

# Mastering White Balance: Perfecting Colour Accuracy in Your Photos

Achieving natural, true-to-life colours in your images is essential, and **White Balance (WB)** is the key to getting it right. Whether you're shooting indoors, outdoors, or under mixed lighting, understanding how to adjust White Balance ensures your photos look natural and professional.

## What White Balance Actually Does

White Balance corrects the colour cast in your photos caused by different light sources. Each type of light—sunlight, tungsten, fluorescent—has a different colour temperature. White Balance compensates for these variations to ensure whites appear white, and all colours look accurate.

- **Daylight (approx. 5500K)** – Neutral light.
- **Shade (7000K+)** – Adds warmth to counteract cool shadows.
- **Tungsten (3200K)** – Corrects for yellow/orange indoor light.
- **Fluorescent (4000K-5000K)** – Adjusts for greenish artificial lighting.
- **Custom/Manual WB** – Allows setting a precise balance using a white or grey card.

## The Pros of White Balance Control

- **True-to-Life Colours** – Ensures accurate skin tones and natural hues.
- **Creative Flexibility** – Adjusts for mood (warmer for sunset, cooler for winter scenes).
- **Corrects Mixed Lighting** – Helps balance colours when using multiple light sources.
- **Saves Post-Processing Time** – Getting WB right in-camera reduces editing time.

## The Limitations

- **Difficult in Mixed Light** – Different light sources in one scene can confuse auto white balance.
- **Subjective Interpretation** – Some colour preferences are artistic, not purely technical.
- **Auto WB May Struggle** – Auto mode can misinterpret certain lighting situations.
- **RAW Processing Flexibility** – If shooting RAW, WB is easier to correct afterwards.

## How to Use White Balance Wisely

- **Auto WB for Most Situations** – Modern cameras handle daylight and simple scenes well.
- **Custom WB for Consistency** – In controlled shoots, set WB manually for consistent colour.
- **Use Presets for Speed** – Switch to Shade, Tungsten, or Fluorescent when in matching environments.

- **Shoot RAW for Flexibility** – RAW files let you fine-tune WB in post-processing without loss.
- **Use a Grey Card** – For perfect colour, photograph a grey card under the lighting you're using.

## Testing & Hands-On Experiment

To develop confidence with White Balance, try this:

1. **Choose a location** – Indoors with tungsten light, outdoors in shade, and under mixed lighting.
2. **Photograph a white or grey card** – Using Auto WB, Daylight, and Tungsten presets.
3. **Compare results** – Look for colour casts (too warm, too cool, etc.).
4. **Set Custom WB** – Use your camera's Custom White Balance function to set colour based on the grey card.
5. **Review photos** – Compare Auto, Preset, and Custom WB images to see which gives the truest colour.
6. **Shoot in RAW and Adjust** – Practice fine-tuning WB in editing software.

## Camera Manufacturer Symbols Table

Manufacturer	White Balance Symbol	Additional Notes
Canon	WB or White Balance Icon	Found in quick menu and settings
Sony	WB or Kelvin Icon	Adjustable via Fn menu or dedicated button
Nikon	WB or Sun/Tungsten Icon	Accessible via i menu or dedicated button
Fujifilm	WB or Kelvin Symbol	Custom presets are available through the quick menu
Panasonic	WB Icon	Available in quick menu and shooting settings