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Julie Adair King

Author of Digital Photography For Dummies



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by Julie Adair King



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About the Author

Julie Adair King is the author of many books about digital photography and imaging, including the best-selling *Digital Photography For Dummies*. Her most recent titles include a series of *For Dummies* guides to popular Nikon, Canon, and Olympus cameras. Other works include *Digital Photography Before & After Makeovers*, *Digital Photo Projects For Dummies*, *Julie King's Everyday Photoshop For Photographers*, *Julie King's Everyday Photoshop Elements*, and *Shoot Like a Pro!: Digital Photography Techniques*. When not writing, King teaches digital photography at such locations as the Palm Beach Photographic Centre.

An Ohio native and graduate of Purdue University, she now resides in West Palm Beach, Florida, and does not miss Midwestern winters even a little bit (although she very much misses friends who have not yet made the journey south).

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Contents at a Glance

| | |
|---|------------|
| <i>Introduction</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps.....</i> | <i>5</i> |
| Chapter 1: Getting the Lay of the Land | 7 |
| Chapter 2: Choosing Basic Picture Settings | 47 |
| Chapter 3: Taking Great Pictures, Automatically | 77 |
| Chapter 4: Exploring Live View Photography and Movie Making | 97 |
| <i>Part II: Working with Picture Files.....</i> | <i>135</i> |
| Chapter 5: Playback Mode: Viewing, Erasing, and Protecting Photos | 137 |
| Chapter 6: Downloading, Printing, and Sharing Your Photos | 171 |
| <i>Part III: Taking Creative Control.....</i> | <i>211</i> |
| Chapter 7: Getting Creative with Exposure..... | 213 |
| Chapter 8: Manipulating Focus and Color | 259 |
| Chapter 9: Putting It All Together..... | 299 |
| <i>Part IV: The Part of Tens</i> | <i>317</i> |
| Chapter 10: Ten Fun and Practical Retouch Menu Features | 319 |
| Chapter 11: Ten Special-Purpose Features to Explore on a Rainy Day..... | 341 |
| <i>Index</i> | <i>365</i> |

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

| | |
|---|---|
| A Quick Look at What's Ahead | 1 |
| Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps..... | 1 |
| Part II: Working with Picture Files | 2 |
| Part III: Taking Creative Control..... | 2 |
| Part IV: The Part of Tens..... | 2 |
| Icons and Other Stuff to Note | 2 |
| eCheat Sheet..... | 3 |
| Practice, Be Patient, and Have Fun!..... | 4 |

Part 1: Fast Track to Super Snaps..... 5

Chapter 1: Getting the Lay of the Land 7

| | |
|---|----|
| Getting Comfortable with Your Lens | 8 |
| Attaching a lens..... | 8 |
| Removing a lens | 10 |
| Setting the focus mode (auto or manual) | 10 |
| Zooming in and out..... | 12 |
| Using a VR (Vibration Reduction) lens | 12 |
| Adjusting the Viewfinder Focus..... | 13 |
| Working with Memory Cards | 15 |
| Exploring External Camera Controls..... | 18 |
| Topside controls | 18 |
| Back-of-the-body controls..... | 20 |
| Front-left buttons..... | 23 |
| Front-right features..... | 24 |
| Hidden connections..... | 24 |
| Ordering from Camera Menus | 25 |
| Using the guided menus..... | 26 |
| Ordering off the main menus..... | 31 |
| Monitoring Shooting Settings..... | 33 |
| Changing Settings Using the Information Display | 35 |
| Displaying Help Screens | 36 |
| Customizing Your Camera: Setup Menu Options | 37 |
| Restoring Default Settings | 44 |

Chapter 2: Choosing Basic Picture Settings 47

| | |
|--|----|
| Choosing an Exposure Mode | 48 |
| Choosing the Release Mode | 50 |
| Single Frame and Quiet Shutter Release modes | 52 |
| Continuous (burst mode) shooting..... | 52 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Self-timer shooting..... | 54 |
| Wireless remote-control modes..... | 55 |
| Adding Flash..... | 56 |
| Enabling flash | 57 |
| Setting the Flash mode..... | 58 |
| Choosing the Right Quality Settings | 61 |
| Diagnosing quality problems..... | 62 |
| Considering image size: How many pixels are enough? | 63 |
| Understanding Image Quality options (JPEG or Raw) | 67 |
| My take: Choose JPEG Fine or Raw (NEF)..... | 72 |
| Setting Image Size and Quality..... | 73 |

Chapter 3: Taking Great Pictures, Automatically. 77

| | |
|---|----|
| Setting Up for Automatic Success | 78 |
| As Easy As It Gets: Auto and Auto Flash Off | 82 |
| Taking Advantage of Scene Modes..... | 86 |
| Getting More Creative with Guide Mode | 90 |

Chapter 4: Exploring Live View Photography and Movie Making . . . 97

| | |
|--|-----|
| Using Your Monitor as a Viewfinder | 98 |
| Live View safety tips..... | 99 |
| Customizing the Live View display..... | 103 |
| Focusing in Live View Mode..... | 105 |
| Choosing the right focusing pairs | 110 |
| Autofocusing in Live View and Movie mode | 111 |
| Manual focusing for Live View and movie photography | 113 |
| Shooting Still Pictures in Live View Mode..... | 114 |
| Shooting Digital Movies | 116 |
| Choosing the video mode (NTSC or PAL)..... | 116 |
| Setting video quality (frame size, frame rate, and bit rate) | 117 |
| Controlling audio | 120 |
| Manipulating movie exposure | 123 |
| Reviewing a few final recording options | 124 |
| Recording a movie | 125 |
| Screening Your Movies | 127 |
| Trimming Movies..... | 129 |
| Saving a Movie Frame as a Still Image..... | 132 |

