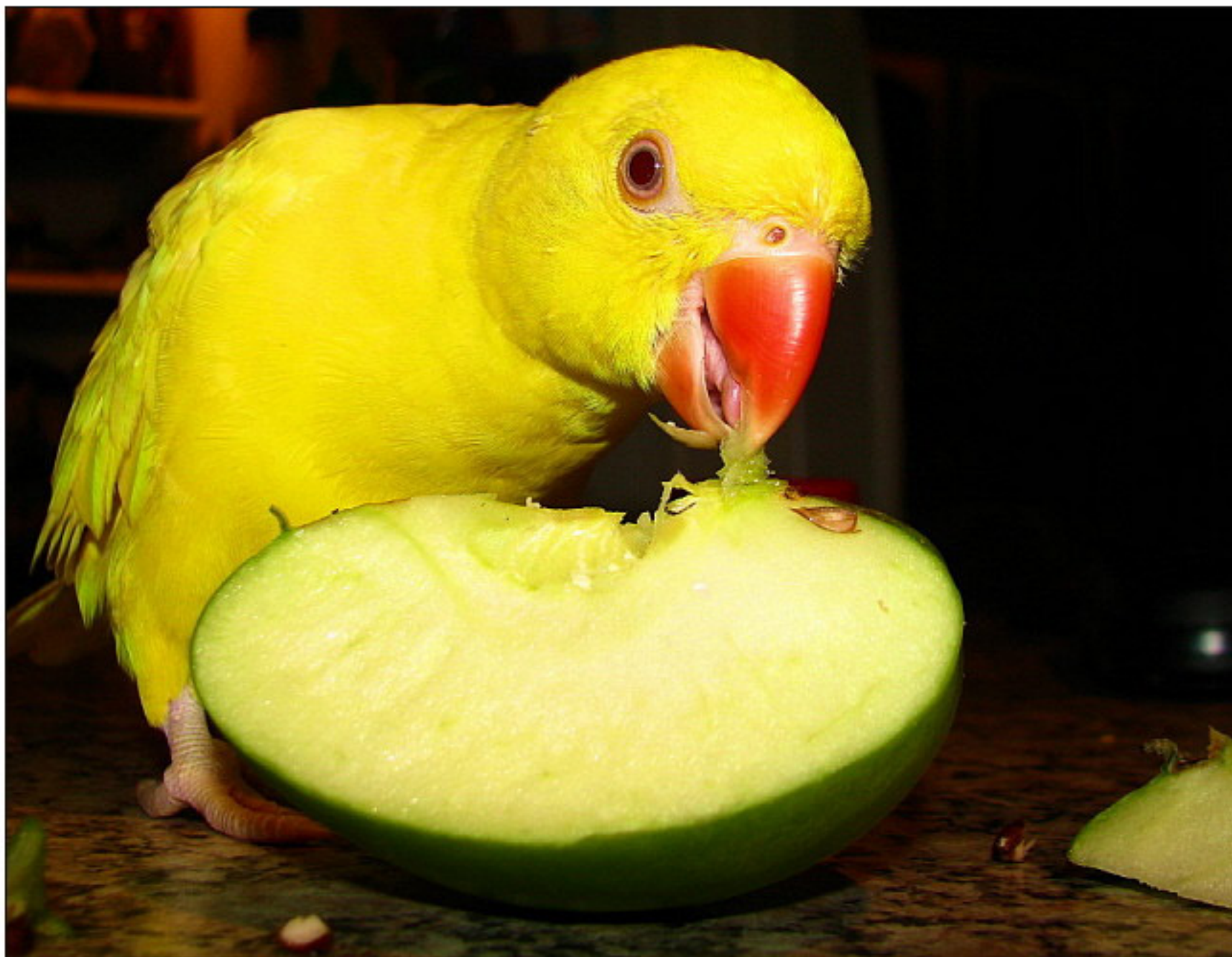
Light was fading when we found this grasshopper, and we had no tripod, so we used a flash, and a 1/200 shutter speed so prevent any movement - and just got as close as we could.

