



Florida Society of Goldsmiths
(founded in 1984)



Greater Pensacola Chapter

March 2009

Sorry, I forgot to include Mary K Cargill's e-mail address – mkbanker@aol.com

Here is some relevant information sent in by FSG-GP member, Neomi (abbycinn@cox.net)

Five Simple Steps to Better Product Photography

- 1) Make sure you know how to **focus your camera**. Digital cameras with auto focus are often difficult to use precisely, especially when shooting small objects. Read your owner's manual on auto focus. Most digital cameras have difficulty focusing on small subjects. It is often useful to put your camera in spot focus mode to give you more control over the exact spot of your object you want your camera to focus on.
- 2) **Use a tripod**, even the slightest movement while taking a picture will cause motion blur. The closer you are to an object the more obvious the motion blur becomes. Even an inexpensive tripod will make a big difference in the sharpness of your images.
- 3) To get the largest area of your subject in focus **put your camera in aperture priority mode** and set the aperture to the highest number possible.
- 4) **Use soft lighting**. Your camera's built-in flash will rarely give good results for product photography. For better lighting either shoot outside on an overcast day or use a light tent like the EZcube.
- 5) **Use image-editing software**. Even inexpensive software like Photoshop Elements™ can make your product photography much easier.

Here's additional information on how to edit digital photos using Photoshop sent in by Neomi. She included this note. "Remember, that I am not a photographer or a photo-editing expert. I have learned through much reading and experimentation."

Preparing and Editing Your Digital Photos with Photoshop:

After opening your Photoshop program and selecting your photo, following the next few steps, in order, will help you edit most of your photos with good results. You will see in the upper bar of your photo program, many of the following editing choices: File, Edit, Image, Filter and others. In Adobe Photoshop CS2, another bar directly underneath this top bar is where you find your cropping icon (a an irreg. box with a diagonal line crossing it). **Briefly, the steps to follow in order are:**

1. Level

2. Resolution and Size

3. Crop

4. Resize

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Level is found by clicking Image (in the upper horizontal bar) and then Adjustments. Never do Auto-Level since rarely will it work for you. For those who are not familiar with level...it is something to the tune of brightness/contrast. First, move the farthest small arrow on the right inward toward the left till you reach the spot where the graph begins to change (usually upward). This may be all you will have to do here. Play with the 3 arrows so you become familiar with what changes they make onto your photo.

Resolution and Size is found by clicking Image and then clicking Image Size. Change the resolution from 72 to 300 pixels/inch. Then immediately change the width and height to convert the photo to as close to 4x6 as possible. (This you will fine tune in the fourth step). Most art shows accept and/or request photos that are of this size.

Cropping is done only if necessary to remove outer distractions in your photo. Thus, focusing on the jewelry piece only. So you click the crop icon and drag the box around your photo. It's easy if you've done this before. Otherwise, just a little practice.

Resize needs to be done if you've cropped your photo and now you want to convert it into a 4x6, if possible. Go back to Image, click and then click Image Size. Now change your width to 4" or 6" and your height to 6" or 4'.

After these steps, you may be done if your photo was taken in good lighting and with well-focused. If more tweaking needs to be done go back to Image and click Adjustments again. You can now "play" with the following: Brightness/ Contrast, Curves, Color Balance and Exposure. By the way, if you feel you really, really need to sharpen your photo, click Filter (on the upper horizontal bar) and then click Sharpen. Never use Auto-Click. It almost always overcompensates. I have heard that judges tend to know when the Sharpen tool is used and they do not like this. I don't know how true this is.

Last point, remember to save your newly edited photo as **Save As** (this will now require you rename your photo) and not as Save. Why Save As? This way you will always have your original photo and your newly changed photo.

So now, give it a try! Edit your photos with success. You can do it!



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