# Product Photography

## Secrets in the Internet Age

Tricks and Helpful Hints for
Non-Professional Digital Camera Users

2nd Edition

www.mkdigitaldirect.com/tips

# *Product Photography*
## *Secrets in the Internet Age*

*You have taken the first step to shoot quick and easy professional photos*

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# Table of Contents



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***www.mkdigitaldirect.com/tips***

# Introduction

Using a digital camera to photograph products takes more than just turning your camera on and taking pictures. I know you you're probably thinking "That's all you need to do when taking pictures of your family on a nice weekend". You're almost right! All digital consumer cameras were designed to take general pictures under general lighting conditions. And to be honest with you, there are very inexpensive cameras that will challenge any high priced one on a family weekend reunion.

## The Wrong Setup

When it comes to taking a picture for the purpose of promoting and selling your products, the full automatic settings on the camera may not provide you the quality that you are expecting. You'll encounter several and consistent problems including:

- Shadows
- Glares
- Reflections
- Hot spots
- Not enough depth of field
- Poor illumination
- Focusing problems

On the following pages, I'll walk you through the different characteristics and features that you need to be aware of to buy and use a digital camera, and in order to take high quality product shots. A word of advice: When you are ready to buy a digital camera, purchase a camera for the sole purpose of taking pictures of your products, rather than for personal use. Do not use it for your kid's parties, beach weekends, weddings, bar mitzvahs, etc.

The camera is part of your business. Once the camera is programmed and all the settings are done, you wouldn't want to change them for other purposes (believe me, buy another camera for the weekends). Sometimes the settings can be forgotten, and you do not want to deal with camera problems when a customer is expecting a picture of your new product on a Sunday at 3 p.m. and you can't reach the technical support office. Really I am not kidding, it can happen.

## The Right Camera for You

Although many people will say "buy the best camera you can afford" this is not always true. You need to buy the camera that best fits your needs. A good way to start can be by asking yourself, or whomever will us it, how well you or them know how to use digital cameras.

Are you willing to learn how to use it, or is he or she? Do you have enough time to give it a try? What are you going to do with the pictures? Are you going to print catalogs, brochures or flyers, or use them on your web site, send e-mails, sell on eBay, or for internal production and quality control? When you know what you're going to do with these images, purchasing a camera becomes a much easier task.

## The Million Pixel Camera Dilemma

If you are not planning to enlarge your images to cover the side of your house, you really don't need to buy the highest mega pixel camera on the market. If you're going to print or use your images that are no larger than 8 ½" x 11", then you can rest assure that almost any decent 5.0 mega pixel camera will do a fine job for you. Why? Because the information contained in a 5.0 mega pixel file has more than enough resolution to provide the appearance to the eye of a smooth and continuous output.

If you are planning to produce larger images, then you need a camera with more mega pixel capabilities. Why? Because as you enlarge the image, you'll see distortions with many spots, points, and noise. The image will look terrible.

## Must-have Options

The following list provides the basic options needed in a digital camera for product photography:

- **The camera needs to have the option to be used at fully manual settings.** (Having this option allows you to control the aperture and shutter speed individually, as well as other specific features)
- **You need to be able to program the white balance options** (many cameras come with pre-programed options or presets). You need at least one custom white balance option. This means that the camera can "read" and self-adjust itself to be able to take pictures under many lighting conditions. ***This feature is very important.***
- If your camera cannot perform the custom white balance adjustment, the probabilities are that you'll end with pictures with wrong or not very

accurate colors, especially if you are trying to take picture of products against a white background. You'll likely end up with all kinds of color variations: yellow, blue, magenta, green, etc. Do not misunderstand the white balance feature to mean that the background is going to be always white. White balance is the camera adjusting itself to the ambient light to give you accurate and true colors of the items being photographed.

- **A key feature that the camera needs to have is the option to attach close-up lenses.** Either by using an adapter, lens holder, or direct attachment to the front of the camera lens. I know that your camera has a fantastic macro feature but this is not always enough. Sometimes you'll need to shoot items just at the border of the camera's capabilities. Meaning that the camera will be too close to the items being photographed with the camera's normal settings.
- **Another important feature is the zoom option.** Most of the time you'll use zoom to adjust and compose the product being photographed on the camera viewfinder or LCD monitor. Almost all new cameras have a combination of optical and digital zoom.
  - **Optical zoom** is the ability of any camera to use the supplied zoom lenses to zoom in or out into your items without using any digital electronic manipulation of the viewed image.
  - **Digital zoom** is a feature of some digital cameras to imitate an optical zoom to zoom in or out into your items. Sometimes the excessive use of the digital zooms may decrease image quality. It's always better to use less digital zoom and more optical zoom.

