



JEWELRY PHOTO INSTRUCTIONS

The following jewelry photography set-up is the simplest and most effective means to take an acceptable photograph of jewelry for appraisal purposes.

The minimum equipment required is:



1. A Fluorescent light source. The Ott-Light Truecolor is very effective due to its small footprint, daylight color temperature, light weight and adjustability.



2. A digital camera. The Nikon Coolpix S7C is used in this example due to its small size, very large view screen, macro lens setting and adjustability.



3. A device to hold the camera. Either a tri-pod or device that attaches to the table or workbench. Often the camera takes the shot at very slow shutter speeds and it's usually difficult to hold the camera still without shaking. If space isn't an issue, a tri-pod may be more versatile.



4. A device to hold the ring. The one shown allows you to adjust the angle of the ring, thereby eliminating the need to adjust the angle of the camera.
5. A piece of bright white paper.

As shown below, this set-up requires a minimal amount of space. It's best not to have any additional light in the area, especially incandescent bulbs.



Below is the basic set up for the shots. If you are photographing large items such as necklaces or pearls, you will probably need to take the camera off its holding device so you can hold it farther away. A tri-pod would be helpful in this case in order to stabilize the camera higher up, away from the jewelry.



Setting the image size, white balance, exposure and macro are necessary before you take the photos. On this particular camera, once these are set, they are saved for future photos.

Image size:



1. Press the menu button
2. Rotate the wheel until you get to Image Mode.
3. Image mode is highlighted.
4. Press OK.



5. Rotate the wheel to choose PC screen (1024). Though you can use different sized images if you wish, this size gives you an image that doesn't take up too much space on your hard disk and still enables you to print an image large enough to tell what it is.
6. Press OK to lock it in.

Next, set a custom white balance for the light you are using. This is necessary so the jewelry and stones are the right color. The camera has several custom settings along with an auto white balance, but it's best to set a white balance customized to the lights in your area. Make sure you have the lights on that will be on every time you take a photo.

7. Rotate the wheel until you land on WB.



8. WB (White Balance)

9. Press OK



10. Rotate the wheel until (measure) is highlighted.

11. Fill the entire area with the white surface you are photographing the jewelry on.

12. Press OK to set the white balance.

Next, adjust the exposure compensation. Digital cameras seem to eat light, so it may be necessary to overexpose the photograph. Overexposing by +.7 is a good place to start. Your own personal settings may vary.



13. Rotate the wheel until +/- is selected.
14. Exposure compensation. (Exp. +/-)
15. Press OK



16. Rotate the wheel until +0.7 is highlighted.
17. +0.7 Overexposed is checked.
18. Press OK to lock it in.

Upon pressing OK, it will then take you back to the settings screen.



19. Press the menu button to exit the settings screen.

Since most of the shots you take will be close to the camera, the macro setting is required.



20. Press the bottom part of the wheel, just above the icon that looks like a flower.



- 21. Roll the wheel until (ON) is highlighted
- 22. A check mark will appear next to the (ON)
- 23. The macro symbol will appear at the top of the view screen.
- 24. Press OK to lock the macro on.

Before you take your first photograph, the zoom must be in the green area.



- 25. Move the zoom button left or right.
- 26. *If you see a white bar, the camera will not focus.*



27. Move the zoom lever to the right until the bar appears blue-green.
28. As long as the bar is blue-green, the camera will focus on the item. Fill the screen with the jewelry as much as possible while keeping the bar in the blue-green area.

Below is the set-up for the first shot.



Fill the screen by zooming in and out. (Be sure to keep the zoom bar in the blue-green zone)



Below is the actual shot.



Note that the photo above appears dark under the ring. By having a movable light source, it enables you to move the light to better illuminate the jewelry. As shown below, the light source was moved back, closer to the camera, which casts more light over the ring.



The following three shots are actual un-retouched shots from the camera. They are also the actual size that they were in the camera.



On flat or rounded surfaces, you often get reflections from the camera or your hands. To avoid this, make sure your fingers are behind the camera while taking the shot.



Note that the fingers in the photo above are not wrapped around the front right side of the camera, as they normally would be. This helps prevent the pink reflections of the hand.

This camera has many possible adjustments, however the aim of this tutorial was to give you the simplest procedure to take a good jewelry photograph.

The most important thing is to have the desire to take a good photograph. Look at each shot after you take it. Is the image clear? Is it properly exposed? If not, take another one.

The beauty of digital photography is that you can immediately see the image you've taken and make corrections when needed.