

## Shooting UV Effects on Digital Cameras or Film

Shooting a convincing UV effect can be tricky, but this tutorial will help clear it up. Although most people use digital these days, we've included some guidelines for those rare film aficionados, as well.

Long-wave ultraviolet light (black light) is invisible to the human eye, but you should be aware that film stock is extremely sensitive to it. This is because silver halide, the photosensitive material used in film to detect light, is also very sensitive to UV. Therefore, it's necessary to use a high-density UV haze filter to help prevent fogging. What we want is the fluorescent effect—not the UV light itself. For digital or video, a filter is not necessary.



However, when shooting fluorescent effects, you'll need much more light—a much brighter effect—than you would for a live audience. Human eyes are much more sensitive to the fluorescent effect than film or digital cameras.



In order to determine the F-stop you need for shooting with film, use a spot meter to read the light coming off the fluorescing object. This reading should be accurate enough to determine the proper exposure.

If the image is overexposed, it will appear as a glowing, colorful light. Underexposed, it will appear flat, and lack dimension. Exposed at the meter reading F-stop, the effect will appear as a nice, bright, saturated color. However, different film stocks—and different colors—will produce slightly different results.

For best and brightest results, place the camera at the angle of incidence of the light source. In other words, if the light strikes the subject at  $85^\circ$ , place the camera at  $95^\circ$ . ( $180^\circ - 85^\circ = 95^\circ$ ) Backlighting is typically not effective, unless you're using a transparent UV-sensitive material. Side and  $\frac{3}{4}$  rim produce interesting results.

When it comes down to it, you just need to test. Always perform test shots before making final shots. Experiment a little. You'll soon be well on your way to creating some spectacular shots! Remember to use our comments only as guidelines and recommendations, not as hard and fast rules.