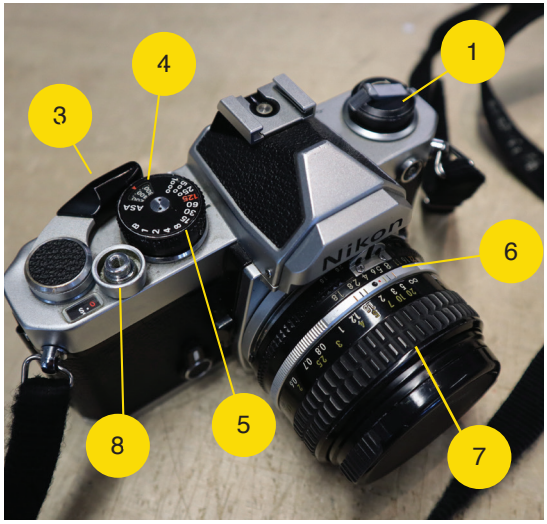
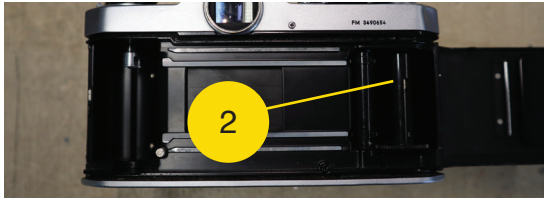
HANDBOOK 01 – THE ANALOG CAMERA





LEGEND

1. Film rewind knob & crank
2. Film takeup spool with slots
3. Film advance lever
4. ISO indicator
5. Shutter speed dial
6. Aperture
7. Focus
8. Shutter button
9. Film rewind button

So, you've rented out an analog camera but you're at a loss what to do. Don't worry, just follow this quick guide and you'll be fine.

1. INSERTING THE FILM

Let's start with putting your film in the camera. This is a Nikon FM, a camera that uses 35 mm film, so make sure you have that type of film.

1. To put the film in the camera, pull the button (1) and open up the back of the camera.

2. Put the film in with the protruding part downwards, and push the button (1) back down again so the film can't move.

3. Now pull the film gently out of its container over to the other side and insert the end of the film in one of the slots (2).

4. Rotate the lever (3) a little bit so the film gets wrapped around.

5. If the film is in there neatly and tightly, you can close the back of the camera.

6. Make sure you hear a distinct click and then rotate the lever (3) completely so that it snaps back.

7. Technically you can now make a photograph, but usually I click the shutter button and rotate the lever again, just to make sure the film is properly wound.

Congratulations, you've just placed your first film.

So, now what?

You see a ton of buttons and numbers and slides and levers and panic is setting in.

No worries, we'll explain it as simple as possible here.

2. SETTING THE ISO

So, you've just placed your film. Now, let's continue with setting up the basics.

On the container of your film there's two numbers – usually in a format like this: 36/400 – which tell you the number of photographs you can make with the film and the ISO. ISO denotes the light sensitivity of the film and it's the first thing we'll be setting up.

1. Pull the button (5) gently up and rotate it so that the number in the little window (4) slides. If you're using a 400 ISO film, rotate it to 400.

2. Release the button (5) so it gets locked in place. We could write a gigantic in-depth article on ISO but we won't 'cause we don't have the time. Basically, what you need to know about ISO is that the lower it gets, the less light-sensitive the film is.

A SHORT EXPLAINER

Okay so now all the fixed settings are done. The rest of the settings will all be dependent on the situation you're photographing in. In flight, we'll have to deal with the following three variables: shutterspeed, aperture and focus.

SHUTTERSPEED

So, first up is shutterspeed. The (other) numbers on button (5) show you the shutterspeed - so how quickly the shutter opens and shuts (hence the name) - and they range from B (no shutterspeed, manual) to 1000 (1/1000th of a second). The higher the shutterspeed the less light that comes into the camera and the less exposed the film will be (and the other way around, obviously).

