

Photographing Fireworks (DSLRs and some P&S)

- 1.) Turn off your flash.
- 2.) Set the lens to manual focus and set it to the ∞ (infinity) mark.
- 3.) Put the camera on tripod. Use a cable release or remote control so you won't have to jiggle the camera.

If you don't use a tripod, the smooth streaks will become squiggles. If you want weird special effects, be my guest and wiggle the camera around to see what happens.

- 4.) If your camera has it, shoot on M or Manual exposure mode.
- 5.) Set the camera on "B" or "Bulb." When you press the shutter, the camera opens to light, and stays open until you remove your finger.

Some cameras have a "T" (time) setting, which instead stays open by itself and closes when you press the shutter a second time. This isn't as convenient.

If you have neither of these, set a long manual exposure of many seconds, and start the exposure the usual way. Use your hand in front of the lens to stop it. If you have no remote control or cable release, set a long exposure and use your hand or a hat to start and stop the exposure.

Check your camera's instructions if you can't find these settings. If you can't find them, for the USA, phone Nikon at (800) NIKON-UX for digital, (800) NIKON-US for film, and (800) OK-CANON for Canon.

- 6.) Shoot at the lowest ISO for the best results. Turn off ISO AUTO because it will try to set a high ISO in the dark. If you have no idea what ISO is, forget about it.
- 7.) Try an aperture of f/8 at ISO 100, or f/11 at ISO 250 for starters. If you don't know what an aperture is, or your camera doesn't have this adjustment, don't worry.
- 8.) Open the shutter before the first burst. Hold it open several seconds, until one burst completes, or hold it open longer for several bursts.

As more bursts happen, they "draw" on you film or digital, and add together to look like they all happened at once. If you only open the shutter for one burst, you get one. If you hold it open for several consecutive bursts, you'll get a photo loaded with all of them.

- 9.) How's it look? Too dark? Open up to f/4. Too washed-out? Stop down to f/11. Try again until you get an exposure you like, at whatever aperture you need.
- 10.) The brightness of the burst depends only on ISO and the aperture (f/stop). They don't vary with the amount of time the shutter is open.

11.) The brightness of the sky, but not the bursts, varies also with the length of the exposure.

12.) For a bluer sky, Use the Tungsten white balance setting on your camera. For more orange, try the cloudy or shade white balance settings.