

## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

In this lesson, we'll be taking a look at  
**Taking Photos for Online Auctions.**

*Estimated Completion Time: **16 minutes.***

## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

When selling products online, a good photo can mean the difference between a good price, and a poor price.

Have a look at eBay, or similar sites. You'll see a range of quality of photograph from professional, to truly awful.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

**Lighting.** If taking your shots indoors (if you can, do take them indoors), probably the most important aspect is the lighting.

Professional lighting is expensive, and out of the question for most. Small, relatively inexpensive studio kits, with several small lights, and light boxes to diffuse the light, can make photographs of small objects look more professional.



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

**Lighting.** So, most of us will be using the lights that are available. Set up your photo area so that several lights are available - one light source is going to throw harsh shadows. Several lights, from different directions, will help diffuse harsh shadows.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

A flash is likely to throw harsh shadows as well. And if your light source is too close to the subject, you'll also get harsh shadows.



*The photo on the left has much harsher shadows. Same amount of light on the right hand side, just a different light position. Experiment with moving lights around to get the best position.*



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

***Moving the Light Source.*** Below you can see the effect of moving the light source can have on the subject.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

**Natural Light.** If natural light is available, take advantage of it. Perhaps it can be used in conjunction with artificial light, or even a mirror to reflect the light back onto the object from the other side.

Natural light will give much more flattering color, and less harsh shadows.



*On the left, no flash. On the right, a flash was used. In this case, because there were no reflective surfaces, it has turned out fairly well. In both cases, the camera stands out extremely well from the background.*



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

***Tripod.*** If you are using artificial light, indoors, and no flash, then you are almost going to have to use a tripod.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

**Backgrounds.** Choose your background well. It should either contrast with the subject, or perhaps complement it - see the subject in context perhaps.



*One subject, three different backgrounds. The bottom one certainly illustrates the subject nicely, but the first looks nice on the wooden table. The second one - forget it. The subject gets totally lost on the background.*



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*A white background for this subject allows the colors to stand out. Any other color would have meant this subject would have got lost a little.*



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions



*Here a camera in the background on this shot gives it some relevancy. We've used a small aperture to ensure the camera is out of focus.*

## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

One great way to take the shot is to prevent anything else other than the object getting in the shot. This does not require a studio, and can be done quite simply at home.

For example, take a sheet of A3 or so size paper. You can get cardboard much larger than this if needed.

Lay it on the table. Lift up one end, and under that end, place something large. This will curve the paper/cardboard upwards, and will serve as the backdrop for our piece. Because it curves upwards gradually, it retains better color and less shadows.





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Experiment with colors and textures for the backdrop (it will also sit underneath the object as well). White is good to make the subject stand out, but large white areas in a photograph can really play havoc with the automatic white balance settings in a camera.

So try a colored, or texture cardboard for better color reproduction. Just ensure it still allows the subject to stand out, and is not too similar in color.





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Place the subject on the near end of the paper - the opposite end where you placed something under it to make it curve.

Place the camera in front of the subject, close enough so that the paper/cardboard is the only thing seen behind the subject. If it is not, don't worry - you can always crop it out later.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

Place the subject at an angle to the camera. Maybe the camera looks slightly from one side, or slightly from the top, or both. This gives the subject some depth.





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Get as close as possible. If you cannot fill the frame with the subject, don't worry - you can always crop it in a graphics program after you've taken it.





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If it is small, or flat, then lay it on the cardboard, or whatever backing you've selected.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

Include a variety of shots, particularly for more complex items. You must give customers the confidence that this is the product they want.



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

If you can't get a good shot, try a hand held, particularly if it is a hand held item. This can give it a human touch.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

A different perspective may help draw attention to your product...





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

If there is any question of how big the item you are selling is, include a shot with some other object to give an idea of scale.

Rulers are pretty boring and ugly - try it with something more interesting.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

When you get in close and sharp to your subject, if it has a reflective surface, you'll see dust, fibers, or fingerprints. Cleaning the item carefully helps, but they are almost unavoidable. See how we fixed this, below.



*On the left, our original shot, complete with dust and fingerprints. On the right - we used the **Salt and Pepper** filter available in **Corel Photo Paint Pro** - and seconds later we have this result.*



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

Use a small aperture setting if it gives the right effect. This will allow you to blur the backgrounds, again making the subject stand out a little better.



*On the left, F/22. On the right, F/5.6.*



## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

Edit in a graphics program. You may need to crop, or remove unwanted elements. You may need to darken, or lighten the background, remove fingerprints, or dust. Below, we cropped, and adjusted the white balance on the image to complete it.





## Taking Photos for Online Auctions

You've now completed this lesson.

In this lesson, we took a look at  
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