



focus on photography

Steady does it for sharp photos



MONTE NAGLER

Keeping your camera steady is critical in your photography to produce pictures that are sharp and clear. And the longer the exposure and the greater the focal length of the lens, the more impor-

tant rigidity becomes.

Of course, the best method of keeping your camera steady is by using a sturdy tripod. With a tripod, shutter speed isn't a critical factor, enabling you to concentrate on the aperture to obtain the depth-of-field you want. If you don't have a tripod handy and there is nothing else to support the camera but yourself, some knowledge about how to correctly hold the camera and steady yourself will come in handy.

First of all, cup your camera in the palm of your left hand, using your thumb and forefinger to operate the

focusing ring. Your right hand steadies the camera and your forefinger trips the shutter. Make sure you dig your elbows firmly into your rib cage to steady your upper body. Place your feet slightly wider than shoulder width, making yourself into a kind of bipod.

Under normal circumstances, it is unwise to hand hold your camera at any shutter speed slower than the reciprocal of the focal length of the lens.

For example, you can hand hold your 50mm lens at 1/60 second or faster. But with a 200mm telephoto, you better use a shutter speed of at least 1/250 second if you're going to hand hold your camera. But if low light dictates hand holding at slower shutter speeds, try leaning against a tree or wall to gain added rigidity. This way, you'll make yourself into a human tripod.

Other methods of steadying your camera include miniature tabletop tripods, which are easily stowed in a camera bag and conveniently used on a car hood, a table or even the ground. A monopod is a tripod with one leg. It's



Steady does it:
This sharp, crisp picture was captured by Monte Nagler by using a sturdy tripod for support. This unusual tree was photographed near Blanding, Utah.

inexpensive, easily transported and lightweight, and can furnish adequate support at shutter speeds more than 1/8 second.

Pistol grips and "L" brackets, both available at your local photo dealer, screw into the tripod socket of your camera and will give you a firm, comfortable grip, which in turn will steady

your shot. "L" brackets can also be used in conjunction with your flash unit for a more secure grip.

Using a sandbag or piece of foam under your camera will provide a solid base when using a ledge.

All forms of camera support, except hand holding, should be used with a cable release. If you're without one, your camera's self-timer will do.

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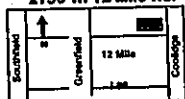
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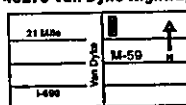


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