

The bish, bash, bosh guide to shutter speed

When you take a photograph, your camera's shutter opens, letting in light. It stays open for a period of time (usually only a fraction of a second) and then closes, cutting off the light. This period of time is called the 'shutter speed'.

For reasons you'll soon see, sometimes you'll want to be in total control of your shutter speed. In these cases, the best mode to use is 'Shutter Priority', which is marked by **S** or **Tv**.

'Shutter Priority' allows you to change your shutter speed, while your camera kindly sorts out the correct corresponding aperture. But let's ignore aperture for now.

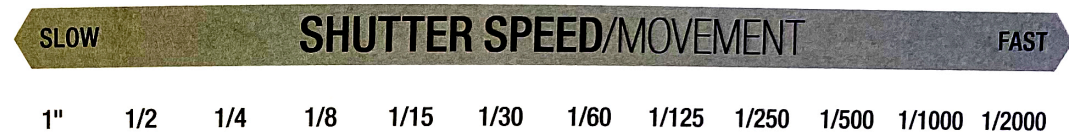
Here's how to change your shutter speed:

BISH Select 'Shutter Priority'. Most cameras have a mode dial. For those that don't, you'll be able to access your modes through the menu.

BASH Lightly tap the shutter release button to make your camera come to life. This is the button you press to take pictures.

BOSH Scroll one way to make your shutter speed faster. Scroll the other way to make it slower.

As you scroll, you'll see numbers from this scale:



Cameras show shutter speed either as a fraction, for example **1/500**, or a number, for example **500**. Either way, this indicates a shutter speed that is a fraction of one second. So **1/500** (or **500**) means your shutter will open for a mere one five hundredth of a second. That's fast.

If you see a double quotation mark after a number, for example, **2"**, this means your shutter speed is no longer fractions of a second, but whole seconds. So **2"** means your shutter will open for two seconds. In photography, that's an eternity.

Generally, when it's darker you have to use slower shutter speeds and when it's brighter you have to use faster shutter speeds. This is because shutter speed acts like a timer, which controls the length of time light enters the camera. So if it's dark you'll need to allow light to enter for longer.

Now, let's put exposure aside for a moment because this is where it gets really sexy. Shutter speed also creates two very distinctive visual effects in your image, and it's all about photographing movement.