[introduction]

I’m in love with light. I’m infatuated with a beautiful highlight and drawn to a mysterious shadow. I love the freedom and control of creating light that expresses my vision, mood or story whether in the studio or on location. Creativity and pushing outside of the expected really challenges, inspires and fulfills me. Yes, clearly I am a photo nerd!

As a fashion photographer lighting has become a powerful tool for me to develop my style and create images with staying power.

I am also passionate about teaching and sharing. When I create educational tools and materials, I aim to create things that I wish existed as I was growing as a photographer. My goal is to help my fellow photographers to save time, avoid frustration and master our photographic craft more quickly.

In the studio I started by learning about softboxes, strip softboxes, and reflectors. I began with a single strobe with no modifiers, and grew from there. I eventually learned light patterns like paramount light and Rembrandt light. As I mastered these techniques, I wanted to try more advanced modifiers or lighting setups. I wanted to learn something a little more creative and unexpected. It seemed, however, that for the most part there were very few advanced or creative lighting tutorials.

Sure, there were a few behind the scene photos of complicated shoots, but there wasn’t really a break down of how to replicate the lighting. I discovered some creative lighting tutorials, but often it was just adding a single gel to the scene. Overall, I felt that after a certain point there weren’t many resources, and that creative lighting was often a closely held secret.

For this reason, I have created this guide for our photographic community to expand our creativity in the studio. This guide is a resource of creative tools and techniques, whether you are trying to get creative with ‘usual’ modifiers (like a softbox and reflectors) or more exotic tools (like spot projection and barn doors). Whether you have 1 light or 4 lights, I’ve included setups to make use of your gear for striking and eye-catching results.

For each and every shot I’ve included several detailed behind the scenes photos, step-by-step instructions on setting up the shot, gear required, settings of the lights and camera, distances, and even a control shot of a mannequin (so you can see the light without styling or model).

Furthermore, I have more than 20 instructional videos of these setups on learn.lindsayadlerphotography.com (included with site membership) so you can see me build the setups in real time!

My hope is that this guide helps you to discover something new about studio lighting, whether it is a new modifier or an unusual way to use the tools you already have. My hope is that you are inspired by the amazing capabilities of studio lighting, and push yourself to experiment and create!

Lindsay Adler
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“My job is to create high impact images that grab your attention. Light is an essential tool to captivate and draw people in. When creating memorable photographs, I grab my Profoto D1s. They are extremely intuitive, powerful, reliable and let me focus on creating impact. The versatility of these strobes paired with Profoto light shapers provides me endless flexibility and control to bring my vision to life”.

- Lindsay Adler

Learn more at www.profoto.com/us
High Key Wrap around with Grid
Equipment Used:

- **LIGHTING GEAR**

  2 Profoto D1 Air 500 Watt  
  Light 1: Profoto 5 degree Grid  
  Light 2: Profoto 3x4ft Softbox

  Other gear used:  
  Cinefoil (optional)  
  Avenger D600 Boom Arm

  Distance of Subject to Background: Not Applicable

- **CAMERA GEAR & SETTINGS**

  Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark III DSLR  
  Lens: Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM at 130mm  
  ISO: 100  
  Shutter Speed: 1/200  
  Aperture: 11

The Setup:

- **LIGHT 1**

  Distance from subject: 9 inches  
  Distance off center: 0 inches  
  Height above eye level: 5 inches  
  Power (Fstops): F/11

- **LIGHT 2**

  Distance from subject: 0 inches  
  Distance off center: 0 inches  
  Height above eye level: 0 inches  
  Power (Fstops): F/22

Illustrated Lighting Setup
THE STEP BY STEP GUIDE:

» STEP 1

Place a strobe with softbox directly behind and against the subject to create a pure white background with highlights that wrap around the body and jawline. The closer you have the softbox to the subject, the more the light will wrap. Here a 3x4ft softbox has been utilized. You may alternatively light a white seamless paper to create a white background effect if this is what you prefer, or if shooting full length.

» STEP 2

Place a strobe with a 5 degree grid (or smallest grid available) pointed at the center of the subject’s face. A small degree grid helps create a focused area of light, especially if you can bring the light closer to the subject. Consider having the strobe on a boom arm to allow you to center it over the subject’s face without obscuring your photograph. If desired, lower the light just out of the frame to keep the area of light more circular/focused and to ensure catchlights in the eyes.

