Tips For Using Light Cubes & Tents

Here are a few pointers that will help you to get the best photographs possible with your Square Perfect and Shutter Starz Photo Tents.

General Tips for all Camera Types

1. Be sure to light your subject by placing light(s) on each side of the tent, facing inward, toward the object.
2. Align lights evenly with the subject or with the subject a bit forward of the lights, not behind (this will cause your subject to be too dark) and not too far in front of it (this will cause your subject to wash out and be overexposed).
3. Choose a background color or cloth that will provide the optimal contrast for your subject but will not match or blend too well with any predominant color on your object. For instance, choosing a white background for an object with a significant amount of white may cause those areas to wash out.
4. To achieve a better white balance and a warmer light effect, turn off any external room or studio lighting and use the lights provided.
5. **Do not use a flash.**
6. Avoid placing the lights too close to the tent sides...if you are experiencing hot spots or glare, adjust the lights further away from the tent to compensate. If your subject seems too dark, be sure that your lights are not pointing behind the subject, or move them closer to the tent sides and test. You can also "bounce" light toward the front of the subject by using a white reflector or card positioned at the bottom right or left of the tent opening out of camera range.

Adjusting White Balance

If you are experiencing yellowing or graying of your photo, you may need to adjust your white balance settings.

Note: For best results, you should adjust white balance before each shoot, or more occasionally if you are not taking photos that often.

To do this:

1. Turn on the lights for your photo tent and place a piece of white poster board or a sheet of white paper into the spot where your subject will sit (upright).
2. Next, take a photo of this board or sheet, making sure that the lens/frame is filled completely with this white.
3. Consult your particular camera settings/menu to find the custom white balance settings that will apply, then select the photo you have just taken as the new white sample/setting. We recommend trying numerous settings with a test object to determine which "solution" yields the best results.

Tips for Point & Shoot Cameras

1. Place your camera on a tripod for better stability and set your camera to a 2 second delay to avoid movement/blur.
2. Most point and shoot cameras' white balance can safely be set to the "Daylight" setting when using full spectrum bulbs. NOTE: You may still need to adjust the white balance as shown above.
3. Choose Aperture Priority mode, f-stop set to f/5.6-f/11.
4. Set ISO sensitivity to manual. Use the lowest possible setting (80-120).
5. In general, place camera approximately 24" away from your subject. Use the zoom feature on your camera to frame your photos.
6. If the above settings result in dark or underexposed pictures, adjust the F-Stop below 5.6 and/or increase the ISO sensitivity to a higher value.

Tips for D/SLR (single-lens reflex) Cameras

1. In general, place camera approximately 24" away from your subject. Place your camera on a tripod for best stability and set your camera to a 2 second delay to avoid movement or use a remote trigger.
2. Set your white balance to approximately 3000-5400k depending on your light bulbs, but you may still need to adjust the white balance as shown above.
3. Save in large jpeg format for better manipulation and adjustment later and use extra sharpness to improve quality.
4. Focal length: 50mm
5. Use Manual Exposure mode, f-stop set to f/16, 1/60th of a second.
6. Set Auto ISO to off and then set ISO 120.

Please Note: These are general settings and tips...since cameras and settings vary greatly, experiment with your equipment until you find the optimum settings for your subjects, camera and environment. Happy shooting!

5