

TIFFEN® Insight... Controlling Contrast

Controlling the contrast of your film or video image is critical. Bright lights or sunlight create problems when the ratio between the highlight and shadow areas is beyond the latitude of the recording medium. If you expose for the highlights, the shadows appear without detail. If you expose for the shadows, the result is washed-out, overly bright highlights. Tiffen offers three alternatives to solving your contrast problems: ULTRA CONTRAST, LOW CONTRAST, AND SOFT CONTRAST filters.

ULTRA CONTRAST filters work with ambient light from surroundings, lowering contrast uniformly throughout the scene. Shadow areas reveal more detail without any flare or halation from light sources or bright reflections, even direct shooting into the sun.

LOW CONTRAST filters work by spreading light from the highlights to the darker areas. Shadows are lighter, enabling you to see more detail. They also create a very slight flare or halation around hot spots which can be a useful effect. Low Contrast is the filter of choice for people who shoot video but want to achieve more of a film look.

SOFT CONTRAST filters diminish highlights while retaining the darker look of the shadows, hence a reduction in contrast. Although the Soft Contrast filter is a neutral gray do not compensate exposure.

Compare the filtered photos to the photo without a filter. With the Low Contrast 5 filter, notice the greater detail in the leaves caused by the lightening of the shadows and the mild flare around the bright areas. In the scene utilizing the Soft Contrast 5 filter, the dark areas of the leaves, tree trunks and walkway retain their darkness, but there is more detail visible in the bright areas, particularly in the buses. The mild flare still exists. With the Ultra Contrast 5 filter, the dark areas of the leaves and tree trunks show more detail but without flare from the bright areas around the edges of the backlit leaves. Use Ultra Contrast filters in scenes with sufficient brightness to lower the contrast without the minimal amount of flare produced by the Low Contrast and Soft Contrast filters.

Tiffen offers Low Contrast and Ultra Contrast filters in densities 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and Soft Contrast in densities 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. They are available through your dealer in a range of sizes to fit every type of lens or Matte Box.



No Filter



Ultra Contrast 5



Low Contrast 5



Soft Contrast 5



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