

Tips for Photo Panning

Compiled by Bob Spalding



Panning photography is a technique in photography that **uses a slow shutter speed while moving your camera along to create motion blur in the background**. With the right technique, you can create a relatively sharp subject combined with a background that features motion blur for a stunning photograph.



Set your camera to Shutter Priority mode.

This lets you select the **shutter speed** while your camera chooses the **aperture**. (If you like, you can also force your camera to choose the **ISO**.)

You see, panning photography is all about the correct choice of shutter speed – the aperture and ISO values don't play a major role. So while it's important to choose the shutter speed yourself, the rest can be done by your camera.



Choose a slow shutter speed

The panning effect depends **heavily** on the shutter speed. Too fast, and you'll end up with a tack-sharp image and zero blur effect. Too slow, and you'll end up with a smudgy, blurry subject.

So to keep your subject sharp and the background blurry, you've got to choose your shutter speed carefully.



For perfect panning photos, the ideal shutter speed is anything between 1/30s and 1/125s. Unfortunately, there's no one-size-fits-all shutter speed, because the faster the subject is moving, the faster the shutter speed needs to be. To get a beautiful panning effect on a racecar, you may want a speed of 1/125s; to get the same effect on a runner, 1/30s is a better idea.



Move along with the subject

If you want to create beautiful panning photography, you *must* move your camera in line with the subject. After all, the whole idea is to shoot a photo of a moving subject while panning your camera along with it.

One note: The speed at which you are panning your camera should match the speed at which the subject is passing through the scene. Start following the subject

when it's off in the distance, follow it as it passes you, and continue to follow even once it's gone by (you should follow through, like in sports).

And press the shutter release button only when the subject is parallel to your camera. That way, your subject remains in focus, while you get perfect motion blur in the background.



Position yourself correctly

To give your lens enough space to focus, keep some distance between your camera and the moving subject.