

Softbox

- A large box made of rods and reflective material that attached to a flash head to provide a direct but very soft, diffuse light—usually through a white cloth diffuser.
- Should ideally be at least 1 metre square or in diameter (if octagonal).
- Softbox does not have to be centred on face—can be moved sideways in plane.
- Usually with a white diffuser.

Beauty Dish

- A light dish about 2ft in diameter to provide a bright and harder light than a softbox.
- Can be white or silver internally.
- Produces very flattering portraits—harder to see wrinkles and flaws because very little shadow. Used with Hollywood Lighting, also known as Butterfly Lighting (because shape of shadow from model's nose looks like a butterfly in flight).
- Not really suitable for male models—adversely highlights ears.

Infinity Cove

- Currently fashionable to have a large white backdrop, usually white washable vinyl suspended on tube between two metal poles, 2.75m wide by 6m long. Can be white muslin or white paper but both get dirty when walked on.
- It drops vertically to floor and then extends across floor so you cannot see join between vertical and horizontal. Edges are taped to floor to avoid trip hazard and to keep curve at bottom of drop.
- You get reflection off white glossy background so do not overlight models.
- You should overlight background by one f-stop (i.e. f16) to give nice silhouette of model with soft edges, without burning out hair in reflected glow from backdrop. Typically two lights illuminate backdrop, one from each side and about 4ft high, with barn doors fitted. Lights are aimed off centre on backdrop to avoid hot spot.
- Usually two front lights—large rectangular softbox to one side and set to f11, raised above height of model's head; and a fill light at front shooting through white umbrella, set at f8, at 6.5 ft above floor and angled down to light white floor.

(Notes taken during RPS course in studio lighting, run by Chris Burfoot at Lacock).

Studio Flash Lighting — ACC Practical Session

The Basics—Camera Settings

To work with the studio flash lights you will need to set your camera as follows:

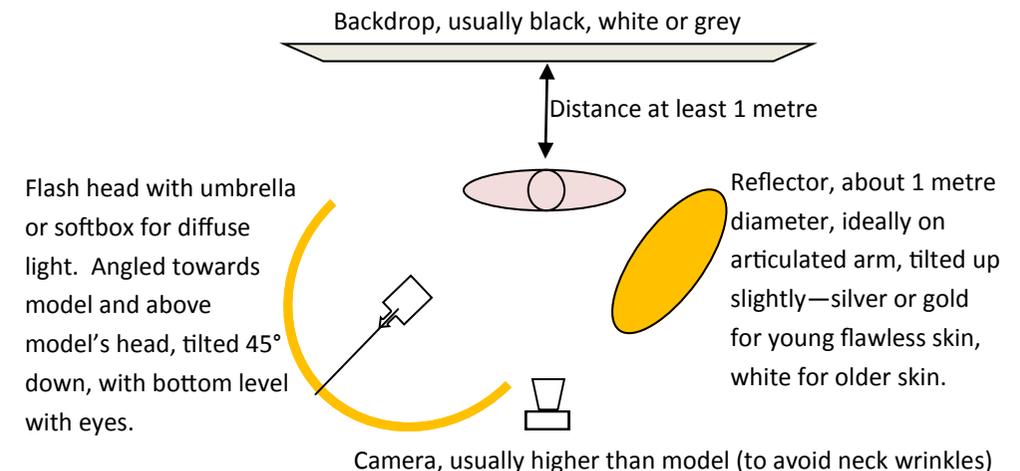
- Set the camera to **Manual ('M')**;
- Choose **ISO200** for best balance between light sensitivity and avoiding 'noise';
- Set aperture to **f11** for depth of field so all of model is in focus but background blurred;
- Set shutter speed to **1/125 sec**, to synchronise with lights;
- If your camera has a 'hot shoe' that can take the wireless trigger, turn off the camera's in-built flash—otherwise leave the flash on.

Standard Set-up—'Rembrandt Lighting'

- Name refers to lighting seen in many of Rembrandt's paintings, probably from studio skylight.
- Shadow of nose leaves white triangular highlight below model's eye.
- Shadow of nose should not cross model's lips (else light is too high).
- There should be only one nose shadow.
- Bottom of light umbrella or softbox should be about level with top of model's head (for white 'catchlights' in eyes).



Easy One-Light Set-Up



Metering

- Use a flash meter.
- Hold against model (near forehead) pointing towards light source and trigger flash.
- Adjust light output with arrow buttons until meter reads f11. With digital lights:
 - One big press of arrow (up or down) = 1 f-stop, e.g. from f8 to f11.
 - One small press = 1/10 of an f-stop.

Snoot

- Snoot is a cone-shaped attachment on flash head to produce very narrow, focused beam of light—usually to highlight hair from behind model.
- Put very high on lighting stand, and angle down onto hair—from same side as main light (which may also be called ‘keylight’ or ‘accent light’).
- Do NOT leave modelling light turned on with snoot fitted or can get very hot—watch fingers!
- When metering light from snoot, turn off main light and hold meter where light hits model’s hair. Adjust until meter reads f11.

Reflector

- Ensures one side of model’s face is not in darkness, without needing extra lights.
- Use white for men, or for old, wrinkly or ‘bad’ skin.
- Use silver or gold for a sparkle on good skin; gold gives a tanned glow.
- Distance from model should be quite close—less than 1 metre. Adjust using modelling lights until light falls correctly.
- Do not adjust light power from flash head for reflectors (because they are not a light source).

Backdrops

- White backdrops will look grey in photo unless lit. by a flash head.
- Backdrops can be lit using honeycomb grids on a reflector attached to flash head, to get bright area behind model. Can angle honeycomb down from one side to get ‘gradient fill’ effect.
- Meter the light on backdrop at edge of beam and adjust power to get f11 here.

Posing the Model

- Model usually looks directly at camera.
- Angle model’s body towards or away from main light. (DO NOT TOUCH MODEL).
- Angling female model away from light is more flattering—cleavage etc.
- Can shoot level with, above or below model’s face—but above is more flattering to chin and neck. (‘Turkey neck’ pose reduces double chins and neck wrinkles).
- Shoot in colour and RAW if possible. Can always change to mono later.
- Take shot with grey or colour balance card if possible to help white balance or colour adjustment in Photoshop or Lightroom later.

Flash head controls

- Beep shows that light has recharged. (Can turn beep off if annoying but best left on).
- Can adjust power output (usually up/down arrow buttons).
- Can test flash. (This is a quick way of discharging lights when you turn the power down).
- Can turn model lights on or off. (Important when using a snoot to avoid overheating).
- Can set to fire using cable from camera, or wireless trigger, or if another flash triggers. (Wireless best if you don’t want lights to be triggered by other people’s flashguns, at weddings etc).

Beauty/Glamour Shots—‘Hollywood’ Lighting

