

INTRODUCTION TO THE
Canon AE-1

The Basic Steps to Picture-Taking



Congratulations on your purchase of a Canon AE-1. We know that you are anxious to start taking pictures with it. Our first hint for taking great ones is to read these instructions. Follow the steps in order and become well acquainted with the camera. Then, once you have a good understanding of PART I, move on to PART II. It contains a lot of information you won't find elsewhere. The brief time spent in reading these instructions is a sound investment in satisfaction and enjoyment.

Symbols

- ☒ Signals an important DO.
- ☐ Signals an important DON'T.

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Camera parts are labeled on the insides of the foldout flaps at the beginning and end of PART II.

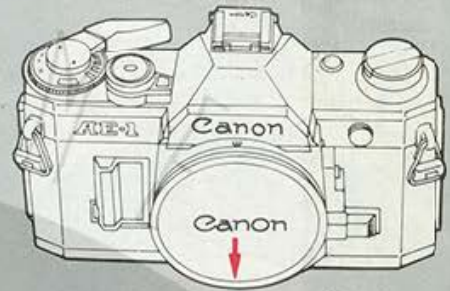
1. Attach the Lens



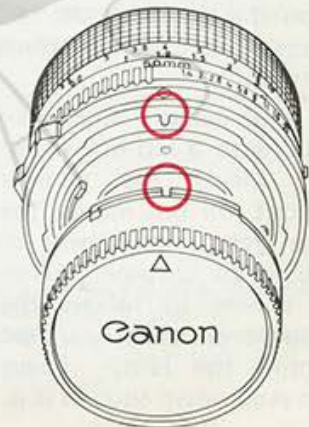
The instructions in this section concerning the lens are for an FD lens without a chrome mount ring. If your lens looks like this one with a chrome mount ring, read its instructions for handling the rear cap and mounting it on the camera.



Remove the rear lens cap by turning it in the direction of the arrow until it stops and pulling it out.



Remove the body cap.

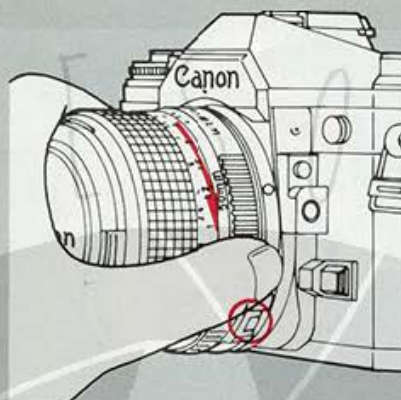


To reattach the rear lens cap, align it with the lens as illustrated. Then lightly push it in and turn it clockwise until it stops.

3



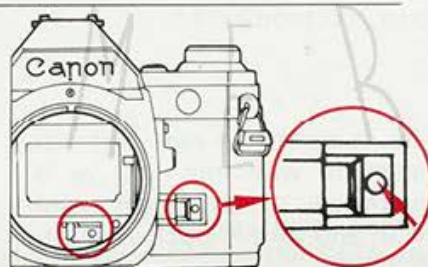
To mount the lens, first align the rounded red positioning point on the lens with the red dot above the camera mount as illustrated.



Then turn the lens in the direction of the arrow until it stops and the lens release button pops out with a click.

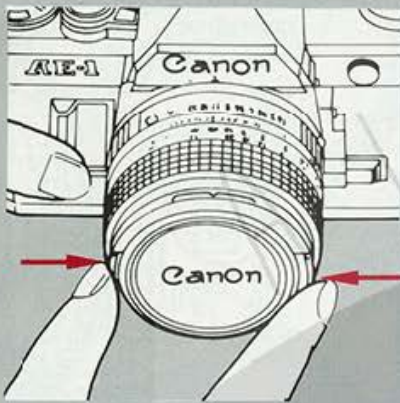
Make sure the lens release button has popped out. Otherwise, the lens will not work properly. DO NOT press the lens release button while mounting or it will not pop out.

⊗ If your camera looks like this, with a red dot showing inside the camera mount, do not mount the lens yet. First press in the small chrome button as shown to release the stop-down slide. Then mount the lens. Leave the stop-down slide as it is.

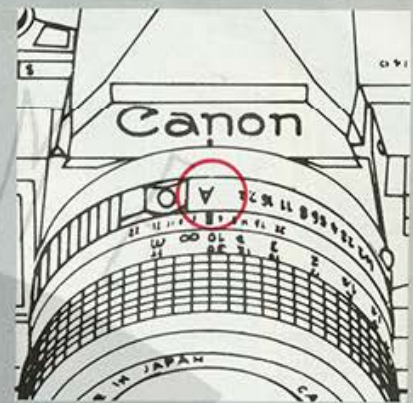
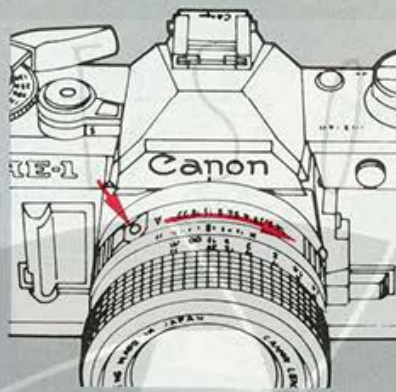


✓ When film is loaded, make sure it is completely advanced to the next frame before mounting the lens.

