

Making Everything Easier!™

Dog Photography

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Take photos of your pooch in all sorts of settings
- Capture your dog's moods, whether at play or at rest
- Apply expert lighting and composition techniques to your photos

IN FULL COLOR!

Kim Rodgers

Sarah Sypniewski

Los Angeles' premier pet photographers



Dog Photography For Dummies®

Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/dogphotography to view this book's cheat sheet.

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**by Kim Rodgers and Sarah
Sypniewski**

Co-founders of Bark Pet Photography



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About the Authors

Kim Rodgers and **Sarah Sypniewski** co-founded Bark Pet Photography (www.barkpetphotography.com), a Los Angeles-based pet photography business, with a mission of giving back to local animal rescue organizations. In two short years, Bark Pet Photography emerged as an industry leader and was named Los Angeles's best pet photography business of 2011 by the CityVoter Los Angeles *HotList*.

Kim, the photographer behind Bark, graduated from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, with a bachelor of arts degree in studio arts. Kim's images are described as modern, bold, and graphic — a style influenced by her years of working as a graphic designer. Her work has been seen in places like the *Wall Street Journal*, PeoplePets.com, LAist.com, TMZ, *People StyleWatch Magazine*, and *Popular Dogs Series* magazines. When she's not photographing her clients' dogs, she's pursuing her first true love: helping to save animals in need with her pro-“bone”-o work. Whether taking professional photos of shelter dogs, flying with them across the country to their forever home, or adopting them herself, Kim tries to help animals in need however she can.

Sarah, the marketing force behind Bark, left her ten-year career in the nonprofit world to pursue writing, consulting, and Bark on a full-time basis. When she's not waxing poetic in the Bark newsletter or churning out website copy for her various consulting clients, she's rescuing animals on a volunteer basis and using the specialized strategy she developed for NinjaDog Concepts (www.ninjadogconcepts.com) to recover lost pets. She writes about all her adventures on her blog, *Sarah Leaps* (www.sarahsypniewski.wordpress.com). Her poem, “Paws Amidst Pain” — about the therapy dogs she worked with after the 9/11 tragedy — has become a tribute used by service animal

organizations everywhere. Sarah holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from DePaul University, which she calls upon frequently when performing such tasks as writing heartstring-pulling adoption bios for her homeless animal friends, calming dogs and humans alike during photo shoots, and using “I” statements.

Dedication

From Kim: For my parents, who taught me what it means to love and care for a dog as part of the family.

For MeMe, who took in a feral cat despite being a “dog person” her whole life and who taught her grandkids that dogs and cats *can* coexist.

For my current four-legged friends (Kali, Piko, Sammy, and Delilah), who have reminded me throughout this process to pause and take a break every now and then.

And for all the animals I grew up with but never had the chance to photograph as I would today — Teddy, Boz, Norman, Bubba, Kitty, and Duncan.

From Sarah: The hours I spent on this book are dedicated with my deepest adoration and gratitude to all the dogs in my life — especially Sophie, Kali, Piko, Sammy, and Delilah. It is to them that I co-wrote this 320-page love letter.

From both: A *huge* wet kiss and tail wag go to all the animal rescuers out there who devote their lives to making a difference, one animal at a time. You spend countless hours and sleepless nights being the voice for the voiceless, and you inspire us to keep going. This book really is for you. May it help you find many homes for many deserving dogs.

Authors' Acknowledgments

We feel extremely lucky to have been able to write this together — there's no way we could've done it alone. Thank you to our Wiley team of cheerleaders and smarties, who let us do this as a duo and made this whole experience a great one: our acquisitions editor, Tracy Boggier, for finding and believing in us all the way through; our project editor, Vicki Adang, for moving the pieces around to maximize clarity, for allowing our creativity to run wild, and for laughing at our jokes; our copy editor, Todd Lothery, for refining our words and catching our errors; and our tech editor, Jenny Denton of Red Hydrant Pet Photography, for making sure our techniques and recommended settings were spot on.

