

## Guide to purchasing a high performance camera.

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So you are ready to purchase a new camera. Your money is all saved and you are ready for the big day. What do you look for?

1. First buy a camera that you like the look and feel of - one that feels right in your hands. But one that is not too heavy, nor too light.
2. Select a camera with a big and bright viewfinder that you can clearly see in all types of light. Most premium DSLRs will qualify just fine. Very few point and shoot cameras meet this basic criteria.
3. Make sure you can quickly and easily set shutter speeds, f-stops, ISO setting, and white balance. The more intuitive these controls are, the more you will enjoy making photos.
4. Look for a camera with electronic stability control. This will allow you to use slower shutter speeds without a tripod.
5. A high maximum ISO can be very important, but make sure the high settings give acceptable results. Just saying that a camera will go to 12,800 ISO doesn't mean that you will get usable pictures at that speed. My experience is that most cameras will give great results when used within one or two ISO settings of the maximum. Of course, don't use a higher sensitivity than you need for the situation.
6. The main settings you need are "Program" and "Manual." "Aperture Priority" and "Shutter Priority" are also very useful. The various "scene" settings such as snow, night, mountains, and so forth, are not necessary and are generally only found on lower priced cameras. The manufacturers assume if you are paying \$1,200, \$1,500, or more for a camera you are probably beyond such fluff.
7. If you are planning to use professional studio flash equipment, you will need to plug it into your camera. A PC contact is the most common method. Oddly, these little sockets are only found on more expensive cameras. Wireless flash triggers are also commonly used.
8. A big bright LCD screen on the back of the camera is important for reviewing your photos to make adjustments. Make sure you can quickly review the last few shots without disturbing any other settings.
9. You will often need to turn off the auto-focus. Look for a switch that is easy to use, not a menu item.
10. Brand names are not particularly important. The big sellers are Canon, Nikon, Olympus, Pentax, Sony, and a few others. The big Japanese companies all make great cameras.