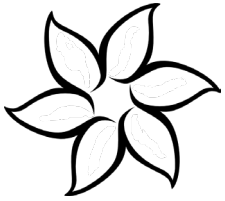


HIGH KEY FLOWER



GOAL

Create a high key photograph of a flower using a high key lighting set up.

SUMMARY

High key images are those that have no or very few shadows present and give a bright and airy feel to the image. High key photographs are often created to show a cheerful, calm or pleasant mood in an image. Some would imagine that high key photographs can be achieved by just overexposing the images by a few stops, but that is not the case. Rather it is achieved by choosing the right background and balancing the lighting in the scene.



High key photographs can be shot in a studio, indoors in your house or outdoors. In this project, we will focus on how to photograph a high key flower. You should be able to achieve this by placing the flower naturally near a window.



Photo by Masaaki Komori



Photo by Tanalee Youngblood

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. LOCATION



If you are photographing flowers indoors, you can take complete control of the lighting, backgrounds and get the mood you are looking to achieve. If you are shooting them outdoors, then you will need to play around with the available light.

4. GEAR



Shooting high key photographs requires minimal camera gear since lighting is the main consideration. However, it's good to have a prime lens with a wide maximum aperture so that you can play with depth of field.

2. FLOWERS



Flowers are easier to get. You can bring one from your garden into your house or studio to shoot high key images. Any flower can be used to photograph high key images.

5. STYLE



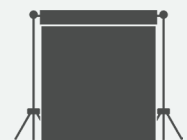
High key photographs have predominantly lighter and white areas with lesser contrast unlike other images that have dark shadows and high contrast.

3. LIGHTING



Using natural light, high key photographs can be shot outdoors and indoors. We will be looking at the indoors part in this project.

6. BACKGROUND

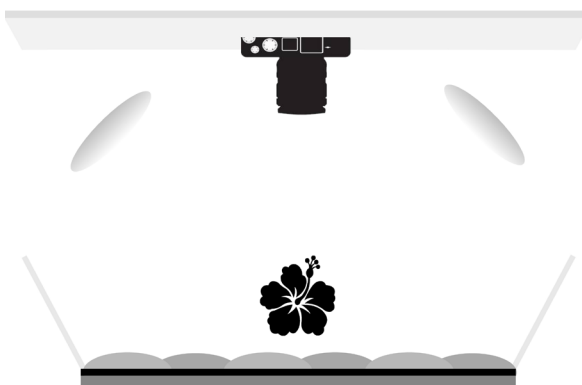


Balance the light between the subject and the background so you can preserve all details in your subject and leave the background white. You can also use a lightpad to backlight the flowers.

LIGHTING SETUP:

- Have your flower on a stand or a vase, so you have the flexibility to compose and frame your shots.
- If you are using window light, put the flower against the window. If you are shooting elsewhere, make use of a white background or preferably a light coloured background.
- You can also use dark backgrounds, but you will need to adjust the light intensity levels and the distance between the flower and the background so that you get a clean white or pale coloured background.

WINDOW LIGHT



- For window light, the background and the background light will be the window. Light through the window should preferably be soft diffused light through glass, blinds or curtains. You can use reflectors in front of the flower to reflect back light onto the flower, so it gets correctly exposed. Use white reflectors to get the true colour of the light.
- You may need to use spot metering to get the exposure right on the flower. This is a method where you can photograph with minimal gear.

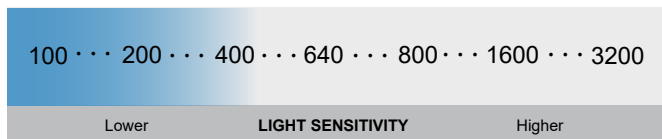
CAMERA SETTINGS:



Wide Aperture (more light)

Narrow Aperture (less light)

- Set the aperture to wider values like f/1.8, f/2.8 to get a soft effect in the images because when shooting at wider apertures, the depth of field is shallow. If you think you want more parts of the flower in focus, then try slightly narrow aperture values like f/3.5 or f/5.6.



