

A photograph of a forest with tall, slender trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. Long, dark shadows of the trees are cast across the grassy ground, creating a rhythmic pattern. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Light and Shadow

“This month we explore how light shapes form, mood, and meaning.”



Seeing the Light

Before lifting the camera, notice where the light is coming from.

- Side-light reveals texture
- Back-light creates silhouettes
- Top-light sharpens edges
- Front-light flattens shape

Let the light decide the picture — not the subject.



Hard vs Soft Light

A simple explainer.

- **Hard light** — sharp edges, strong contrast, bold shapes
- **Soft light** — gentle transitions, subtle shadows, calm mood

“Hard light defines; soft light describes.”





Expose for Highlights

Protect the brightest areas.

- Keep highlights clean
- Let shadows deepen naturally
- Strong contrast appears without effort

This is the simplest way to control light and shadow.



Shadows as Subjects

Treat shadows as shapes.

- Look for bold outlines
- Move slightly to clarify the form
- Use simple backgrounds
- Let the shadow tell the story

Shadows aren't the absence of light — they're part of the composition.



Silhouettes

Shoot *into* the light.

- Simplify the outline
- Keep the background bright
- Use strong shapes: trees, people, animals, objects

Silhouettes are the easiest way to create drama.



Back-Light

Glow around edges — perfect for:

- Fur
- Leaves
- Hair
- Petals

Move until the light sits behind the subject.
Back-light adds magic to everyday scenes.



Texture & Shape

Side-light reveals detail.

- Brickwork
- Bark
- Fabrics
- Stone
- Faces

Texture comes alive when light skims across the surface.



What to Avoid

A few gentle pitfalls.

- Blown highlights
- Busy backgrounds
- Shadows with unclear edges
- Shooting too far away
- Over-editing contrast

“If the picture feels messy, simplify it.”

**I hope this presentation will be useful
for the August Monthly Challenge.**

**Thanks for watching
Now it's up to you.**