



# Tripods

A Love, Hate Relationship



# Essential Usage Tips

- ▶ **Extend Thicker Sections First:** For maximum stability, extend the top, thicker leg sections before the thinner bottom ones.
- ▶ **Avoid the Center Column:** Raising the center column significantly increases the risk of camera shake and vibration. Use it only as a last resort.
- ▶ **Set Up for Stability:** On level ground, point one leg toward the subject and stand between the other two. On hills, point two legs downhill and shorten the uphill leg to keep the base level.
- ▶ **Manage Camera Settings:** Disable image stabilization when the camera is on a steady tripod to prevent the system from creating artificial movement. Use a remote or the 2-second timer to avoid "shutter slap" vibrations.
- ▶ **Increase Weight Safely:** Use the center hook to hang a camera bag for extra stability in wind but try to keep the bag touching the ground to prevent it from swinging and causing shake.









# Maintenance & Cleaning

- **Immediate Post-Shoot Care:** Wipe legs down with a damp cloth after every use. If you've been in saltwater or mud, rinse the legs with fresh water immediately and **dry them thoroughly** before collapsing.
- **Dealing with "Grit":** If you hear a grinding noise or feel vibration while turning a lock, sand or salt is trapped inside. Stop immediately and clean the joint to avoid scratching the internal surfaces.

# Maintenance & Cleaning

## Lubrication Rules:

- **Use Dry Lubricants:** Avoid wet oils like WD-40, which act as "dust magnets". Use light, dry lubricants like silicone spray or PTFE\* only on moving metal parts.
- **Never Lubricate Tubes:** Only lubricate threaded parts. Putting grease on the actual leg tubes can cause the locks to fail and the tripod to collapse.

\*PTFE lubricants are synthetic, non-stick, and ultra-low friction agents (often known as Teflon) used for dry lubrication, resisting dirt, dust, and oil buildup. They work best on slides, hinges, and tracks because they dry quickly and leave no residue

# Maintenance & Cleaning

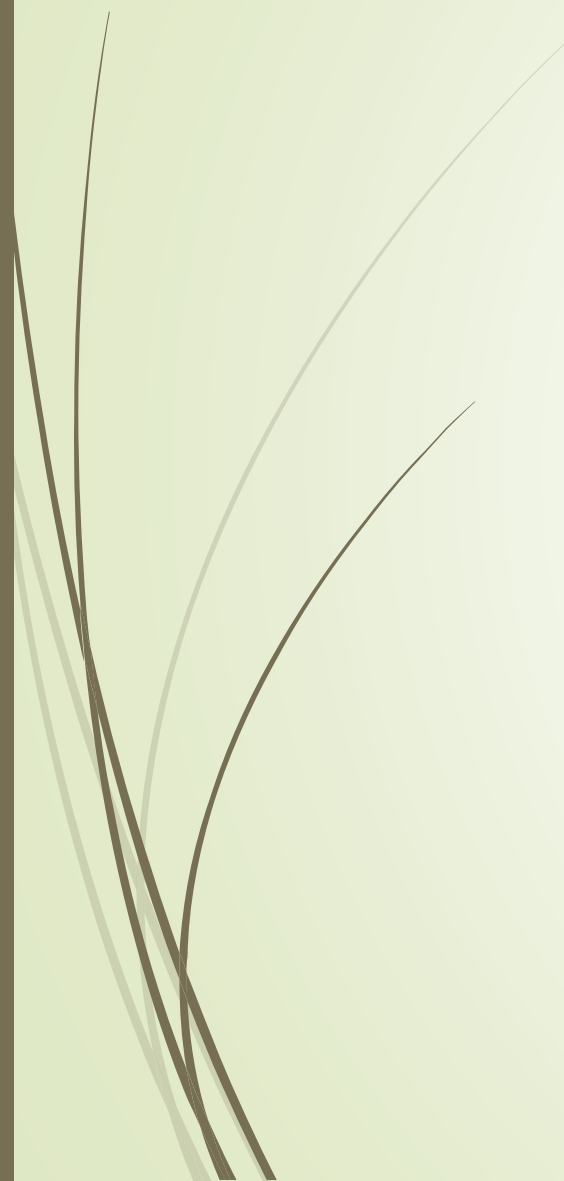
**Deep Cleaning:** Once a year (or after heavy beach/desert use), disassemble the legs entirely.


