

More About Depth Of Field

Manual focus scale comparison

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∞	20	7	4	3	2.5	2	1.75	50mm
∞	4	2	1.25	1				24mm

Using lenses that have depth-of-field markings and manual focus scales, a comparison between a “normal” 50mm lens and a “wide angle” 24mm lens easily illustrates the increased depth-of-field in the 24mm lens.

The scales also show how the depth-of-field increases the further away the subject focus is from the photographer’s position. On the 24mm lens the marked distances drop from infinity to 4 feet and the rest of the focus scale only brings us to 1 foot. After 20 ft., the 50mm lens rapidly approaches infinity. The 24mm does so after 4ft.

With the 50mm lens @ $f22$, if you focus at 4 ft you would have depth of field from 3 ft to 7 ft. You could use this to put two subjects at different distances into focus. Or you could throw a busy background out of focus in a portrait shot. The short depth of field is why portrait photographers gravitate toward telephoto lenses with wide apertures. This also makes them popular with sports and wildlife photographers.

To summarize:

With the popularity of zoom lenses that don’t have depth of field markings and of auto focus lenses that don’t have distance settings, the important thing to remember about depth of field is that you get more depth with a wider angle , with a smaller aperture, and at a greater distance. To isolate a subject, you should use a telephoto lens at a wide aperture and as close as possible.