



THE ULTIMATE

20-STEP CHECKLIST

FOR TAKING INSTRUCTIONAL PHOTOS

You don't need a lot of expensive equipment to shoot amazing instructional photos. By following some basic guidelines, you can take professional photos to help support your work instructions and procedures.

WORKSPACE SETUP

- **Find a clutter-free table or flat workspace.**
 - Try to minimize ambient light.
 - A table by a window can have varying light conditions throughout the day, resulting in inconsistent photos.
- **Use a clean white background.**
 - Inexpensive matte posterboard or butcher paper works best and reduces distracting background textures.
- **Use two lamps, one on each side.**
 - Use "daylight" bulbs, or bulbs in the 5000-5500k color temperature range, for a clean white light. Avoid incandescent bulbs, which cast an orange glow over your photos.
- **Gather your team.**
 - **Camera Operator:** Not for the faint of heart, this job requires patience, a little technical skill, and an eye for detail. Opposable thumbs are a plus.
 - **Lighting Operator:** Requires attentiveness and near immunity to heat. Must be trusted to wield the power of blinding light responsibly; anyone who owns a laser pointer should be instantly disqualified.
 - **Hand Model:** Someone to hold parts and tools completely still from awkward, sometimes precariously balanced positions.

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CAMERA SETUP

- **Use a tripod.**
 - For crisp, clear shots, you need to keep the camera rock steady.
- **Don't use flash!**
 - Bright directional light from a flash distorts colors and emits a large glare that distracts your users.
- **Use the highest resolution setting.**
 - Small photos are difficult to decipher and leave large information as well.
- **Shoot in 4:3 aspect ratio, aka 'landscape'.**
 - It may be tempting to shoot vertical (aka 'portrait') shots, but these don't translate well when inserted into instructional documents.
- **Shoot in aperture priority mode and set exposure compensation to +1.**
 - Your light background will cause photos to be dark when shot in auto mode.
 - Aperture mode is usually denoted by an A or Av on cameras.
- **Use a delay timer or remote.**
 - Set your camera to a short (1 or 2 second) delay, using the self-timer setting and remove your hands completely after pressing the shutter button. Having slightly shaky hands on the camera can introduce blurriness into your shots.
- **Use the correct white balance setting.**
 - For daylight bulbs, use the "daylight" or "fluorescent" white balance setting.
 - For incandescent bulbs, use the "incandescent", "tungsten" or "indoor" white balance setting.



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WHILE SHOOTING

- **Use your hands and/or tools in each shot.**
 - Be sure to demonstrate the action being performed.
- **Shoot in a first-person perspective.**
 - Try to set up each shot so that it matches what your users will experience.
- **Fill up the frame with the subject.**
 - Try not to let your arms or hands dominate the view. If you're working alone, you can use the camera's delay timer to free up your hands.
- **Keep the action in the center.**
 - This helps draw attention to the most important parts of the procedure.
- **Keep the subject in focus, not your hands.**
 - On most point-and-shoot cameras, you can lock the focus by holding the shutter button halfway down.
- **Take multiple shots for each step.**
 - Switch hands or change positions in order to give users a better understanding.
- **Zoom in to get detailed shots of intricate actions.**
 - Be sure to leave reference points in the photo for to help orient users.
- **For complex actions, use multiple photos in sequence.**
 - You can create a "stop-motion" or "flip-book" effect, using up to three photos in one step.
- **Use the "Macro" setting for extremely close shots.**
 - This helps capture even the most precise and intricate procedures.

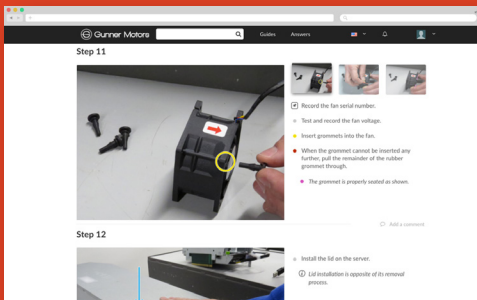
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MODERN INSTRUCTIONS FOR MODERN PROCESSES

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“Dozuki is fantastic. We put information on the site, our pictures are crystal clear, and they go out to our installers immediately.”

-Marty Trow, Director of Operations, International Telematics



Ready to use photos and videos as part of your instructions, procedures, and documentation?

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