

# MULTIPLE EXPOSURES

Newsletter of the Urban Ecology Center Photo Club • Vol XVII No XI



*Path through the Dust*  
by **Ted Tousman**,  
first place in our November  
Photo Challenge: Sports Stop Action  
See inside for more!

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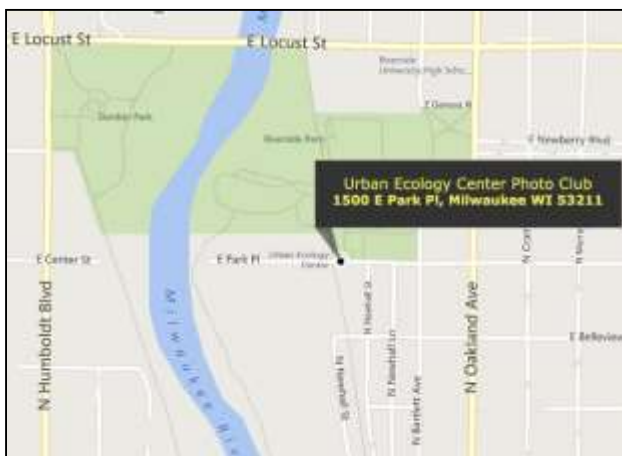
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*Room for More!*

### Please Join Us!

Our next meeting is **Thursday  
December 5th**, 6:30PM to 9:00PM,  
in the Community Room of the Urban  
Ecology Center, at 1500 East Park  
Place in Milwaukee.



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Multiple Exposures, the official newsletter of the Urban Ecology Center Photo Club, is published twelve times a year, and is included in the club membership dues.

The Urban Ecology Center Photo Club is a member club of the Wisconsin Association of Camera Clubs ([WACCO](#)) and the Photographic Society of America ([PSA](#)).



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## Photo Challenge



*1.5 Milliseconds, Deconstructed* by Joe Swiggum  
was our second place winner.

## Photo Challenge



*Pickleball Action by Jack Kleinman.*



# 25 Tips for Winter Landscape Photography

by Rusty Parkhurst

**See the full article at:** <https://improvephotography.com/51315/25-tips-winter-landscape-photography/>

Winter is in full swing for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere. Depending on where you live, cold temperatures and perhaps even snow may be in your forecast. Photographers who enjoy getting outdoors to shoot face a few more challenges during the cold winter months. Although freshly fallen snow can make for very beautiful and striking images, it can be more difficult to leave the warmth and comfort of home when the thermometer dips into the freezing digits. This article provides some helpful tips for getting out for winter landscape photography.

## **Tip #1 – Dress in layers**

Staying warm and dry while out in the cold weather is of utmost importance. If you are warm and dry, you will be much more comfortable. Being more comfortable means you will enjoy being outside shooting for longer periods of time.

Everyone has heard this advice a thousand times, but it's worth reiterating here. Dressing in layers is the best strategy for braving cold wintry weather. Wearing layers will make it much easier to regulate your body temperature. As the day warms up or as physical activity such as hiking raises your body temperature, layers can be removed to keep you from overheating. This will allow perspiration to evaporate, keeping you dry and much more comfortable.

Finally, layers need to be planned out carefully, depending on weather conditions and how much you will be moving around. The most important layer is the one that is against your skin – the base layer. If you remember only one thing, it should be that cotton is not your friend. It's great when lounging on the couch, but not as a base layer. In fact, avoid it altogether. Cotton does not do a good job of wicking moisture away from your body. Once it gets wet, it stays wet. That means you get cold and miserable. Go for a combination of synthetic materials, merino wool, and down fabric for your layering system.

## **Tip #2 – Mind your hands and feet**

No matter how warm the rest of you is, if your hands or feet get cold, the shoot is not going to be much fun. Worrying about being cold means you are not focusing on image creation, and that will be noticeable later while reviewing your photos on the computer.

A good pair of gloves is vital when heading out into the cold. I've been using the Vallerret Markhof Pro gloves for about a year now. They are specifically designed for photographers and work well for me for temperatures down into the lower 20s to upper teens. For colder temperatures, I use a base layer glove inside insulated mittens. That way, when I need to manipulate camera controls, I can quickly slip a mitten off and back on again to keep the cold at bay.

