

Using the Plasti-Pinhole Camera

The small slider on the front of the camera opens and closes the flap in front of the pinhole. This is your shutter. Be careful not to bump it open accidentally.

The original button on the top of the camera no longer does anything to take pictures. However you will need to click it each time you're ready to wind to a new frame.

Whenever you uncover the flap over the pinhole, you are exposing the film. There's nothing to prevent you from making several exposures onto the same frame of film (deliberately or accidentally). Get in the habit of clicking and winding to a new frame immediately after each exposure.

[A "P" setting on the back of the camera moves a mask into the film gate that crops the image to a panorama. You can play with this setting if you like; but note that enlarging these frames to panorama-size prints will give even blurrier photos.]

Load the camera with 100-speed film (Fuji if possible).

If you haven't loaded a manual 35mm camera in a while... Pull up the rewind crank and drop the cassette into place; tuck the tip of the film into the slot on the takeup spool; and wind a couple of waste frames before closing the back, to be sure that the film is taut and engaging with the sprocket teeth.

After closing the back, wind two more frames to reach unexposed film.

This pinhole mod results in a super-wide angle of view—wider than what the viewfinder shows. To avoid having subjects be too small in the frame, get up close! With pinholes you don't have to worry about focus.

Steady the camera against the ground, a tabletop, chair, or door frame. (Or use the tripod socket if you have one.) Trying not to wiggle the camera, open the shutter for these times:

In direct sun: One second (just open and close the flap as smoothly as you can).

With sun behind a cloud, or in open shade on a sunny day: 6 seconds

In very heavy overcast or deep shade: One minute

Indoors but with bright window light: 10 minutes

[For 200-speed film reduce these times by 1/2. After you get your rolls developed, check the negatives: If many are almost clear, increase these times; If they're consistently dense with no clear areas, reduce them.]

Try to keep your fingers out of the pinhole's field of view, although it's inevitable you'll get them in a few shots.

Be careful not to force the film winder if you feel resistance: You may be at the end of the roll (or the takeup spool may be overfull).

After your last shot, hold in the button on the bottom of the camera; fold out the small crank on the rewind knob; and turn clockwise to rewind all the film into its cassette. You'll hear a change in the sound and feel less resistance when you're done.

If you accidentally open the back and expose the film, slam it shut as quickly as possible—you will probably spoil a few frames, but not the whole roll.

Any grocery or drugstore with a "Kodak Perfect Touch" kiosk can develop the film and return prints plus a CD of scans for about \$12, with a turnaround time of 2-3 days.