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If you want to get some insect shots, take a torch, and try going out at night - even on the driveway, and your own garden. You'll find a range of them around. This one was achieved using automatic mode, with a flash, and no tripod.

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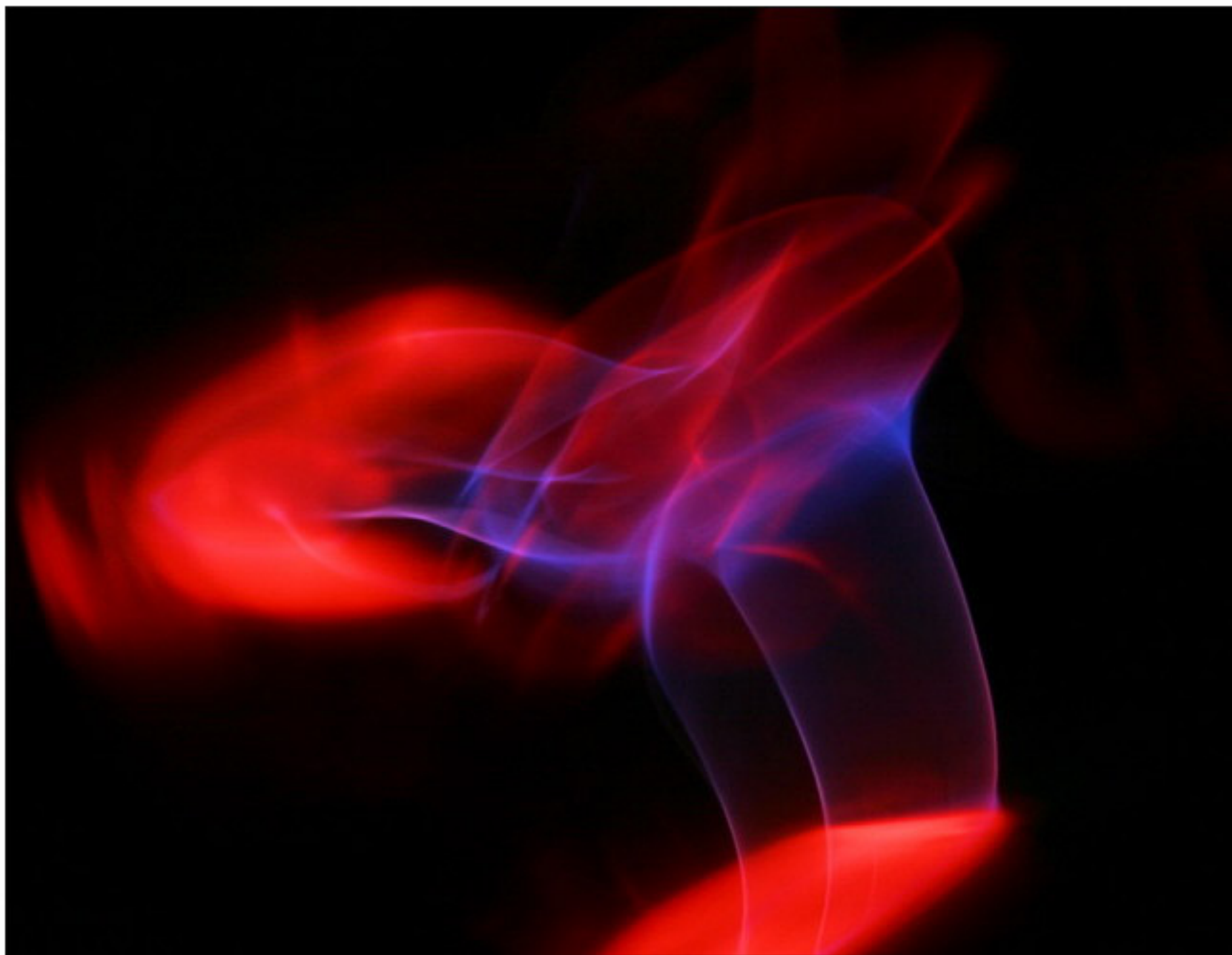
This pet bird is a favorite subject, as you've probably seen. She is tame, but to get close, we have to keep her interested. In this case, some food does the trick. Indoor, at night, with a flash.