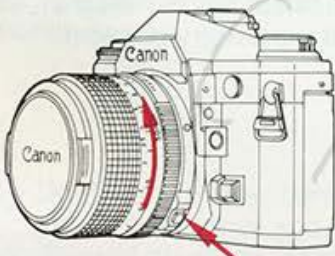
2. Set the Lens for AE (Automatic Exposure) Photography



Remove the front lens cap.



While pressing in the AE lock pin, turn the aperture ring in the direction of the arrow until "A" click-stops at the aperture index. "A" will be in line with the red dot on the camera. If you forget to do this, automatic exposure will be impossible.



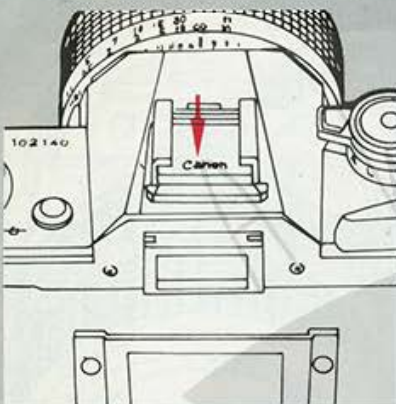
To remove the lens, turn it in the direction of the arrow, while pressing the lens release button, until it stops.

Notes

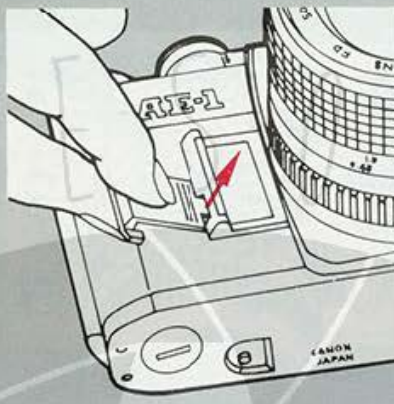
1. AE photography is possible only with a Canon FD lens. See PART II, p.24 for how to use a non-FD lens on the AE-1.
2. Some Canon FD lenses have a green circle in place of the "A" mark. It means the same thing as the "A" mark.

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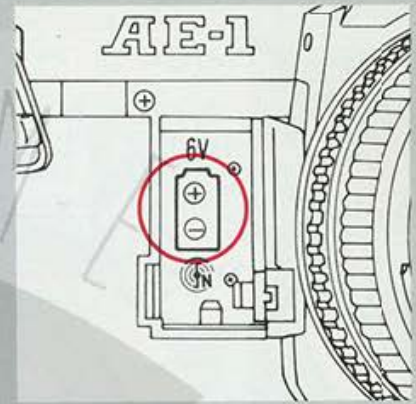
3. Load the Battery



Remove the viewfinder cover from the accessory shoe.



Open the battery chamber cover using the viewfinder cover.



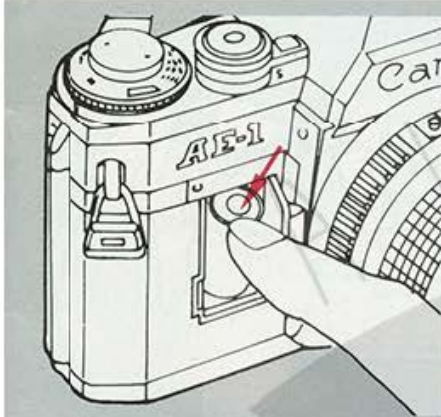
Load one new battery so that its poles are in the directions indicated by the diagram inside the battery chamber.

Correct Batteries Examples

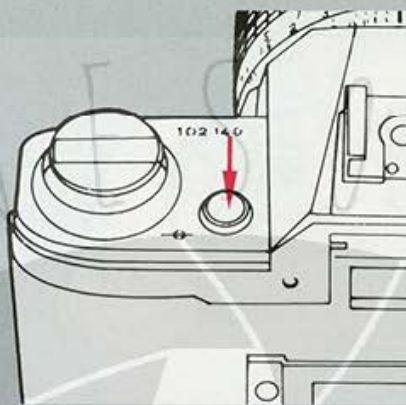
Alkaline-manganese 6V	Eveready (UCAR) No. A544 IEC 4LR44
Silver Oxide 6V	Eveready (UCAR) No. 544, Duracell PX 28 IEC 4SR44
Lithium 6V	Duracell PX 28L

Without a battery, the AE-1's shutter will not work and it will be impossible to take a picture. We recommend carrying a spare battery.

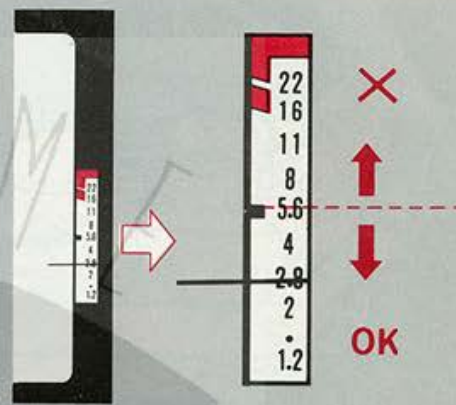
4. Check the Battery



Insert the negative end first. Then push down and insert the positive end. Close the chamber cover.



Press the battery check button while looking through the viewfinder. The meter needle in the viewfinder will move.



If the battery is good, the meter needle will rest at or below the battery check index. If there is not enough power, it will rest above the index. Replace the battery.

