

Back Button Auto Focus

So, what is BBAF anyway?

Back Button AF (BBAF) uncouples autofocus from your shutter release and moves it exclusively to a button on the back of your camera.

BBAF works best when the focus mode is set to AF-C.

Camera systems will vary with each make and model. You will have to check your user manual to see if your camera is capable of BBAF.



AF-On button options on Nikon and Canon cameras. NOTE - Most non-Rebel series Canon cameras will have a dedicated AF-On button, whereas only Nikon's higher end models have one, so you'll have to reassign the AE/AF lock button if AF-On is missing from yours.

How's it work?

For action, BBAF is just like you'd expect since the camera is already in AF-C mode. Simply get your AF area over your subject and hold in your AF-On button for as long as you'd like to track. The camera will continue to focus using your selected AF area as you fill your card with future magazine covers images.

But here's the real trick.

When you need to shoot a static image, you just focus – AND THEN
RELEASE THE AF-ON BUTTON. Now you can recompose and shoot.

As long as you keep your finger OFF of the AF-On button, the lens won't refocus, effectively keeping it “locked in” at whatever distance it was the last time you pressed AF-On.

Let's look at the advantages:

1. You have more control. With the standard setup of autofocus on the shutter release, every time you take your finger off that button and then put it back on again, the camera must refocus. If you do a lot of focus, compose, and shoot, then every time your finger comes off the release, you must go through that process again, since the camera is going to want to focus again. Arrgh – that's no way to live!

2. It's great for action - Back Button AF gives you a LOT of flexibility in an action situation. See, with Back Button AF, as long as you're pressing the AF-On button, the camera is attempting to focus.

If the subject stops and you want to take a second to get critical focus on the eye, just focus on that spot and then release your AF-On button. The focus is set at that distance until you press the AF-On button again. If the action starts again, or the subject moves, just press the AF button to reacquire focus or start tracking.

Why?

With BBAF, it's far simpler. I decide where I want the focal point located in the scene, hover my AF point over it, and press the Back Button to focus.

Now, I can recompose and not worry if the AF point is in the wrong place. I don't have to agonize about the camera refocusing because I was in AF-S mode. This way, I focus, take my finger off the button, and my focus distance stays right where I want it.

Back Button Autofocus Web Links

<https://fstoppers.com/originals/back-button-focus-what-it-and-why-you-should-be-using-it-203806>

<https://photographylife.com/back-button-focus>

<https://digital-photography-school.com/back-button-focus/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PN9R0D3pF0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzqQskGoURE&t=30s>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1aUw3_WUBQ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGIYDmZmGY8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPYrrPQAWfU>

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