

astrophotography

light
pollution

composition

Milky Way
placement

slide for
set up

post
production

Golden
triangle:
Shutter Speed
ISO
Aperature

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planning

Check dark sky maps to find the best locations with minimal light pollution.

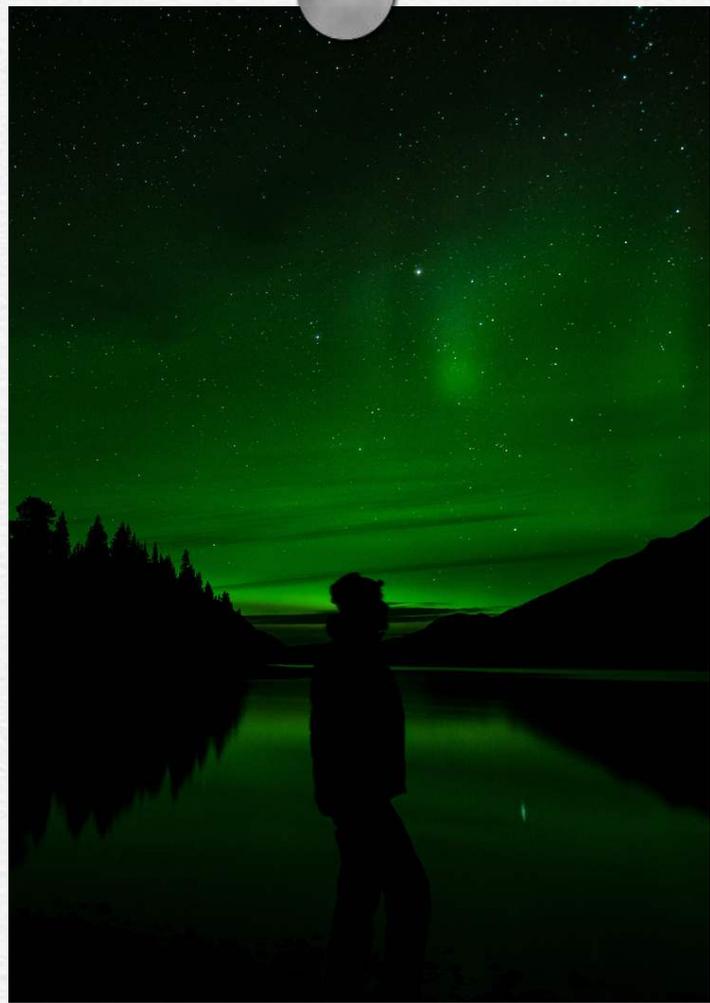
Apps like Sky Guide will show you exactly where and what is in the sky at any given time and location. Use it to plan for the milky way and avoiding the moon (yes, the moon creates light pollution).

Scout in advance, check for open skies and composition. The Olympic National Park is super super dark but the trees are so tall + dense you can't see the sky.

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Tools

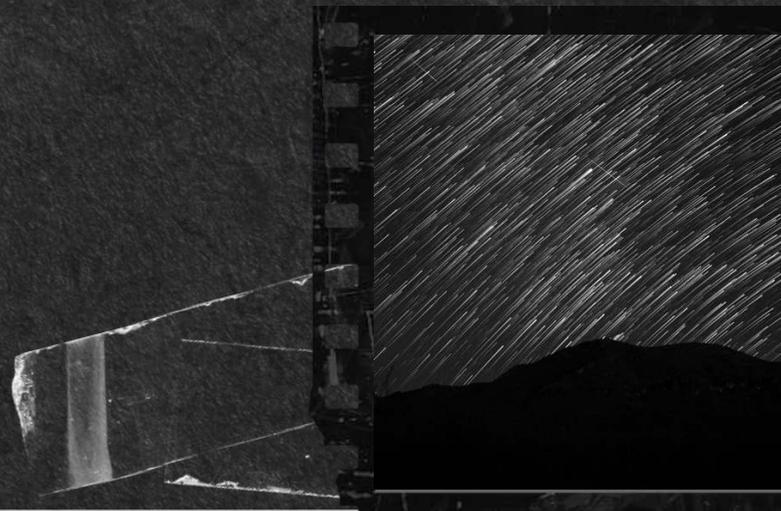


Northern Lights
Yukon Canada

A headlamp with red light capabilities to preserve your night vision.

Tripod, depending on the shot, your shutter speed will be 1 second to infinity. A tripod is necessary

A wide-angle lens, to capture more of the sky and create that grand sense of place that comes with astrophotography.



Optional: If you want longer shutter speeds for painting with streams of light or extra-long star trails without using Photoshop, your shutter speed will need to be in bulb mode. This means that your shutter will stay open until you shut it. A simple remote to control your shutter will be essential so you don't mess up the whole image by pressing the shutter. You may think you have steady hands and pressing the shutter won't shake the whole camera - you're wrong.



light painting the Saguaro

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shoot day

Every astrophotography shoot is different, just like every night is different.

Start with framing your shot. Check your composition. This is anything interesting in the foreground and the stars that you're shooting.

Use the Sky Guide App or something similar. If you want the Milky Way, plan for it. If you want star trails, you'll likely want to avoid the Milky Way because it will be too busy/distracting.

Next is the fun part, creating the image. This takes some playing around, so enjoy it.



slide for
settings



CAMERA SETTINGS

Aperture - you want your sensor wide open, the lowest f-stop that your lens allows.

Shutter Speed - Stars move faster than you'd think. If you want crisp single-point stars, go for a lower shutter speed like 8 seconds or less. If you want more of a light trail, increase your shutter speed.

ISO—This is your camera sensor's sensitivity to light. Higher ISO means extra sensitivity and more grain. In a starry photo, grain will make the stars look messy, and it is difficult to tease out in post. Play with this; you want it as low as possible. Shoot darker than you are comfortable with so you have more to work with in post/edit.

White Balance - Is measured in Kelvins, sunset is about 2000K, midday sun is about 5200K and a clear blue sky is 10000K. This is personal preference. Play around and see.

BONUS!

If you're filming the northern lights, a longer shutter speed will create a thick band where they are dancing. A faster shutter speed will better highlight the movement.



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