- Use warm soapy water and an old toothbrush to clean threads.
- Be careful not to lose the small plastic "shims" (guides) inside the legs.
- Let all parts air dry for at least 24 hours before reassembly to prevent mold and internal rust.



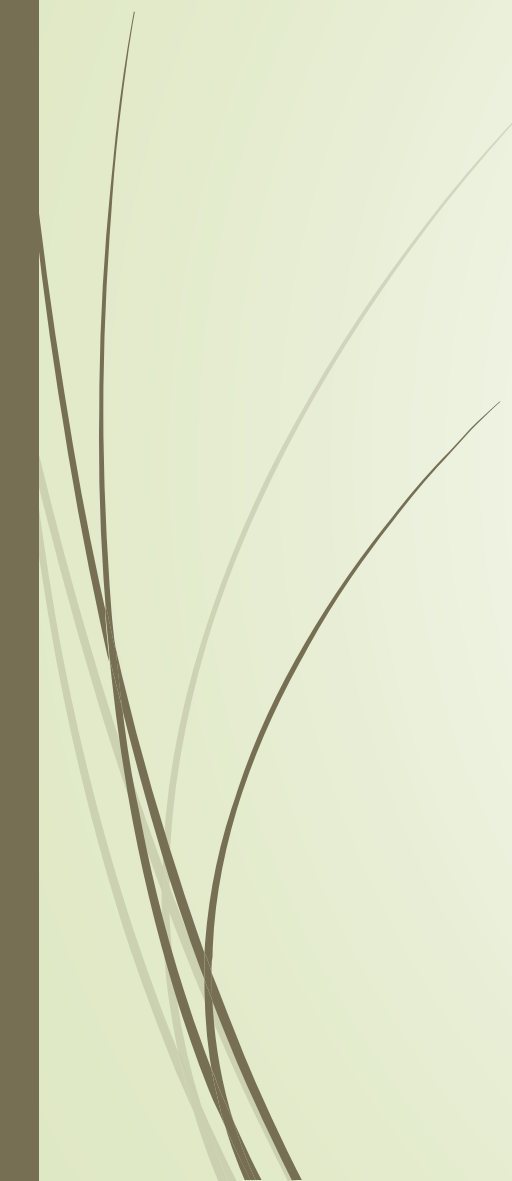
# Safety Best Practices


- **The "Shake Test":** After mounting your camera, give the setup a gentle shake while holding the camera to ensure it is securely locked into the quick-release plate.
- **Weight Wisely:** Hang a camera bag from the center hook to lower the center of gravity in windy conditions. For the best results, use a bungee cord so the bag rests on the ground rather than swinging in the wind.
- **Visible at Night:** Use **reflective or glow-in-the-dark tape** on the legs to prevent yourself or others from tripping over them in low light.





# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

- ▶ A tripod is one of the things that can boost your photography instantly. But new photographers don't appreciate its value until they get one and use it.
  - ▶ At the same time, owning a tripod doesn't magically make you a good photographer. If you're a newbie tripod owner, you should know some common mistakes to avoid to make your photos shine.
- 



# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 1. Choosing the Wrong Tripod


- A tripod is not something you should just order online or pick up in a big-box store. Instead, you have to find the right one based on many factors. Here are some great reasons to invest in a good tripod.
- The most important thing to consider is your camera and lens weight. You don't want to take chances with your gear worth thousands of dollars. The tripod should be sturdy enough to hold your camera-lens combo. You can check the weight limit of the tripod and choose accordingly.
- There are other things to consider, too, from the material to the weight of the tripod. You want strong yet lightweight material. If you're a nature photographer who spends most of the time outdoors, choose lighter materials like carbon fiber. You'll appreciate it during long hikes. For studio work, go for a solid aluminum tripod.

# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 2. Using the Wrong Type of Tripod Head Tripod-ball-head.