## Camera Brand Selection

Okay, deciding on the features was easy… wasn't it? Now it's time to buy the camera.

There are many great brand name cameras on the market that will provide you with excellent quality pictures and include all the features I just mentioned. Leading brands include Canon, Nikon, Olympus, Fuji, etc. The main differences are size, price, features, look, feel, etc.-and one of the must important – ease of navigating the camera menu selections.

Buy a camera that feels strong, well made, and is easy to operate and navigate through the menus. It must have the ability to be attached to a tripod in order to produce sharp images. How do you make a selection? Do your homework, go out to a camera shop and test them. Look for cameras with the features mentioned above. Play with the camera and set it to full manual operational mode. Take some pictures with or without the optical and digital zoom, then, view the images on a computer monitor instead of only on

the camera's LCD Screen. This will test the quality and resolution of the camera. Then do a custom white balance, and try to adjust the file size and resolution… Was it Easy? Hard? Frustrating? Buy the easiest one that lets you do these important things and you won't need to attend any night classes.

## Your Photographic Scenario

Set up a photographic studio or set aside a dedicated work area to take pictures.

First imagine how you want your products to look when the pictures are taken. Use anything that you can use to create your background scenario: you can use fabric drapes, paper, towels, Formica, a painted wall, plants, flowers, etc. The idea is to create a nice scenario and a contrasting effect between the item being photographed and the surroundings. The more contrast, the more your product will stand out and display its details.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** If your primary method of selling your products is by a printed catalog, web site, e-mails, and not actual on-hand samples that the customer can evaluate, the majority of people are going to decide either to buy or not simply by judging your pictures. This means: **IF YOU HAVE POOR QUALITY PICTURES, CUSTOMERS ARE NOT GOING TO BUY YOUR PRODUCTS.** In their minds, they may think "If the picture looks bad, the actual item may be the same condition or worse." Yet, the opposite is true, if they see high-quality photos, they'll judge your items to be worthy and of high quality. In other words, what you're really doing is *Selling Pictures* that only represent your product. Thus, **Better Pictures = Better Sales™**

Okay, you have your new camera, and now you know how to use it. You just finished reading the manual three times and you are an expert. Digital cameras need constant light to compose a correct image. Flashes are not recommended for product photography when using consumer entry level digital cameras. Constant light gives you the ability to accurately compose your picture. An example of a shadow-free constant light environment is found in the MK Digital photography lighting systems, like the Photo-eBox™.

Turn on or off different lights to get the proper illumination according to your personal preferences and taste. Rotate and position your product until you get the look you want. Then, adjust the lighting to illuminate your items at different angles to bring out their special characteristics, and this way they won't look flat. Also use different materials for your background. If you photograph jewelry, remember to enhance your items with "hard" lighting. Hard lighting can be obtained from halogen or LED lighting.

## Close-up Pictures

As I mentioned earlier, sometimes you will find the need to take pictures at a close distance to your object. If needed, set the camera macro feature to "ON". The macro feature of your camera will activate the ability to focus at close distance to your items, sometimes from a half-inch up to twelve inches or more, depending on your camera. Often you'll find that the item being photographed is between the macro distance and the normal lens distance – meaning, too close to use the normal lens and too far to use the macro feature.

When this happens you'll need to install a close-up lens. More often the Number 2 close-up lens will do the job. The number indicates the diopters, i.e., times you can get closer to an item. Usually a Number 2 close-up lens will be enough for distances at about twelve to fifteen inches from the object to the camera lens. If the distance is shorter, you might need to activate the macro feature on your camera as well as using a Number 4 close-up lens or a combination of them. Try not to use more than two close-up lenses together at the same time because you'll loose some picture quality.

**Remember:** the more you zoom into your item the more you lose your depth of field. This means that you will focus in a small specific area of your item and part of it will be out of focus. This works like the adjustment you do when looking through a microscope; where a small turn on the focusing knob will adjust a section of the item but make everything else out of focus.

