

## Small Flash Set-up 1 “Rembrandt”

The basis for the first lighting set-up is what’s called “Rembrandt Lighting”. This is characterised by trying to preserve some triangle like shadows under the nose and eye sockets away from the “key” light. Typically this can be achieved using a single light and a reflector or with two lights with the second light or reflector providing some fill on the shadow side of the face from the key side.

This configuration is normally used to provide images that appear more natural and pleasing owing to the existence of shadows that would normally be cast by a high sun. Thus the key light is positioned to one side above head level, the fill normally at body level. In the configuration demonstrated a third light was used as a hair light, positioned opposite the key-light, high, behind the subject and directed at the hair to provide more pleasing lighting of the hair and further “separation” from the background.



So what were the details to the configuration demonstrated? Three standard camera flash guns/Speedlights/Speedlites were used (Nikon SB-600, Canon equivalent would be the 430ex) in manual mode triggered using cheap eBay “Cactus” radio triggers. This allows all three flashes to have their own manually set power but triggered by a transmitter on the camera.

As a bare flash gun provide a very harsh light that goes everywhere the key and fill lights needed softening, more direction and appear less like a point source of light. To achieve this you can either use a “shoot-through” umbrella (a white translucent umbrella with the flash firing through the fabric towards the subject on the opposite side) or a soft-box (a box with a reflective interior where one end has an opening covered with a white fabric and the flash gun fires into the box the opposite side). Both methods change the point light of a flash gun to a large soft more diffuse source. Umbrellas are great (and cheap) for lighting the whole subject and having plenty of light spilling onto the background. The soft-box provides more control of where the light goes. In our configuration a

26" soft-box was used for the key light, left and above the subject and a 16" soft-box right and at subject level.

For the hair light a different tool was used. Here we wanted far more directionality of the light, i.e. a pool of light to fall on the hair area and nowhere else. Two tools/attachments can be used, a snoot (like putting a narrow tube on the end of the flash to focus the light) or a grid (a honeycomb where smaller channels produce tighter more focused light). In our configuration a 1/8" grid was used, high, right and behind the subject directed at their hair.

So what were settings used? To ensure consistency picture to picture the camera was set to manual exposure mode. As great TTL (Through The Lens) metering is, it can be unpredictable. So without the use of a flash meter I would normally start with the following rule of thumb for this kind of portraiture:

- Camera: ISO200, manual at 1/125s shutter speed, f/8-11 aperture
- Lights: key-light 1m away at 1/4 power, fill light 1m away 1-2 stops less than key and the hair light the same as the fill light.

The final setting used for the flash were as follows:

- Light 1/Key-light: manual, 1/4 power
- Light 2/Fill-light: manual at 1/16 power
- Light 3/Hair-light: manual at 1/16 power

## Small Flash Set-up 2 “Clamshell”

The second lighting set-up demonstrated is called either “Clamshell” or “Up-and-Over” lighting. The lighting set-up is obvious from the names. Here we place two lights high and low in front of the subject (thus encased in a “clamshell”). This form of lighting will light the subject with little or no shadow in features and is commonly used for cosmetic, fashion and glamor photography. So this configuration is great for taking out wrinkles but can appear false (remember the sun analogy used in the Rembrandt configuration). The two lights can either be at the same power or the lower light one or two stops less to provide some texture. The lights can either be fired through umbrellas or soft-boxes. In the configuration demonstrated soft-boxes were used and a third light was again used as a hair light.



The camera settings used were ISO200, manual exposure 1/125s shutter, f10 aperture. The flash power was also reduced given as we now have a pair of lights pooling the light together. So the flashes were configured as follows:

- Light 1/Above: manual at 1/8 power
- Light 2/Below: manual at 1/16 power
- Light 3/Hair-light: manual at 1/32 power