How We Got It



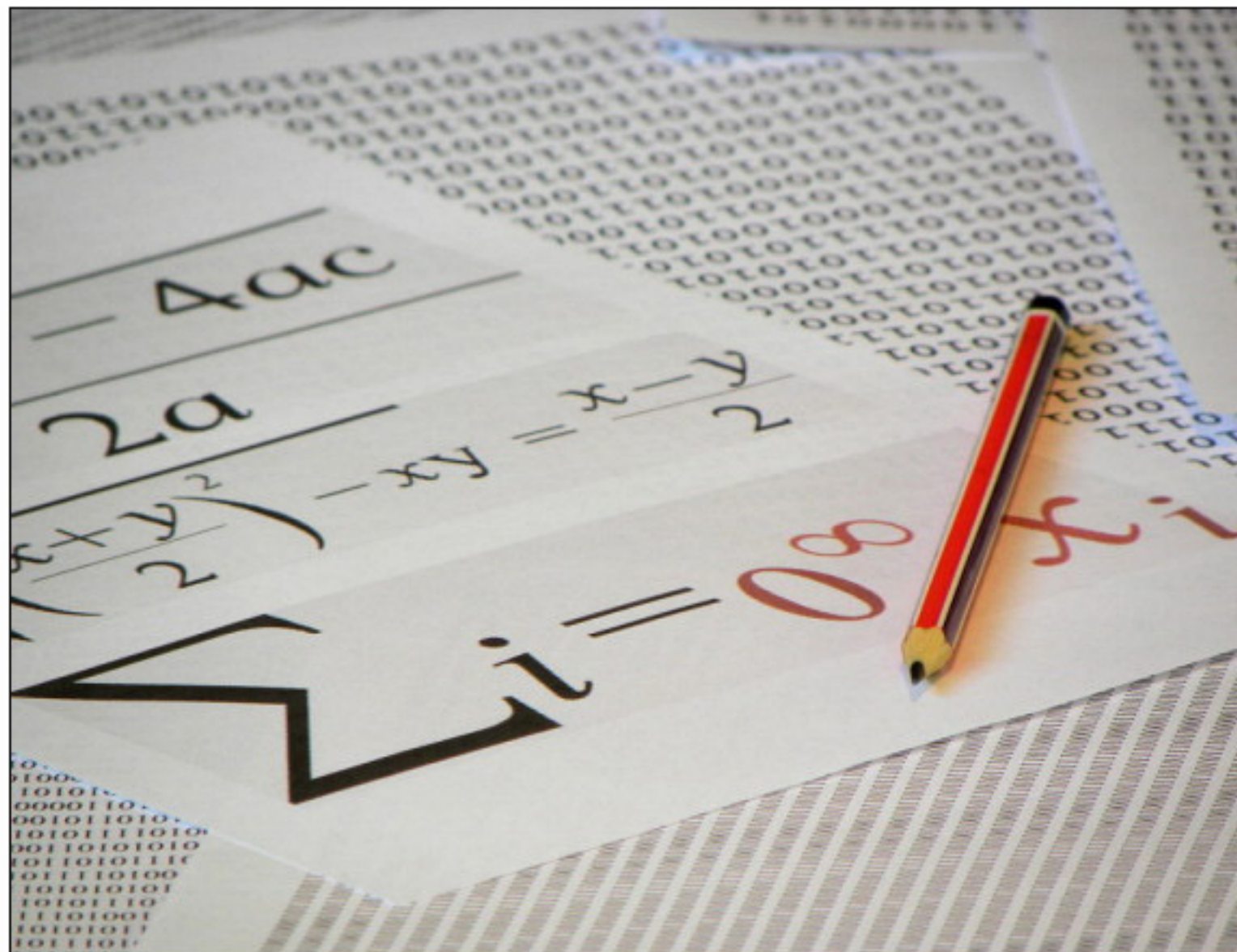
This bird appeared in the backyard, so we followed it around, from ground level to the tree. We could not get close, so a 300mm zoom lens was used to capture this shot. Normally, this bird had its feathers down, but a loud noise (not from us) made it ruffle its feathers, and make the shot more interesting. There was probably enough natural light, but a flash was used, but it was probably out of range. ISO was set to 800.