## Check the White Balance

When the product is in place, focus your camera on the item. Check that the lights are properly set. Hold a white paper or white cardboard as close as possible in front of your item and perform a "custom white balance calibration". If you're using an MK Lighting System, use the lit white platform.

As I mentioned earlier the custom white balance will adjust the camera to the surrounding light. Carefully read your camera manual to perform the custom white balance calibration. A proper white balance is not done automatically; you need to do it manually.

Be sure that the lens is focused at the center on the white cardboard, paper or lit platform. This will help adjust your camera to the surrounding ambience light. If for any reason your camera cannot focus on the white paper, place or tape a small white business card with some text written at the

center. Then, your camera will be able to focus using auto focus mode, if not, focus it manually. Now do your custom white balance calibration.

## Light Makes the Difference

Cameras need to control the amount of light so that an image is not too bright (over exposed) or too dark (under exposed). Similar to our eyes, light enters through the lens and strikes the inside of the camera. Digital cameras use a charged-coupled device (CCD) to capture the light of an image. Think of a CCD as "film" in a conventional camera. The term "exposure" refers to a combination of aperture and shutter speed to obtain the proper amount of light.

- **Shutter speed** – The amount of light can be regulated by controlling the amount of time that the CCD is exposed to light. Different shutter speeds are used to increase or decrease the presence of light. A typical high-end digital camera has a shutter speed range between 1/2000 of a second to 15 seconds.
- **Aperture** – The amount of light that passes through a lens can be increased or decreased by opening or closing a "variable diaphragm" generally located inside a lens. The larger the aperture opening, the more light enters, but the depth of field decreases. Depth of field is the distance from beginning to end that an object is in focus. A typical high-end digital camera has an aperture range between F2.0 (more light, less depth of field) and F22 (less light, more depth of field).

## Depth of field Focusing

Depth of field is an important element in product photography. The first thing we need to do is to take advantage of the maximum depth of field that any camera has to offer. The camera should be set to manual so that the smallest aperture setting can be selected. "Aperture priority" is a semi-automatic mode where the aperture is selected and the camera automatically adjusts the shutter speed.

I recommend manual focusing whenever possible to eliminate the possibility of any error. When photographing small objects, such as rings, it is advisable to set the focus point one third down from the top of the object to obtain the maximum depth-of-field in both directions.

## Shoot Some Pictures

When you're finished setting the white balance, verify that your digital camera is set to full manual mode and your aperture is at the highest f/stop number (e.g., F8.0). This is to ensure the maximum depth of field for continuous clarity.

All cameras set to manual mode will give you the option to adjust the shutter speed. The built-in light meter may suggest adjusting the shutter speed for a specific picture. It's very important to shoot at different speeds to test for the proper shutter speed adjustment. As you adjust the shutter speed, some cameras will show the light and contrast on the LCD monitor, while others will show the changes with a sliding meter display on the viewfinder.

These indicators can be very helpful to determine the exposure of your picture. But when you download the images to your computer, you can verify if the pictures are well illuminated, in focus, and sharp to suit your preferences.

Take a couple of pictures at different speeds (e.g., 1/60 or 1/125). Please make notes of the different settings. This is important because when you download the images into the computer you'll know the speed information on each picture, then you can select the one that you like the best. Once you find the best settings, you can photograph hundreds of similar items with very little, if any, camera adjustment.

**Overall, there are just a few things you need to do to obtain good pictures:**

- Read your camera manual to understand what and where to push, move, or turn
- Set the aperture to the highest number (Biggest F-stop number, i.e F8.0)*
- Practice taking many pictures at different speed settings
- Experiment with different lighting scenarios
- Be patient, nobody was born a photographer

A good product photo is the one that shows your item in detail, well illuminated, in focus, and with accurate colors. Image clarity is achieved by focusing on an object that is within the depth of field. When a lens can be focused on an object, the image is made smaller (diverged) to pass through the axis of a lens and then enlarged (converged) to the CCD size of a digital camera. When the lens diaphragm is fully open at F2, for example, the lens will let-in the most amount of light but the depth-of-field will be the smallest. If we take a close-up image of a ring at F2, the ring will be in focus but everything else will be blurred.

When the lens diaphragm is almost closed, at its smallest point, the lens will let-in the least amount of light but the depth-of-field will be the greatest. If we take a close-up image of a ring at F8.0*, the entire ring including the bottom of the shank will be in focus.