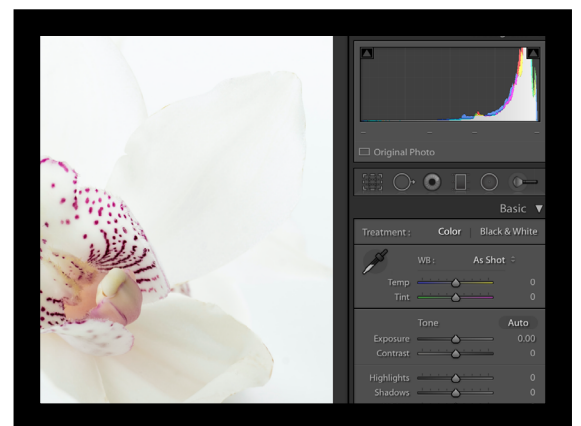
- For high key photographs, you have a lot of light and so you can shoot at lower iso values, but, do not hesitate to increase the iso values if necessary.



- Choose shutter speeds greater than 1/250 sec or greater than 1/focal length taking into account the crop factor. If you have the camera on a tripod, then you can go with slower shutter speeds, but make sure you turn image stabilisation off.



Photos by Tee Zett and Elvie S



- Keep an eye on the histogram if your camera allows for one and make sure that the image is exposed to the right, which means the histogram has more information to the right without clipping the highlights as seen in the example above.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

1.

Shoot raw, so you have the flexibility to adjust the white balance and other settings when post processing. You can also safely recover a lot of details from raw files.

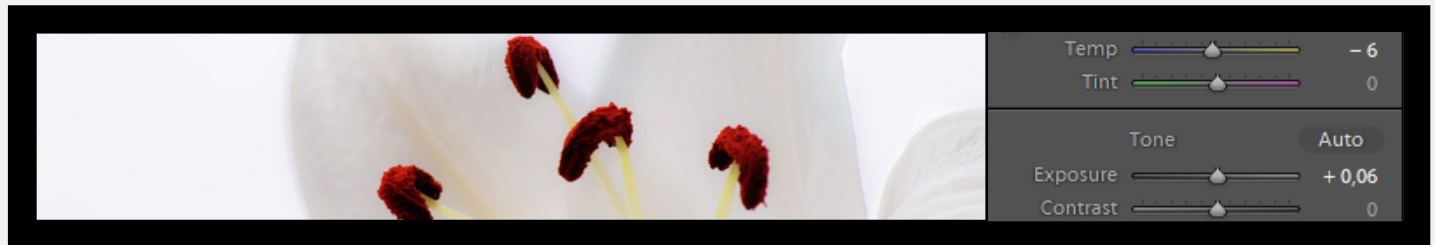
2.

Set the white balance depending on the type of light that you use. If you are unsure, shoot using auto white balance and make adjustments while post processing.

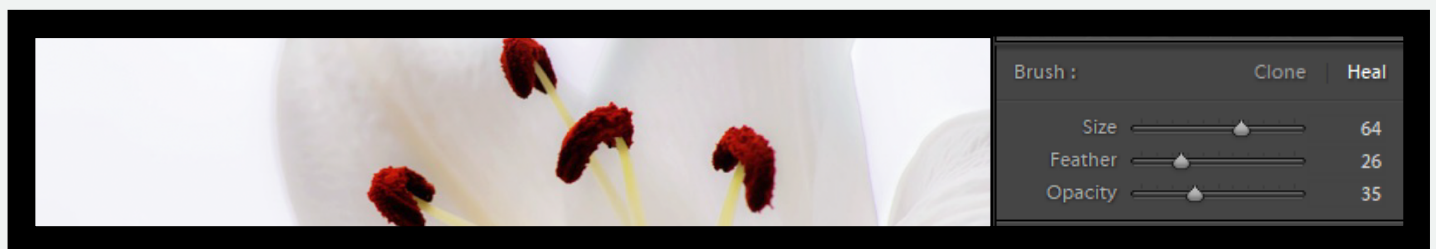
EDITING:

Import the photos to your favourite post processing application.

1. Adjust the white balance if necessary and crop the image to get the desired composition. Use the exposure, highlight and shadows sliders to even out the background to get it white or light coloured. You may have to use the highlights slider to bring back details.



2. Increase contrast only if necessary. You may add a little bit of sharpness if required. If there are distracting spots, lines, etc. in the background, clean them up using the spot removal tool so you get a clean background.



3. If you are going for a softer / delicate look, slightly decrease the clarity and dehaze sliders.



Photo by Marion Beraudias



POST YOUR RESULTS [ON THE FORUM!](#)

