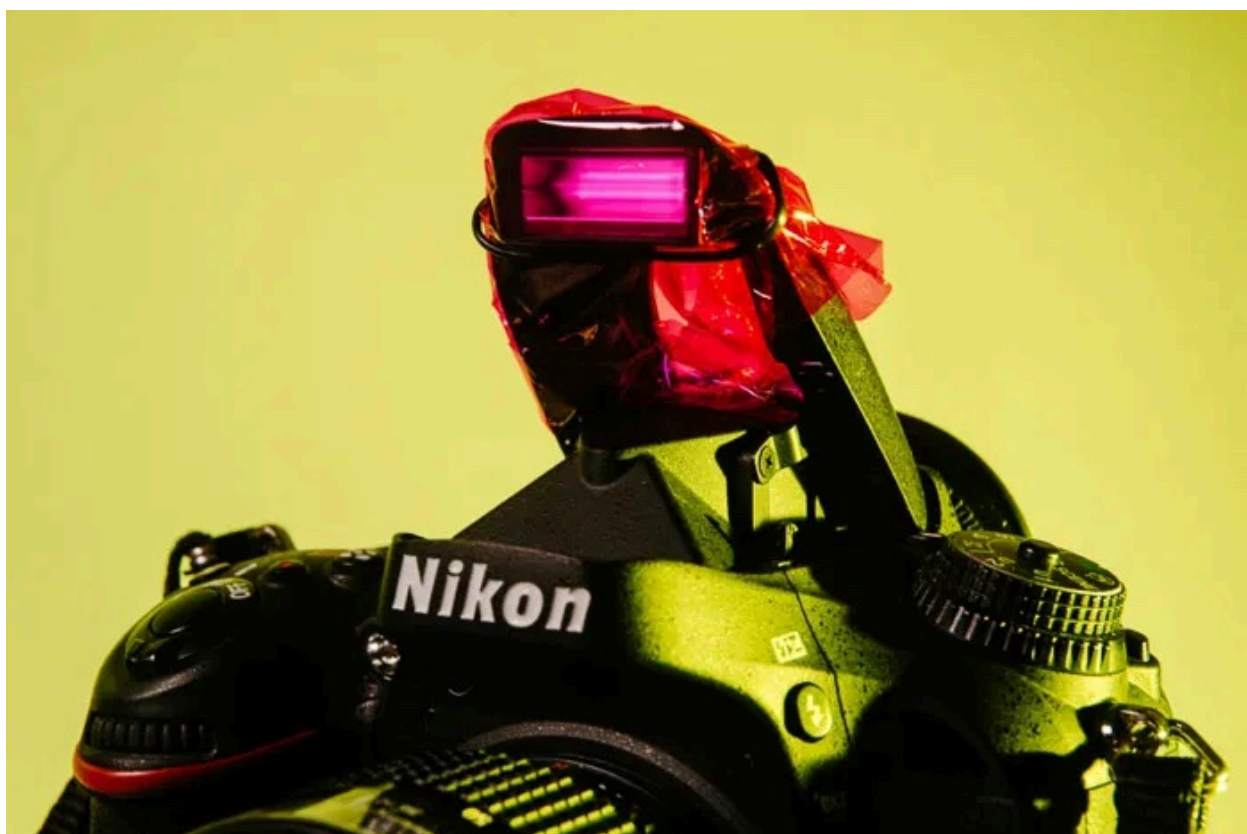


# Mastering Flash Gels: Adding Creative Colour to Your Lighting

Flash gels are thin sheets of coloured material placed over a flash to alter the light's colour temperature or add creative effects. They're essential for balancing flash with ambient light or injecting artistic flair into your photography. Mastering gels gives you a powerful tool to control mood, correct colour, and craft visually striking images.

## What Flash Gels Actually Involve



- Gels correct colour temperature — for example, matching a flash to tungsten lighting.
- Creative gels add vibrant colours for artistic portraits or dramatic effects.
- Typically attached with velcro, clips, or gel holders to the flash head.
- Available in correction sets (CTO, CTB) and creative sets (reds, blues, greens, etc.).

## The Pros of Flash Gels

- Correct white balance when mixing flash and ambient lighting.
- Add mood and atmosphere with coloured light.
- Easy and inexpensive to experiment with.
- Allow greater storytelling control through colour.
- Help separate subjects from backgrounds creatively.

## The Limitations

- Overuse can make images appear unnatural.
- Colour shifts can affect skin tones if not used carefully.
- Cheap gels may melt under strong continuous use.
- Require careful white balance settings for accurate results.
- Setup adds complexity compared to plain flash.

## How to Use Flash Gels Wisely

- Use **CTO gels** to warm up a flash and match indoor lighting.
- Use **CTB gels** to cool the flash for matching blue-toned environments.
- Place gels behind subjects for colourful rim lighting or background effects.
- Start subtle — a light gel wash is often more effective than heavy saturation.
- Balance with in-camera white balance for best skin tone results.

## Testing & Hands-On Experiment

1. Attach an orange CTO gel to your flash.
2. Set your camera to auto white balance (AWB) and take a portrait indoors.
3. Remove the gel and take the same shot again.
4. Compare the colour of skin tones and background light.
5. Repeat using a creative gel (e.g., blue or red) as a background light.
6. Experiment balancing exposure between flash and ambient light.

---

## Camera Manufacturer Symbols Table

Manufacturer	Flash Gel/Colour Correction Options	Additional Notes
Canon	Manual Flash with Gel Accessories	600EX series includes gel holders; manual white balance adjustment.
Sony	Flash settings for colour compensation	Sony flashes like HVL series can pair with gels.
Nikon	Flash white balance presets	Nikon Speedlights often include warming/cooling gels in the kit.
Fujifilm	Manual flash adjustments	Third-party gels commonly used; manual WB setting adjustment.
Panasonic	Colour temperature adjustment via flash menu	Flash units support manual Kelvin settings when using gels.