**If you own a DSLR camera, contact us for more information*

## Actual Size Photography

In order to have an image at actual size, the first thing you need to know is the printing or viewing size. For example, you want to print an image of a ring where the overall image size is an inch and a half by two inches. Place your ring in the position you want to photograph. Then set your camera at the proper angle of view. Set the lighting the way you want. Place two rulers to frame the ring on the top or bottom and a side. Zoom in or out until you cover an area of two by two inches. This means that your field of view is two by two inches. Then take your picture. When you print your picture, the image will be actual size.

## Jewelry Photography

As you may know, jewelry photography is one of the most difficult areas of commercial photography. Many professional photographers don't even try to do this kind of work, and the ones that do, are not easy to find. A good jewelry photographer normally will be very busy and booked for months in advance and his job is well remunerated. But why is it so hard to obtain decent pictures of jewelry?

Jewelry is very difficult to photograph because it's shiny, highly polished surface reflects, in many cases, up to 99% of the light it receives. Photographing a piece of jewelry is like taking a picture of a mirror. And, you'll see all kinds of images being reflected into the picture – the lights, the camera, yourself, the table etc.

Another point to consider is to avoid using a flash. You'll likely either over illuminate (wash out), or under-illuminate, which often results in dark areas and uneven lighting from one side to the other. Jewelry photography has become an easier task with the use of enclosed lighting systems. The enclosed and controlled environment wraps even and balanced light all around the items you are photographing. The advantages include an even distribution of light, consistent natural lighting, elimination of glare, and illumination of hard to reach spots. Additionally, most MK Digital Lighting Systems also include halogen lighting (for photographing warm colored gemstones) and LED Natural Daylight lighting (to give sparkle to your jewelry).

## Shooting Jewelry

Like any other product photography job, first you need to know what you're going to do with your pictures. This is very important because the end result depends on your set-up.

Also, you need to think about the background. Will you enlarge the image for printing or not? Are you going to take pictures for print or for the Internet? Answers to these questions are important so you can set your camera before you start taking pictures. For larger images, choose large file size and high resolution. Today, to store large files on a computer is very cheap, and you can always re-size down the images if it's needed. And, you'll always have a high resolution image if a print is needed. Before starting, remember to:

- Set your camera to manual mode
- Perform a custom white balance according to the light you are using. If you are going to photograph rings or bands, set the aperture to the highest F-stop in order to get the maximum depth of field
- Focus one-third from the top section of your items to ensure sharpness
- Do not use a flash
- Have a good size memory card to store your images
- Connect the camera to the wall outlet using a power adapter to ensure that you not run out of power during a shooting session
- For macro shots, the Number 2 close-up lens works well in most applications

Most of the time you'll use your camera in auto-focus mode, but sometimes when you shoot very shiny and reflecting jewelry, the camera has problems. To solve this, either change to manual focus mode, or use a plain object that the camera can focus on. For example, use any non-glossy business card with small text and place it or hold it just over the top of the item being photographed.

With the other hand, press half-way down on the shutter button until the camera locks in focus. Then, without releasing the shutter button remove the business card and then continue to take the picture without letting go of your finger from the shutter button.

For certain small pieces of jewelry such as pendants, earrings, and rings, set your focusing point to "spot" or "center weight." This will force the camera to focus on a smaller area of the item being photographed.

**Get step-by-step instructions for setting up your digital camera and shooting high quality photos in our "Photography Startup Guide" booklet.**

Find it online at: www.mkdigitaldirect.com/startup

# Jewelry Photography Tips

## 1. How to photograph silver, white gold, and platinum jewelry

When it comes to photographing silver, white gold and platinum high-polish (mirror finish) jewelry, the first thing one has to understand are the natural properties they have. Silver jewelry, in most cases, tends to be a natural mirror that reflects everything that is around it. For this reason, one has to carefully place silver jewelry with the correct surroundings in order to create an image that can truly show the silver jewelry piece in its true and natural look.

To illustrate the idea that silver, white gold & platinum jewelry mirrors its surroundings, we have placed a silver ring in three different photographing environments, and have showed you the result of each of them. Please view the following images, and read the text along each photograph. After the photographs, you will find tips on how to photograph silver.

