



4 ESSENTIALS TO GET STARTED WITH OFF-CAMERA FLASH



Howdy!

Are you ready to get started?

Since you're reading this, you have probably realized the difference that using flash can make in your business as a photographer- cheers for getting here!

For years, I hid behind the label of being a "Natural Light Photographer."

I would tell people that I didn't have the gear to shoot indoors, and that was partially true, I didn't, but the REASON that I didn't GET the gear was because I didn't know what to get, or how to use it once I got it!

So, I kept turning down sessions, refusing to book weddings or even think about them because all I knew was one thing: I would have to use flash.

If that sounds like you, you're in the right place!

After years of being afraid, I finally took the plunge and dedicated a ton of time, sweat and (literal) tears into learning flash! Once I understood it, I realized that it's not the monster that it's made out to be and in fact, it can become your best friend!

Flash can be so simple to understand, especially once you have the basics of light down, which you likely already do as a photographer!

So first I'm going to tell you the four things that you need to get started, and then a little bit about how to use them so that you can get started down the road of mastering flash!

4 Essentials to get started with Off-Camera Flash

#1
Speedlite(s)
(Flash, Flash Gun,
Flash Unit, Etc.)

#2
30" White Diffusing
Umbrella

#3
Cold Shoe Umbrella
Mount Bracket.

#4
Light Stand



Coffee is optional, but always recommended :)

#1. I suggest researching Speedlites with built in radio transmitters. While you can start learning how to operate and set a speedlight with one unit, you have to have at least one or two additional flashes to use it as "Off Camera Flash." One will be ON your camera acting as a "Master" and at least one will be on a stand acting as a "Slave Flash."

#2. This doesn't have to be fancy, this is just something for one of your "Off Camera" flashes to shine through to soften and diffuse the light that is coming from your flash.

#3. This is what allows your Off-Camera Flash units to connect to your light stand as well as providing a mounting location for your umbrella.

#4. A sturdy light stand to hold up your flash and your umbrella. You can find nice options that are reliable and relatively inexpensive.

A little more information...

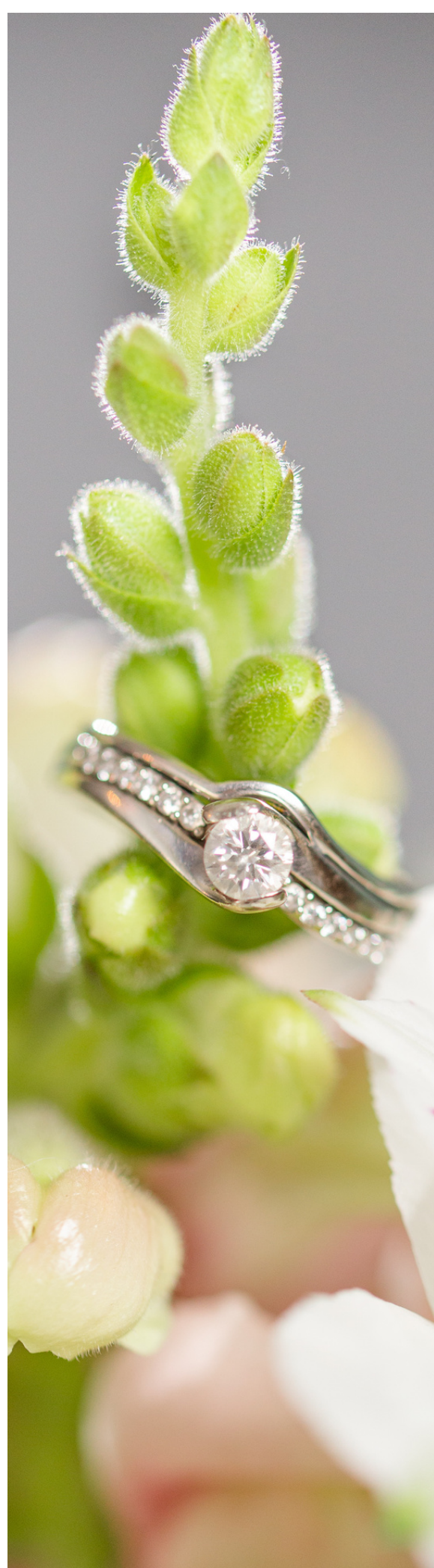
#1. Speedlite(s).

Besides the name brands such as Canon and Nikon, there is another, more affordable brand of speedlites called Yongnuo. This Speedlite brand offers similar models to most name-brand flashes but at a fraction of the price. This would be a good place to start in your research!

I highly recommend looking into flashes with built-in radio transmitters. This means that when you have a Speedlite on your camera and you release the shutter button, the flashes that you have set around the room will communicate with each other automatically. The alternative is speedlites without radio transmitters, with which you have to purchase and set up **external** radio transmitters on each speed light (Such as PocketWizards) to get them to communicate with each other. Many photographers use 3 speedlites, one on their camera to act as the master and two Off-Camera Flashes.