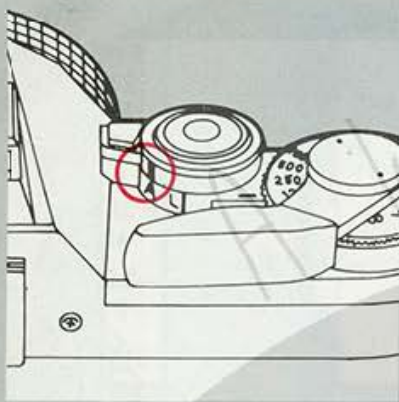
- ⊗ Don't touch the battery poles. Wipe them and the camera contacts with a clean, dry cloth before loading to prevent poor contact from dirt.



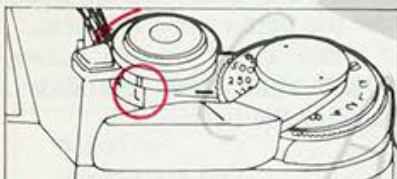
Notes

1. With normal use, the battery should last about one year.
2. It is necessary to take special precautions with the battery when you are shooting in very low temperatures (below 0°C, 32°F). See PART II, p.30.

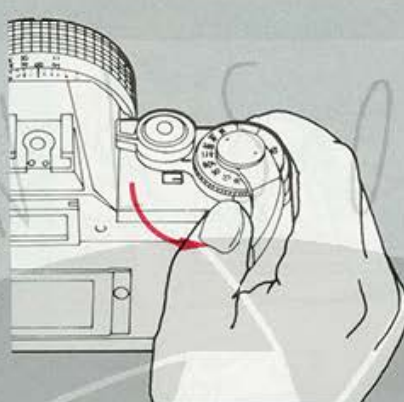
5. Before Loading Film, Learn to Operate Basic Controls



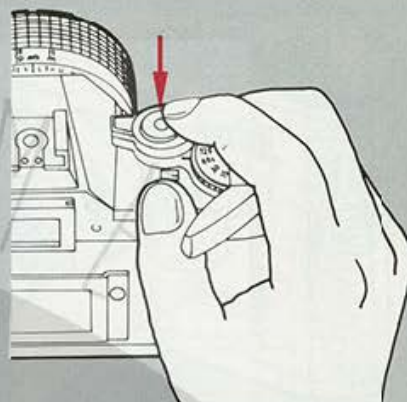
Turn the shutter button lock lever to "A".



- ✓ Turn the shutter button lock lever to "L" to prevent accidental shutter release or battery drain whenever you are not using the camera.



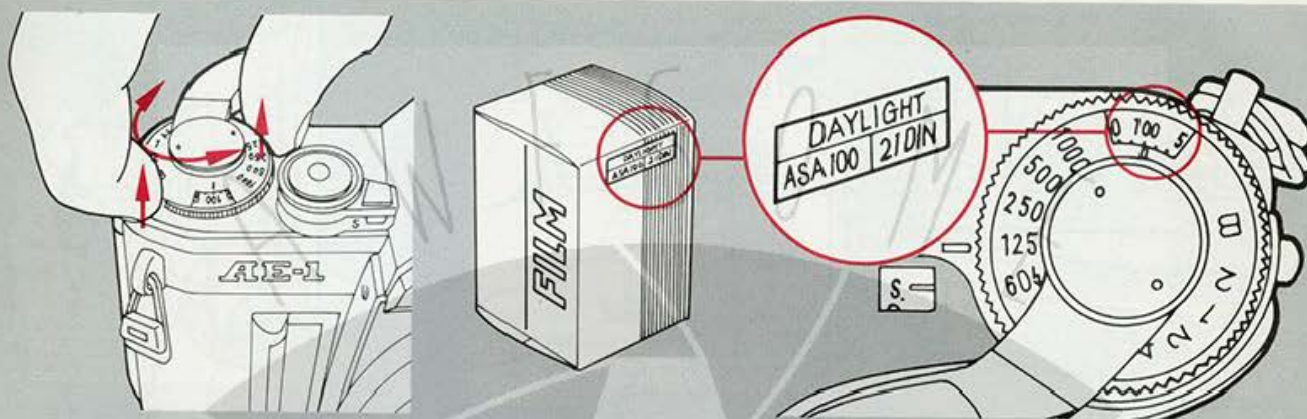
Turn the film advance lever in the direction of the arrow until it stops. You may turn it in one continuous stroke or in several short strokes. When film is loaded, this will advance it to the next frame.



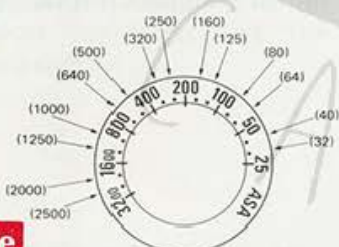
The AE-1 has a two-step shutter button. Press it half-way to turn the meter on and to get a meter reading in the viewfinder. Gently squeeze it all the way down to release the shutter. You cannot release the shutter again until the film is advanced.

- ⊗ NEVER JAB the shutter button! Pressing it gently is important for getting sharp pictures.

6. Set the ASA



Lift the knurled ring around the shutter speed dial and turn it until the ASA speed of your film is aligned with the green index. This is absolutely necessary for getting correct exposure.