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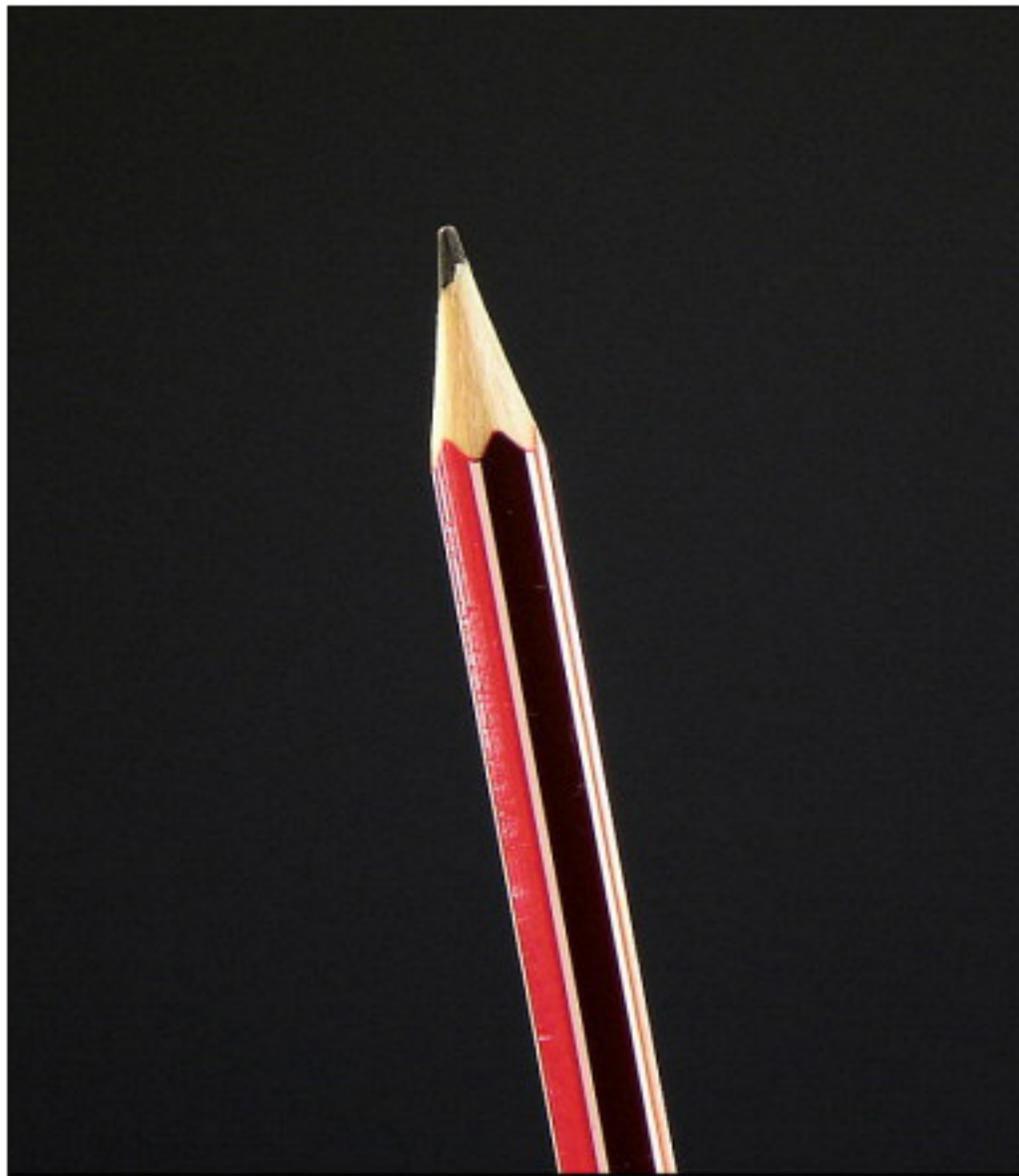
This interesting shot was achieved using a 'plasma lamp'. We set it up indoors, at night, and turned out the lights. A hand held camera, set at 1/3 of a second gave this effect.

