

TIPS AND TRICKS NO 2.

Torch or Strobe?

I see many entry level photographers getting good results with a simple point and shoot camera and housing using natural light or the on board camera flash. A common mistake is upgrading the base camera in the quest for better results. Better camera, better photographs, right? The better camera may give the user greater control over light hitting the sensor. But the benefit is only marginal if the light is still the same. Greater gains are made with adding artificial light to the system rather than changing cameras.

The next mistake is to add a torch as they are cheaper than strobes or video lights. A torch has a bright narrow focussed beam. It is not suitable for underwater photography. The focussed beam causes whatever the light hits to be over-exposed and the sections further from the light to be underexposed. For



photography the light must be wide spread evenly across the whole frame. Fortunately with the advent of LED technology and strobe innovation, video lights and strobes no longer cost an arm and a leg and are affordable for most serious underwater photographers.

When buying a strobe look to get one that will work with better cameras should you decide to upgrade later on. Also for daytime photography use strobes. I use strobes in the daytime, they limit the impact on subjects and allow greater control over light. Given the difficulty of carrying a torch and camera system at night, I prefer to use a single strobe and video light. The video light is my prime light source and the strobe fills in any shadows.

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