Note

If the shutter speed dial turns while you are setting the ASA, turn it to "B" or "1000" and then set the ASA.

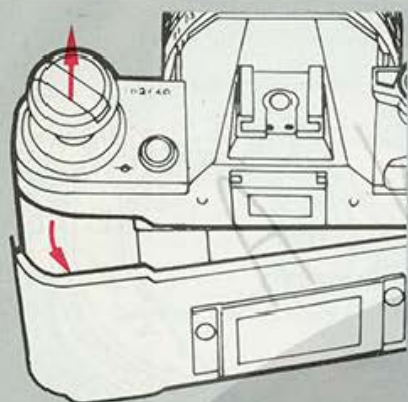
Have you figured out what this slot on the camera's back is for?

The top of the film carton fits in there. That way we can remember what kind of film is loaded. What a convenient memo holder!



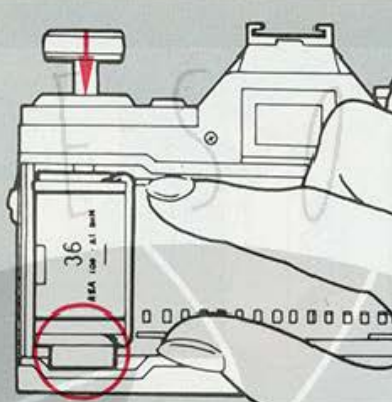
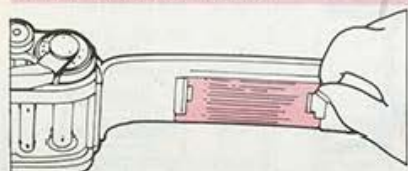
9

7. Load the Film

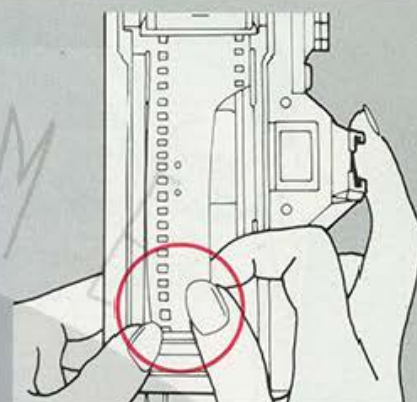


Pull the rewind knob up until the back cover pops open.


A plastic insert is attached to the pressure plate of a new AE-1 to protect it in transport. Before loading the first film cartridge, it is important to remove this insert. It may be thrown away.

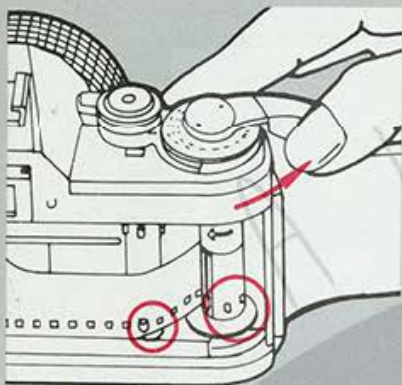


The AE-1 uses color (negative or slide) or black and white film in standard 35mm cartridges. Place the cartridge in the film chamber as shown. Then push the rewind knob down, rotating it until it drops into its normal position.

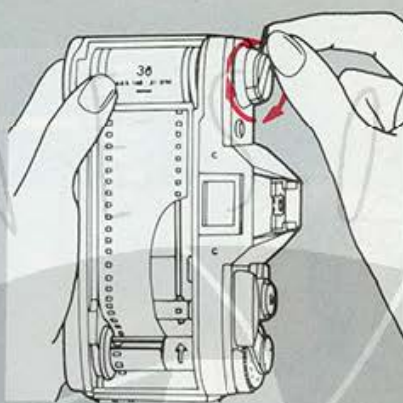


Pull the film leader across the camera and insert it into any slot of the take-up spool.

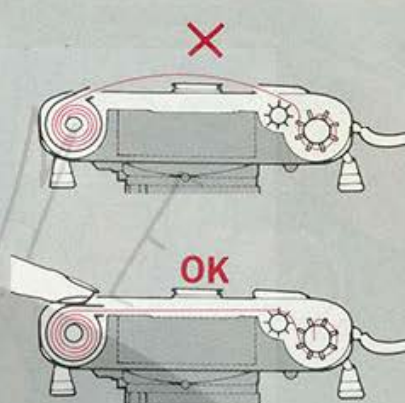
 Shield the film from direct sunlight while loading.



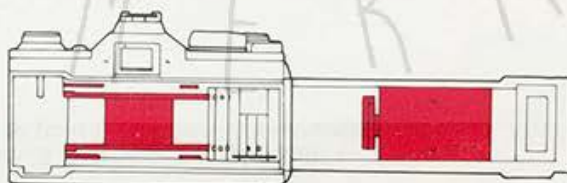
Advance the film once. Check that the film perforations are engaged in the teeth of the film transport sprocket and the take-up spool.



