

## Getting Started in Toy Photography

In this post from Mon Macutay from <http://www.gmtristan.com> shares some introductory tips for **toy photography**.



I collect toys and I love photography. Combine the two together and you'll embark on a journey filled with fun, adventure and new discoveries every time you go out and shoot. I'm no pro, but I'd like to share with you some of the things I've learned through experience, research and experimentation as I went through my own journey in this fascinating (and did I say fun?) photographic field.

### **The Art of Toy Photography**

Toys represent our imagination, our aspirations and our innocent, childhood fantasies. Everyone is still a child at heart. The camera, along with our creativity, will allow us to capture these moments and share it with everyone. The challenge of Toy Photography is to make the toy "lifelike"; to remove that "plastic-feel" to it and to make it more human. Most Toy Photographers put their subjects into everyday, mundane scenes. You are limited only by your imagination.

Here are a few tips and notes to help you get started;

- **Tell A Story** – Each toy has its own background story. Be they be action figures, dolls, superheroes or giant mecha (robots). Each product line has a rich “origin” to it. Use these elements to either create thematic or wacky themes. An example would be Star Wars toys interacting with everyday objects in your kitchen... or how about small, green army men having a life of their own and invading your work-station when you leave the office. There are endless possibilities.
- **Make them more human** – Pose and compose your shots as if you were shooting a real human being. You may apply the elements you learned in portraiture to this. You can also combine and experiment with landscape photography and then apply your toys to all of nature’s splendor. You can start in your own backyard using natural sunlight. You can’t get a cheaper or better light source than that.



- **Don't be afraid to experiment** – The good thing about toy photography is that; there no set rules on how to do it right. As a photographer, you create your own style. You may want to apply the things you learned about product-photography and use that light box as a studio for your “models”. I love borrowing dolls from my niece and getting a “professional

magazine like model” shoot. You can have our pets interact with your toys too. Just fire away, you’re bound to get a few great “keepers”.

- **Learn from others** – The Internet allows you to check out the works of other hobbyist toy photographers. I follow the [Star Wars Toys Flickr group](#) and this [Flickr group](#) so that I can see their own works. More often than not, some photos will spark off my own ideas on what I’ll integrate in my next photo-shoot or project. It’s also best to interact with the community and ask questions. They’ll be more than glad to offer help.
- **Share** – I have lots of fun when I do my own shoots and I’m sure to have more fun reading the reactions of my friends when I share my toy photos. I use [Facebook](#) and [my own blog](#) to share my photos. Even if I don’t make money from this, the input and constructive comments that I get are more than enough compensation for me. When someone smiles because of the photo of my toy, that’s reward enough for me.

## Toy Photography Gear and Details



Aside from your DSLR, your toys (heck, you can borrow if you don’t have that much) and probably a light box or some [home-made light sources](#), you don’t need much to get into Toy Photography.

Here are some tips when you do both indoor and outdoor photo shoots:

- **Indoor** – If you can take your flash off camera, you're in the right track. The best areas inside our home are the kitchen, the living room, your home office or even your garage. Just imagine wild and fun scenes that your toys can make and you'll have hours of fun. You can also use a simple light box to add drama to an otherwise bland and boring toy.
- **Outdoor** – The outdoors (and natural sunlight) are great for toy photography. You can use your flash to "fill in" when your subject's back lit. You can also bring a home-made reflector (such as the sun screen of your car) and use that to add more light to your subject. I normally use my "nifty fifty" (Canon 50mm f1.8 II) lens for this. It's sharp and affordable. Great for this hobby!



There you go! I hope these tips will get you started in this fun and rewarding field of photography. I'll be more than happy to answer some of your questions on the comments below.

Lastly, there's only one rule that you need to follow – Have Fun!