*For this tutorial, we have used the MK Photo-eBox™ lighting system & a Canon Powershot S5 IS*

**Silver looks too white**

*In this photo, we can see that the silver looks too white, as it reflects the lit surface of the Photo-eBox. There is nothing you can do to avoid this; as silver will simply reflect everything surrounding it. The ring looks unnatural, although the background is fully white.*

Photo 1A

**Silver looks much more natural**

*In this photo we can see that the silver looks much more natural, as it reflects the metallic background it is against. By using this metallic surface, we can make the ring reflect metal, and thus appear metallic and natural. Also note that the purple stone looks more real.*

***Note:** Photos have been cropped and had the brightness & contrast adjusted. Nothing else.*

Photo 1B

**Silver and the ring look more natural**

*In this photo we have used a black background. If you take a look at the silver ring, you can see that it reflects part of the black background and also parts of the white walls of the Photo-eBox. Once you have understood that silver acts just like a mirror you can understand that when photographing jewelry, its surroundings will directly affect how the image will appear.*

Photo 1C

**Tips and suggestions for photographing silver, white gold & platinum:**

- **Do not use a white background when photographing silver jewelry:** In order to get a photograph that presents silver in a much more natural and real way, you want to avoid a white background; as white will only make the silver look white, dull and unnatural.
- **Use dark or metallic-like backgrounds:** When using a dark or metallic-like background, you are allowing the silver, white gold or platinum jewelry to reflect a more natural color; because you are reflecting it against backgrounds that create a contrast between the white walls of the photography lighting system and the surface it is against. This contrast, lets the jewelry appear natural in color while creating a three-dimensional look. Use yellow gold-like backgrounds when shooting gold.
- **Photograph silver jewelry inside a photography lighting system or light box:** In order to provide the correct lighting and reflections in silver jewelry photographs, you need to have a diffused lighting source inside a closed environment. Such as the walls enclosed inside the MK Digital Photo-eBox™ lighting system.
- **Don't expect reflection-free photographs:** When it comes to the facts of nature, don't expect the impossible. You have to completely understand the nature and fact that silver, white gold and platinum high-polish jewelry will always act as mirrors, and will always reflect its surroundings.

  Don't expect your photos to be completely reflection-free, as there is nothing you can do about this (unless you use an editing software). In some photos you will see the reflection of the camera lens, or other surroundings. It is impossible to completely avoid them. (In photo 1A & 1B above, you can see the reflection of our camera to the right of the purple stone - it's the black spot you see). To avoid the camera's reflection (as in photo 1C) we moved the ring, so that the purple stone would be directly in front of the camera lens, and thus avoiding it's reflection in the silver of the ring. ***"If your eyes can see it, the camera will see it too"***

## 2. Avoiding unnecessary shadows and reflection

When photographing jewelry, there are certain shadows and reflections that might be necessary to create a three-dimensional look, or that you may simply want as a personal preference. Yet, there are other reflections and shadows that are unnecessary and that you want to avoid in order to have a photograph that presents your jewelry in the best way possible.

The first thing you need to understand about reflections and shadows is how they are produced and why they appear or exist. Though it may seem obvious, shadows are created when an object is exposed to direct lighting (which can come from light in a room, the sun, or through the use of a regular lamp); while reflections are created in any object that is composed of reflective materials such as metals or glass.

What you need to do, is to avoid this direct light that creates shadows, and avoid those surroundings that create reflections in your jewelry. Please read the following steps on how to avoid shadows and reflections in your jewelry. View photos on the following page.

**Steps for photographing jewelry without unnecessary shadows and reflections:**

- **Step 1:** Get a photography setup with enclosed wraparound and diffused natural daylight, like one of MK Digital's photography lighting systems.
- **Step 2:** Place your jewelry item inside the enclosed photography setup or lighting system. At this point, you are making sure that the surroundings of your jewelry are nothing but natural daylight and white backgrounds.
- **Step 3:** Adjust your camera settings and begin photographing. The correct camera settings will allow you to take photographs with the correct exposure, focus, colors and qualities of your jewelry.


