

# Let it SHINE

Product Techniques

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What are the best techniques for doing product photography on white backgrounds? What can I do to speed it up?

## Light Tents

In product photography, small items and jewelry are often placed inside light tents, which are white translucent boxes that come in all sizes and shapes. These light tents are often placed outside in sunlight, or evenly lit from all sides indoors. The light enters the tent through the translucent surfaces of the

box all soft and diffused, illuminating all shadows within the set. The objects are then placed inside the box, and the camera lens is fitted through a small opening on one of the box's sides to take the shot. Light tents also do come in large sizes if you're looking to shoot some larger products.



When shooting products inside light tents, your photos are likely to come out a bit under-exposed. The reason why is that all that white within your scene *from the light tent sides* is going to cause your light meter to think the scene is brighter than it actually is. In turn, the camera is going to close down for the shot, and that's going to show in the background of your capture which is not going to be really white.

To overcome this issue, check your histogram to determine how much your shot is being under-exposed by. Since you need the background to be pure white, the histogram needs to be just touching the right-most hand-side of the scale representing the brightest parts of your scene.

Once you determine how many stops you're missing, you mainly have two options to make up for that:

- If you're shooting in manual mode, just ride up your camera settings up by the specified number of stops.
- If you're shooting in shutter priority or aperture priority modes, you can use exposure compensation to over-expose your shots by the needed amount.

## White Seamless Backdrops

A white seamless backdrop or background is another great way to shoot amazing product photography on the cheap. You can basically use anything from special photography foam boards, to white cardboards, white sheets or anything else you have lying around.

Once you got your perfect white background, all you need to do is tape it up to a wall or clamp it in place in a way that it's left hanging from the top all the way to the ground *or to the table top if you're placing your products on a table*. There should be a subtle curve at the corner where your vertical and horizontal surfaces meet so that it curves away from your shooting side upwards, making sure there's no seam.

Once you have that in place, position your desired product to shoot in place on your white background, and then take a few shots. Check out your LCD screen to make sure your subject is positioned perfectly in place, and that your frame doesn't fall outside the boundaries of your white background so that everything is nice and clean.

Your camera might also tend to under-expose for your scene because of all that white going on in the background, so make sure you check your histogram to ensure the best results. In the case of under-exposure, follow the steps mentioned above to compensate and fix the problem.