

Camera Sensor Cleaning

As a DSLR Owner, You Will Be Doing Some Cleaning!*

Unless you never change lenses on your DSLR the possibility of dust entering the camera body and adhering to the image sensor is very high. This will reduce image quality, and make it necessary to clean the sensor. Alternatively, you will spend more time than necessary in Photoshop to clone out the dust spots. Two principal techniques exist for cleaning camera sensors. The *Wet Method* and the *Dry Method* (there is also the *No Method*, but no use covering that!) Some people prefer to clean the sensor themselves and some send the camera in for a factory cleaning (\$\$\$).

The Wet Method.

The Wet Method involves cleaning with special solvents and specialty sensor “wands.” I use the Sensor Swab and Eclipse solution manufactured by **Photographic Solutions** (www.PhotoSol.com).

The Dry Method

While the Wet Method is my sensor cleaning method of choice, I have also engaged in the Dry Method. This basically consists of the use of forced air, followed by an anti-static brush or a tacky material applied to the sensor to transfer dust present on the sensor. DO NOT use compressed air as it may damage the sensor and other delicate camera parts, as well as introduce other impurities onto the sensor. There is an excellent bulb

that works for me: **The Giotto Large Rocket Blaster** (find it at Amazon.com). The widely recommended anti-static brush is the **Arctic Butterfly SL700** by *VisibleDust.com*. The dry-transfer method involves the use of a wand with a sticky silicone applicator touched to the sensor. This is called **Dust-Aid Platinum** and made by *DustAid.com*.

All of these items can be ordered directly from the manufacturers or from *Amazon.com*. Check all for pricing comparison. Be sure to get the correct materials for your camera model! Consult the Web sites. Finally, be sure to follow all directions carefully!

Testing for Dust

- Set lens to small aperture
- Photograph a light-colored wall or clear sky
- Load into *Photoshop*
- Enhance with Levels

Caveats!

- Consult your camera manual
- Check camera manufacturer website
- Order the correct material for your model
- Check vendor websites for tutorials
- Use fresh batteries or AC adapter
- Use good lighting
- FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS!**
- Work in a dust-free environment
- Minimize sensor exposure to the environment
- TAKE YOUR TIME!**

* The risk associated with cleaning the sensor yourself is not trivial. You can permanently scratch or otherwise damage your camera's sensor, resulting in an expensive visit to the repair shop.