We want to give a big, juicy bone to all our furry clients who lent their cute mugs to these pages and to all the human pals who helped us pick images, promote the book, and just generally supported us every step of the way.

I (Sarah) also want to thank my family — most of all, Mom and Dad — not only for loving dogs as celebrated members of the brood but also for not freaking out (at least externally) when I told you I was ditching my career and paycheck to chase my dreams of becoming a writer. It's because of you that this book was even possible. A special thanks to Katie, who always was one of my biggest fans. I hope you can see this from where you sit.

A tip o' the cap also to my muse, for knowing I was a writer before I did and for always giving me a reason to put down words.

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Introduction

They're just like humans — no two are the same. Some constantly wag their tails, happy just to be alive in their blissful oblivion. Others are curmudgeonly and reserved; they prefer to chew a bone in peaceful solitude, not caring to be bothered with playtime. And then there are those who hear the jangle of their leash and come scrambling across the house, excited to go on a new adventure to parts (and smells) unknown.

Dogs.

They're complex and simple, funny and serious, hyperactive and sloth-like. But among them all, one common thread runs strong and true: We love them. Whether because of or in spite of these quirks, we love the specific things that make our dog *ours*.

This book is actually a tribute to them. It's an ode to those who curl up at our feet, plop themselves onto our laps, lick our tears away, crack us up with their four-legged antics, get us out of the house for walks, teach us new tricks, and school us on what it means to truly care for someone.

Dog Photography For Dummies is a celebration of these beautiful creatures that take up residence in our hearts and share a lifetime of moments with us. Though we can't make them live forever, with a few photography skills and lots of patience, we *can* capture the belly rubs, dirty paws, and slobbery kisses forever, before they fade away all too soon.

About This Book

Although they come with their own challenges, dogs make very obvious and interesting photography subjects, and a lot of books are devoted to this topic. But where other dog photography books stop at giving you composition ideas or pages of the author's own photos as examples to replicate without really telling you *how* to take them, we start at the beginning and end with a final photo suitable for framing and hanging in a place of honor in your home.

Just like our subject, *Dog Photography For Dummies* does a lot of sniffing and digging. If you're a beginner, you'll find some basic information about equipment and how to use it so you're ready when your dog does something cute. If you already have some photography experience, you'll still benefit from chapters that describe different types of dog-specific shots in a fun, step-by-step way to ensure that you capture the moment. And if you already know that dog photography's your thing and you want to break into the business, we have a full how-to on that, too.

We start with a general photography refresher for anyone who needs it, and then we point out how to take every doggie photograph you want (and even some you don't yet know you want). We continue on with what to do after you take your photos to get them to look all polished and pretty, and then we tell you what to do if you want to join the ranks of the professionals.

The great thing about *Dog Photography For Dummies* is that we, your humble authors, are just like you — dog lovers and photography enthusiasts. And we remember a time when we weren't professionals. With this book, we hope to offer you an entertaining, easy-to-follow adventure through the ever-expanding world of dog photography. We're glad you're here and hope you enjoy choosing your own path through these pages.

Conventions Used in This Book

We use the following conventions throughout the text to make things consistent and easy to understand:

- ✓ New terms appear in *italic* and are closely followed by an easy-to-understand definition.
- ✓ We use **bold** text to highlight keywords in bulleted lists and the action parts of numbered steps.
- ✓ All web addresses appear in monofont.
- ✓ Each photo in this book is followed by information in small print that looks something like this: *50mm, 1/500 sec., f/2.8, 100*. These are the camera settings used to take the photo. The first number is the focal length, the second is the shutter speed, the third is the aperture, and the fourth is the ISO. (Don't worry if you don't know what any of that means; we explain each of those settings in Chapter 4.)

