



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

Video transcript: Getting started with a camera

- *Image of the Moon by Anthony Kenworthy*
- *Image of the Whirlpool Galaxy M51 by Doug German*

*LJ RICH:*

It's a familiar situation. There you are on a beautiful clear night and there are millions of stars.

- *Image of a starry sky by Corinne Mills*

If only there was some way of recording that forever.

- *Image of the Moon and Venus in conjunction by Adrian Jannetta*
- *Image of a starry sky by Brendan Alexander*
- *Image of star trails by Jack Archer*

*MARK THOMPSON:*

As an astronomer I know how to take beautiful pictures of the night sky. But I know also how it can seem a little out of reach to the backyard stargazer.

*LJ RICH:*

Hello.

*MARK THOMPSON:*

Hi LJ, how are you doing?

*LJ RICH:*

Good thanks. How are you?

MARK THOMPSON:

Good thank you.

LJ RICH:

So Mark, I've taken a few shots with this compact camera. To be honest the results aren't that great. So I'm hoping you'll be able to help.

MARK THOMPSON:

Well you've got to get the basics right. So we need a dark sky and we need it to be clear. Thankfully we've got both of these. But something else you're going to need is one of these – it's a tripod. You can get them for around £10 and they hold the camera really steady, so with something like that you can start to get some wonderful pictures.

- *Images of the Moon by Jeremy Jordan, Philip Ray and Samantha Bloomfield*

So with objects like the Moon, which are quite bright, you can actually just stick the camera on a tripod and point and click. It's as simple as that. You can even add it a bit of foreground to make it look quite dramatic.

LJ RICH:

Well this is a compact camera and like a lot of compacts it's got manual settings. So in order to take a decent shot of the Moon, how can I make best use of these settings?

MARK THOMPSON:

There are three settings you need to worry about. There's the aperture, which is the size of the hole that lets the light through. For the Moon, you can open that up quite wide to let in as much light as possible.

There's the exposure, which is how long the sensor is exposed to the light. For the Moon, that maybe needs to be about 250<sup>th</sup> of a second, so still quite fast by astronomical terms.

And there's the ISO setting which is film speed, so that's the sensitivity of the camera. And that probably needs to be set to about 400.

So shall we give it a try?

LJ RICH:

Why not? OK.

So we've seen the compact camera and I know that this is a DSLR camera. It's not as expensive as it used to be, so more and more of us have them. How can we take advantage of one of these beauties?

*MARK THOMPSON:*

Well these use pretty much the same principles but the real beauty of this camera is that you can use different lenses. You can get a much closer image of the object like the Moon that you're trying to take a picture of, and that makes the whole difference.

*LJ RICH:*

OK, so I'm going to set the exposure – I'm going to turn the dial on the top. And now I'm going to select the aperture, or F-stop, so let's put it around 4. Then the ISO, that's the sensitivity, let's set that to 400. There we go, that looks good.

*MARK THOMPSON:*

Give it a try. Give it a whirl!

*LJ RICH:*

So now I'm just going to put my eye up to the viewfinder.

Well that shot of the Moon was quite a lot better than my first picture. Thank you!

*MARK THOMPSON:*

It was – it was brilliant. Now DSLRs are great for the Moon and the constellations, but if you use a telescope you can get some really mind blowing stuff. Shall we give it a try?

*LJ RICH:*

Absolutely.

*Contributor images courtesy of the BBC Stargazing LIVE and The Sky At Night Flickr group:*  
<http://www.flickr.com/groups/bbcskyatnight>