APERTURE

Second, aperture. Aperture denotes the size of the 'eye' of the camera and can be found on the lens (6) closest to the body. As with ISO, we're not going to go into full detail here, but what you need to know is that a small aperture lets in less light and a greater aperture more. So, in a dark situation you'll have to go for a large aperture and vice versa.

BUT WAIT! There's a catch..

The larger the size of the aperture the smaller the number. So, an aperture of 3.5 is larger than an aperture of 16, keep that in mind. Oh yeah, usually the aperture is denoted with an f.

One important thing to understand about aperture is that a small aperture (so f/5,6 to f/16) gives you a large depth of field and a large aperture (f/3.5 and lower) gives you a shallow depth of field. A shallow depth of field means your subject will stand out (sharp) and your background will not (blurry), the larger the depth of field, the smaller this sharp-blurry contrast will be.

FOCUS

Thirdly, focus. This might seem somewhat of a no-brainer, but it's still good to touch upon it briefly. The focus on your subject can be changed by turning the focus on the lens (7). By using that strange circle-cut-in-half in the viewfinder you can make sure you are properly focused in (because, disappointingly, your own eyes are not always that reliable). The weird circle works as following: you see two halves and by aligning the two halves (so they form a single image) you can make sure you are properly focused on your subject.

3. SETTING THE APERTURE AND SHUTTERSPEED

So how are you supposed to find the right setting for your shutterspeed and your aperture? The right setting for your aperture is entirely dependent on what you're focusing on. To give you a rough idea you can use the following list:

f/3.5 and f/4	portraits and general usage
f/5.6 and f/8	architecture, large subjects, groups of people
f11 and f/16	landscapes and such

Obviously, there's no real 'right' setting as it all depends on your preferences, but the list gives you a bit of an idea. Generally speaking, most people use f/4, f/5.6 and f/8.

Okay, so now that you've picked the right aperture for your subject, turn the aperture ring (6) so that it aligns with the dot. Now, we only need to know the shutterspeed. At a base level, you need to know the strength of the light in your situation for this. There are two ways to do this.

One is by using a lightmeter. We have lightmeters available at the WdKA.Rental but you can also regularly find them in secondhand stores or online (see Marktplaats). Usually, a lightmeter works as follows: you put your ISO in the lightmeter and your aperture and then you point the lightmeter at your subject. The lightmeter will then advise a certain shutterspeed.

There's also a free app available for iOS and Android called Lux which does a fairly good (albeit not perfect) job.

The other option is to use the Sunny 16 rule. It's not entirely perfect but it can get the job done if you're in a hurry. Unfortunately, it only works when it's a bright day which are in short supply in the Netherlands. Anyhow, basically, the Sunny 16

rule dictates that if it's a sunny day (that means sharp shadows) you can use aperture f/16 and you should use a shutterspeed that is equal (or close to equal) to your ISO. So, for example:

You use 400 ISO and you've set your aperture to f/16, then the Sunny 16 rule recommends you to use shutterspeed 400.

To set the shutterspeed, turn the button (5) and leave it there.

4. LET'S SHOOT

Okay! So now you're all set to shoot. To shoot, open the lever (3) halfway, look through the view-finder, focus on your subject and then click on the shutter button (8). Now, open the lever all the way and let it snap back so the film advances and you can take the next picture.

5. TAKING OUT THE FILM

That's it, you did it. Now all that remains is shooting the rest of your film. Once that's done, it's time to get the film back into its container and out of the camera.

1. To do this push the button on the underside of the camera (9) and flip the crank out of the button on top of the camera (1).

2. Turn the crank clockwise so the film is rolled back up in the container. Keep turning the crank until you don't feel any resistance anymore: this means the film is now back in its container, safe from pesky light.

3. To open the back of the camera, pull out button (1) again and take the film out of your camera.

Congratulations, you have now successfully used an analog camera.

Written by S.D. van Gelderen
WdKA.Rental
2022