

Accessories for Photography

There are accessories for every need you have, and more for needs you don't have...yet. Inventors envision a solution for every challenge. Some accessories are considered standard tools needed by most photographers, e.g. a flash or a tripod. These basic items come in a bewildering variety of options. Simple products like tripods vary in stability, height, speed of adjustment, leveling adjustments, quick releases, and more. A seemingly simple filter can vary greatly in price. The quality of glass, the type of coatings, and the materials in the mount all contribute to the cost. And since filters are used in the image-forming path, you don't want to skimp on them.

Quality photography can require a substantial investment in the tools of the trade. To compete, your images must be as good as the best from others doing the same type work. Photographers often specialize in one area due to the costs, and the learning curve, for working in multiple fields.

And there's the rub. As a hobbyist you will invest in gear to make the images that appeal to you. When you are asked to take pictures that fall outside the realm of your regular interests do you have the tools needed? Do you even know what specialized gear might be necessary? If you don't know, you should find out before taking on the task. You may need to rent some gear (adding to your overhead). But be sure you enjoy the work, and can count on more of it, before adding specialized equipment to your personal kit. Consider renting a piece of specialty gear for a trial before you purchase it.

Of course, having gear does not make you a photographer. You also need the specialized knowledge and skills required for the work. If your specialty is landscapes, could you take on a portrait assignment or a wedding? And should you? Nothing can sully your reputation quicker than a botched job. And nothing can bust your budget more than renting an expensive piece of gear that was not in your quote for the job. How do you know what is needed? Try asking someone already doing the work. Some photographers think they are privy to trade secrets and don't share info. But many will. And there are books, magazines and the internet for sources. Again, do the research and properly prepare yourself.

Having the proper accessories available can make your work easier and help keep the creative juices flowing. Having to fight your gear to get it to perform is not fun and can either stifle your enthusiasm, or stimulate your problem-solving processes. Some accessories can be very specialized and useful for only a limited range of images or connect to only one camera type. Batteries and chargers can change from model to model within the same brand of camera. Remote releases can fit some models but not others from the same manufacturer. Before you change cameras do the research and find out what else you might be forced to change.

You will want to have back-up equipment when doing weddings and other non-recurring events. You can break your back and carry everything you own to a job "just in case." A good photographer will always find a creative way to get a great photograph. With experience you will be able to anticipate the tools needed.