

5 Must-Have Accessories for Your New Digital SLR

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Distribution

This free download from the [Digital SLR Guide](#) is available to anyone considering a digital SLR purchase. Forward it to anyone you know who might be considering a new digital SLR and will benefit from this information.

Also feel free to print it and read it when you have the time. If you'd like to include any information from this document on your own web site, please [contact me](#).

A Memory Card

This is less of an accessory for your digital SLR camera, and more like something that you can't do without.

In fact, you won't be able to take a single photograph with your new digital SLR until you've got the memory card to go with it.

Many compact digital cameras ship with a memory card included, but most digital SLRs don't.

This is actually a good thing, since the cards usually included with digital cameras can only hold about 24 shots - they're not especially useful.

Memory Card Types

There are 2 basic cards for digital SLR cameras: compact flash (the more common one) and SD memory cards.

The digital SLR that you want is going to drive the type of memory card that you get.

For example, the [Canon EOS 20D](#) and the [Konica Minolta Maxxum 5D](#) both use compact flash cards, while the [Nikon D50](#) uses SD memory cards.

Once you've decided on a camera, you can go about getting some memory for it.

What Size?

The harder part of selecting a memory card is deciding what size to get.

Right now, memory cards come in a wide range of sizes, from 64 MegaBytes to 4 GigaBytes (4,000 MegaBytes).

First, figure out how many megapixels your digital SLR camera is going to capture.

Then, use this table to see approximately how many photos you can store on each memory card, based on the number of megapixels in each photo (I am using 4 sample card sizes: 64, 256 and 512 MegaBytes and 1 GigaByte).

Megapixels	64MB	256MB	512MB	1GB
4.0	72	145	290	580
6.0	40	81	163	326
8.0	36	72	145	290
12.0	20	40	81	163
16.0	18	36	72	145

Extra Battery

When a friend of mind is getting a new digital camera, I always recommend that they get an extra battery.

While you think that you can get by with just one (and many people do) there is a really good reason to have 2 batteries for your digital SLR.

Here's why: **it takes about 2 to 3 hours to charge a digital SLR battery.**

Imagine that you're photographing a birthday party of some other important event. Let's also say that you forgot to completely charge the battery the night before.

Suddenly in the middle of the festivities, the battery goes dead.

It's going to be at least 2 hours until you can take another photo. You're probably going to miss a lot of great photo opportunities.

If you have an extra battery on hand, then you never have to worry. When the first one runs out, just swap it for the second.

While taking photos with the second battery, charge the first.

In this manner you'll never have a moment where the battery runs out and you can't take any more pictures.

Unless, of course, you get exceptionally lazy one day and forget to recharge the extra battery. Yes, I have done this, and no, I'm not especially proud of it.

Camera Bag

When you want to take your digital SLR with you out into the open world, a camera bag is a necessity.

If you've just spent anywhere from \$700 to \$1,000 on a new digital SLR doesn't it make sense to spend \$50 on a camera bag to protect it?

Digital SLR camera bags come in all shapes and sizes, mostly because photographers have different amounts of gear.

For example, you can get a small camera bag that snugly fits one camera and one lens. These bags are good for day hikes when you know you won't need a lot of extra lenses, flashes, etc.

Other camera backpacks feature compartments for multiple camera bodies, lenses, flash units, and an assortment of pouches for memory cards, lens filters and anything else you might need.

My camera bag of choice is the [slinger pack](#) from Adorama.

It's just the right size for one camera, but can include several lenses and other accessories.

It's comfortable to wear even when you're chasing kids around a playground and trying to take snapshots.

The especially nice part is that I can find absolutely all of my camera gear into this one bag, including a Canon 20D body, a 50mm lens, a 28-135mm lens and a 200-400mm lens.

This arrangement of lenses keeps me covered no matter what I'm trying to photograph, and I'm not trying to lug around 4 different bags to carry it.

UV Filter

If a camera bag is an inexpensive insurance policy for your digital SLR, then a UV filter is an insurance policy for your lens.

UV stands for Ultra Violet, but it's basically just a clear piece of glass.

The UV filter screws onto the front of your digital SLR lens. UV filters come in different sizes, since lenses have different diameters.

The typical range of sizes is anywhere between 50mm and 77mm.

When you're looking at lenses (if you're not getting a digital SLR kit) you can find out what the filter size is and get the right UV filter to match.

Here's what it does: a UV filter protects the glass on the front of your lens.

Let's say that you are out taking photos one day and your digital SLR camera strap slips off your shoulder. The front of your lens hits a small rock and gets a nice scratch all the way across it.

You've just ruined the lens on your digital SLR. Since just the front glass can't be replaced, you have to replace the ENTIRE lens.

If you'd had a UV filter on it, only the UV filter would get scratched. You unscrew the filter and get a new one.

Rather than losing the entire lens, you just lost the filter. And since they only cost about \$30.00 this seems like a pretty good investment for the peace of mind.

Lens Cloth

A lens cloth doesn't seem like an essential accessory...until some small child places greasy fingers right on the front of your lens.

You don't want to just grab a paper towel and wipe the front of the lens. Remember, this is a \$300+ piece of equipment.

With that in mind, there are many inexpensive lens cloths that you can get that are specifically designed to remove dirt and debris from the front of a lens without scratching it.

A lens cloth keeps the front of your lens nice and clean which in turn leads to clearer photos.

Don't think that the cleanliness of your lens really matters?

Ask anyone you know who wears glasses how well they see if they don't clean their glasses for three days.

You don't have to be obsessive about cleaning the lens. So long as you use a lens cap when you're not taking photos the lens will be protected.

Dirt and dust do build up after prolonged use, so it's always a good idea to have a nice clean lens cloth at hand when you need it.

For More Information

If you'd like to find out more about digital SLR cameras and technology, you can subscribe to the [free newsletter](#) from the digital SLR Guide.

For more frequent updates, check out the [Digital SLR Guide Weblog](#), which includes breaking news, photo tips, camera reviews and a whole lot more.

And if reading isn't your thing, you can always listen to all of the information on the Digital SLR Guide at [Digital SLR Talk](#), the audio companion to the Digital SLR Guide.

Chris Roberts is the owner and author of the [Digital SLR Guide](#). He created the guide in 2005 to provide consumers with practical advice about digital SLR cameras. The guide includes advice that will save you money when making a new digital SLR purchase, and provides in-depth reviews of some of the most popular cameras, lenses and accessories available today.