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[Weekend Project: How to Clean Your Camera](#)

[Weekly Photo Challenge](#)

By [Stephanie Simpson](#) | Posted on [August 8, 2008](#)



Congratulations to this week's photo challenge winner,

[Heaven's Gate \(John\)](#) for this winning, untitled photo.

Check out [this week's photo challenge](#), and keep the

great submissions coming!



I just came back from a mountain vacation and boy is my camera dirty! I took a ton of pictures, and brought my camera everywhere I went. Like my car after this road trip, my camera needs some serious cleaning.



Here are the tools I need:

- A bulb blower

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Year in Pictures

- micro fiber cleaning cloth
- 2 or 3 soft & clean cloths or washcloths
- Q-tips
- Dish of water

Work on the Bag

The first thing I'll do is to empty my whole camera bag and organize. I jammed everything in there at the end of the trip and nothing is where it's supposed to be, so a quick re-org is definitely in order.



Next, I've got to clean the bag. It's no good cleaning my camera if my camera bag is dirty! There's a ton of dust in there, which will eventually find its way into my camera's sensor or on my lenses if I don't clean it out. I'll use one of the clean washcloths to wipe out the bag, attacking spots and grimy spots with a little water.

Blow Out the Camera

Before I work on the lenses, I want to blow out the inside of the camera. I'm not going to clean the sensor as my images seem free of spots, but it's a good idea to blow out the camera using my bulb blower. Often, this simple step will prevent you from having to clean your sensor if you find you've got



sensor dirt.



To properly blow out your camera, first turn the camera off, then remove your lens and turn your camera to face the floor. Squeeze the blower a few times into the camera body, and any dust and particles will hopefully fall to the floor.

You must never use compressed air to blow out your camera because the chemicals can damage the sensor, and it's much too strong. A gentle bulb blower works just fine. I recommend this cool-looking rocket blower, but make sure to keep it away from the kids or you'll never see it again. (I've rescued my twice now from the clutches of my resident space explorer.)

Clean the Lenses

I've capped off the camera with the body cap so the inside of the camera will remain clean as I work on the lenses.



To clean my lenses, I will need my rocket blower, a clean micro fiber cloth and a dry washcloth. It's really important that you keep your micro fiber cloth in a separate case, because if dust gets on the cloth, you might end up grinding the dust into your lens. After blowing off the surface of the front and rear glass elements of the lens to get rid of dust or

other particles, I will gently clean the glass with my micro fiber cloth.

You can find these cloths at camera stores or anywhere they sell sunglasses.

Don't forget to clean the lens caps, because they are the worst collectors of dust!



I have UV filters that live on my lenses. Now is a good time to remove them and clean both sides before putting them back on the sparkly-clean lenses.

Lenses are covered with special coatings that are easily scratched or damaged. Never use your shirt, or tissues, or paper towels to clean your lenses. You can use lens cleaner or a tiny bit of water if your lenses are particularly grimy or have spots on them. Be careful not to use too much liquid. Lens cleaning papers are fine to use, but are not as effective as a micro fiber cloth.

Be careful to avoid touching lens glass and filters with your fingers, as the oil on your hands can break down the special coatings over time.

Work on the Camera Body

Oh boy is my camera body dusty! There is only so much my



bulb blower can do to get rid of dust, so after I blow out the nooks and crannies, I'm going to have to get serious. A quick pass with a clean washcloth will help the big areas, but I'll need some Q-tips for the areas around the viewfinder, flash,



buttons, and switches. I may have to lightly dampen the Q-tip to get some of the dust. If it's too wet, moisture can seep into the camera.

Tackle the Accessories

Finally, I'm going to attack the accessories. This means all my filters, my flash, cables and other do-dads. I'll clean my filters like I did my lenses. The rest of stuff can be cleaned with a dry washcloth.

Aaahhh, finally done. Now I can put everything back into the bag. I forgot that I have a sunset grad filter! I'll have to put that to work soon. I also seem to have misplaced a lens cap that I'll have to hunt down.

So sparkly. So clean. So ready to use another day.

<<added>> I'm so glad I closed the top to my camera bag because about 5 minutes after I finished cleaning the camera, my daughter accidentally dumped a full glass of water onto herself and onto the camera bag. That would have been a serious pain!

About Stephanie Simpson

Stephanie Simpson is a Los Angeles-area family and child photographer, specializing in happy shots and fun colors.

She also teaches Cinematography and The Business of Film and Television at Azusa Pacific University. Visit her

website at: www.ispeakfilm.com

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This:

Responses and Conversations

Great step by step information about camera care. I should get some microfiber cloths for my new camera 😊

Comment by [Dominique](#) on [August 8th, 2008 at 6:52 am](#)

This is so helpful, Steph! Thanks for the run down on how to do this so easily.

Comment by [Amy Frazier](#) on [August 10th, 2008 at 12:13 am](#)

Good article on an often overlooked subject, nicely done Stephanie!

Comment by [JimmyD](#) on [August 19th, 2008 at 6:22 am](#) .

I was searching for a nice blog to clean my newly bought camera !!!

Thanks Stephanie !!!

Comment by [prathyushkeeriyatt](#) on [September 3rd, 2008 at 12:01 pm](#) .

[...] from a lens. They are anti-static, non-scratcing and will not streak or smear the surface. Digital Photography Blogs

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[September 9th, 2008 at 5:00 pm](#)

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[September 10th, 2008 at 10:10 am](#)

Thank you! I got the inside of my mom's camera dirty yesterday and haven't told her (bad boy!). I am glad to hear it's that simple to clean. Again, thank you! 😊

Comment by Justis Ketcham on [January 7th, 2009 at 2:24 am](#)

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