My feet are usually the most difficult part to keep warm, even if the temperatures aren't that cold. This is particularly true if I'm just mostly staying in one place and not moving around much. If I'm going to be doing a lot of hiking, I wear a pair of waterproof, insulated hiking boots. If my plan is to stay in one place for most of the time, a good pair of snow boots does the trick. In either case, I use a pair of moisture wicking merino wool socks underneath.

Another good idea is to have some of the chemically activated hand and toe warmers with you. They work well to keep things toasty in especially frigid conditions.

### **Tip #3 – Allow time for gear to acclimate**

Moving photography gear directly from the warmth of home or your car to the freezing cold outdoors, or vice versa, can be troublesome. This is especially true for camera bodies and lenses. The extreme temperature change will cause condensation to form on or even inside a camera and lens, and that can be bad news. At best, the lens is fogged up when you go outside and you will have to wait for it to clear before shooting. Worst case scenario, moisture formed inside the camera causes damage to the delicate electrical components.

Preventing this from happening is not difficult, it just takes some planning and patience. Before heading outside, place your gear inside the camera bag. Place the bag outside for 15 minutes or so, leaving it closed. This will allow the camera, lenses, and other gear to slowly cool and acclimate to the cold temperatures before taking it out to begin shooting. Before coming back in where it's warm, put everything back in the bag and close it. Keep it in the bag inside for at least 30 minutes so everything inside can slowly warm up. Another option is to carry a large zip-lock bag with you, and place the camera in the bag and seal it before coming inside. When you come inside, moisture will form on the outside of the bag instead of on the camera. Also, start saving the little silica gel packs that come in about everything we buy and carry those with you. Put a couple in your camera bag and in the zip-lock bag as an added precaution against moisture.

**Tip #4 – Go out early**

Try to get out as soon after snowfall as possible. Ideally, get out while it's still snowing. If you wait too long, the nice pristine snow may be history as people or animals have tracked through. After an overnight snow, plan to head out for sunrise. The snow will be in good condition, plus you will have great light to work with (assuming it is not completely overcast).

**Tip #5 – Bring water and snacks**

Another way to help keep yourself comfortable and warm is to keep your body fueled. Bring along some snacks that work well for you and a water bottle or two. Staying hydrated is important, even when it is cold outside. Cold weather tricks our bodies into thinking we are not thirsty. However, it is important to take a few sips now and then, even if you think you don't need it. Staying hydrated helps your body regulate its temperature and will keep you feeling much better, even in the dead of winter.

**Tip #6 – Bring plenty of fully charged batteries**

This is true no matter the time of year, but is particularly important during cold weather. Batteries lose their ability to power the camera much faster when it is cold outside. You have likely noticed when shooting in the winter that the camera battery drains very quickly. What is really happening is that the cold temperatures are slowing down the chemical reaction inside the battery to the point that it no longer produces enough power to operate the camera. Be sure to bring along plenty of extra batteries and make sure they are all fully charged before leaving home.

**Tip #7 – Keep batteries warm**

Carry the extra batteries in a pocket that is close to your body to keep them warm when not in use. This will ensure that when you need to switch them out, that the new battery is ready to perform. Note that the battery that is replaced is probably not totally dead; it just needs to be warmed up. Place the cold batteries into a separate pocket to warm them back up again. Given some time to warm up and get the chemical reaction going will likely make them usable again.

**Tip #8 – Keep camera and lenses cold**

After getting your camera and lenses acclimated to the cold temperatures, keep them cold until you are finished shooting. It may be tempting to place the camera inside a coat to protect it from the elements, but that will only warm it up and cause the lens, viewfinder, and possible other components to fog up. Warm breath can also cause the lens and camera glass to fog up. Don't be tempted to remove accumulated snow by blowing on the camera or lens. In extreme conditions, the moisture from your breath can condensate on the glass and freeze to create a glaze of ice.