Part 11: Working with Picture Files 135

Chapter 5: Playback Mode: Viewing, Erasing, and Protecting Photos 137

| | |
|--|-----|
| Customizing Basic Playback Options..... | 138 |
| Adjusting playback timing | 138 |
| Adjusting and disabling instant image review | 139 |
| Enabling automatic picture rotation | 139 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Viewing Images in Playback Mode | 141 |
| Viewing multiple images at a time (thumbnails view) | 143 |
| Displaying photos in Calendar view | 144 |
| Choosing which images to view | 146 |
| Zooming in for a closer view | 146 |
| Viewing Picture Data | 148 |
| File Information mode | 150 |
| Highlights display mode | 152 |
| RGB Histogram mode | 153 |
| Shooting Data display mode | 156 |
| GPS Data mode | 157 |
| Overview Data mode | 157 |
| Deleting Photos and Movies | 159 |
| Deleting files one at a time | 159 |
| Deleting all photos and movies | 160 |
| Deleting a batch of selected files | 161 |
| Protecting Photos and Movies | 163 |
| Creating a Digital Slide Show | 164 |
| Viewing Your Photos and Movies on a Television | 168 |

Chapter 6: Downloading, Printing, and Sharing Your Photos171

| | |
|---|-----|
| Choosing the Right Photo Software | 171 |
| Three free photo programs | 172 |
| Advanced photo programs | 174 |
| Sending Pictures to the Computer | 176 |
| Connecting the camera and computer for picture download | 177 |
| Starting the transfer process | 178 |
| Downloading using ViewNX 2 | 180 |
| Processing Raw (NEF) Files | 187 |
| Processing Raw images in the camera | 187 |
| Processing Raw files in ViewNX 2 | 191 |
| Planning for Perfect Prints | 195 |
| Check the pixel count before you print | 195 |
| Allow for different print proportions | 197 |
| Get print and monitor colors in sync | 200 |
| Preparing Pictures for E-Mail and Online Sharing | 203 |
| Prepping online photos using ViewNX 2 | 205 |
| Resizing pictures from the Playback menu | 206 |

Part III: Taking Creative Control..... 211

Chapter 7: Getting Creative with Exposure213

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introducing the Exposure Trio: Shutter Speed, Aperture, and ISO | 214 |
| Understanding exposure-setting side effects | 216 |
| Doing the exposure balancing act | 221 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Exploring the Advanced Exposure Modes | 222 |
| Reading the Meter | 224 |
| Setting Aperture, Shutter Speed, and ISO..... | 227 |
| Adjusting aperture and shutter speed | 227 |
| Controlling ISO | 230 |
| Choosing an Exposure Metering Mode..... | 233 |
| Sorting Through Your Camera's Exposure-Correction Tools..... | 236 |
| Applying Exposure Compensation | 236 |
| Using autoexposure lock..... | 240 |
| Expanding tonal range with Active D-Lighting..... | 241 |
| Investigating Advanced Flash Options | 244 |
| Choosing the right Flash mode | 247 |
| Adjusting flash output | 253 |
| Controlling flash output manually | 256 |

Chapter 8: Manipulating Focus and Color259

| | |
|---|-----|
| Mastering the Autofocus System..... | 260 |
| Reviewing autofocus basics | 260 |
| Understanding the AF-Area mode setting..... | 262 |
| Changing the Focus mode setting..... | 267 |
| Choosing the right autofocus combo..... | 269 |
| Using autofocus lock | 269 |
| Focusing Manually..... | 270 |
| Manipulating Depth of Field | 274 |
| Controlling Color | 281 |
| Correcting colors with white balance..... | 281 |
| Changing the White Balance setting..... | 283 |
| Fine-tuning White Balance settings | 286 |
| Creating white balance presets..... | 287 |
| Choosing a Color Space: sRGB versus Adobe RGB | 291 |
| Taking a Quick Look at Picture Controls..... | 292 |

Chapter 9: Putting It All Together299

| | |
|--|-----|
| Recapping Basic Picture Settings | 299 |
| Shooting Still Portraits | 301 |
| Capturing action | 307 |
| Capturing scenic vistas..... | 310 |
| Capturing dynamic close-ups..... | 313 |

Part IV: The Part of Tens..... 317

Chapter 10: Ten Fun and Practical Retouch Menu Features319

| | |
|--|-----|
| Applying the Retouch Menu Filters..... | 320 |
| Removing Red-Eye | 322 |
| Straightening Tilting Horizon Lines..... | 324 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Removing (Or Creating) Lens Distortion..... | 326 |
| Correcting Perspective | 328 |
| Cropping (Trimming) Your Photo | 329 |
| Shadow Recovery with D-Lighting..... | 331 |
| Boosting Shadows, Contrast, and Saturation Together | 333 |
| Two Ways to Make Subtle Color Adjustments..... | 334 |
| Applying digital lens filters | 335 |
| Manipulating color balance..... | 337 |
| Creating Monochrome Photos..... | 338 |

Chapter 11: Ten Special-Purpose Features to Explore on a Rainy Day..... 341

| | |
|--|-----|
| Annotate Your Images..... | 341 |
| Creating Custom Image Folders..... | 343 |
| Changing the Function Button's Function..... | 346 |
| Customizing the AE-L/AF-L Button | 347 |
| Using the Shutter Button to Lock Exposure and Focus..... | 348 |
| Adding a Starburst Effect..... | 349 |
| Creating Color Effects | 351 |
| Creating a color outline..... | 352 |
| Producing a color sketch | 353 |
| Playing with the Selective Color Filter | 354 |
| Softening Focus for a Dreamy Effect | 356 |
| Creating a Miniature Effect..... | 358 |
| Combining Two Photos with Image Overlay..... | 360 |

Index..... 365

Introduction



Nikon. The name has been associated with top-flight photography equipment for generations. And the introduction of the D3200 has only enriched Nikon's well-deserved reputation, offering all the control a die-hard photography enthusiast could want while at the same time providing easy-to-use, point-and-shoot features for the beginner.

