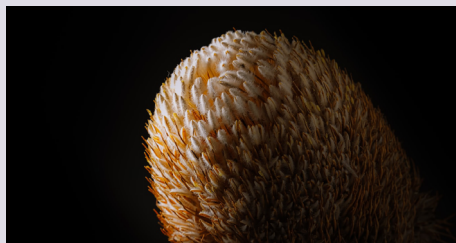


# SINGLE LIGHT SOURCE

## BLUEPRINT

Single light sources are known for creating hard, clearly defined shadows and harsh light if there is no diffuser. However, you can use a single light source to good effect, with a variety of subjects.



With a single light source and a reflector for fill, you have enough creative options in terms of lighting that you could go an entire lifetime with nothing more and still create a diverse portfolio.

Bear in mind that one light setups can give you both dramatic, shadowy photos which feel moody as well as bright, cleanly lit images with plenty of detail throughout.

Single light sources are great for portrait and product photography - you just need to learn a few basic setups.



## EXAMPLES OF PHOTOS WITH ONE-LIGHT SETUPS

## 1 KEY LIGHT & REFLECTOR

For portraiture, you should place the light close to your subject. The larger the apparent light source, the softer the light. The softer the light, the more flattering it is for the subject. You can even avoid using a reflector if the light source is very close to the subject.



Since the reflector acts as an independent light source, you can meter its exposure - it will help you achieve the optimal lighting. Also, you shouldn't be afraid to turn the reflector at funny angles. If it's a large reflector you probably don't need to use the whole surface area.

### TIP:

You don't have to use off-camera artificial lighting - these tips apply to window light as well, if you photograph your subject in a room with a single window.

## 2 OTHER MODIFIERS

Light modifiers are quite important when it comes to single light sources. Without them, the light won't be diffused enough and this can lead to harsh shadows.



If you use a large diffuser such as a traditional softbox, the light will be very soft and flattering, which is ideal for portraits. But you can also use an umbrella - it is very versatile and inexpensive. If you specialize in portrait photography, purchasing a beauty dish can be a good idea.

### TIP:

Grids and snoots are excellent modifiers for moody portraits. They produce moderately soft edges and they are great at separating the subject from the background.

## THE ESSENTIALS

## 3 PROPER ANGLES

You should experiment with different angles and directions to get the look you're going for. Decide where you want the light to go and visualize the direction the light should take.



Butterfly lighting, loop lighting and Rembrandt lighting are 3 popular setups that use only one light source. The difference between them is simply the angle and position of light - make sure to master them as they are very effective!

### TIP:

Placing the light and the reflector at about 45 or 60 degree angle from the subject usually yields the most pleasing results.