

# Shutter Effects 101: “How-to” Suggestions for Creative Shutter Use

MCarrow

## Defined / Suggested Exposures

**When considering any shutter image you must first have a few things in place prior:**

1. A tripod or flat surface that your camera can hold steady with out your assistance
2. Consider some of your situations prior – make them something you can control (aka – have good friends that will repeat actions)
3. Shoot multiples of your idea at different settings for blurred motion images and repeat the action for stopped-action images; so you can be sure to get what you need captured on film.

- **Blurred movement of a subject (ex. waterfalls) -**

With the use of a tri-pod, the subject/focal point will appear “ghosted” due to movement within the picture frame over the span of time that the shutter system remains open, while other areas of the image that have not moved remain “solid.” Be sure that the ghosted element of the focal point is noticeable; this may require bracketing or repeated attempts at the same motion to capture just the right effect.

*Suggested shutter speeds to start with: 1/8 or LOWER  
(depends on desired depth of field – F8 or higher)*

- **Stopped movement of a subject (ex. waterfalls) –**

The subject/focal point must have been obviously in motion and stopped completely in mid-action with a clearly considered background. The trick with motion photography is the photographer’s ability to anticipate the scene and watch for mergers in the frame. It may be necessary to shoot multiples of the same action to ensure you have captured the image as you anticipated and in a compositionally interesting way.

*Suggested shutter speeds to start with: 1/250 or HIGHER  
(remember to consider the depth of field of the action as well)*

- **Fireworks -**

With the use of a tri-pod and shutter release cable, set your camera on the longest exposure time, if possible the “B” bulb setting, and focus on “infinity.” When taking images of fireworks it is important to plan for where the action will be and compose your image area using a larger depth of field (F16-F22) to help insure focus. Using the cable release, open the shutter and wait for the fireworks. You can keep the shutter open with multiple bursts of fireworks because the film records the scene only when there is light. Plan on bracketing your times with a watch to ensure a good exposure.

*Suggested shutter speeds: B “bulb”  
(depth of field should remain large – F11 to F22)*

- **Light Patterns -**

Light patterns can come from a number of different subjects, the most obvious being cars, but other examples could be sparklers, carnival rides, flash lights, etc. To capture the path of a light set up a tripod with second or more exposure time – remember that ambient light will factor into how your film exposes. Be sure to consider the depth of field for the image and be prepared to take the same image at a bracketed setting – lengthening the exposure times to make sure you have captured the desired effect on the film.

*Suggested shutter speeds: 1 second or MORE  
(depth of field– F8 to F16 depending on the subject)*