

Fill Flash Basics

Balancing the backlight with fill flash

Fill Flash is a technique used to 'balance' the ambient backlight with the output from your flashgun so that the shadows are 'filled in'.

The examples below show how a conventional portrait shot against a bright window will create a silhouette effect. Increasing the exposure will allow detail to be seen in the subjects face but this is at the expense of losing detail in the background and creating a 'blown out' look. (This can be used for creative effect sometimes!)

By switching on your cameras flashgun the light on your subject can be balanced with the daylight coming through the window, but as the examples show, a straight pop-up flash can be a little harsh and it is usually best to 'bounce' the fill flash if possible (by angling the flash head so that the light is reflected off a neutral coloured ceiling)

				
1/125 f5.6 400iso NO FILL LIGHTING	1/125 f2.8 400iso NO FILL LIGHTING	1/125 F2.8 1600iso NO FILL LIGHTING	1/125 f5.6 400iso POP UP CAMERA FLASH SWITCHED ON	1/125 f5.6 400iso FILL FLASH BOUNCED OFF CEILING

To practice this technique, find yourself a bright window and a willing model, then try different exposures and flash power settings so that you can determine the possibilities using your own equipment.