In fact, the D3200 offers so *many* features that sorting them all out can be more than a little confusing, especially if you're new to digital photography, SLR photography, or both. For starters, you may not even be sure what SLR means or how it affects your picture taking, let alone have a clue as to all the other techie terms you encounter in your camera manual — *resolution*, *aperture*, *white balance*, and so on. And if you're like many people, you may be so overwhelmed by all the controls on your camera that you haven't yet ventured beyond fully automatic picture-taking mode. Which is a shame because it's sort of like buying a Porsche and never actually taking it on the road.

Therein lies the point of *Nikon D3200 For Dummies*. Through this book, you can discover not just what each bell and whistle on your camera does, but also when, where, why, and how to put it to best use. Unlike many photography books, this one doesn't require any previous knowledge of photography or digital imaging to make sense of things, either. In classic *For Dummies* style, everything is explained in easy-to-understand language, with lots of illustrations to help clear up any confusion.

In short, what you have in your hands is the paperback version of an in-depth photography workshop tailored specifically to your Nikon picture-taking powerhouse.

A Quick Look at What's Ahead

This book is organized into four parts, each devoted to a different aspect of using your camera. Although chapters flow in a sequence that's designed to take you from absolute beginner to experienced user, I've also tried to make each chapter as self-standing as possible so that you can explore the topics that interest you in any order you please.

Here's a brief preview of what you can find in each part of the book:

Part 1: Fast Track to Super Snaps

Part I contains four chapters to help you get up and running. Chapter 1 offers a tour of the external controls on your camera, shows you how to navigate camera menus to access internal options, and walks you through initial camera setup. Chapter 2 explains basic picture-taking options, such as shutter-release

mode and Image Quality settings, and Chapter 3 shows you how to use the camera's fully automatic exposure modes. Chapter 4 explains the ins and outs of using Live View, the feature that lets you compose pictures on the monitor, and also covers movie recording.

Part II: Working with Picture Files

This part offers two chapters, both dedicated to after-the-shot topics. Chapter 5 explains how to review your pictures on the camera monitor, delete unwanted images, and protect your favorites from accidental erasure. Chapter 6 offers a look at some photo software options — including Nikon ViewNX 2, which ships free with your camera — and then guides you through the process of downloading pictures to your computer and preparing them for printing and online sharing.

Part III: Taking Creative Control

Chapters in this part help you unleash the full creative power of your camera by moving into the advanced shooting modes (P, S, A, and M). Chapter 7 covers the critical topic of exposure, and Chapter 8 explains how to manipulate focus and color. Chapter 9 summarizes all the techniques explained in earlier chapters, providing a quick-reference guide to the camera settings and shooting strategies that produce the best results for portraits, action shots, landscape scenes, and close-ups.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

In famous *For Dummies* tradition, the book concludes with two “top ten” lists containing additional bits of information and advice. Chapter 10 covers the most useful photo-editing tools found on the camera's Retouch menu, and Chapter 11 wraps up the book by detailing some camera features that, although not found on most “Top Ten Reasons I Bought My Nikon D3200” lists, are nonetheless interesting, useful on occasion, or a bit of both.

Icons and Other Stuff to Note

If this isn't your first *For Dummies* book, you may be familiar with the large, round icons that decorate its margins. If not, here's your very own icon-decoder ring:



A Tip icon flags information that will save you time, effort, money, or some other valuable resource, including your sanity. Tips also point out techniques that help you get the best results from specific camera features.



When you see this icon, look alive. It indicates a potential danger zone that can result in much wailing and teeth-gnashing if ignored. In other words, this is stuff that you really don't want to learn the hard way.



Lots of information in this book is of a technical nature — digital photography is a technical animal, after all. But if I present a detail that is useful mainly for impressing your technology-geek friends, I mark it with this icon.



I apply this icon either to introduce information that is especially worth storing in your brain's long-term memory or to remind you of a fact that may have been displaced from that memory by some other pressing fact.

Additionally, I need to point out these additional details that will help you use this book:

- ✓ **Other margin art:** Replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen symbols also appear in the margins of some paragraphs. I include these to provide a quick reminder of the appearance of the button or feature being discussed.
- ✓ **Software menu commands:** In sections that cover software, a series of words connected by an arrow indicates commands that you choose from the program menus. For example, if a step tells you to "Choose File⇨Convert Files," click the File menu to unfurl it and then click the Convert Files command on the menu.

Occasionally, I need to make updates to technology books. If this book does have technical updates, they will be posted at www.dummies.com/go/nikond3200updates.

eCheat Sheet

As a little added bonus, you can find an electronic version of the famous *For Dummies* Cheat Sheet at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/nikond3200. The Cheat Sheet contains a quick-reference guide to all the buttons, dials, switches, and exposure modes on your D3200. Log on, print it out, and tuck it in your camera bag for times when you don't want to carry this book with you.

Practice, Be Patient, and Have Fun!

To wrap up this preamble, I want to stress that if you initially think that digital photography is too confusing or too technical for you, you're in very good company. *Everyone* finds this stuff a little mind-boggling at first. So take it slowly, experimenting with just one or two new camera settings or techniques at first. Then, each time you go on a photo outing, make it a point to add one or two more shooting skills to your repertoire.

I know that it's hard to believe when you're just starting out, but it really won't be long before everything starts to come together. With some time, patience, and practice, you'll soon wield your camera like a pro, dialing in the necessary settings to capture your creative vision almost instinctively.

