

Quick-Start Guide to Using the Digital Grey Kard

For user's guides in German, French, Italian, Spanish and English, video guides, tips, questions, and to order more cards or lanyards, visit us at www.digitalimageflow.com or e-mail us at digitalimageflow@gmail.com.

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Thank you for purchasing the Digital Grey Kard, the number one rated digital color correction tool. With proper use of the digital gray card, you can be assured of *perfect digital color every time*™.

1.1 Assemble your Digital Grey Kard:

The Standard and Premium Cards include a set of three color balance cards, and the Event, Studio, and Ultra Digital Grey Kard products include one ultra-calibrated gray reference card. All Digital Grey Kard products are identified by an individually numbered certification label and focus target patch. You may use either side of both cards for color correction. Remove the card or cards from the packaging. Remove the lanyard from the packaging and attach the lanyard to the cards. Pass the string connector through the hole in the cards and loop it back on itself.

1.2 A Brief Introduction to the Concept of Color Balance:

In the days of film photography, the only control the photographer had over color balance (also termed white balance) was to choose the correct film emulsion or color filter for the lighting conditions. There was a special fluorescent light filter and tungsten balanced film for indoor shots and daylight balanced film for outdoor shots. Most photographers were not even aware of these choices. Behind the scenes, the developing labs were applying significant color balance at the time of photo printing. Overall, most film photographers were blissfully unaware of the problem of white balance. With the advent of digital photography, color balance became the responsibility of every photographer. To make things easy, most digital cameras have an *auto white balance* (AWB) feature built-in. This feature finds bright areas in the photographed scene and uses this data to set the color temperature. If there are no bright areas in the scene, or the illuminating light has a very strong color cast, even expensive digital cameras will perform poorly. Once a photographer moves beyond camera phones and simple point and shoot cameras, she begins to notice that there are problems with color balance in some of her photographs. In these conditions, she needs a simple, portable, and easy to use color balance tool.

1.3 What is a Digital Grey Kard?

The Digital Grey Kard is simple, easy-to-use, ultra portable and, and economical white balance tool. A white balance tool consists of one or a series of spectrally neutral objects used for digital color balancing. Each Digital Grey Kard is formulated to be spectrally neutral under all lighting conditions. That is, the light reflected from the Digital Grey Kard is a true and accurate representation of the physical qualities of the light illuminating the card. Nothing is added, nothing is distorted, and nothing is taken away. The photographer simply causes the camera or the computer software to register the light reflected from the Digital Grey Kard (DGK) as a reference. With this precise reference data stored, the camera or the post processing software can then perform a precision correction of all of the colors in the scene. If reflections are seen on the DGK surface during a white balance operation, reposition the card so that reflections are eliminated. The surface of the black product label or the white card will instantly reveal any reflections that may lead to incorrect white balance. You may use either side of the cards for white balance operations. If the cards become soiled or scratched, they may be washed with regular soap and water or lightly polished to restore the surface. Do not use harsh cleaning solutions on the cards, as they may become damaged.

1.4 Quick- Start Guide for In-Camera Custom White Balance (for JPEG Shooters)

To use the DGK as the basis for an in-camera custom white balance, make sure enough of the center of the frame is covered by the card in your picture to be properly read for white balance. Consult your camera's manual for details on how much of the frame should be filled. Next, go through the menu to select that picture for your custom white balance. Finally, set the camera to the custom white balance setting. Remember, you will need to shoot a new custom white balance shot each time you go into a different room, or the sun goes under a cloud, or if you are pointing your camera at a portion of the scene that is more strongly lit by one particular light source. You can save these images and settings and re-use them as often as you need them.

1.5 Quick- Start Guide for Post-Processing White Balance (for RAW Shooters)

If you are using the **DGK** for RAW shooting, you will need to shoot an image for the DGK in each lighting situation you encounter. The DGK does not need to be exactly centered. When shooting a wedding, for example, the idea is to walk through the location and shoot a photo of the grey card in each room of the house, each location in the church, or each place at the reception where you expect to shoot the wedding party later. You simply hold the grey card out in front of yourself where it is lit by the same light as the area of interest and take a shot of the card and its surroundings. Use a wide angle lens so you can see where you were when you made the shot. Once you complete the shoot, you go back to your grey card images and use the appropriate image to set white balance for each series of shots. To use the grey card in your post-processing workflow, simply select a point in the Digital Grey Kard picture in your post processing software to be the basis for the custom white balance setting. Then select the images taken under that lighting and tell the software to set the white point for all of them. The black and white cards are to set black and white points (such as in the Photoshop *Levels* control) if you use them. See the instructions for your image editing software.