(continued...)
» STEP 3

Optionally you can use cinefoil (or other flag) to block off areas of the main light to create more of a strip or focused effect to the light. This is not a necessary step but can allow you to create more shadows and drama. For example, you can narrow the beam of light just around the eyes, lips, or other specific area of interest.

tip

Because of the very narrow area of light created by the grid, your subject will have a very limited range of motion. A movement of a few inches to the left, right, front or back will cause the subject to fall into shadow. Small subject movements combined with small adjustments of the light will likely be necessary.
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For more information on the Evolution Series drives visit g-technology.com/evseries
Equipment and Setup

Equipment Used:

» LIGHTING GEAR

2 Profoto D1 Air 500 Watt
Light 1: Profoto Softlight Reflector (beauty dish) + Grid
Light 2: Profoto zoom reflector with barn doors + gels (modeling light only)

Other gear used:
Rosco Gel Kit
Avenger D600 Boom Arm

Distance of Subject to Background: Not Applicable

» CAMERA GEAR & SETTINGS

Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark III DSLR
Lens: Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM at 130mm
ISO: 100
Shutter Speed: 1/8
Aperture: 14
WB: Flash

The Setup:

» LIGHT 1

Distance from subject: 32 inches
Distance off center: 9 inches
Height above eye level: 12 inches
Power (Fstops): F/9

» LIGHT 2

Distance from subject: 19 inches
Distance off center: 0 inches
Height above ground: 14 inches
Power (Fstops): F/16
**THE STEP BY STEP GUIDE:**

**STEP 1**
Completely remove all ambient light in the shooting space. Be sure no light is entering through windows and that overhead lights are turned off to prevent ambient light from affecting the look of the final photograph.

**STEP 2**
Place a strobe with a beauty dish and a grid as the main light illuminating your subject’s face. The beauty dish will create crisp but glowing light on the face. The grid will focus the light primarily around the subject’s face and torso.

(continued...)

setup: front of camera view

setup: side view
[more step by step]
(continued from previous page)

» STEP 3
Add a second light pointed at the lower half of the subject’s body. For this light you will turn OFF the strobe capabilities and only use the modeling light. Here we have used a zoom reflector with barn doors and a red gel for creative effects. Turn the modeling light up to its fullest power.

» STEP 4
For this image you will use a long shutter speed (aka ‘dragging the shutter’) to allow the background light to register in your exposure. Here we have thrown the dress in the air to create movement in the frame that registers through the long exposure. The moving fabric combined with the red gel results in a fiery appearance for the dress. Also try zooming your lens in or out, moving your camera left and right, or physically moving your body in and out during the long exposure. Each will produce different creative results.

You may want to turn off the modeling light on the beauty dish. During the long exposure, the constant light from the modeling light may register on the subject’s face and create unwanted motion blur. For this shoot, the subject will need to be wearing clothing/items to pick up the light from the constant light (modeling light). In this case a shimmery dress is perfect for the effect. Avoid dark colors or matte fabrics.
Two Front Strip Lights
**Equipment Used:**

» **LIGHTING GEAR**

- 4 Profoto D1 Air 500 Watt
- Lights 1 & 2: Profoto 1x4ft Strip Softboxes
- Lights 3 & 4: Profoto zoom reflectors with barn doors

Other gear used:
- Savage Super White Background
- Distance of Subject to Background: 75 inches

» **CAMERA GEAR & SETTINGS**

Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark III DSLR
Lens: Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM at 150mm
ISO: 200
Shutter Speed: 1/200
Aperture: F/9
WB: Flash

**The Setup:**

» **LIGHTS 1 & 2**

- Distance from subject: 26 inches
- Distance off center: 12 inches
- Height above eye level: 0 inches
- Power (Fstops): F/11 (together)

» **LIGHTS 3 & 4**

- Distance to background: 48 inches
- Distance off center: 36 inches
- Power (Fstops): F/22 (together)
» **STEP 1**

Set up a white background (in this example, Savage “super white” seamless paper) and two strobes to illuminate the background. Here we have used two zoom reflectors with barn doors, but several other modifiers would achieve a similar look. Illuminate the background to give you even white throughout.

» **STEP 2**

Place two strobes in front of the subject with 1x4ft strip softboxes on each strobe. Both lights should be exactly the same distance, power and angle from the subject. This will give you flat light and unusual catchlights. The strip lights can be placed vertically or at angles to create triangle effect. Be sure that the lights are not too far apart, as this may create a shadow/darker area in the center of the face.
When doing a portrait, this setup will create very even light with interesting catchlights in the eyes.

If you want to emphasize the catchlights more, consider using sunglasses or other reflective surface to accentuate the unusual catchlights.
B&H shares Lindsay Adler’s photographic passions and commitment to being the professional source where photographers go to learn and be inspired.