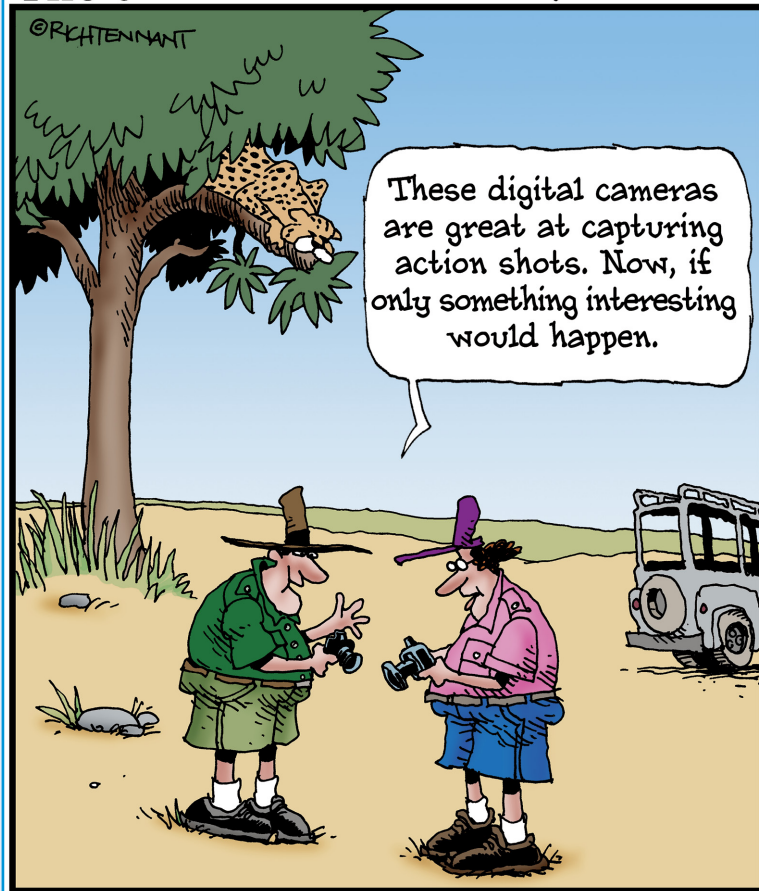
So without further ado, I invite you to grab your camera, a cup of whatever it is you prefer to sip while you read, and start exploring the rest of this book. Your D3200 is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and I thank you for allowing me, through this book, to serve as your tour guide.

Part I

Fast Track to Super Snaps

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



In this part . . .

Making sense of all the controls on your camera isn't something you can do in an afternoon — heck, in a week, or maybe even a month. But that doesn't mean that you can't take great pictures today. By using your camera's point-and-shoot automatic modes, you can capture terrific images with very little effort. All you do is compose the scene, and the camera takes care of almost everything else.

This part shows you how to take best advantage of your camera's automatic features and also addresses some basic setup steps, such as adjusting the viewfinder to your eyesight and getting familiar with the camera menus, buttons, and other controls. In addition, chapters in this part explain how to obtain the very best picture quality, whether you shoot in an automatic or manual mode, and how to use your camera's Live View and movie-making features.



Getting the Lay of the Land

In This Chapter

- ▶ Attaching and using an SLR lens
- ▶ Adjusting the viewfinder to your eyesight
- ▶ Working with memory cards
- ▶ Exploring the camera controls
- ▶ Selecting from menus
- ▶ Using the Information display to view and adjust settings
- ▶ Customizing basic operations
- ▶ Restoring default settings

I still remember the day I bought my first single-lens reflex (SLR) film camera. I was excited to finally move up from my one-button point-and-shoot camera, but I was a little anxious, too. My new pride and joy sported several unfamiliar buttons and dials, and the explanations in the camera manual clearly were written for someone with an engineering degree. And then there was the whole business of attaching the lens to the camera, an entirely new task for me. I saved my pennies a long time to buy that camera — what if my inexperience caused me to damage the thing before I even shot my first picture?

You may be feeling similarly insecure if your Nikon D3200 is your first SLR, although some of the buttons on the camera back may look familiar if you've previously used a digital point-and-shoot camera. If your D3200 is both your first SLR and first digital camera, you may be doubly intimidated.



Trust me, though — your camera isn't nearly as complicated as its exterior makes it appear. With a little practice and the help of this chapter, which introduces you to each external control, you can become comfortable with your camera's buttons and dials in no time. This chapter also guides you through the process of mounting and using a lens, working with memory cards, navigating your camera's menus, changing picture-taking settings, and customizing basic camera operations.



One note before you start: Photos in this book show the black version of the camera instead of the red one. What can I say — I'm a traditionalist, I guess. But all the buttons, menus, and other camera features work the same, no matter what the color of your camera.

Getting Comfortable with Your Lens

One of the biggest differences between a point-and-shoot camera and an SLR camera is the lens. With an SLR, you can swap out lenses to suit different photographic needs, going from a *macro lens*, which enables you to shoot extreme close-ups, to a *telephoto lens*, which lets you photograph subjects from a distance, for example. In addition, an SLR lens has a movable focusing ring that lets you focus manually instead of relying on the camera's autofocus mechanism.

Of course, those added capabilities mean that you need a little information to take full advantage of your lens. To that end, the next several sections explain the process of attaching, removing, and using this critical part of your camera.

Attaching a lens



Your camera can autofocus only with a type of lens that carries the specification *AF-S*. (Well, technically speaking, the camera can autofocus with *AF-I* lenses also. But because those are high-end, very expensive lenses that are no longer made, this is the only mention of AF-I lenses in this book.) You can use other types of lenses, as long as they're compatible with the camera's lens mount, but you have to focus manually and you may lose access to other camera functions as well. (See your camera manual for information about which functions aren't available with different types of non-AFS lenses.)

Whatever lens you choose, follow these steps to attach it to the camera body:

1. **Turn the camera off and remove the cap that covers the lens mount on the front of the camera.**

2. Remove the cap that covers the back of the lens.
3. Hold the lens in front of the camera so that the little white dot on the lens aligns with the matching dot on the camera body.

Official photography lingo uses the term *mounting index* instead of *little white dot*. Either way, you can see the markings in question in Figure 1-1.

Note that the figure shows — as do others in this book — the D3200 with its so-called *kit lens* — the 18–55mm AF-S Vibration Reduction (VR) zoom lens that Nikon sells as a unit with the camera body. If you buy a different lens, your lens mounting index may be some other color or shape, so check the lens instruction manual.

4. Keeping the dots aligned, as shown in Figure 1-1, position the lens on the camera's lens mount.

When you do so, grip the lens by its back collar, not the movable, forward end of the lens barrel.