MK Photo-eBox™
Lighting System

***Note:*** *Photos have been cropped and had the brightness & contrast adjusted. Nothing else.*

**Photo of a ring <u>without</u> reflections or shadows**

*This photograph shows no shadows and reflections because it was photographed inside a Photo-eBox™ lighting system that contains wrap-around natural daylight. The natural daylight that is exposed through the sides, back and bottom of the Photo-eBox, avoids all the shadows and reflections in the ring. The lit bottom allows the background to be completely white, and makes the ring to appear to be "floating".*


Photo 2A

**Photo of a ring <u>with</u> reflections and shadows**

*This photo was photographed outside of the Photo-eBox™ on a white plastic surface, with the light in the room. You can see that regular light will create shadows on the ring, while the fact that the ring is in the outside allows the surroundings to reflect on the ring. The arrow pointing to show reflections on the ring shows the reflections of the walls or ceiling from the room, which as you can see adds an unprofessional look to the ring's photo, and does not show the true colors of the ring.*


Photo 2B

## 3. Giving Sparkles to your jewelry using white LED lighting

Diamonds and gems presented in jewelry stores do not sparkle as intense as compared to being displayed in the sun. While the sparkle produced by illuminating jewelry with metal-halide, halogen, and florescent lighting are good, it could be better.

**MK SparkleLite™ LED light**
To give sparkle to jewelry

New advances in technology have created a unique opportunity for the jewelry business. A scientific breakthrough in light emitting diodes (LED) has produced lighting that matches the full spectrum of the sun. As a result, retailers can now display their jewelry with maximum radiant potential.

**A photograph with the right amount of LED lighting**
This photo was photographed inside a Photo-eBox Plus™ and the Mini-Lite™ 350-2 LED natural daylight light, which contains a light intensity dimmer.

**Perfect Photo**
Right amount of LED Light

Photo 3A

Utilizing the new LED technology, MK Digital has crafted the SparkleLite™ product line. With MK SparkleLite™ lighting your customers will be amazed at the fire and brilliance of your diamonds and gems. Using specially calibrated and color corrected super white LEDs, your jewelry has the ability to out-sparkle the competition.

While super white LEDs are great, SparkleLite products offer an additional design advantage. By placing the LEDs on a precise angle, the effect creates multiple points of light, which brings out even more surface sparkle.

**Proper LED light illumination**

When illuminating your jewelry with LED light it is important to only use the right amount of light, not too much and not too little. Most LED natural daylight products will not allow you to control the intensity of the light with a dimmable switch, but in this example we have used the Mini-Lite™ 350-2, that does contain a dimmer switch and allows you to control the light.

**Steps for proper illumination:**

1. Turn off the fluorescent light on your lighting system box.
2. Turn on your LED light and direct it towards your jewelry. Once you have the light box turned off, you will be able to see only how much LED light you will be using.
3. Now turn on the fluorescent lights on your lighting system box.
4. Take a photograph of your item, then check the photo to see if you like it.
5. If needed (and if your LED light allows you), adjust the intensity of the LEDs to a proper level. The correct amount of intensity, is the one that begins to show sparkles and brings out your jewelry piece to life, but it's not excessively strong, which would make it too shiny. View the photo shown above (Photo 3A - Right amount of LED light).

**Examples of photos with incorrect amounts of LED light intensity.**

**Too much LED lighting**

Photo 3B

*This photo has been exposed to too much LED lighting, which make the ring appear too shiny*

**No LED lighting at all**

Photo 3C

*This photo has not been exposed to any LED lighting. As you can see in the blue stone, there are no "sparkles"*

**A few more examples with and without LED lighting:**

**With LED lighting**

**Without LED Lighting**

**With LED lighting**

**Without LED Lighting**

## 4. Halogen lighting used for photographing rubies, amethysts, opals, emeralds, and other stones.

As we have mentioned before, the illumination of jewelry in photography is one of the most important elements for achieving quality photos. Although most jewelry only needs to be photographed with fluorescent light, certain types of gem stones and jewelry need halogen light illumination.

Halogen lighting provides a warm light environment that provides the optimum viewing and photographing condition for rubies, pearls, opals, emeralds, amethysts. If fluorescent lighting is used, there will be a shift in the color of your gem stones and precious stones which might not allow you to appreciate them in their natural colors and characteristics.

