



Section 1 – Initial Camera Configuration

This chapter is divided into two sections. In section 1, we'll look over the camera's external controls and prepare the camera for first-time use. In section 2, we'll briefly examine the menu systems used to adjust the camera's internal functions. Each menu system will be covered later in this book in full detail.

Let's work our way from the outside of the camera to its internal settings.

External Camera Controls

Before we move into the configuration of the camera, let's look in detail at the various dials, switches, and buttons found on

the body of the camera. We'll use these external controls often while working through this book, and you'll need to become very familiar with what each button does.

I've counted 13 buttons, 3 switches, and 2 dials on the D3000. We'll look at



FIG 1A – Front of camera



FIG 1B – Back of camera

them all in detail. I strongly suggest that you bookmark this place in your book so that you can refer back to these control locations as we study what they each do. In future chapters, I'll refer to the names and sometimes the numbers of these controls. Each of the control references is numbered in FIG 1A to FIG 1C. I have labeled each control with a number that corresponds to the reference numbers in the figures.

Here is a list of controls on the camera body's front (see FIG 1A):

1. [Flash Mode](#) and [Flash Compensation button](#) (two functions)
2. [Self-timer](#) and [Fn button](#) (two functions)
3. [Lens Release button](#)

Here is a list of controls on the camera's back (see FIG 1B):

4. [Playback button](#)
5. [Menu button](#)
6. [Thumbnail/playback zoom out](#) and [Help button](#)
7. [Playback zoom in](#) and [Information edit button](#)
8. [Diopter adjustment control slider](#) (hidden behind rubber eyecup)
9. [AE-L/AF-L button](#) (Auto Exposure lock and Autofocus lock)
10. [Command dial](#)
11. [Multi Selector](#) (very important, learn this)
12. [OK button](#)
13. [Delete button](#)



FIG 1C – Top of camera

Here is a list of controls on the camera's top (see FIG 1C):

14. [Mode dial](#)
15. [Information \(info\) button](#)
16. [Exposure-compensation](#) and [Aperture button](#) (two functions)
17. [Camera On/Off switch](#)
18. [Shutter-release button](#)

The most important controls for adjusting the camera are the [Multi Selector](#) (#11), [OK button](#) (#12), [Command dial](#) (#10), and the [Menu button](#) (#5). These will get a lot of use and references throughout this book, so be sure you remember where they're located.



First Use of the Nikon D3000

You've just opened the box and buried under the plastic wrap, wires, manuals, CDs, and warranty registration card you find your new digital camera. What next?

Attaching the Lens

One of the powerful things a DSLR like the D3000 can do is use a variety of lenses to achieve various “looks” or perspectives in your images. Most likely you have purchased your D3000 as part of a “kit” that includes an AF-S Nikkor 18–55mm f/3.5–5.6G VR lens. If you bought the camera with no lens, then you can skip this section on attaching the lens. If you've never put a lens on a DSLR, please read this carefully so you won't damage the lens or camera body.

Nikon ships the camera without the lens attached. Instead there is a body cap and lens cap that must be removed before you mount the lens to the camera body. In FIG 1D, you see the camera and lens with both caps still attached (see red arrows).

Leave the camera turned off while attaching or removing lenses. I've never damaged a Nikon camera's electronics by leaving the camera on during the

Dust is a Sensor's Enemy

Before removing the caps, or when switching lenses, blow away any dust you see on the front of the camera or on the rear of the lens so it won't get inside the camera body and end up on the sensor. If dust gets on your sensor, it can cause spots on your pictures. Always change lenses in a dust-free area when possible.

changing of lenses, but there's always a first time. Sometimes, in the heat of shooting and quickly changing lenses I forget and just change it with the camera on, so it's probably not too dangerous. However, I may just have been fortunate. I recommend that you don't take chances with an expensive camera or lens.

Now, let's remove the caps and prepare to attach the lens to the camera.

To remove the camera's body cap, you'll press and hold the [Lens release button](#) (see FIG 1E), turn the body cap clockwise until it stops, and then pull the cap straight out. It uses a “bayonet” mount with three ears, just like a lens. The lens cap is just a little plastic see-thru cap that you pull directly off the lens. It's just pressed on,



FIG 1D – Preparing to attach the lens



FIG 1E – Removing the body and lens caps

not mounted, so you can just pull and twist it until it slides off.

It isn't hard to attach the lens to the camera, and when you've done it once, you'll have no problems in the future. So, let's mount the lens.

The lens attaches to the camera using a Nikon F bayonet-style mount that's been in production for over 50 years. Nearly any lens ever made for a Nikon film SLR or DSLR will mount on your D3000. Isn't that incredible! In this book, we'll refer to the AF-S Nikkor 18–55mm f/3.5-5.6G VR kit lens most of the time.

Notice in FIG 1F, image 1, how the lens has a white dot that must line up exactly with a corresponding white dot on the

camera body. The lens must be inserted into the front of the camera until the two dots are close together as in FIG 1F, image 2. Once the lens is fully inserted into the bayonet mount and the dots are lined up, slowly turn the lens counter-clockwise (rotate left) until the white dot on the lens is under the K of the Nikon logo on the front top of the camera. The dot on the lens will then be straight up and just below the Nikon logo. **Do not force the lens to turn.** If it does not turn easily to the left, please make sure that it has been fully inserted into the body before you start turning it toward the locking position.



FIG 1F – Mounting the lens on the camera



When you get the lens's white dot in the up position, you'll hear a "snap" as the lens locks to the body. To remove the lens in the future, you'll have to hold in the **Lens Release button** (see FIG 1A, image 3), turn the lens clockwise until it stops, and then pull it straight out.