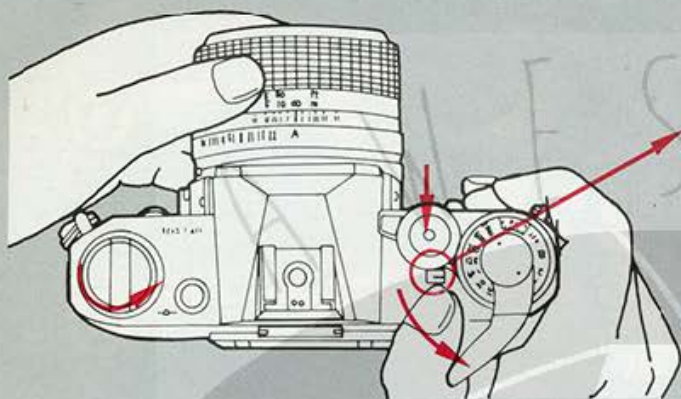
The film should be taut. If there is slack, gently turn the rewind crank in the direction of the arrow until it stops. Close the back cover.



⊗ While loading the film, take care not to touch the shutter curtain, the film rails or the pressure plate (parts in red).



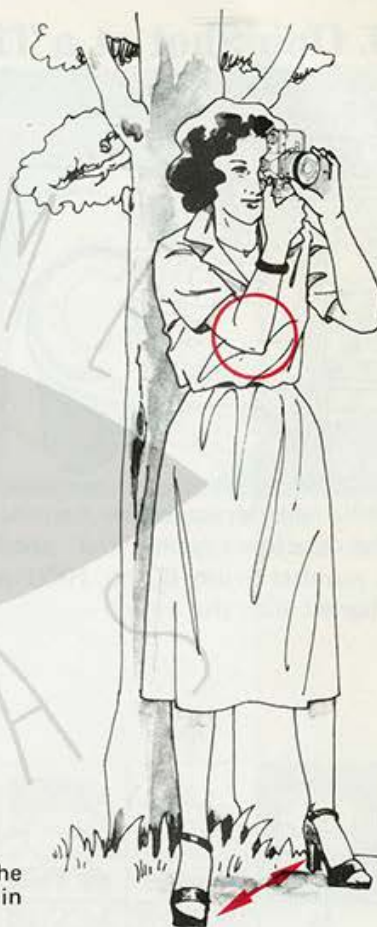
11



Take several blank shots, releasing the shutter and advancing the film, until the frame counter reads "1" (the dot following zero). While doing this, keep an eye on the rewind knob. If it rotates in the direction of the arrow, the film is loaded correctly.

Each time you advance the film, the frame counter also advances to the next frame. It can count up to 38 frames. The numbers 20 and 36 are in orange to call your attention to the fact that rolls with those numbers of frames are or are almost finished.

8. Learn to Hold the Camera Correctly



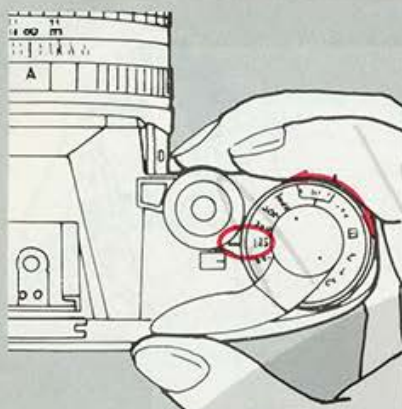
The slightest movement of your body during shutter release may cause blur in the picture. To reduce chances of this, hold the camera as steady as possible with your left hand supporting the camera and lens. Press both elbows to your body and lightly press the camera to your cheek or forehead. For a vertical shot, steady at least one elbow against your body. Spread your feet slightly apart, one foot ahead of the other, and relax. If a wall or a tree is available, lean against it.

Note

There is, of course, no one correct way to hold the camera. Experiment to find the most comfortable way for you of holding it steady. It may help to practice in front of a mirror.

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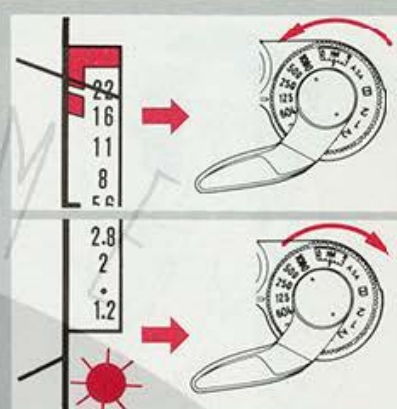
9. One Shot at a Time



Set a shutter speed by turning the shutter speed dial until a number from 60 to 1000 is aligned with the index.



Then look into the viewfinder and press the shutter button HALFWAY. The meter needle will move to tell you whether the shutter speed you have set will give correct exposure.

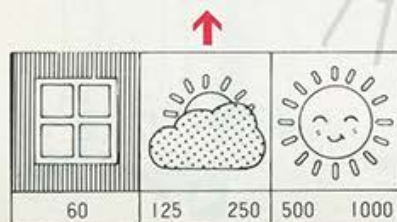


If the meter needle points to the red zone at the top of the scale or if the red LED (Light-Emitting Diode) blinks below the scale, turn the shutter speed dial as shown. Otherwise, exposure will be correct at the shutter speed you have set.