Find all the tools you need to inspire your creativity at bhphotovideo.com
Equipment Used:

» LIGHTING GEAR

3 Profoto D1 Air 500 Watt
Light 1: Profoto 5 degree grid
Light 2 + 3: Profoto Barn Doors
Light 4: Profoto 5 degree grid

Other gear used:
Savage Thunder Grey Background
Avenger D600 Boom Arm

Distance of Subject to Background: 67 inches

» CAMERA GEAR & SETTINGS

Camera: EOS 5D Mark III DSLR
Lens: Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM at 50mm
ISO: 200
Shutter Speed: 1/200
Aperture: 7.1
WB: Flash (with monochromatic preset)

The Setup:

» LIGHT 1

Distance from subject: 40 inches
Distance off center: 17 inches
Height above eye level: 12 inches
Power (Fstops): F/7.1

» LIGHTS 2 & 3

Distance from subject: 67 inches
Distance off center: 67 inches
Height above eye level: 12 inches
Power (Fstops): F/5.6

» LIGHT 4

Distance from subject: 48 inches
Distance off center: 67 inches, pointed at center
Height above eye level: 6 inches
Power (Fstops): F/5.6
THE STEP BY STEP GUIDE:

» STEP 1
Place a studio strobe with 5 degree grid high and to the right of the subject. When the subject is facing forward this should create loop light on the face or Rembrandt if you want to create more drama (small triangle of light under the left eye).

» STEP 2
Place two additional strobes with barn doors behind the subject at an angle to create two crisp rim lights. These should be placed at or above shoulder level to illuminate the jawline, hair and top of the shoulder. Narrow the barn doors to create a more crisp beam of light or to help reduce lens flare. If you want to reduce the amount of light hitting the floor, close the bottom barn door.

setup: side view

(set continued...)
Because this light is meant to be theatrical and reminiscent of old Hollywood, you may consider shooting in black and white. If you shoot in RAW you can always change your mind, but you may choose to visualize by seeing the images in black and white as you shoot.
Clam Shell Gel + Gel Background
**Equipment Used:**

*LIGHTING GEAR*

- 3 Profoto D1 Air 500 Watt
- Light 1: Profoto Softlight Reflector (Beauty Dish) + Grid
- Light 2: Profoto Barn Doors + Gel (blue)
- Light 3: Profoto 10 degree grid + Gel (purple/pink)

Other gear used:
- Savage Thunder Grey Background
- Avenger D600 Boom Arm
- Rosco Gel Kit

Distance of Subject to Background: 91 inches

*CAMERA GEAR & SETTINGS*

- Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark III DSLR
- Lens: Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM at 95mm
- ISO: 200
- Shutter Speed: 1/200
- Aperture: 6.3
- WB: Flash

**The Setup:**

*LIGHT 1*

- Distance from subject: 27 inches
- Distance off center: 6 inches
- Height above eye level: 23 inches
- Power (Fstops): F/7.1

*LIGHT 2*

- Distance from subject: 27 inches
- Distance off center: 0 inches
- Height below eye level: 16 inches
- Power (Fstops): F/5.6

*LIGHT 3*

- Distance from subject: 29 inches
- Distance off center: 25 inches
- Height below eye level: 5 inches
- Power (Fstops): F/5.0
- Distance of light to background: 60 inches
» **STEP 1**
Place a strobe with a beauty dish and grid high above the subject’s face. You want to create light that results in deep shadows in the eyes and long shadows beneath the nose/chin. The light can be centered or slightly off to the side (right) to create a bit more shadow.

» **STEP 2**
Add a second strobe with barn doors and a blue gel centered below the subject pointed up at the face. With this creative ‘clam shell lighting’, you will fill in the shadows in the eyes and beneath the nose/chin with blue light.

(continued...)
Although the main light of the beauty dish does not necessarily create catchlights in the eyes, the bottom blue gel will create the catchlights that bring life to your subject’s eyes. For more drama, be sure that the beauty dish is so high up that the catchlights from it are not apparent.
Fashion photographer, Lindsay Adler, has risen to the top of her industry as both a photographer and educator. Based in New York City, her fashion editorials have appeared in numerous fashion and photography publications, including, Marie Claire, ELLE, InStyle, Noise Magazine, Zink Magazine, Rangefinder, Professional Photographer, and dozens more. As a photographic educator, she is one of the most sought after speakers internationally, teaching on the industry’s largest platforms and at the most prestigious events, having been named one of the top 10 best fashion photographers in the world. Lindsay has worked with some of the top brands in the photographic and related industries, such as Canon, Adobe, and Microsoft.

A clean, bold, and graphic style has become the hallmark of her work, whether shooting advertising campaigns, designer look books, jewelry, hair campaigns, fashion editorials, or professional athletes. Lindsay is renowned for her creativity and collaborating with designers and stylists in order to create fresh looks.

An author of four books, she is always working on new ways to share her passions and knowledge with others. Each year she teaches tens of thousands of photographers world-wide through prestigious platforms such as creativeLIVE, KelbyOne, and the industry’s biggest conferences.

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