

THE MODEL PHOTO

We love featuring pictures of miniatures painted by you, our readers. But taking good pictures can be quite a challenge. To help you out, we've come up with a few photography tips and tricks to help you get the best photos of your models possible.

SETTING THE SCENE

Before you even take out your camera, it's important to set the scene for your pictures. We suggest a simple set-up with a plain background – a piece of paper stuck to a sturdy backdrop is a quick and easy solution and perfectly suitable for the job, providing a neutral backdrop for your models **(1)**. We normally use a white background behind our miniatures as it really helps show off the model, though any colour that contrasts with the miniature will work. A White Scars Space Marine, for example, will show up better on a black background **(2)**, while an Iron Hands Space Marine would struggle to be seen at all **(3)**. If in doubt, stick with plain white paper – a chequered tablecloth, wooden table, fur rug or grassy lawn (yes, those are all real examples) will just confuse the outline of the model.

***Top tip:** If you're really serious about photographing miniatures, look at investing in a light box. You can find them in most camera shops and online.*

LIGHTING YOUR PICTURE

When taking pictures of miniatures, you need a consistent, even light. The best way to achieve this is with lamps and, specifically, daylight bulbs **(1)**. Daylight bulbs provide a neutral light, not too yellow, not too blue, but just right for taking pictures of models. You can find them in most supermarkets and they'll fit most standard desk lamps. While one lamp aimed directly at the model will work, two lamps are even better, enabling you to light your model from both sides and eliminate shadows from overhanging weapons, equipment and whatnots **(4)**. It's



important that no other light affects your picture, so make sure you turn off the room lights and shut the curtains or blinds before taking your picture. To the right you can see what a picture with consistent, even lighting from two lamps looks like (5), while next to it you can see the same model with just one lamp aimed at it (6).

It's worth noting that natural daylight is not a good substitute for a light set-up, even if it is really sunny. Natural daylight varies constantly, making it hard to get the same level and colour of light in your pictures. A cloudless day, for example, will often make your pictures come out too yellow, while an overcast day will leave them blue. Avoid using the flash setting on your camera, too. The flash is used to saturate an area with light and will often result in really harsh highlights and deep shadows.

Top tip: If you want to take lighting your pictures to the next step, look into purchasing a set of softboxes and flash lights.

THE GOLDEN ANGLE

Every miniature has a golden angle, a viewpoint that best captures the essence of the model. This will almost always be the front of the model, where you can see its weapons, face and body clearly (7). If you take a picture and these key areas aren't visible (8), turn the model round a little and try another angle.

Some miniatures, like the assassin Shadowblade, can be pretty hard to photograph. If you're ever unsure of a model's golden angle, just have a look at how it's been photographed on the Games Workshop webstore or in the new releases section of White Dwarf. If you match that angle, you can't go wrong!

Another important factor to consider is the height of the camera. Looking back at the set-up in picture (1), you'll notice the camera is level with the model, not angled down at it. We refer to this angle as a model's-eye-view, the camera lens at the same height as the model's eyes. If your camera is positioned too high, you'll get a lovely shot of the model's shoulders and the top of its head, but little else.

