

Using the FDL Lab Panasonic Digital Camera

Although these instructions are written specifically for the camera found in the FDL Lab, you will most likely find that they are applicable to other cameras as well. Most digital cameras work the same way, though the complexity and location of the controls and settings vary from model to model.

The Camera:



The Camera Modes:

There are nine different modes available on the camera. You may switch between them using the wheel on top of the camera.

Simple Mode – This is the most basic mode on the camera. If you don't want to deal with special settings or are a beginner with digital cameras, stick with this mode.

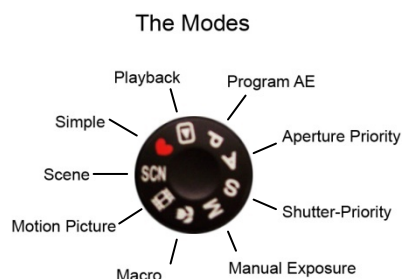
Scene Mode – Within this mode are settings that can be used in specialized situations – for instance, portrait, scenery, sports, fireworks, and nighttime shots. Use the up and down arrows to see what scene options there are. Use the right arrow to get more information about that particular setting, and the set button to choose a setting.

Motion Picture Mode – Use to capture video clips. Push the photo button once to start recording, and again to stop. View the video in Playback Mode.

Macro Mode – Use this setting for objects that are very close (usually 30 inches or less).

Advanced Modes – The next four modes (Manual Exposure, Shutter-Priority, Aperture-Priority, and Program AE) are more advanced settings. Unless you know about them already, you should probably stick to the more basic modes. They'll get the job done with much less confusion.

Playback Mode – In this mode you can review any photos you've taken so far, and play back any videos you have recorded. Toggle between recorded media with the left and right arrow buttons. To play back a video, push the down arrow. You may then control the video's playback using the four arrow buttons. Look at the diagram on the bottom left of the LCD screen to see which buttons to use to pause, fast forward, etc.



Taking the Picture:

Of course, the most important function of a camera is to take pictures. To do so, turn the camera on using the Power button, and choose the appropriate mode. Choose the shot you wish to take. If you push the Photo halfway down and hold, the camera will focus on the selected target. Then, push the Photo button down fully. Voilà! Your picture will be taken. Keep in mind that digital cameras take longer than standard cameras to capture a shot, so don't move the camera until you know the photo has been taken.

Settings:

The settings for the camera can be accessed by pressing the menu button. This takes you to the settings menu, where you can use the arrow keys to navigate between the alterable settings. The menus vary depending on which mode the camera is set to. Simple mode gives you a very basic settings menu. Excluding Simple mode, all modes have access to the Setup menu, where you can adjust settings like clock set, volume, languages, etc. All of them save Simple and Playback modes also access the Recording menu, where you can adjust such things as white balance, picture quality, and sensitivity. Playback mode also has the Play menu, where you can play a slideshow, mark pictures as favorites, resize photos, and various other tasks.

A Few Notes:

The use of most of the controls and parts shown above are rather self-explanatory. Some, however, are less so, so I will clarify a few of them.

Flash – the camera flash is not on by default. Unless it is open, there will be no flash. To open it, push the flash button, and the flash will pop up. Simply push it down again to turn the flash off. Flash settings can be adjusted via the up and, in some modes, the right arrow buttons.

EVC vs. LCD – By default, the LCD screen is activated and the EVC is off when you turn the camera on. To switch between the two viewers, use the Toggle EVC/LCD button.

Joystick Control – In the advanced modes, the joystick adjusts the manual exposure settings.

LCD Mode Button – This button adjusts what settings information is displayed on the LCD screen. If you hold it down, you may also adjust the lighting mode of the LCD screen.

Arrow/Menu Buttons – The middle Menu button allows you to access the settings menus of the various modes. When you browsing the menu, use the arrow keys to navigate the options and change the settings. Unless otherwise told on the LCD screen, pushing the Menu button again exits the settings menu, and takes you back into picture mode. When in picture mode, the arrows have different uses, which vary somewhat by camera mode.

↑ In simple mode, the up arrow merely adjusts the backlight of the camera. In the other picture modes, it allows you to adjust the flash, exposure, and/or auto-bracket settings.

← The left arrow allows you to take a delayed shot. The default is a 10 second delay, although in the picture modes excluding Simple, you may toggle between 2 and 10 second delays.

