

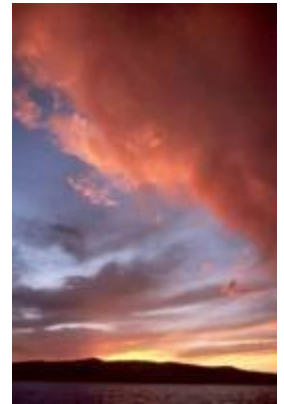
COLOR AT THE EDGE OF THE DAY

This lesson is based on an article by Daryl Benson called “12 Tips For Color At The Edge Of The Day” from the June 2003 issue of Outdoor Photographer magazine. They have a web site at www.outdoorphotographer.com where you can buy back issues.

Sunrise and sunset provide the best opportunities to get rich saturated colors. Here are some ways to take advantage of early and late light:

TIP 1 – Under Lit Clouds. Some of the most beautiful elements of sunrise/sunset are warm, glowing under clouds lit on the bottom. Don’t put away your camera because of a heavy cloud-filled sky. Be ready for a hole to open up that can create a fiery sunset.

TIP 2 – Graduated Neutral Density (ND) Filters are clear at the bottom and blend to gray at the top. They are used when the sky is bright and the foreground dark to distribute the exposure more evenly. They are also available in colors to add punch to a bland sky. Cokin filters are square and require a special holder, but can be moved up or down as required. Now digital techniques can create similar effects in the computer, but it is better to start with the best possible image in the camera.



TIP 3 – Breakfast/Supper Can Wait. Just because you’re happy that you got a couple of good shots at sunrise, don’t be too quick to head in for some pancakes. Opportunities often come in groups, and the best shot of the morning may be yet to come.

TIP 4 – Shadows And Textures. The low-angled light source at sunrise and sunset make beautiful long shadows and enhanced visibility of textures. A stony beach or field of wheat may look bland at midday, but when the light is low each pebble or shaft of wheat will stand out.

TIP 5 – Color Filters are best used when trying to enhance colors or moods that, to some extent, already exist in the scene. It doesn’t work to use a filter to try to convert high noon to a sunset. Like graduated filters, digital technology can now alter color without using filters. Polarizing and color polarizing filters can often enhance the colors in a sunrise or sunset sky in a way that is difficult to mimic digitally.

TIP 6 – Where In The World Are You? Latitude makes a huge difference in the amount of sweet light at sunrise and sunset. The closer you are to the equator, the less time you have to find new compositions before the sun sets. The farther you travel from the equator, the longer the arch of the sun will be as it rises or sets.

Sharp Shooters tip 6A – **Winter Light.** Bear Lake winter has more sweet light than summer because the sun never gets very high above the horizon, creating many of the long shadows and textures that you see at sunrise and sunset.

TIP 7 – Pre-Dawn provides opportunities others will miss if they stay in bed. Exposures will be longer and colors cooler (more of the blue spectrum).

TIP 8 – Shoot First, Ask Questions Later. The first and most important thing to remember in any shooting situation is to *get a shot*. Conditions change rapidly at sunrise and sunset. Get the shot, and then if conditions change, you may be able to improve composition, color, etc. later using various digital or printing techniques.

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TIP 9 – **Don't Prejudge The Sunrise/Sunset Sky.** Just because the morning sky looks gloomy when you poke your eyes out of the tent, don't make the mistake of thinking the morning isn't worth the effort. Dazzling things can happen from gloomy beginnings.

TIP 10 – **The Stillness Of Dawn** produces ground fog, calm reflections, and dew on spider webs that all disappears once the sun rises and stirs up the air.

TIP 11 – **A Higher Point Of View** allows you to see and photograph in whatever direction the best colors appear.

TIP 12 – **Nothing Is Ever Really Finished.** When shooting and editing your images, try to leave room for your ideas to grow as technology and your skill level improves. You may be able to improve your image years from now.

BONUS TIP from the May 2004 issue of Shutterbug Magazine – **Earth's Shadow** by Frank Weston. Here in the arid west, particularly at high altitudes, the earth casts a shadow when the sun is just below the horizon. It can often be seen on the opposite horizon as a pink band transitioning into blue. This can often make an empty sky interesting. A tripod and a fairly long exposure are necessary. The full article can be seen on line at www.shutterbug.com. Under "from the archives", click on "features", then select May 2004.

MORE SHARP SHOOTERS TIPS:

TIP SS1 – **KEEP SHOOTING.** Don't stop shooting just because the sun has set. Longer exposures may be needed, but evening afterglow creates interesting light.

TIP SS2 – **ALTERED COLOR.** The low light of early morning and late evening causes sunlight to pass through more of the atmosphere, causing a shift toward the red spectrum. This in turn gives your subject a warmer color. Photograph other objects besides the sunrise and sunset. Your film will register this altered color even if your eyes don't see it.

TIP SS3 – **FOREGROUND.** Use foreground objects to add interest and depth to your sunrise and sunset photos. These objects will probably show in your photo as silhouettes.