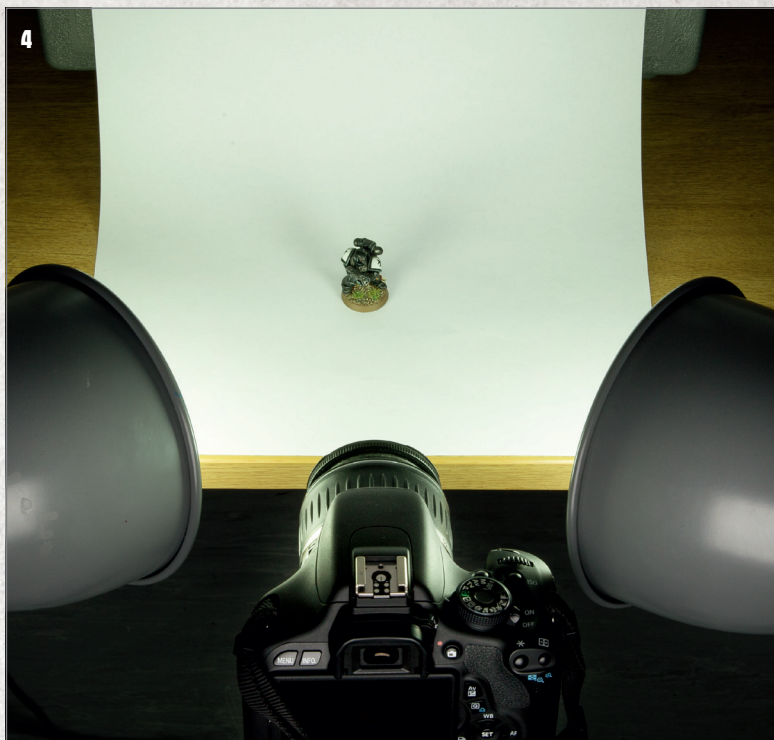


IMAGE SIZE AND GETTING IN FOCUS

Miniatures are, by their nature, pretty small, so you need to make sure your camera is close enough so they fill the frame. If the camera's too far away **(9)** your models will appear tiny and the picture will be useless. Instead, move the camera in nice and close so the miniature fills the viewfinder or viewscreen.

Be careful not to cut the ends off weapons and banner poles **(10)**, you want a picture of the whole model, not most of it. There is a down side to moving the camera too close, though – it may struggle to focus on such a close subject **(11)**. If this happens, move the camera back from the model and try another shot. If it's still out of focus, move the camera back and try again.

There's a lot of trial and error involved in photographing miniatures, so don't worry if it takes a few goes to get it right.

*Top tip: If you have to pull the camera back so far that the model appears tiny again, don't forget that your camera probably has a zoom function **(12)**.*

Putting all of this together should help get a good picture. But we can still do better...

TAKING THE PICTURE

There are four important settings on a camera to consider when taking pictures of miniatures: **aperture, shutter speed, ISO** and **white balance**. To alter these settings, you will need to take your camera out of its automatic setting and put it in manual.

APERTURE: USE THE HIGHEST SETTING

The aperture controls how much light comes through the lens and how much of the model you will be able to get in focus. It is often referred to as the f-number or f-stop. The higher you can set the f-stop, the better. Most DSLR cameras will have an f-stop up to 22, while compact cameras reach around 8. We recommend using a high f-stop to help get more of your model in focus **(13)**, as a low one will leave parts of it fuzzy and out of focus **(14)**.

SHUTTER SPEED: THE LONGER THE BETTER

The longer the camera's shutter stays open while taking the picture, the more light will



be let in. Start with a shutter speed of 1/100th of a second (15). You can then reduce the shutter speed to let more light into the camera and brighten your photo (16). Be wary of leaving the shutter open too long, though, as this can lead to image blur if you're holding the camera when you take the picture.

Top tip: Invest in a tripod to keep the camera steady. Use the camera's timer function, too, so you're not touching the camera at all when the picture is taken.

ISO: SET IT LOW

The **ISO controls** how sensitive the camera is to light. A high ISO puts more light into the picture, but runs the risk of making the image grainy (17). Set the ISO as low as possible and only increase it if you need a brighter photo. (18).

WHITE BALANCE

White Balance controls the colour of your photo. As we recommend daylight bulbs, you should change your white balance setting to 'Daylight'. This should give you consistent colour in your photos. If you are using a different light source, adjust your settings to match. 🐼



SEND US YOUR PICTURES!

With all these tips and tricks at your disposal, you should now be equipped to take pictures of your best-painted Citadel Miniatures. What you need to do now is send them to us at:

team@whitedwarf.co.uk

When sending your pictures, make sure you send the original pictures straight off the camera, the higher the resolution the better. You don't need to edit, crop, shrink or tweak them in any way, we'll do all that for you if we choose to feature them. Send some information about your models, too, such as how you painted or converted them and your name so we can credit you with your hard work. This Centurion by Gareth Etherington is a fine example of a reader's submission.

