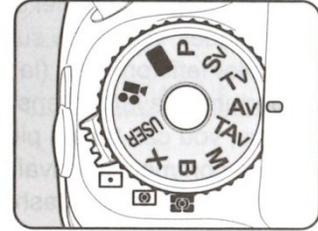


APERTURE PRIORITY MODE

When you set your camera to Auto or Program mode, the camera is making all the decisions for you. Sometimes that may be a good thing, but as we have seen in our Aperture discussion, you can get more control over depth of field by using the most popular mode; Aperture Priority.

Select aperture priority by setting your Mode dial on “A” for Nikon and Sony, or “Av” for Pentax and Canon. Note: Less sophisticated cameras may use a menu selection instead.



When taking a picture, most cameras will show many settings in the LCD panel on the back, the viewfinder, and/or a window on top, so you can see what f stop has been selected.

In this display, you can see that the camera is in aperture priority mode (AV) and the f stop is 4.5. As we learned in the Aperture discussion, this small number will result in shallow depth of field. In other words, not much will be in focus from front to back.



Most cameras will have a least one control wheel used to change settings.

When aperture priority has been selected, the control wheel can be used to change f stops. Therefore, if you want more depth of field turn the wheel to a larger number, like f 16 or f 22.

Other considerations:

You can't judge depth of field through the viewfinder because the camera lens will be at its widest aperture until you press the shutter release. The best method to check depth of field is to take the picture and review it on the LCD panel. Zoom in if necessary. Some cameras have a depth of field preview button that stops down the lens so you can check depth of field before taking the picture, but it is difficult to use.

Aperture, ISO and shutter speed work together to manage the correct exposure. Change any one of these settings and the camera will compensate by changing another setting, based on your pre-sets.

Changing f stop influences shutter speed. A larger f stop means less light through the lens, so the camera normally adds exposure time to get the correct exposure. So, watch your shutter speed to be sure you don't get unwanted motion blur.

You can take control of shutter speed by changing aperture. If you want intentional blur, set your aperture to the biggest f stop and a low ISO. If you want to freeze action, set your aperture to a small f stop and increase your ISO to a larger number.

HDR is a valuable technique to increase detail in bright areas and shadows by taking multiple photos with different exposures and combining them on a computer (see the HDR lesson on the club website.) When taking bracketed photos for HDR processing, always use aperture priority mode so the three photos will have identical depth of field.