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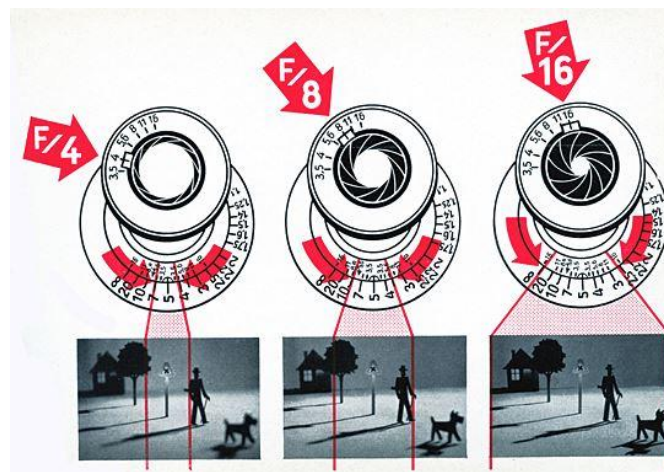
## Depth of Field

Definition; The part of an image from near to far that appears acceptably sharp.

Depth of Field (DOF) is an important concept in photography. Landscape photographers often want to maximize DOF, rendering everything from the front to the back of the image in focus. A minimal DOF can be helpful in portrait and wildlife photography because it will blur a busy background and draw the viewer's eye to the subject, which is sharp.

There are four ways to influence the DOF; Aperture, Distance, focal length, and the use of a specialized lens.

You can adjust the DOF by changing the aperture setting. A larger aperture (smaller number) decreases depth of field and vice versa.  $f/16$  would give a larger amount of image in focus, and  $f/2.8$  smaller.



Varying the distance from the subject will give different depths of field. The closer you are to your subject, the lesser the DOF.

Changing focal length will change DOF as well. A wide angle lens (eg. 24mm) will have a greater DOF than a telephoto (eg. 200mm), at the same distance and aperture. Technically, this difference is due to a change in distance from the subject and therefore not really a difference at all. Still, it is good to remember that a lens change (and stepping back or forward) is one way to effect a DOF change.

Finally, a specialized lens called “tilt-shift” or “perspective control” can be used to dramatically increase or decrease DOF beyond the limits of the other three methods. More information about these lenses can be found here; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tilt-shift\\_photography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tilt-shift_photography)



Tip: Depth of Field Preview button.

By default, when you look through your viewfinder you're looking through the widest aperture available on that lens. Most advanced cameras have a Depth of Field preview button, which closes (“stops down”) the aperture while you depress it. Provided there is enough light, this function can help you to evaluate your DOF, especially when used together with the zoom function and live view.

#### Exercises:

1. Vary your aperture dramatically while still focused on the same object. Notice how the background and foreground can be rendered in and out of focus and how this brings emphasis to the subject.
2. Fill the frame with your subject using a wide, medium, and long lens. You'll have to step back with each lens change, of course. Notice differences in DOF. Notice, too, how you create subtle changes in the subject and the background.
3. Get as close to a subject as your lens will allow. Use a macro (close-up) lens if you have one. Notice how narrow your DOF is at such close range.