

Photo 30

Bounce Flash Guidelines

When using bounce flash make sure you check the surface you are using to bounce the light off of. Whatever color characteristics are in that surface will be reflected onto the subject. (i.e. blue wall, a blue cast will be placed on the subject)

This table can get you in the ballpark but don't rely on it. Work with it yourself.

FILM SPEED	DISTANCE TO SUBJECT	F/STOP**	SHUTTER SPEED
100 – 125	8 - 10 feet	F/4 – f/5.6	1/60 – 1/125
200 – 400	8 - 10 feet	F/5.6 – f/8	1/60 – 1/125 or 250*
400 – 1600	8 - 10 ft	F/8 – f/11	1/60 – 1/25 or 250 +*

*Refers to digital cameras that allow for flash synchronization at higher shutter speeds.

**This chart assumes a normal 10-foot white ceiling. If conditions change then you have to adjust.

Bounce flash is always relative to the subject distance (as is all flash) but more dependent on the light absorbed by the subject. **REMEMBER** you are augmenting the existing light in the room not changing the lighting set up. This means that you are only 'bumping' the light up a so that you can record good tonal quality in hard to reach areas. In short you are casting an umbrella of light over the subject in front of you.

This will result in a more natural looking picture where it appears that no strobe was used at all.

Bounce flash also relies on your knowledge of the strobe. Therefore you need to get acquainted with your unit and understand what it does. The color-coded system on the side of the strobe that tells you the power output you will need to understand. The only way to do this is to test it. Digital strobes are a bit easier in this regard because they do more of the work for you, however they have many more modes and can be confusing. Again you need to use them a lot to understand how they work.

Last word – bracket your exposure when you bounce. ½ a stop can make a big difference in your results. Don't assume you have it right all the time. This table is just a starting point but it can get you on your way to getting this technique down.