**Tip #9 – Don't let snow fool the camera**

Shooting snowy landscapes can wreak havoc on your camera's internal light meter. When the camera 'sees' all the white snow, it will immediately compensate by darkening the exposure when it shouldn't. This will happen automatically if you are shooting in aperture or shutter priority modes (or some other auto mode). If you are shooting in manual mode, then the light meter will try to tell you that the scene is overexposed. Letting the camera have its way will result in images with snow that looks gray, so don't let the camera be fooled. Take control and make the necessary adjustments. If you are shooting in an automatic mode, apply about one stop of positive exposure compensation and go from there. Do the same in manual mode by setting the light meter to about one stop overexposed. The snow should look white in the scene without being totally blown out.

**Tip #10 – Ice can be cool**

Look for interesting ice formations to include in your composition. This could be anything from icicles to sheets of ice formed on natural surfaces. Mother Nature makes some very interesting sculptures. Take some time to find them and see how they can be used in your images.

**Tip #11 – Keep frost off your lens**

If you decide to stay out late and do some night landscape photography, you may need to battle the formation of frost on your lens. As the temperature drops and the lens surface cools below the dew point, moisture in the atmosphere may cause the formation of frost. This will inevitably happen in the middle of a timelapse sequence, totally ruining the shot. There are a couple of ways to prevent the formation of frost. You could wrap a chemically activated hand warmer around the lens barrel, holding it in place using a



rubber band. Another way is to use a battery powered lens warmer. This device wraps around the lens barrel and is held in place by velcro closures. The USB cord is connected to a portable power bank to provide warmth for many hours. The downside is that you have to carry the extra power bank and also make sure it is fully charged before heading out to shoot.

### **Tip #12 – Look for color**

There may not always be a lot of color in a winter landscape scene. Trees without leaves and snow create a mostly monochromatic landscape. However, if you can work just a splash of color into the scene, it can make a big difference in an image. Wintry landscapes are generally quite cold, not only in temperature, but also in color. Look for things to include that contrast well with blues. A touch of golden light from the sun could be all you need. If that doesn't work out, look for other things on the yellow to orange side of the color wheel to provide some nice contrast and visual interest.

### **Tip #13 – Shoot black & white**

A lot of times there just isn't much color in a winter landscape. If it is covered in snow, then most things will be white and everything else may be different shades of gray and brown. Add in a dull, overcast sky and there isn't much of an interesting color palette. If that is the case, don't be afraid to just shoot in black and white. Pay more attention to light and shadow and different tones in the image. Assuming you are shooting in RAW format, you could just change the image to black and white in post. However, changing your camera's picture style to black and white will allow you to see what an image will look like while in the field. Then you can adjust settings and composition for a more dramatic capture.

### **Tip #14 – Use fresh snow in your compositions**

A field of freshly fallen, pristine snow can make some very beautiful images. Be aware of how you approach a scene so you don't track through the snow and ruin an otherwise serene image. One exception that I've seen in other images, but never captured myself, is a single line of footprints leading in to the distance. The footprints can act as a leading line and add mystery and intrigue to an image.

**Tip #15 – Conserve battery power**

We've already established that the battery in your camera isn't going to last as long when it is cold. Taking a few measures can help to conserve the battery power and keep it going just a bit longer. First off, try to limit usage of the rear LCD as much as possible. It is a huge battery drain in any condition, but will really zap a battery in cold weather. Also, don't forget to turn off the camera when you are moving between shots or shooting locations. Once you are set up again, just switch it back on and start shooting. I've also heard of using of placing a chemically activated hand warmer on the outside of the camera's battery compartment. Although I've never tried it, it would presumably keep the battery warmer and keep its juices flowing for a longer time.

**Tip #16 – Experiment with white balance**

Shooting a snow-covered landscape with clear blue skies overhead can create an image with a lot of blue, especially in the shadows. The color blue is often associated with cold, so this may not be an issue. However, try experimenting with different white balance settings to create something a little different. Switch out of auto white balance and try a setting to warm up the image. White balance is a setting that is easy to change quickly and can create some unique images. Plus, even if you end up not liking what you see, it can always be changed later in computer software (assuming you are shooting in RAW).