5. Turn the lens in a counter-clockwise direction until the lens clicks into place.

To put it another way, turn the lens toward the side of the camera that sports the shutter button, as indicated by the red arrow in the figure.

6. On a lens that has an aperture ring, set and lock the ring so the aperture is set at the highest f-stop number.

Check your lens manual to find out whether your lens sports an aperture ring and how to adjust it. (The D3200 kit lens doesn't.) To find out more about apertures and f-stops, see Chapter 7.



Figure 1-1: When attaching the lens, align the index markers as shown here.



Even though the D3200 is equipped with a dust-reduction system, always attach (or switch) lenses in a clean environment to reduce the risk of getting dust, dirt, and other contaminants inside the camera or lens. Changing lenses on a beach, for example, isn't a good idea. For added safety, point the camera body slightly down when performing this maneuver; doing so helps prevent any flotsam in the air from being drawn into the camera by gravity.

Removing a lens

To detach a lens from the camera body, take these steps:

1. **Turn off the camera and then locate the lens-release button, labeled in Figure 1-1.**
2. **Press the lens-release button while turning the lens clockwise (toward the button) until the mounting index on the lens is aligned with the index on the camera body.**

The mounting indexes are the little guide dots labeled in Figure 1-1. When the dots line up, the lens detaches from the mount.

3. **Place the rear protective cap onto the back of the lens.**

If you aren't putting another lens on the camera, cover the lens mount with the protective cap that came with your camera, too.

Setting the focus mode (auto or manual)

Again, the option to switch between autofocus and manual focusing depends on matching the D3200 with a fully compatible lens, as I explain in the earlier section, "Attaching a lens." With the kit lens, as well as with other AF-S lenses, you can enjoy autofocus as well as manual focusing.



The AF stands for *autofocus*, as you may have guessed. The S stands for *silent wave*, a Nikon autofocus technology.

For times when you attach a lens that doesn't support autofocus or the autofocus system has trouble locking on your subject, you can focus manually by twisting a focusing ring on the lens. The placement and appearance of the focusing ring depend on the lens; Figure 1-2 shows you the one on the kit lens.

To focus manually with the kit lens, take these steps:

1. **Set the focus mode switch on the lens to the M (manual) position.**

Figure 1-2 gives you a look at the switch.



Figure 1-2: On the 18–55mm kit lens, the manual-focusing ring is set near the front of the lens, as shown here.

2. While looking through the viewfinder, twist the focusing ring to adjust focus.



If you have trouble focusing, you may be too close to your subject; every lens has a minimum focusing distance. You may also need to adjust the viewfinder to accommodate your eyesight; you can get help with the process a few paragraphs from here.

If you use a lens other than the kit lens, check the lens instruction guide for details about focusing manually; your lens may or may not have a switch similar to the one on the kit lens. Also see the Chapter 8 section related to the Focus mode option, which should be set to MF for manual focusing. (With the kit lens and some other lenses, the camera automatically chooses the MF setting for you.) You access this setting via the Information screen, a process you can read about in the section “Changing Settings Using the Information Display,” later in this chapter.



By the way, even when you focus manually, the camera provides some feedback to help you determine whether focus is set correctly. Look in the Chapter 8 section that's devoted to manual focusing for details.

Zooming in and out

If you bought a zoom lens, it has a movable zoom ring. The location of the zoom ring on the D3200 kit lens is shown in Figure 1-2. To zoom in or out, just rotate that ring.

The numbers on the zoom ring, by the way, represent *focal lengths*. I explain focal lengths in Chapter 8. In the meantime, just note that when the lens is mounted on the camera, the number that's aligned with the lens mounting index (the white dot) represents the current focal length. In Figure 1-2, for example, the focal length is 45mm.

Using a VR (Vibration Reduction) lens

Some Nikon lenses, including the 18–55mm lens sold in a kit with the D3200 camera body, offer *Vibration Reduction*. On Nikon lenses, this feature is indicated by the initials *VR* in the lens name.

Vibration Reduction attempts to compensate for small amounts of camera shake that are common when photographers handhold their cameras and use a slow shutter speed, a lens with a long focal length, or both. That camera movement during the exposure can produce blurry images. Although Vibration Reduction can't work miracles, it enables most people to capture sharper handheld shots in many situations than they otherwise could.

Here's what you need to know about taking best advantage of this feature with your D3200:

- ✓ **Turn Vibration Reduction on or off by using the VR switch, labeled in Figure 1-3.** On the kit lens, the switch is located directly underneath the Auto/Manual focus switch.
- ✓ **Vibration Reduction is initiated when you depress the shutter button halfway (which also initiates autofocus and exposure metering).** If you pay close attention, the image in the viewfinder may appear to be a little blurry immediately after you take the picture. That's a normal result of the vibration-reduction operation and doesn't indicate a problem with your camera or focus. Wait until the viewfinder image returns to normal to take your next shot.



✓ **With the kit lens, turn Vibration Reduction off when you mount the camera on a tripod.** When you use a tripod, Vibration Reduction can have detrimental effects because the system may try to adjust for movement that isn't actually occurring. This recommendation assumes that the tripod is "locked down" so that the camera is immovable.

✓ **For other lenses, check the lens manual to find out whether your lens offers a similar feature.** On non-Nikon lenses, it may go by another name: *image stabilization*, *optical stabilization*, *anti-shake*, *vibration compensation*, and so on. In some cases, the manufacturers may recommend that you leave the system turned on or select a special setting when you use a tripod or *pan* the camera (move it horizontally or vertically as you take the picture). For the kit lens, however, you don't need to disable Vibration Reduction when panning.



Vibration Reduction switch

Figure 1-3: Turn off Vibration Reduction when you use a tripod.

Chapter 8 offers more tips on achieving blur-free photos, and it also explains focal length and its impact on your pictures. See Chapter 7 for an explanation of shutter speed.

