

Camera Club of Hendersonville

Revised February 2022

Mentor Program – “Learning That’s Fun”

- What’s exposure?
- How do I use photo editing correctly?
- What’s the correct photo equipment to meet my needs?
- What does ISO, white balance, aperture and other photography jargon mean?
- How do I take better photos of my family?
- What is flash photography all about?
- I hear a lot about HDR. What is it?

If you have questions like these then you’re in the right spot!

Our mentor program’s mission is ***“to improve the photography skills of its members”***.

The approach we use depends upon the need of the member needing help. We can provide informal assistance or a more structured program. We can handle all skill levels from beginner to intermediate to the advanced photographer. Our mentors will provide instruction through sitting down with you as well as getting you some actual hands–on experience in the field.

Informal Mentoring – just let us know the specific question(s) you have and we’ll assign a mentor to answer them. This form of mentoring usually involves a short e-mail or phone call or perhaps a short meeting. The timeline is short in duration, i.e., ask a question and get an answer.

Structured Approach – this approach could be a bit longer term since there could be more instruction time needed. In our case, “structured” does not mean inflexible, i.e., going through a predetermined set of lessons. Rather each mentor has developed a “toolbox” of lessons for their area of expertise. This enables them to have already thought through what may be needed and develop the appropriate learning materials. After talking to you about your learning objective, the mentor will look into their educational toolbox and suggest a learning plan. Once agreed upon, you’re off to taking better photos!

We understand there are different levels of knowledge and skill. We want to help you take it to the next step as well as push you to even higher levels. Therefore, each approach discussed above can be geared toward your particular skill level. Our definitions of skill level and the educational needs are laid out below.

Beginner:

You have an interest in photography but don't have a camera. You have or just got a new digital camera. You may be getting back to photography after a long time. You need to learn your camera's basic operation and understanding how all those buttons and menus work. Topics for the beginner generally cover the following learning topics:

1. Choosing the right camera to meet your photography objective.
2. Selecting the appropriate lens.
3. Selecting any other photography equipment that might be needed, e.g., camera bag, tripod, and filters.
4. Learning about the key features of your camera, e.g., shutter speed, ISO, aperture.
5. Learning about the different shooting modes outside of automatic, e.g., manual, aperture priority, and shutter priority.
6. Learning how different apertures and shutter speed can dramatically impact your photos.
7. Introduction to basic photo editing software, e.g., Lightroom or Photoshop.

Intermediate:

At this level, you know and are comfortable with the operation of your camera. In this level you want to start learning about the "art" of photography. Topics for the intermediate learner cover the following learning topics:

1. Exposure techniques – how to consistently get good exposures under different light conditions, e.g., low light, bright light or back lit. Understanding your camera's histogram, metering, and focal points are also covered.
2. Composition – "what is the subject of my photo?", rule of thirds and when to break the rule, leading lines, patterns, and framing.
3. Focus techniques – manual vs. automatic camera focus systems, depth of field considerations, stopping action, and panning.
4. Using filters appropriately
5. Digital post processing – filing and organizing your photos, more advanced techniques in Lightroom and Photoshop and other software packages, e.g., Nik filters, Luminar, ON1.

Advanced:

At this level, you know how to use your photo equipment without thinking about it. You have a very solid understanding of post processing techniques. You are very comfortable with your niche of photography interest, e.g., landscapes. But you want to get into other photographic areas to broaden your skill level. Topics for the advanced learner cover the following learning topics:

1. Landscape
2. Wildlife
3. Portraits
4. Flash Photography
5. Macro
6. Still Life
7. Infrared
8. Sports / Action
9. Long Exposure
10. Time-lapse
11. Abstract
12. Astrophotography
13. Wedding

What To Expect From a Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring involves a relationship that approaches learning as a shared responsibility. The points that follow provide a high level description of the Mentee and Mentor responsibilities.

Mentee:

- Mentees have the primary responsibility for ensuring the mentor relationship is successful.
- Develop a clear understanding of your learning objective(s). Otherwise your mentor won't know how to help you.
- Study your camera manual. You may not understand everything but you will increase your knowledge of your camera's operation.
- Don't expect your mentor to read your mind. State clear questions and follow-up if you don't understand something.
- Don't expect your mentor to just give you the answer all of the time. They may ask you something that will lead you to the answer.
- Mentees should expect to go to the location preferred by the mentor for their meetings and photo outings.
- Take notes. Review them before any follow-up meetings. Complete any assignments given to you by your mentor. Respect the time your mentor is giving to you.
- Be able to accept constructive criticism from your mentor.
- To wind up with great photos you need to utilize the best light. You may have to get out of bed well before sunrise, travel to your photo destination and wait for that right moment! Likewise, in the late afternoon or early evening you may have to reschedule dinner to allow you the freedom to photograph during that late afternoon warm light or early evening blue light!