→ The right arrow only functions when the flash is open, and toggles between basic flash settings – for instance, auto and red eye. This button is not operational in all of the camera modes.

↓ Pushing the down arrow allows you to review your photos without changing to Playback Mode. When you are reviewing your photos, you can use the Delete button to delete one, multiple, or all the photos in the camera's memory.

Burst/Delete Button – When not reviewing your photos, this button allows you to take multiple shots without pressing the Photo button each time.

The Lens:

Before you can take pictures, you have to remove the lens cap by squeezing the two tabs and pulling the cap off gently. After you are finished taking pictures, make sure to replace the lens cap again. And remember – please, do not touch the lens, the EVF, or the LCD screen!

The Battery:

To change the battery, push the grey button beneath the memory card/battery cover to the right. The battery will spring out enough for you to remove it, and replace it with a fully charged battery. Make sure you put the battery in the right way down – use the arrow on the battery as reference. Also remember to charge the old battery immediately after it is removed from the camera, or you may find yourself with the perfect photo and no means to take it, because you are out of fully charged batteries.

The Memory Card:

The SD card is easily removed from the camera by first pressing it down, then releasing. It will pop up far enough for you to pull it out of the camera. To reinsert the card, push it firmly into its slot until it clicks into place. Use the diagram on the inside of the memory card/battery cover to see how to orient the card before inserting it into the camera.

Getting Images from the Camera to the Computer:

The easiest way to download your photos in the FDL lab is to remove the memory card from the camera and insert it into the card readers.

If you are a PC user, use the slot on the bottom right (labeled “SD/MMC”), and insert the card with the chip side up. An AutoPlay dialogue box will appear with various program options to import and/or view your photos. Choose one of these programs to download the photos from the card to the computer, and then sort, edit, and save them as you please.

On the Macs, insert the card into the top left slot in the card reader (labeled “mSD” and etc.) with the chip side facing right. The iPhotos application will run. Import, sort, and edit your photos as needed.

Using a Tripod:

There are three tripods of two different brands in the FDL Lab, but they all work in the same way. The tripod’s three legs are connected beneath the camera by a sliding connection ring. When setting up the tripod, make sure this ring is pushed all the way down so that the tripod will not collapse. The Digital Concepts tripods have twisting connecting rings that must be turned counterclockwise for the tripod to be collapsed, and clockwise to lock the tripod open. The legs are each split into three retractable sections, each of which has a tab. When the tab is pulled up, the section can be adjusted, changing the tripod’s height.

Another way to adjust the height of the tripod is to raise the head of the tripod. The head sits on a retractable rod (I’ll call it the neck) that can be raised and lowered. To do this, loosen the connecting ring/knob (depending on the tripod’s brand) at the base of the head by turning it counter-clockwise, and turn the hand crank. After you have adjusted the neck’s length satisfactorily, tighten the connecting ring again so that it doesn’t collapse.

There are two other knobs on the tripod’s head that you can use to adjust the position of your camera on the tripod. The bottom knob loosens the head so that you can use the handle at the top of the tripod to adjust where the camera is pointing. When this knob is loosened you can rotate the camera horizontally, and tilt it up and down. Tighten the knob again to lock the camera’s position. If you loosen the top-most knob, you can flip the orientation of the camera (change from landscape to portrait orientation).

To connect the camera to the tripod, pull on the top-most lever and remove the rectangular camera base. There are two knobs on the base – one threaded, and one that pushes down. The threaded knob screws into the connector located on the bottom of the camera; most if not all cameras should be compatible with the lab's tripods. The second, push-down knob is used merely for stability – not all cameras have a connector for this knob, but they can be used with the tripod nonetheless. To connect the camera, screw the threaded knob into the connector on the bottom of the camera. Once the camera is firmly seated on the connecting camera base, you can reconnect the base to the tripod using the same lever as before.

One important thing to remember when using the tripod – after you are finished with your pictures and have removed the camera from the tripod, do not forget to replace the camera base back onto the tripod. If you forget and leave it attached to your camera, the tripod becomes virtually useless to the next person who needs to use it, because they will not be able to mount their camera onto the tripod. Also, do not tighten any of the knobs on the tripod too tightly – they will be difficult to adjust later and may damage the tripod. Tighten only enough so that the tripod will not collapse, but not so tight that the knob is difficult to loosen.