Adjusting the Viewfinder Focus

Tucked behind the right side of the rubber eyepiece that surrounds the viewfinder is a tiny dial that enables you to adjust the focus of your viewfinder to accommodate your eyesight. Figure 1-4 shows you where to find the dial, which is officially known as the *diopter adjustment control*.

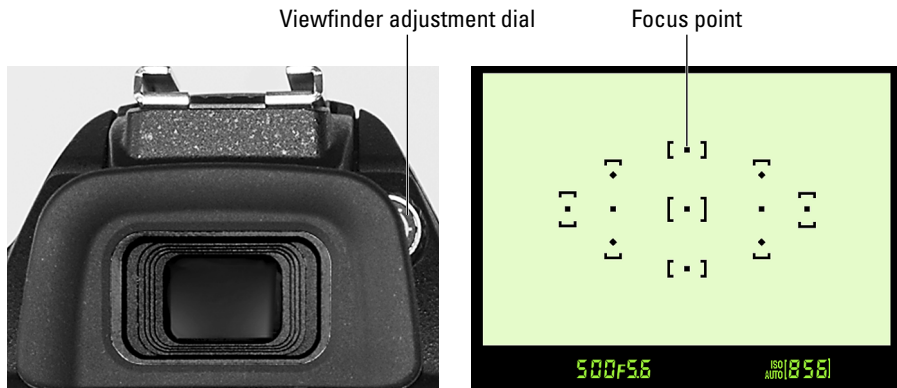


Figure 1-4: Use the diopter adjustment control to set the viewfinder focus for your eyesight.



If you don't take this step, scenes that appear out of focus through the viewfinder may actually be sharply focused through the lens, and vice versa. Here's how to make the necessary adjustment:

- 1. Turn the camera on and remove the lens cap from the front of the lens.**
- 2. Look through the viewfinder and then press the shutter button halfway and release it.**

You should see some shooting data appear at the bottom of the screen, as shown on the right in Figure 1-4. (The data shown may differ from what you see in the figure.) And scattered through the center of the screen are little black marks that indicate the camera's 11 autofocus points. I labeled one of the points in Figure 1-4.

- 3. Aim the lens at a blank wall or other plain surface.**
- 4. Concentrate on the viewfinder data and focusing marks and then rotate the adjustment dial until they appear sharp.**



The Nikon manual warns you not to poke yourself in the eye as you perform this maneuver. This warning seems so obvious that I laugh every time I read it — which makes me feel doubly stupid the next time I poke myself in the eye as I perform this maneuver.

If your eyesight is such that you need a greater adjustment than you can achieve with the built-in diopter control, you can buy an add-on to the viewfinder eyepiece to increase the adjustment range. The official name for this accessory is Nikon DK-20C Correction Eyepiece.

Working with Memory Cards

Instead of recording images on film, digital cameras store pictures on *memory cards*. Your D3200 uses a specific type of memory card: an *SD card* (for *Secure Digital*).



Most SD cards sold today carry the designation SDHC (for *High Capacity*) or SDXC (for *eXtended Capacity*), depending on how many gigabytes (GB) of data they hold. SDHC cards hold from 4GB to 32GB of data; the SDXC moniker is assigned to cards with capacities greater than 32GB.

You also can use Eye-Fi SD cards, a special brand of card that enables you to send pictures to your computer over a wireless network. Because of space limitations, I don't cover Eye-Fi connectivity in this book; if you want more information about these cards, you can find it online at www.eye.fi. Of course, the D3200 also gives you another wireless picture-transmission option: It's compatible with the Nikon WU-1a unit, which sends pictures from your camera to certain smartphones and tablets. See Chapter 6 for more about that product.

Back to the memory cards themselves: Safeguarding your cards — and the images you store on them — requires just a few precautions:

- ✓ **Inserting a card:** First, be sure that the camera is turned off. Then put the card in the card slot with the label facing the back of the camera, as shown in Figure 1-5. Push the card into the slot until it clicks into place; the camera's memory card access light (labeled in Figure 1-5) blinks for a second to let you know the card is inserted properly.
- ✓ **Formatting a card:** The first time you use a new memory card or insert a card that's been used in other devices (such as an MP3 player), you should *format* it. Formatting ensures that the card is properly prepared to record your pictures.



Memory Card access light

Figure 1-5: Insert the card with the label facing the camera back.

Insert the card with the label facing the camera back.



Formatting erases *everything* on your memory card. So before formatting, be sure that you have copied any pictures or other data to your computer.

To format a memory card, choose the Format Memory Card command from the Setup menu. The upcoming section “Ordering from Camera Menus” explains how to work with menus if you need help. When you select the command, you’re informed that all images will be deleted, and you’re asked to confirm your decision to format the card. Highlight Yes and press OK to go forward.

If you insert a memory card and see *For* in the viewfinder, you must format the card before you can do anything else. You also see a message requesting formatting on the camera monitor.



Some computer programs enable you to format cards as well, but it’s not a good idea to go that route. Your camera is better equipped to optimally format cards for use in the camera.

- ✓ **Removing a card:** After making sure that the memory card access light is off, indicating that the camera has finished recording your most recent photo, turn off the camera. Open the memory card door, as shown in Figure 1-5. Depress the memory card slightly until you hear a little click and then let go. The card pops halfway out of the slot, enabling you to grab it by the tail and remove it.



If you turn on the camera when no card is installed, the symbol [-E-] blinks in the lower-right corner of the viewfinder. If the Information screen is displayed on the monitor, that screen also nudges you to insert a memory card. If you do have a card in the camera and you get these messages, try taking it out and reinserting it.

- ✓ **Handling cards:** Don’t touch the gold contacts on the back of the card. (See the right card in Figure 1-6.) When cards aren’t in use, store them in the protective cases they came in or in a memory-card wallet. Keep cards away from extreme heat and cold as well.