Mentors:

- Clearly state and define what areas of knowledge you are willing to provide to the mentee.
- If your mentee uses a camera you're unfamiliar with, review controls online beforehand to ensure you can provide instruction. If you only want to use specific camera makes and models be sure to provide this on your mentor sign-up form.
- Use your photographs to illustrate instruction points but don't make that your only form of instruction.
- For your area of expertise, take the time to develop a logical approach to passing on that knowledge to your mentees. Don't handle these relationships using an off-the-cuff approach.
- Develop some reading materials or search the web for good tutorials you can share with your mentee.
- Prepare some homework assignments to allow your mentee to practice the material you taught.
- Develop and scout out in-the-field learning locations to practice your lesson(s).
- During the first meeting, take time to review the mentee's learning objective(s) to ensure you understand and meet them.
- Don't be too quick to simply provide an answer to questions from your mentee. Develop questions for them to make them struggle a bit to find the answer. This will lead to improved learning.
- Show patience with your mentee. They've asked you for help. Try a different approach to get your point across. Ask another club member to help if needed. They may have a different idea.
- Provide honest feedback to help your mentee learn.
- Enjoy the success of mentee as their skill level improves due to your help.

Mentoring Process:

1. Mentee will complete mentoring form and e-mail it to the Mentor Program Coordinator. A list of mentors is on the club's website.
2. Coordinator will review the form and list of mentors to match the appropriate mentor(s) to work with the mentee.
3. Coordinator will contact the mentor(s) to ensure they have the time and knowledge to help the mentee.
4. Coordinator will provide mentor with the mentee's contact information.
5. Mentor will contact the mentee to arrange a mutually agreeable time and place to hold their mentoring session(s).
6. Coordinator will follow-up with the mentor and mentee from time to time and at the conclusion of mentoring to gather feedback about the sessions. Lessons learned will be utilized to improve the mentor program.

Mentor Sign Up Form

Use this form to sign up to become a mentor.

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Skill Level: _____ Intermediate
 _____ Advanced

What camera brand(s) and models do you use or which you could provide instruction?

What areas of photography do you have expertise?

1. Landscape _____
2. Wildlife _____
3. Portraits _____
4. Flash Photography _____
5. Macro _____
6. Still Life _____
7. Infrared _____
8. Sports / Action _____
9. Long Exposure _____
10. Time-lapse _____
11. Abstract _____
12. Astrophotography _____
13. Weddings _____
14. Printing (all inclusive) _____
15. Other (please detail) _____

Which of the following post processing software do you have expertise? Please indicate which version you use.

1. Photoshop _____
2. Lightroom _____
3. Nik Suite _____
4. ON1 _____
5. Aurora HDR _____
6. Luminar 2018 _____
7. Topaz (which package) _____
8. Other (please detail) _____

Mentee Program Interest Form

Use this form to request a mentor:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

How long have you been interested in photography? _____

What camera do you have? _____

What is your skill level? ____ Beginner ____ Intermediate ____ Advanced

What is your primary area of interest, e.g., landscape, macro?

What are your specific goals with your mentor? What do you want to learn

Date Submitted: _____

Send completed form to Club Secretary

CCoH.clubsecretary@gmail.com

For mentor coordinator use only:

Mentor Assigned: _____

Start Date: _____

End Date: _____

Follow-up Date: _____

Survey Completed: _____

Mentor Evaluation Form

Name: _____

Mentor: _____

Number of meetings with mentor: _____

Please rate your mentor on a 1-5 scale.

- 1. Very unsatisfied
- 2. Somewhat unsatisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Somewhat satisfied
- 5. Very satisfied

Were your learning objectives met? _____

Comments:

Did your mentor have the background to provide the help you needed? _____

Comments:

Was your mentor patient with you? _____

Comments:

Mentor's approach aided learning process? _____

Comments:

Mentor's learning materials were helpful and aided learning? _____

Comments:

Mentor's homework assignments aided learning? _____

Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the mentor experience? _____

Comments:

So we can improve our mentor program, please provide your comments on what you liked and what needs to be improved.