- ▶ You can use many types of heads with your tripod. For example, there are ball heads, pan-and-tilt heads, fluid heads, geared heads, and so on. You need to do some research to identify the best type of head for your genre. Each type of head has pros and cons, so check carefully.
- ▶ Choosing the right head for your photography type is crucial to get the photos you want. For instance, a ball head will not work if you're a product photographer who wants precision, try a geared head instead. A ball head is great for landscape photography. A gimble head is great for wildlife photography.





# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 3. Extending the Lower Legs First

- ▶ It may seem convenient and intuitive to extend the lower legs of the tripod first. But it is not good practice because you're adding weight to the thinnest part of your tripod. So, it can make your tripod unstable. Any slight movement can shake your tripod, leaving you with blurry images.
- ▶ Extend the thicker top legs first, and your tripod will be comparatively sturdier. If it is possible, avoid expanding the lower legs at all. Also, when shortening your tripod's height, start with the lower legs first. This may not make your back happy, but your images will be super sharp.

# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 4. Raising the Center Column Fully




- The center column on your tripod can be handy when you need just a bit more height but avoid raising it entirely. When you extend it fully, it essentially becomes a monopod that is atop a tripod. A camera that is on a tripod is adequately balanced on its three legs and is way more stable than a camera on a single leg of the center column.
- So, should you just forget that there is a center column? Not necessarily. Don't raise it more than halfway—your camera and photos will be safe and secure.

# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 5. Ignoring the Spirit Level

- One of the main benefits of using a tripod is keeping the lines straight in your photos. Most tripods are equipped with a spirit level or bubble level to ensure the tripod is leveled, as well as the horizons in your landscape scenes or the lines in your architectural photos staying straight.
- Make sure to check if it is aligned in the center. This step is especially important if the surface is uneven or rocky.
- Many novice tripod users often overlook this feature. However, it is a handy tool that can save you time and improve the look of your photos—you don't have to spend hours cropping and tilting your pictures in post-production.





# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 6. Not Tightening the Knobs

- ▶ There are many horror stories of photographers losing thousands of dollars worth of equipment due to loose knobs or screws. You may feel that you're careful and things like that probably won't happen to you but think again. Always double-check if all the knobs are tight and the levers are in position.
- ▶ The same goes for attaching the head. Again, you want it to sit tight on the tripod. Be especially careful with ball heads. If the ball head is loose, your camera can tilt quickly and crash the whole setup. Even if something as dramatic doesn't happen, loose knobs can cause a camera shake, making your images blurry and unusable.

# OH NO!!



# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 7. Not Using the Foot Spikes

- ▶ When we buy a new tripod, most of us take out the essential items, leave the rest of the accessories in the package, and forget all about them. Unfortunately, foot spikes are often one of these forgotten accessories.
- ▶ As the name suggests, foot spikes have spikes that can provide more traction than your default tripod legs. Are you planning to shoot on rough or loose surfaces like ice or sand? Shooting with foot spikes can make a night and day difference. Your tripod will be more secure, and your photos will be crisp.



# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos



## 8. Not Counterbalancing

- ▶ Your tripod likely has a hook under its legs for counterbalancing. When you add some weight to it, it acts as a counterweight to balance your tripod.
- ▶ You don't have to give it a thought for most studio shots. But, when you're outside, exposed to elements, or have a long lens, it is a good idea to utilize it. A sudden gust of wind is all it takes to bring your setup crashing down. Plus, having a steady setup will give you clear images.
- ▶ If your tripod has a 90-degree center column, you need counterweights to balance the tripod. When the arm is extended at a right angle, the weight of your camera can topple it.
- ▶ You can buy sandbags to use as a counterweight, but you can use your backpack too. Just make sure your bag is heavy enough to balance the weight.

# Tripod Mistakes You Should Avoid for Better Photos

## 9. Using the Camera's Shutter Button

- ▶ After you set your camera on the tripod, you should use a shutter release to take photos. You will introduce a camera shake if you press the shutter button on your camera. Many new photographers overlook this fact when using a tripod.
- ▶ Shutter releases are inexpensive accessories, and you can buy them online. If you don't have one yet, use your camera's self-timer mode.





**Thanks for Watching**