- ✓ **Locking cards:** The tiny switch on the side of the card, labeled *lock switch* in Figure 1-6, enables you to lock your card, which prevents any data from being erased or recorded to the card. Press the switch toward the



Figure 1-6: Avoid touching the gold contacts on the card.

bottom of the card to lock the card contents; press it toward the top of the card to unlock the data. (If you insert a locked card into the camera, you see a message on the monitor alerting you to the fact, and the symbol [d] blinks in the viewfinder.)

You also can protect individual images on a card from accidental erasure by using the camera's Protect feature, which I cover in Chapter 5.



One side note on the issue of memory cards and file storage: Given that memory cards are getting cheaper and larger in capacity, you may be tempted to pick up a 64GB (64-gigabyte) or even larger card, thinking you can store a gazillion images on one card and not worry about running out of room. But memory cards are mechanical devices that are subject to failure, and if a large card fails, you lose *lots* of images. And putting aside the potential for card failure, it's darned easy to misplace those little guys. So I carry several 16GB SD cards in my camera bag instead of relying on one ginormous card. Although I hate to lose any images, I'd rather lose 16 GB worth of pictures than 64 GB.



Do you need high-speed memory cards?

Secure Digital (SD) memory cards are rated according to *speed classes*: Class 2, Class 4, Class 6, and Class 10, with the number indicating the minimum number of *megabytes* (units of computer data) that can be transferred per second. A Class 2 card, for example, has a minimum transfer speed of 2 megabytes, or MB, per second. In addition to these speed classes, The Powers That Be recently added a new category of speed rating, UHS, which stands for Ultra High Speed. UHS cards also carry a number designation; at present, there is only one class of UHS card, UHS 1. These cards currently offer the fastest performance. Your D3200 supports this new card speed.

Of course, with the increase in card speed comes a price increase, which leads to the question: Do you really have a need for speed? The answer is “maybe.” If you shoot a lot of movies, I recommend a Class 6 card at minimum — the faster data-transfer rate helps ensure smooth movie-recording and playback

performance. For still photography, users who shoot at the highest resolution or prefer the NEF (Raw) file format may also gain from high-speed cards; both options increase file size and, thus, the time needed to store the picture on the card. (See Chapter 2 for details.)

As for picture downloading, how long it takes files to shuffle from card to computer depends not just on card speed, but also on the capabilities of your computer and, if you use a memory card reader to download files, on the speed of that device. (Chapter 6 covers the file-downloading process.)

Long story short, if you want to push your camera to its performance limits, a high-speed card is worth the expense, especially for video recording. But if you're primarily interested in still photography or you already own slower-speed cards, try using them first — you may find that they're more than adequate for most shooting scenarios.

Exploring External Camera Controls

Scattered across your camera's exterior are buttons, dials, and switches that you use to change picture-taking settings, review and edit your photos, and perform various other operations. In later chapters, I discuss all your camera's functions in detail. This section provides just a basic road map to the external controls plus a quick introduction to each.



Many of the buttons perform multiple functions and so have multiple “official” names. The AE-L/AF-L button, for example, is also known as the Protect button. In the camera manual, Nikon's instructions refer to these multi-tasking buttons by the name that's relevant for the current function. I think that's a little confusing, so I always refer to each button by the first moniker you see in the lists here. In addition, when I reference a button, its picture appears in the margin to further clarify things. (The exceptions are the Menu and OK buttons — I don't show these because they are such frequent players in the camera's operation, and so would appear way too many times on the page.)

Topside controls

Your virtual tour begins with the bird's-eye view shown in Figure 1-7. There are a number of controls of note here:

- ✓ **On/Off switch and shutter button:** Okay, I'm pretty sure you already figured out this combo button. But you may not realize that you need to use a specific technique when pressing the shutter button: Press the button halfway, pause a second to allow the exposure meter and auto-focusing system to do their jobs, and then press the button the rest of the way to take the picture. See the Chapter 3 section on using the Auto exposure mode for more picture-taking basics.
- ✓ **Exposure Compensation button:** This button activates a feature that enables you to tweak exposure when working in three of your camera's autoexposure modes: programmed autoexposure, aperture-priority autoexposure, and shutter-priority autoexposure, represented by the letters P, S, and A on the Mode dial. Chapter 7 explains. In manual exposure (M) mode, you press this button while rotating the Command dial to adjust the aperture setting.
- ✓ **Info button:** Press this button to display the Information screen on the camera monitor; press again to turn off the display. See the upcoming section “Monitoring Shooting Settings” for details on this screen.



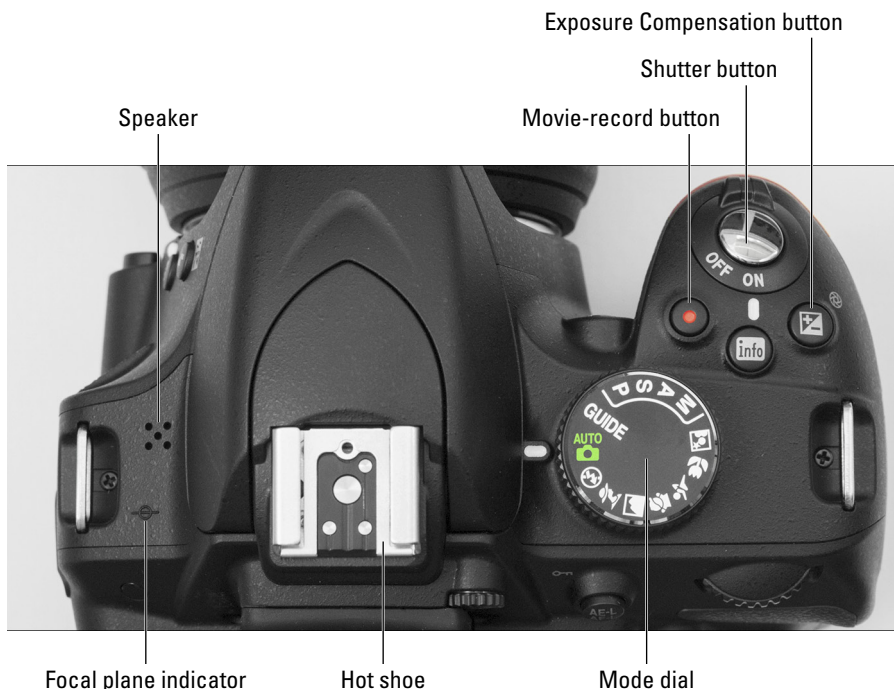


Figure 1-7: The tiny pictures on the Mode dial represent the automatic exposure modes known as Scene modes.