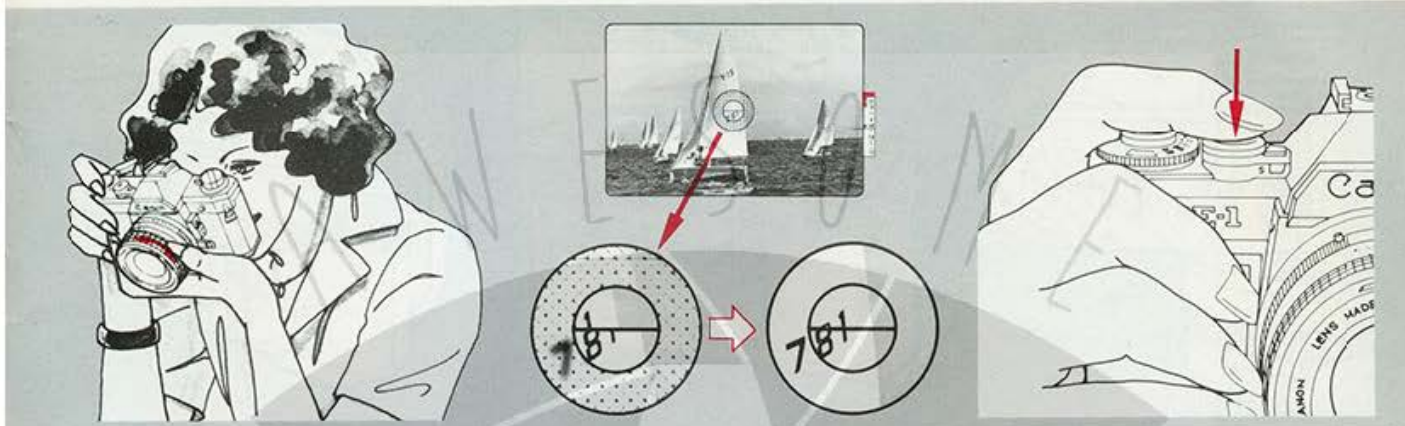
⊗ Do not set the shutter speed dial between the click-stop settings. Note that it does not turn past "1000" or "B".

Note

See PART II, p.14, if you must set the shutter speed dial to a number below "60". If action is a particularly important element in the shot, you may wish to refer to PART II, p.13, for more information on choosing a shutter speed.



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Compose the picture. Center your subject in the viewfinder if possible. Turn the focusing ring until the main subject is sharp.

Press the shutter button all the way down to take the picture.

What do you think this thing is for?

Must be Eyecup 4S. I tried attaching it to the eyepiece and it made viewing lots more comfortable.

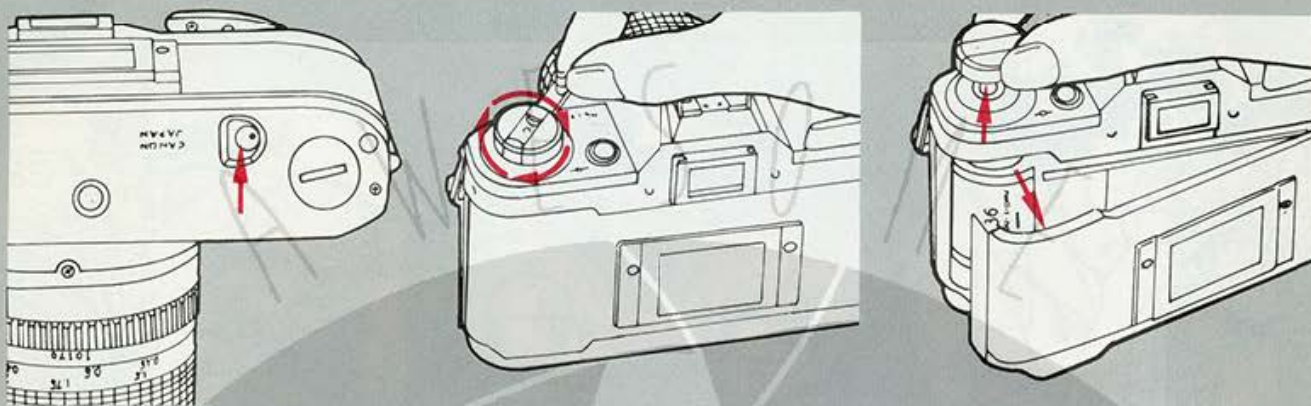


Note

If there is light, such as the sun or a window, behind your subject, press the backlight control switch as you press the shutter button. See PART II, p.20.

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10. At the End of the Roll, Rewind the Film



You can tell you have reached the end of the film by the frame counter and the film advance lever. Either the film advance lever will not turn at all or it will not turn all the way. First press in the rewind button. You may immediately let go of it.

Then turn the rewind crank in the direction of the arrow until the frame counter, which counts backwards as you rewind, reaches "S".

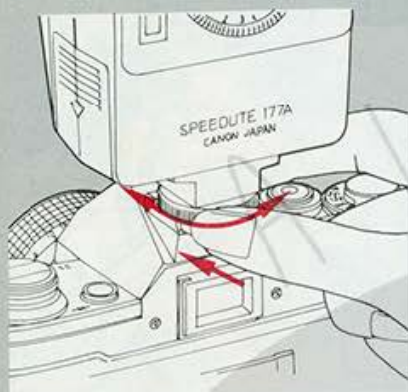
Then open the back cover, remove the film cartridge, place it back in its canister and have it developed as soon as possible.

⊗ DO NOT open the back cover until you have rewound the film back into the cartridge. If you do, light falling on the film may ruin all of the pictures.

Note

The rewind button rotates as you rewind the film. When the film is completely rewound, it stops rotating.

