

# Digital Photography School

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## Using White Balance as a Creative Tool

In my last post I [introduced the topic of White Balance](#) as a way of ensuring you get accurate colors in your shots.

Of course there are times when photographers do not want accurate colors in their photography. I first discovered the power of this when I bought myself a warm up filter for my film SLR before taking a trip to outback Australia. I used the warm up filter when photographing sunsets and the red rocks and dessert there. The results were quite spectacular. What were already fairly warm tones in my photos became even warmer - in fact they sizzled!

Of course you could go out and buy yourself colored filters for your digital cameras (many allow you to attach them, especially DSLRs) however using White Balance controls on your camera can also impact the colors in your images - not only to correct them but to enhance the look and feel of your shots.

Let me illustrate with three shots I just took of a Camilia in my front yard (excuse the poor composition - it was about to rain so I had to take these quickly):

The first shot was taken with Automatic White Balance mode (AWB) selected. The camera took a guess at what the colors were and it got it pretty much spot on.



The following shot was taken with exactly the same settings as the first except that I changed the White Balance mode so that the Color Temperature was 2800k (2800 Kelvin). This cooled the colors down to the maximum that the camera would allow and the result was a much bluer (or cooler) shot than the first.



This last shot was shot at the same settings as the first two except that I warmed up the colors to the maximum by changing the temperature to 10000k. The result is an image with an orange cast over it - much warmer tones.



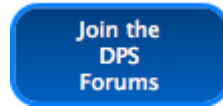
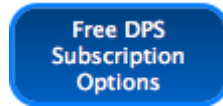
Now I personally prefer the first shot but if I were photographing a sunset on a beach at the end of a hot summers day the warmer tones of the last shot might add something to the mood and feel of the image. On the other hand if I were shooting on a cold misty winters day out in the countryside and wanted to enhance that feeling I could use the cooler tones of the second shot.

My camera (the [Canon EOS 20D](#)) allows me to shoot at any Kelvin rating between 2800k - 10000k (in increments of 100) so I wouldn't have to shoot at the extremes (like I have in these shots) to get warmer or cooler tones in my shots.

**PS:** Some more advanced digital cameras also have White Balance Bracketing which allows you to take a series of shots at slightly different temperatures automatically so that you can choose which one you like the best.

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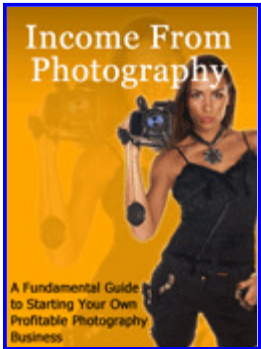
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