You also can display the screen by pressing the Information Edit button (on the back of the camera, shown in the next figure) or by pressing the shutter button halfway and releasing it. I find these methods easier, so I use the Info button only when I want to turn off the screen. Remember that if you do use the button to turn off the display, you must press it again to turn the display back on. Pressing the shutter button halfway won't do the trick. However, pressing the Info Edit button turns on the display regardless.



- **Movie-record button:** After switching to Live View mode, press this button to start and stop recording movies. See Chapter 4 for an explanation of Live View mode and details on movie recording and playback.
- **Mode dial:** With this dial, labeled in Figure 1-7, you set the camera to fully automatic, semi-automatic, or manual exposure mode. Choosing

the Guide setting brings up the guided menu display, which helps newcomers get acquainted with the camera. The little pictographs represent Scene modes, which are automatic settings geared to specific types of photos: action shots, portraits, landscapes, and so on. Chapter 3 details the fully automatic modes; Chapter 7 explains the P, S, A, and M modes; and the section “Using the guided menus,” later in this chapter, introduces you to Guide mode, which you can explore a bit more in Chapter 3.

- ✓ **Flash hot shoe:** A *hot shoe* is a connection for attaching an external flash. When you first take the camera out of the box, the contacts on the shoe are protected by a black cover; to attach a flash, slide the cover off to expose the contacts, as shown in Figure 1-7. Chapters 2 and 7 discuss flash photography.
- ✓ **Speaker:** When you play movies that contain audio, the sound comes wafting through the holes labeled *Speaker* in Figure 1-7.
- ✓ **Focal plane indicator:** Should you need to know the exact distance between your subject and the camera, the *focal plane indicator* is key. The mark, labeled in Figure 1-7, indicates the plane at which light coming through the lens is focused onto the negative in a film camera or the image sensor in a digital camera. Basing your measurement on this mark produces a more accurate camera-to-subject distance than using the end of the lens or some other external point on the camera body as your reference point.

Back-of-the-body controls

Traveling over the top of the camera to its back side, as shown in Figure 1-8, you encounter the following controls:

- ✓ **Command dial:** After you activate certain camera features, you rotate this dial to select a specific setting. For example, to choose an f-stop when shooting in aperture-priority (A) mode, you rotate the Command dial. And in manual exposure (M) mode, you change the f-stop by rotating the dial while pressing the Exposure Compensation button. (Chapter 7 explains apertures and f-stops.)
- ✓ **AE-L/AF-L/Protect button:** Pressing this button initiates autoexposure lock (AE-L) and autofocus lock (AF-L). Chapter 7 explains autoexposure lock; Chapter 8 talks about autofocus lock.



In playback mode, pressing the button activates the Protect feature, which locks the picture file — hence the little key symbol that appears to the left of the button — so that the image isn’t erased if you use the picture-delete functions. See Chapter 5 for details. (The picture is erased if you format the memory card, however.)



Figure 1-8: Use the Multi Selector to navigate menus and access certain other camera options.



- You can adjust the performance of the button as it relates to locking focus and exposure. Instructions in this book assume that you stick with the default setting, but if you want to explore your options, see Chapter 11.
- ✓ **Live View button:** As its name implies, this switch turns the Live View feature on and off. As soon as you turn on Live View, the scene in front of the lens appears on the monitor, and you no longer can see anything through the viewfinder. You then can compose a still photo using the monitor or begin recording a movie. Turn off Live View to return to normal, through-the-viewfinder still photography. Chapter 4 details Live View photography and movie recording.
 - ✓ **Multi Selector/OK button:** This dual-natured control, labeled in Figure 1-8, plays a role in many camera functions. You press the outer edges of the Multi Selector left, right, up, or down to navigate camera menus and



access certain other options. At the center of the control is OK, which you press to finalize a menu selection or other camera adjustment.



✓ **Delete button:** Sporting a trash-can icon, the universal symbol for delete, this button enables you to erase pictures from your memory card. Chapter 5 has specifics.



✓ **Playback button:** Press this button to switch the camera into picture review mode. Chapter 5 details playback features.



✓ **Menu button:** Press this button to access menus of camera options. See the section “Ordering from Camera Menus,” later in this chapter, for details on navigating menus.



✓ **Zoom Out/Thumbnail/Help button:** This button has a number of functions, but the most important ones are

- *Display help screens:* You can press this button to display helpful information about certain menu options. See “Displaying Help Screens,” later in this chapter, for details.
- *Adjust the image display during playback:* In playback mode, pressing the button enables you to display multiple image thumbnails on the screen, reduce the magnification of the currently displayed photo, and access Calendar display, which makes it easy to see all the photos shot on a particular day. Again, see Chapter 5 for a complete rundown of playback options.



✓ **Zoom In:** In playback mode, pressing this button magnifies the currently displayed image and also reduces the number of thumbnails displayed at a time. Note the plus sign in the middle of the magnifying glass — plus for zoom in. Like the Zoom Out button, this one also serves a few minor roles that I explain in later chapters.



✓ **Information Edit button:** With this button — which I hereby designate as simply the Info Edit button to save space — you can display the Information screen. Press again, and you can then shift to what I call the Info Edit screen, which enables you to adjust the settings shown on the screen. See the upcoming sections “Monitoring Shooting Settings” and “Changing Settings Using the Information Display” for details.

✓ **Infrared receiver:** This little round sensor, labeled in Figure 1-8, picks up the signal from the optional ML-L3 wireless remote control. There’s a second sensor on the front of the camera; see the upcoming section “Front-right features” for a look-see.