How We Got It



We were after a shot to signify numbers, maths. We printed out a number of sheets, and placed them on a table indoors. We set up two everyday lamps at some distance and aimed at the table. We then moved back, and, on a tripod, zoomed in to 250mm. Automatic settings were used, although the shutter speed was 1 second.

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We were after the black background effect. Being a little lazy, we clamped a pencil to a table, and placed it about 10 feet in front of a large television, turned off, giving us the black background. Two everyday lamps lit the pencil from either side, and a flash was not used. Shutter speed was 1 second. A smaller aperture ensured that the background was also out of focus.

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This one was simply a matter of taking a lot of shots, using a shutter speed of 1/750 of a second to freeze the bubbles. By taking a lot of shots, we were bound to get some bubbles in the making.

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A nice sunset gave a perfect background. Using this as a background, and using fully automatic settings on a hand held camera - including a flash, it turned out nicely.

How We Got It



We found a small stage. There was only normal indoor lighting. We used a 1.5 second shutter speed on a hand held camera, and asked the kids to dance.

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Taking a shot of a computer screen, or a television can be a little tricky. You need a fairly slow shutter speed - fast shutter speeds will capture the screen refresh in a dark band across the photo. Use a tripod, no flash, and with even normal lighting, and a shutter speed of around 1/60 to 1/10 of a second, you'll get a good shot.

Ensure the screen, or camera, is angled so that there are no reflections on the screen.

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In order to get this caterpillar with a blurred background, we picked up the stick the caterpillar was on, and just raised it above the ground. We moved in as close as possible. it was an overcast day, so lighting was quite good. Totally automatic settings were used - no flash.

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To get a fish through glass, use a tripod. Because you cannot use the flash, as it will reflect off the glass (or give a strange light), you have to use a relatively slow shutter speed. You can place the camera quite close to the glass, but aim it at a slight angle so that there are no reflections. It helps if the fish are not moving around too much - so, once again, take a number of shots, and the fish will stay still at some stage. This was taken at 1/18 of a second, ISO 400, F/3.

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This was taken in some fairly heavy rain. You can see how the flash reflects off the raindrops. As we had to venture outside for this one, we donned the gumboots, and used a raincoat to cover the camera. Even as the shot was taken, a raincoat was sitting above it to protect it. You can see the limited range of the flash, even though we used an ISO of 800.

How We Got It



Unless you are patient, getting a dragonfly can be almost impossible. They move all the time. All we can simply do, as we did here, is move in as quietly as possible for the shot. It was fairly dark, so we used to flash to illuminate, and also to freeze the action, as the camera was hand held.

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Very simple setup. We put the camera on a tripod, and used shutter priority to set the shutter speed to six seconds. It was dark, and we gave the child two sparklers to wave around...

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This did not turn out quite as well as hoped - but the subject matter was fascinating. A praying mantis was caught in a web. As we were photographing it, a bee was also caught in the web, and the praying mantis began to eat it. We used aperture priority to ensure the background was out of focus (F/5.6).

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You've now completed this lesson.

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