**Tip #17 – Use a tripod**

Using a tripod is a good idea when shooting landscapes, as it slows you down and allows you to focus more on compositions. For winter landscape photography, there is an additional advantage to using a tripod, at least for me. I have found that holding the camera to shoot makes my hands a lot colder. This is due to conductive cooling, as heat tends to want to move from a warmer object (your hands) to a cooler object (your camera). With the camera on a tripod, that is not a problem. It also makes it easier to protect the camera and lens from moisture. Be aware, however, that you should allow the tripod some time to acclimate to the colder temperatures. Going directly from warm to frigid cold will cause condensation to form and causes added stress on metal parts.

**Tip #18 – Outfit your tripod for the conditions**

If the legs of your tripod sinking into soft snow is a problem, you may want to try a set of tripod snow shoes. These attach to the feet of the tripod and provide a wide base to prevent the legs from sinking. Another situation you may encounter is shooting on hard-packed snow or ice, where your tripod may be unstable due to the surface conditions. Try a set of tripod spikes to really lock in the legs and prevent the tripod from moving around.

**Tip #19 – Take advantage of the low-angle sun**

One of the cool things about winter is that the sun stays relatively close to the horizon all day. Because of this, the light is less harsh, even in the middle of the day. The lower angle of the sun can create dramatic light and shadows and might make it possible to shoot all day, or at least for a lot longer than you would during the summer months. Another advantage of the lower sun angle is that it is easier to include the sun in your landscape images at times other than sunrise and sunset.

**Tip #20 – Don't forget the details**

Remember that there is more to a scene than the wide sweeping vistas of mountains and fields. There are so many other smaller details to shoot. Look for more intimate landscapes. One way to do this is to take off the wide angle lens and put on a telephoto to zoom into a scene. It could be anything, such as the way the light is hitting a single tree or part of a tree; frozen bubbles in ice on a small pond; or a unique formation created by wind-blown snow. The possibilities really are endless, and only limited by your imagination.

**Tip #21 – Frightful weather can make dramatic images**

The weather outside may be frightful, but don't let that keep you from going out to make images. Head out into the storm to look for dramatic image opportunities. Clouds can give a landscape image much more interest, but make sure there is some detail that can be seen rather than just flat, overcast skies. Falling snow or blowing winds can also create a much more dynamic scene. Try dragging the shutter to show some movement.

**Tip #22 – Use a polarizer**

A circular polarizer filter is good to have for any type of landscape photography. It will work the same and provide many of the same advantages for winter landscape photography. A polarizer will help to make a blue sky darker and can enhance cloud

detail. It also is good for cutting through glare and generally saturating colors. Just be careful to not over-polarize the scene. This will make the sky look unnatural. A polarizer also doesn't always work well with a wide angle lens, as the polarization may not be consistent across the frame. Try shooting at different polarizer strengths to see what works best.

### **Tip #23 – Protect your gear**

Shooting winter landscape photography in inclement weather could put your gear at risk. Even if your camera and lens are weather sealed, there are limits, and you might as well take precautions just in case. If it is snowing, then snowflakes landing on your camera may melt and moisture could seep into the buttons or other openings. This likely isn't a big deal most of the time, but if it is snowing heavily, you will want to use something to cover your camera and lens. These rain covers work well and are inexpensive and take up next to no space in the camera bag. Also be sure to use the lens hood, which will help keep snow off the front glass and also cut down on glare.

### **Tip #24 – Check your histogram**

We've already talked about how snow in winter landscape photography can fool your camera's metering system. After you make the necessary adjustments, don't just review the image on the LCD to determine if it exposed correctly. Check the histogram occasionally to be sure that there is data pushed as far to the right as possible without blowing out highlight details. Be sure to turn on the highlight over-exposure warning – the 'blinkies' – on your camera to easily see if any areas of the image are over-exposed. It's easy to over-expose snow. Some over-exposure may not be a big issue, since there may not be much detail in those areas anyway. You'll have to judge which areas of the image, if any, you can live with being over-exposed and adjust accordingly.

### **Tip #25 – If all else fails....**

Winter landscape photography can be a lot of fun and amazing images can be created. Try to get out and shoot if you can, but don't feel too bad if you're unable to make it for some reason. Use that time to curl up in a warm place and soak up some photography knowledge from this website, Improve Photography Plus, or other video tutorials.