



## HOW DO I TAKE A BEAUTIFUL PHOTO OF SPACE?

**Video transcript: Unlocking the power of a computer**

*LJ RICH:*

Compact cameras and DSLRs are great for taking pictures of the stars and Moon, but you can actually get some truly astonishing results, even without a proper camera, by using a PC and a simple webcam.

*MARK THOMPSON:*

One of the problems with taking pictures from the Earth is that we're looking through the atmosphere, which makes the picture jump around quite a lot.

Now webcams allow you to take video footage so we can take all the individual frames of that video, add them all together with free software and come up with a really wonderfully sharp picture.

*LJ RICH:*

Brilliant – well free software, that sounds like something I could easily get my head around. Let's see if I can get this to work.

I'm using some video of Jupiter, which Mark recorded earlier with a webcam attached to a telescope.

I'm just going to open up that file. So I've got a picture, it says frame one. First up, I've got three things here – align, stack, wavelet. I'm going to press the button with the green light underneath it.

The software takes the individual frames from the video and combines them to make a much clearer overall image.

And now it's aligning all of those pictures.

*MARK THOMPSON:*

So you can see the progress.

*LJ RICH:*

The results are pretty impressive.

It's amazing how simple technology, like a webcam and some software, can get you such detailed pictures of planets from pictures you take in your back garden.

*MARK THOMPSON:*

Absolutely – it's combining technology with telescopes that is really the key to making wonderful astronomical pictures.

*LJ RICH:*

So actually it's not just the preserve of NASA or Jodrell Bank. By combining a few simple pieces of technology we can all take some remarkable pictures of the night sky.

*All images by Damian Peach*