* Dedicated Flash Photography

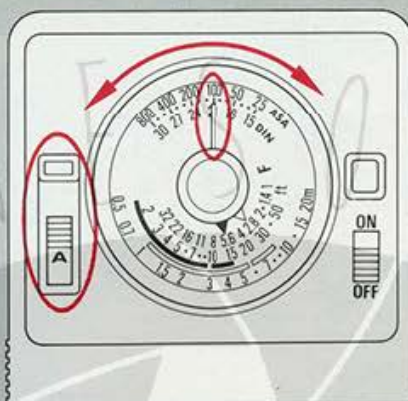


Load the flash with batteries and slide it into the AE-1's accessory shoe. Tighten the lock nut.

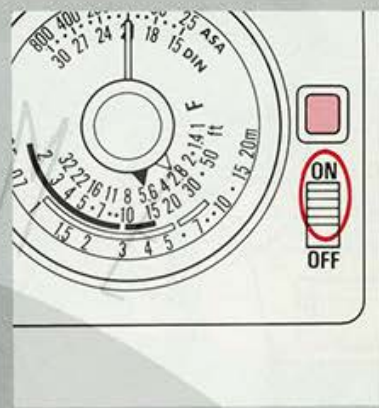
Note

Canon offers seven Speedlites (133A, 155A, 177A, 188A, 199A, 533G, 577G) for the AE-1. See PART II, p.33, and the Speedlite's instructions for more details.

- ✓ Make sure the AE-1's shutter speed dial is not on "B". Any other setting is okay.



Turn the Speedlite's ASA film speed dial to the correct ASA speed and push the aperture selection switch to the green or red "A" position.

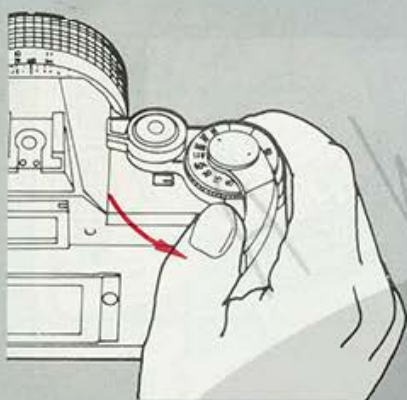


Turn the Speedlite's main switch ON. After the pilot lamp glows, press the shutter button to take the picture.

- ✓ For correct exposure, the subject must be within a certain range of distances from the camera. The required distance range is shown on the flash by the curve which is the same color as the setting of the aperture selection switch. After you focus, check the lens' distance scale to make sure the focused distance is within the range shown by the curve.
- ✗ Do not shoot before the pilot lamp glows or exposure may be incorrect.

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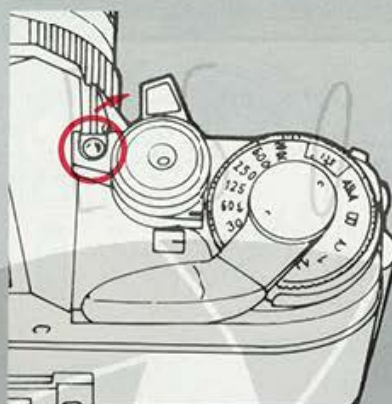
* Self-Timer



Advance the film to the next frame.



- ✓ Use the viewfinder cover to cover the eyepiece whenever your eye is not to it at the moment you take a shot. If it is uncovered, stray light entering from the rear may cause underexposure.



Push the self-timer lever forward to uncover the self-timer lamp.

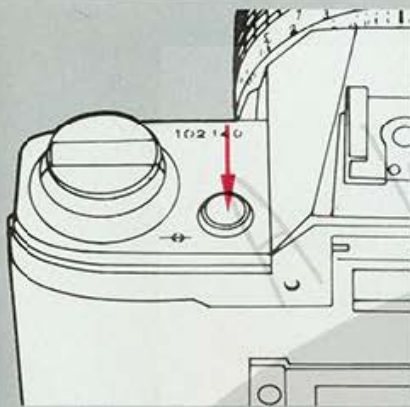
- ✗ The AE-1 sets the exposure the moment you press the shutter button. Do not stand in front of the lens while pressing the button or exposure may be incorrect.



To start the self-timer, press the shutter button. The self-timer lamp will begin to blink. When it stops blinking ten seconds later, the shutter will be released automatically.

Note

Following exposure, unless you want to use the self-timer for the next frame, reset the self-timer lever to "A" or "L".



If you have started the self-timer and wish to cancel it before shutter release, press the battery check button.

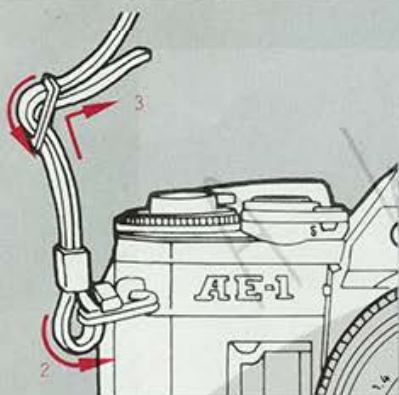
Oh, no! I already started the self-timer and I wanted to stop it so I just pushed the lever back in, but as soon as I did that, the shutter released.