#2. 30" White Diffusing Umbrella

Just like on the previous page, this doesn't have to be anything extraordinary. You will need a white umbrella for the flash to fire THROUGH before it hits your subject. This serves to soften the effect of the flash, spread the light over a larger area, and reduce harsh shadows on your subject. Compare it to the difference of sunlight hitting your subject directly on the face versus having them in open shade with access to the sky. The large area of light coming from the skylights them up evenly and reduces the shadows that the harsh rays of the sun inflict. The flash with diffuser acts as your open shade, lighting your subject evenly.



A little more information...

#3. Cold Shoe Umbrella Mounting Bracket.

A WHAT?

That's what I thought when I first got my flash, my light stands, and was ready to start practicing, and then realized that I needed a bracket to connect them both! The bottom mount on your Speedlight that connects to your camera is called a "Hot Shoe Mount." That's because when you connect it to your camera, you're connecting it to its power source and it is the impulses from the camera that make it fire. When you are using flash OFF of your camera, the connection point for these is called a "Cold Shoe Mount" because you're not connecting them to an active source.

A Cold Shoe Mount Umbrella Bracket screws on top of your light stand and provides the mounting point for your flash, while at the same time providing a mounting location for an umbrella.

You can get Cold Shoe Mounting Brackets without umbrella options, but this is just to save you the pain that I went through of not knowing what in the world I needed to get!

#4. Light Stand.

Again, this is pretty much up to you, as most photography light stands will work as long as you have a Cold Shoe Mount. The main thing to look for is that it is heavy-duty with a good wide base. You will have your flash units standing pretty tall on it sometimes, so you want to make sure that it is not going to wobble or tip over on you, even if someone accidentally kicks it.

I suggest getting an 8' light stand so that you have plenty of extensions to work with in whatever situation you encounter.

I get many questions about where to purchase equipment. A good company that many photographers have had success with is bhphotovideo.com. They offer a wide range of products at reasonable prices.



Some Helpful Info!

I've provided the links to 3 different speedlites with radio transmission. You can compare them and see if one fits your needs! These are very similar units, just different brands.

Just remember that this is a starting place for you, so if there is another tool or accessory that you like more, don't feel the need to stick with these items, this is just to help you get started if you would like to look for gear.

Also, if you find something else that you like more if that you would feel would be beneficial for me to add here, I'd love to hear about it!

Just email me and let me know!

CANON 600 EX-RT

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/847537-REG/Canon_5296B002_Speedlite_600EX.html

YOUNGNUO 600 EX-RTII

<https://yongnuousa.net/products/600ex-rt>

GODOX VING V860ii-N

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1341867-REG/godox_v860ii_f_nikon_kit_v860ii_for_nikon_kit.html?sts=pi&pim=Y

WESTCOTT 8' LIGHT STAND

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/356270-REG/Westcott_9908_Lightweight_Black_Light_Stand.html

WESTCOTT ADJUSTABLE SHOE MOUNT UMBRELLA BRACKET

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/501169-REG/Westcott_5015_Shoe_Mount_for_Mini.html?sts=pi&pim=Y

WHITE TRANSLUCENT UMBRELLA

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/362385-REG/Impact_S3233_White_Translucent_Umbrella_33.html





I hope this helps!

While you can always accumulate more gear, these are the basics that you need for getting started with flash!

Using flash as a photographer is often an intimidating and overwhelming idea, but it doesn't have to be!

As you see here, you only need a few basic things to get started! I suggest starting out small with inexpensive gear and then upgrading as you are able. Don't go all in and get the most expensive stuff, that just adds to the overwhelm.

With a few basic principles and understanding of your flash and how to use it, flash can help you to grow your business and increase your value as a photographer.

Being able to confidently capture beautiful reception images and special lifestyle sessions is within your reach. You don't have to just gamble and hope that something works, with a little bit of time and some practice, you can walk into any type of lighting and deliver images that flow with the rest of your galleries that you are already delivering!

Happy shooting!

To learn more about Off-Camera Flash and how to use these essential tools to be ready to shoot a wedding in UNDER 5 HOURS , check out The Off-Camera Flash Course at chianoconnorphotography.com/course



Meet Chian

Hey there! I know, I know, I have an odd name. It's like Cheyenne, only spelled weird. Ha. I live in northeast Montana (in a VERY rural part of the state) with my husband Denton and two dogs. I am surrounded by boys!

Denton is my second shooter, and together we have photographed weddings from Billings, Montana to Warwick, New York, and places we have yet to go!

I am admittedly a coffee addict and travel junkie! My current list of faves is Venice, and anywhere in Poland. Yes, Poland- have you been there!?!

Since we live in such a rural part of the state, we don't have a lot of high end venues like you see on IG all the time, so I have spent a lot of time learning and implementing techniques to make barns and hotel conference rooms look like high end venues! A key to that is off camera flash, and once I learned it, I am passionate about sharing my techniques and work with you to help you take those kind of pictures, too!

I look forward to seeing you on my website!
Drop me a line and let me know you stopped by!