FREE PRINTABLE · WORKS ON ANY CAMERA

Blurry photo *checklist*

Zoom in to 100% and find the sharpest thing in the frame.

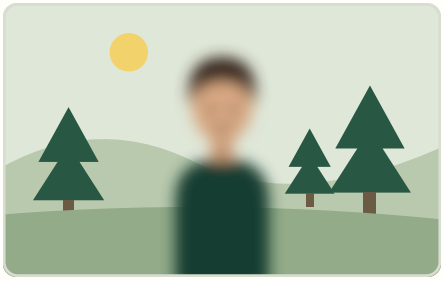
Nothing is sharp	Something else is sharp	Subject streaked, rest sharp	One part sharp, rest fades
1 Camera shake	**2 Missed focus**	**3 Subject motion**	**4 Depth of field**



1 Camera shake

HOW TO TELL Everything is soft in one direction. Lights turn into short lines. If they turn into round blobs, the focus missed: go to 2.

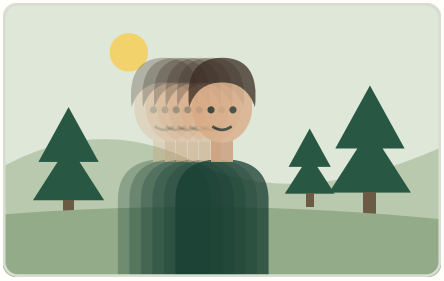
- [ ] Shutter at 1 over the focal length or faster. 200mm: 1/250.
- [ ] Stabilization on when you hold the camera. Without it, double that speed.
- [ ] Elbows in, press the shutter gently, shoot a short burst.
- [ ] On a tripod, use the 2-second timer. Raise ISO before you accept blur.



2 Missed focus

HOW TO TELL Something in front of or behind the subject is sharp.

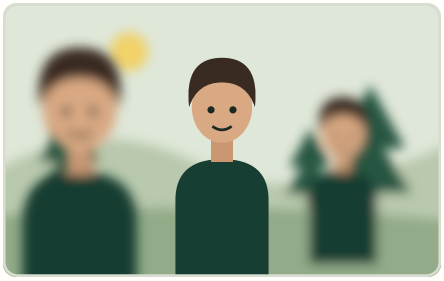
- [ ] Moving subject: Servo AF on Canon, AF-C on Sony, Nikon and Fujifilm.
- [ ] Still subject: One-Shot AF on Canon, AF-S on the others.
- [ ] Eye or subject detection on, or one small focus point on the subject.
- [ ] Not closer than the lens can focus. Back up and try again.



3 Subject motion

HOW TO TELL Still things are sharp. The part that moved is streaked.

- [ ] **1/125 posing** **1/250 walking** **1/500 kids, pets** **1/1000 sport** **1/2000 birds**
  Set the shutter for the subject.
- [ ] Raise ISO or lower the f-number to pay for it.
- [ ] Stabilization won't help: it steadies the camera, not the subject.



4 Depth of field

HOW TO TELL One distance is sharp, such as the near eye, and everything in front and behind fades.

- [ ] Raise the f-number: f/4 for one face, f/5.6 to f/8 for a group.
- [ ] Step back or zoom out a little.
- [ ] Line people up at the same distance from the camera.
- [ ] Focus on the eye nearest the camera.

Still soft?

Test it: tripod, 2-second timer, f/8, base ISO, good light. If that photo is sharp, the cause is one of the four above. If it isn't, clean the front of the lens and check for condensation, then try another lens.

Answer four questions at **thecamera.school/blurry-photo-checker**

Free to print, copy and share for teaching with this line on it. Not for resale.