***Note:*** *Please test your jewelry with both fluorescent and halogen lighting, as different gem stones and precious stones will act differently to both types of lights. While we do recommend halogen lighting for the previously mentioned types of stones, we encourage you to test both types of light. Please remember that when photographing with halogen lighting, you need to adjust the white balance of your camera. Read your camera's manual on how to perform a "white balance".*

**Steps for properly illuminating jewelry with halogen lighting:**

1. Turn on the halogen lighting on your lighting system box
2. Adjust your camera's white balance's to the halogen lighting. *This will adjust your camera, so that the halogen light appears to be white, while maintaining the true colors of your jewelry and stones.*
3. Simply adjust the shooting speed of your camera, then photograph.

***The following photos will show you the difference between using fluorescent lighting and using halogen lighting for illuminating a red colored stone in a ring.***

**Improper light = True color of stone not shown**
**Lighting used:** Fluorescent lighting, which is not proper for this specific ring being photographed
**White balance:** Evaluated with fluorescent light

*In this photo you can see that the red stone looks very dark and is not properly displayed, as it does not show the stone's true colors and qualities.*

**Proper light + improper white balance =**
True color shown in stone, but bad overall photo
**Lighting used:** Halogen lighting, which is the proper light for this ring being photographed.
**White balance:** Evaluated with ***fluorescent light***.

*This is a photo with halogen lighting. You can now see the stone's red color. Yet, the rest of the ring and photo looks yellow/orange, which make it a bad photograph. This occurs if your camera's white balance is evaluated with fluorescent light, as it was in this example. To correct this, you must evaluate your camera's custom white balance using* ***halogen lighting****. (Tungsten)*

**Proper light + proper white balance =**
True color shown in stone, a great photo!
**Lighting used:** Halogen lighting, which is the proper light for this ring being photographed.
**White balance:** Evaluated with ***halogen light***.

*This is a photo with halogen lighting, but after our camera's white balance was correctly adjusted. Now the photo DOES present the ring in it's true and natural color.*

***Note:*** *1. When using halogen lighting, some highlights and reflections will appear in your item. 2. All photos have been cropped, and been edited for brightness & contrast only. Photos photographed inside an MK Photo-eBox II™ with a Canon S5IS digital camera.*

## 5. Artistic jewelry photography using black and white acrylics

Have you ever seen and wondered how those fancy jewelry photos on magazine ads are photographed? - Well, here's one artistic effect that you can easily achieve.

Most jewelry photographs that are used for catalogs, online stores, eBay, or other forms of marketing, don't really look too fancy - but they should. Because when it comes to having that cover or front page photo, or photos that will make a sale, you want to make your jewelry look very special. Here we'll show you how to achieve dramatic reflections in your jewelry photos, which is an effect that is commonly know as the "Tiffany" effect.

A popular product photography effect, is the use of a product's reflection on the surface that it is being photographed. This is a technique regularly used for photographing a very special and unique item, as it has as a purpose to make the product stand out and look "twice" as nice (the reflection).

**Reflection in a black acrylic**

**Reflection in a white acrylic**

This photos were photographed inside an MK Photo-eBox™ with a white & black reflective acrylic placed inside, using a Canon S5IS digital camera.

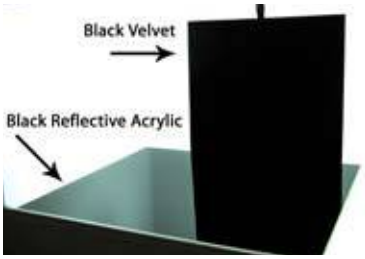
**Steps for photographing in a reflective white surface:**

1. Turn on the fluorescent lighting on your lighting system box
2. Adjust your camera's white balance to the white fluorescent light.
3. Place the white glossy acrylic inside of the box.
4. Take photographs, and enjoy the look of the photos!

**Steps for photographing in a reflective black surface:**

1. Turn on the fluorescent lighting on your lighting system box.
2. Adjust your camera's white balance to the white fluorescent light.
3. Place the black glossy acrylic inside of the box.
4. Add a black velvet or black plastic at the back of the box. This is done in order to get a completely black reflection on the black acrylic. Otherwise, the acrylic would reflect the white walls of the box, and would end up looking gray. See below
5. Place your jewelry near the edge of the acrylic and the black velvet.
6. Take photographs, and enjoy the look of the photos!

*To set-up, place the black or white reflective acrylic on the bottom of the lighting system box. Then place the black velvet piece on the back of the box. Refer to the image shown.*



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*We hope you now have a better understanding of product photography. For your questions and comments, feel free to contact us at*

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