



GETTING STARTED

This is a quick start photography guide for beginners.

For further advice please call our UK head office on +44 (0) 203 301 7216 or email us at hq@fourlabs.co.

What equipment do I need?

Camera

A DSLR or mirrorless camera with manual settings is ideal as you will want the ability to control the exposure, aperture and shutter speed to give you the best result.

We recommend cameras such as Canon 5d mk II, Sony a7.

A wide-angle lens is essential in allowing you to capture the entire room. A lens around the 16-35mm length would work well and will provide a flattering effect.



Note – avoid lenses below 10mm as they can distort the room and create a fisheye effect.

Tripod

A sturdy tripod is key to getting sharp images, particularly when shooting in a poorly lit property, as you will need to slow the shutter speed down to allow more light in to the camera. Make sure that all the tripod legs are locked in tight before shooting as a wobbly tripod leg can affect the quality of the image.

Flash

Using natural light is preferable as there is more room for error when using flash. However, if you do decide to use flash to add in some extra light, make sure to point the flash up and behind you to bounce the light back into the room, rather than pointing the flash directly into the room which can create a very harsh, overexposed image. Examples below of point flash and overexposed rooms due to the flash.

Point flash example



Overexposed example



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CAMERA SETTINGS

Shooting in manual is preferred as you will be able to have more control over the outcome of the photo. Below is a breakdown of the main settings you will be altering and what they are for.

2.1

Aperture

Aperture is the opening in a camera lens that controls the amount of light let in and onto the sensor. Aperture is measured in fractions called f-stops. A wide f-stop such as f/1.4 will keep your subject in focus while its surroundings are blurred, and a narrow f-stop, f/22 will keep everything in frame in focus.



We recommend using an f-stop around f/8 to f/11 for maximum depth of field and ensuring that everything in the frame is sharp.

2.3

Shutter Speed

Shutter speed is the length of time a camera shutter stays open while taking the photo. It is measured in seconds or fractions of a second. Shutter speed is likely the setting that will be changed the most.

2.4

ISO

ISO is another setting that controls how much light the camera lets in. A lower ISO will result in a darker image with less grain, while a higher ISO will result in a brighter image but it will be very grainy.

To keep the image looking sharp, we would suggest an ISO value no higher than 1000 and preferably between 500/640.

2.5

Summary

We recommend keeping the settings simple. Keep your aperture around f/8 or f/11, ISO 500/640 and change the shutter speed based on how much light there is in the property.



Note – it is far easier to edit a slightly darker image than an overly bright image as sometimes data can be lost when overexposed.

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PREPARATION & TECHNIQUE

Before you begin taking photos, it's important to make sure that the property is looking its best. Ensure that kitchen counters are clear from clutter, beds are made, curtains/blinds are open, electrical cables hidden, lawn mowed etc. A cluttered and messy home is only going to distract the viewer, so it is essential that you tidy up to make your property look as inviting and appealing as possible.

Once you have set up your camera and tripod, it is time to begin photographing your property. Most rooms will benefit from a wide shot to show the full size of the space – shoot from a corner of the room to get the best result for this.

Make sure to check that the vertical lines (windows, doors, walls) appear straight, and that the lens is fully zoomed out. Most cameras have an option to show a grid overlay on the live view screen to help with the verticals.

It is important to get at least one wide shot of each room, preferably more to show different angles. If the room has feature elements like a fireplace, decorative elements, such as coving or a ceiling rose, original features etc, then photographing these can be a nice addition.

Please do not forget to include some external images too. We recommend at least two for both the front and rear externals, plus photos of the garden if this applies.

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UPLOADING PHOTOS TO FOURLABS

When you are ready to upload your photos to Fourlabs, remove the SD card from the camera and plug it into a laptop or iPad with an SD card reader.

If you don't have access to DSLR camera, it is possible to get good photos using a mobile phone. We would recommend these simple steps:

1. Go to the Photos tab.
2. Select New Job.
3. Upload your photos (we accept the following file formats: Jpeg, DNG, GIF, or TIF).
4. Choose your photo preference based on the style you prefer.
5. Submit job

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