INDOOR LIGHTING

Generally speaking, our homes are not quite as bright as the outdoors, so when the photographer moves indoors, ISO is a good way to deal with the lesser amounts of light. ISO settings increase the speed, or sensitivity, of the chip to light. The higher the ISO, the more light sensitive the chip—or, to be more accurate, the camera uses ISO algorithms to increase the sensitivity. This allows us to photograph in darker environments at higher shutter speeds. ISO 100 will not work, for example, if you're trying to photograph an indoor sporting event and capture frozen action. The beauty of digital is that we can specify exactly on which frames we want to use an increased ISO.

The downside of increasing ISO is that the image becomes more "noisy," which is similar to the image grain you got when you pushed film speed up to higher settings. The ISO setting is dependent on the amount of light, not the quality. Photographers often use a higher ISO setting to create an ethereal look or ambience, which is a result of that speed increase.

The following situations may require a boost in the ISO:

- **Indoor sports photography** When photographing inside a gym, increase the ISO to 1600 or 3200. This will often provide a high enough shutter speed to freeze the action. Try combining this with flash fill, so the environment of the arena is included—not just a flash-lit subject rising out of a sea of black. Take an exposure reading of something in the gym that is a midtone or gray, use this to establish the manual exposure, and turn the strobe to a TTL setting. The strobe, along with the higher shutter speed, will help freeze the action.
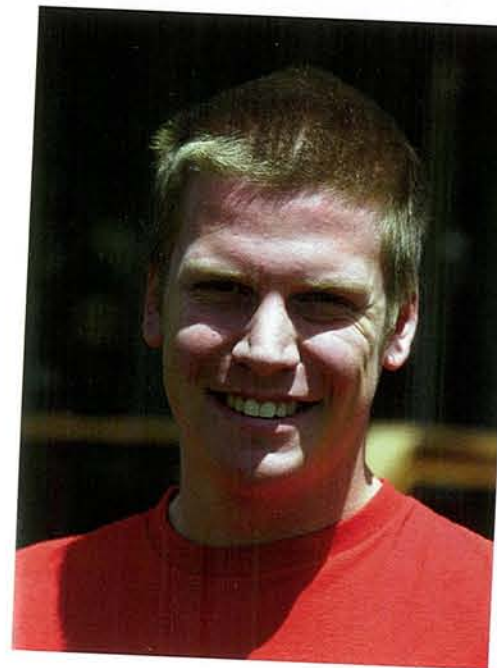
- **Indoor events** Increase the ISO setting at birthday parties or other indoor events where you would prefer to photograph without a flash.

- **Special effects** There are times when the photographer may want the increased noise in a higher ISO image to impart a special look or feeling to the photo.


Too often, the photographer shoots moments like this with a direct flash, eliminating all warmth in the photo. Here, I increased the ISO to 800 and exposed the photo for the candlelight on the face. 85mm lens, 1/30 second at f2

UNDERSTANDING FRONTLIGHT, SIDELIGHT, AND BACKLIGHT

An understanding of the three basic types of lighting is essential if you intend on taking control in the lighting process.

Frontlight, as described in this chapter, is the light coming from behind the photographer and striking the subject. Depending on the time of day, using the sun as your main lighting source can be harsh (if shot around midday) or beautiful and soft (if using late afternoon light).

A fatal flaw many aspiring photographers make is trying to shoot a nice portrait in midday sun. The light is too harsh and creates hard and unappealing shadows, and the light has no warmth to it.
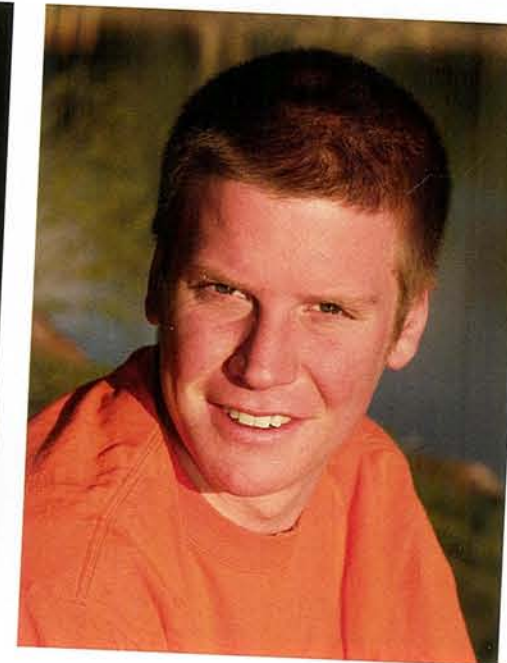
The late afternoon light can be the only light source the photographer needs. Turning the subject ever so slightly from the light falling directly upon his face can provide enough shadowing to help create depth in the portrait.

Sidelight can come from an artificial light source such as a lamp or flash, or it can come from the sun. Using sidelight effectively can add depth to the photo by turning the subject into or away from the light to control the amount of light striking the face. I shot this photo with full sidelight as well as light from a three-quarter angle.

Using artificial lighting, such as a flash in a "soft box" (which emulates late daylight—beautiful light—from a source the size of a window), by placing the unit immediately behind the camera, I created a very flat light that strikes the subject's face equally from the camera's angle.

If you move the light box off to the right of the side of the subject, you create a sidelit photo. By itself, this light is not terribly appealing.

Using the soft box from the side lighting position and using a reflector to fill the harshly shadowed area, you can create a very nicely lit portrait. The beauty of this system is that

Here, the soft box was moved to the right of the subject, making a strong shadow across the face. I find this lighting unflattering due to its harshness.

only one light is required; the backlight can be created by the sun or the ambient light. In this portrait, I used a general manual exposure for the wall in the background, thereby making it a part of the composition.

You can use the ambient available light as your backlighting and the reflector fill light as your *key light* (the main light source, be it sun, flash, or a table lamp—whatever creates the main light on the subject). This method provides a multi-light setup with no lights and just a reflector. But the results look like a photo shot under very controlled lighting conditions.

Now you see why many photographers carry a reflector with them. Adding, controlling, or changing light gives the photographer more options when photographing people.

The power of light is the essence of photography, and photography is what we do and what we love. The mind thinks in terms of images, and those images are awash with light or they wouldn't exist. Our jobs, as photographers, is to use that light, studying it ever so carefully and painting with it in our viewfinder. Watch the light. See how it moves across the land, how it paints and illuminates and creates our reality.

Keeping lighting to a minimum can often produce great results. A main light source, an exposure for the ambient light, and a reflector to fill the shadowed area create a nicely lit photo.