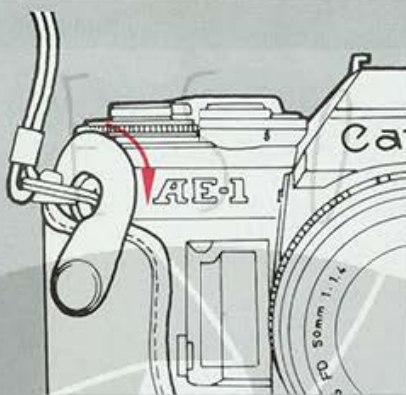
You're going to have a great picture of an empty chair! Try pressing the battery check button next time.

19

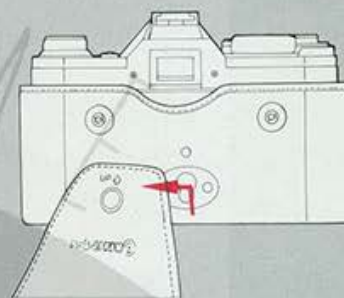
*Carrying the Camera



Thread the ends of the strap through the rings on the camera as shown.



For carrying the camera, in particular, insert it into its semi-hard case (optional accessory) as shown. You can still take a picture while the camera is in the case by turning the top cover down.



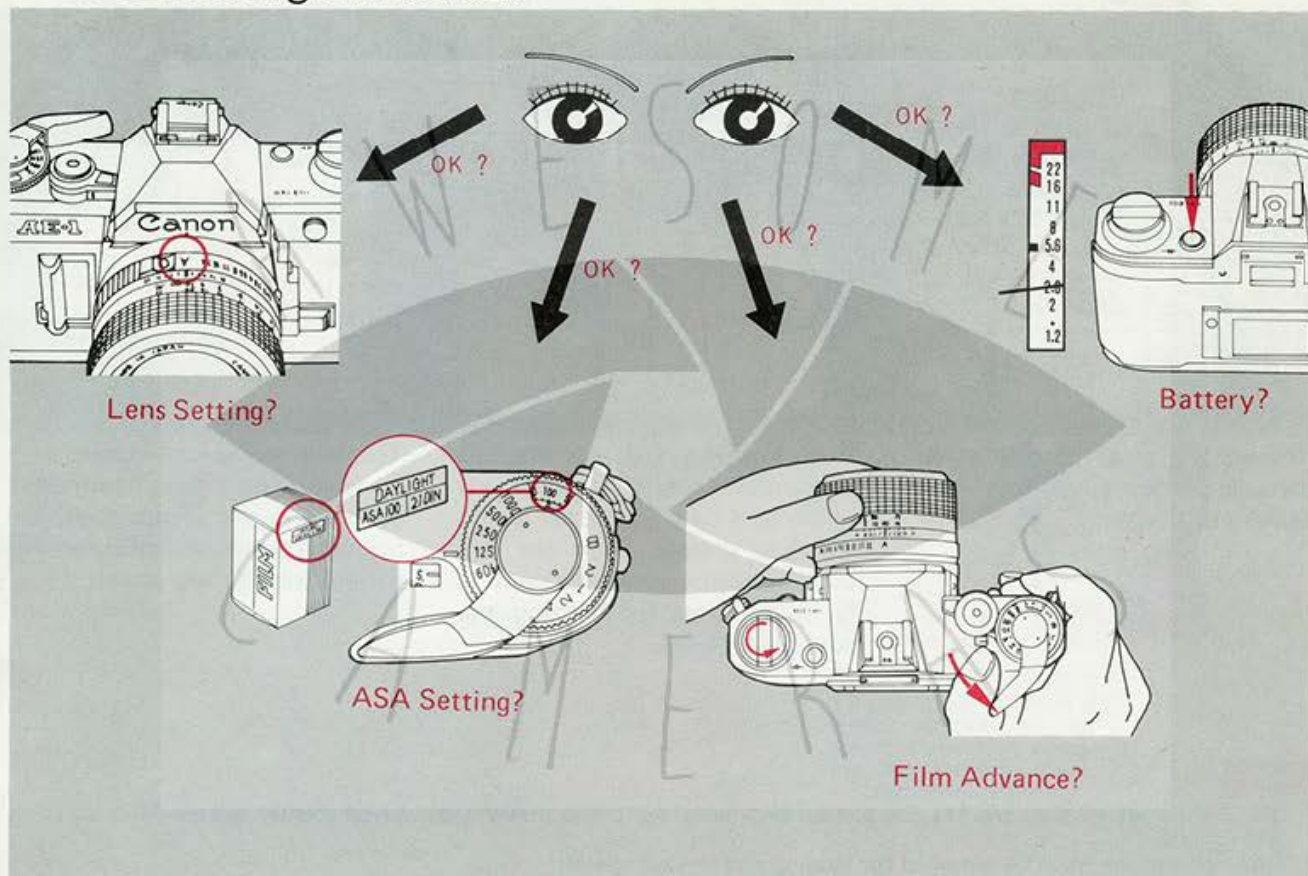
To remove the top cover, turn it down, then push it straight up and out. Turn the lens' focusing ring to infinity (∞) for closing the top cover.

Notes

1. Do not forget to turn the shutter button lock lever to "L" to prevent accidental shutter release while carrying the camera.
2. The camera case must be removed for loading and rewinding film.

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*Pre-Shooting Checklist



21

Hey, look at this. Our first roll — all great shots! Did you have to take one of me with my hair up in rollers?

What about this one of me falling off the pier? Hey, where's Part II of the instructions? I'm ready for more.

Canon