Oh, and one more photography thing regarding those digital cameras that you can slip in your pocket or purse — we don't call them *point-and-shoot cameras* here; we call them *compact digital cameras* (CDCs), which is in line with the current industry standard.

As for how we talk about dogs in this book, we always refer to them as “he,” “she,” or by a proper name (thanks to our clients and fans for letting us “borrow” those names). Also, we don't use the term *owner*, but rather, we refer to a person as a dog's *human or guardian*.

What You're Not to Read

No matter how much you love dogs, photography, and reading, we realize that parts of this book matter less to some of you than they do to others. Even though we poured our *hearts and souls* into writing this just for *you*, we understand that you may not want to read every word. Really. We get that you may have better things to do than dive into every page. No, no — it's okay. We're fine. Those aren't tears running down our faces; that's just, er, water.

Seriously, though, we get that you have dogs to photograph, so if you need to skip over some parts so you can pull your nose out of this book, we support that. Here's what you can gloss over:

- ✓ **Text in sidebars:** *Sidebars* are shaded boxes that usually give detailed examples or provide some information about an advanced technique on the topic at hand.
- ✓ **The stuff about us at the front of the book:** This book isn't about us. It's about *you*. And your dog.

Foolish Assumptions

Yeah, yeah, we know what they say about assuming. Nonetheless, keeping this book under a thousand pages is good for all of us, so we had to narrow our audience just a tad. Here's what we went with:

- ✓ You love dogs and have at least basic experience with them.

- ✓ You aren't afraid of handling cameras and photography equipment.
- ✓ Your knowledge of dog photography is anywhere from zilch to advanced.
- ✓ You *may* want to open your own dog photography business.
- ✓ You're up for getting down on the floor, getting dirty, and occasionally getting slobbered on.
- ✓ You may not be a pro, but you want to take photographs like one.
- ✓ You have a computer and are willing to use it for the sake of your photos.

Though we debated about what kind of camera you, our readers, are using, in the end, we decided to gear this book toward digital SLR users. If you use a compact digital camera, never fear. We haven't left you out, fair friends. Most of the guidelines in this book apply to you, and where they don't (or when we offer additional information specific to compact digital camera users), we note that with a special "Quick Click" icon (see the later section about icons for more details).

How This Book Is Organized

To aid your mission of carving your own path through this book, we divide it up into nice, manageable pieces for you to navigate. We start with parts, which are broad areas of interest. We break the parts down into chapters. Use the table of

contents as your map and the index as your compass, and enjoy the journey.

Part I: Heel! The Basics of Dog Photography

This is the place where we go over all the foundational information you need. We cover how to use both digital SLRs and compact digital cameras (and if you don't have a camera yet, we even outline what to look for in a new one) and what to keep on hand when you photograph dogs. We even throw in a couple of psychology lessons (both canine and human). Start with this part if you want to catch up (or brush up) on your fundamentals.

Part II: Fetch! Go Get That Perfect Photo

This is where the rubber meets the road — er, the camera meets the canine. We give you lots of example photos and tell you *exactly* how you can achieve similar results. We go through indoor and outdoor shots, posed shots, action shots, and even detail and group shots. If you already know your way around cameras and dogs and you're ready to start photographing, this is the part for you.

Part III: Sit! What to Do after the Photo Shoot

In this part, we go over everything you need to do to take your photos through their final stages. We usher you through

downloading the files off of your camera and onto your computer, editing them, and even uploading them onto your website and other media. We also devote a whole chapter to making a business out of dog photography.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

This part covers a range of helpful topics distilled into informative lists. Here, we dish it all — making photo shoots fun, overcoming common challenges, giving back to the animal rescue world, and drumming up business.

Icons Used in This Book

To make this book easier to read and simpler to use, we include some icons that can help you find and fathom key ideas and information.



This icon is meant to draw your attention to a little something extra we think you'll find helpful.



This icon points out something that you may already know or that we've stated before, but it's important enough to reiterate by setting it apart from everything else.