Removing the Lens

Here are the steps I use to remove and change a lens quickly, without dropping the camera or lens. Try this method and see if it works for you. If not, simply invent your own way of holding the camera while changing lenses.

1. Hold the camera body in your left hand with your finger reaching around the front ready to depress the **Lens release button**.
2. Press the grip side of the D3000 into your body to stabilize the camera. The camera's back will be facing the left side of your body.
3. With your fingers that are holding the camera, press and hold the **Lens release button**.
4. Using your right hand, turn the lens clockwise until it stops, then pull it straight out of the camera body.

If you're a left-handed person, this method will still work. Our cameras are designed for right-handed people, so a "lefty" may find this awkward the first few times. I suggest you keep trying to learn it because this method allows you to hold the camera and lens very securely while making lens changes. It would be a shame to drop and break either the lens or camera body.

If this list of steps doesn't work for you, just lay the camera down on its back, press and hold the **Lens release button**, rotate the lens to the right, and pull it out of the body.

Lens Controls

While examining the lens for later use, you will notice four controls that you'll need to use (see FIG 1G). Most Nikkor lenses, and even aftermarket lenses, have the same types of controls.

FIG 1G shows the following four numbered controls that I'll discuss next:

1. **Focus ring** – The **focus ring** is not often used on a camera with autofocus. However, for things like closeup (macro) shots, it's sometimes easier to turn off the autofocus and focus manually so that you can control exactly where you want to place the sharpest point of focus. You can use the **A/M switch** (#3) to turn autofocus on (A) and off (M). *Use the Focus ring only when the A/M switch is set to M or you could damage your Nikkor 18-55mm kit lens.* Some lenses allow "fine-tuning" of the autofocus, even when the **A/M switch** is set to A. However, the 18-55mm kit lens



FIG 1G – Lens A/M and VR switches, focus and zoom rings



is not one of them. If the **Focus ring** feels stiff when set to **A**, *do not turn it by hand*.

2. **Zoom ring** – This ring is the most used control on the lens. You’ll use it constantly to zoom in and out; from 18mm to 55mm and any point in between. The 18mm setting is a wide-angle setting that allows you to take group portraits or get sweeping landscape shots. The 55mm setting is a short telephoto position that magnifies the subject slightly, but is very close to what your eye sees as “normal” size for objects in your image. Use the 55mm setting to pull a subject closer and fill the image frame. We’ll discuss “focal length” in a later chapter. You can use the **zoom ring** to select the exact focal length—between 18 and 55mm—you’ll need to make the best image composition. As you turn the **zoom ring**, you’ll see the numbers turn with it. The numbers shown on the lens are 18, 24, 35, 45, and 55. Each number represents a focal length in millimeters (mm). In FIG 1F, image 2, you can see the number 24 next to a white dot. This means the lens is set to 24mm. Place any number from 18 to 55 next to the dot for a particular focal length position. In between the stamped numbers are other focal lengths. Let’s say you turned the lens half way between 18 and 24mm. That is about 21 or 22mm, as expected. It’s constantly variable as you turn the **Zoom ring**.

3. **A/M switch** – Many Nikkor lenses have an **A/M switch** and a **VR On/Off switch** on the side. The **A/M switch** stands for autofocus (**A**) or manual focus (**M**). If you would rather manually focus the lens by turning the **Focus ring** (#1), you can do so after you move this switch to **M**. *Don’t force the lens to manually focus when in A mode or you will damage it*. If you really want to manually focus the lens, simply set the switch to **M**. This disengages the autofocus motor and the **Focus ring** will turn freely.
4. **VR On/Off switch** – VR stands for “vibration reduction”. If you are using the newest Nikkor 18-55mm kit lens, you’ll notice a big gold **VR** near the **A/M switch**. This lens, and others with the **VR** moniker, is able to compensate for small shaky movements while pictures are being taken, resulting in much sharper images. This doesn’t mean you can wave your camera around like a fire hose and still get sharp images; it means that the lens will try to compensate for natural hand shakiness. It allows you to use slower shutter speeds and still get sharp images. According to how shaky you are while handholding, you may take pictures with shutter speeds up to three stops slower with the 18-55mm kit lens. We’ll discuss what a *stop* is in the chapter titled **Aperture, Shutter Speed, and Focal Length**, later in this book.

Once the lens is mounted you’re almost ready to use the camera. Does your battery have a good charge?



Using VR Lenses on a Tripod

There are two types of VR lenses currently on the market: VR and VR II. Your 18-55mm kit lens uses standard VR. The more advanced form of VR—called VR II—has algorithms that notice when the camera is very still and disable VR. Why have vibration reduction when the camera isn't vibrating? According to Nikon, you should be okay when shooting on a tripod with VR II turned on. However, I always flip the switch to off anyway, unless I'm using a shaky tripod. Nikon says that the Nikkor 18-55mm kit lens has standard VR, *which should be switched off* for tripod use. Check the specs of any new lens you buy to determine if it has standard VR or VR II. VR II adds an additional stop of vibration reduction, so you could handhold up to four stops slower. VR II is found on the more pricey lenses in the Nikkor lineup. An easy way to tell if you have VR or VR II is by how many extra-slow stops you get. If the lens's sales literature says three stops, it is VR. If four stops, it is VR II.

Charging and Inserting the Battery

If you're like me, you'll open the box, put the lens on your camera, insert the battery, and take your first picture. Wouldn't it be a better idea to wait an hour to charge the battery and only then take the first picture? Sure it would, but I've never done that, and I bet you haven't either. Nikon knows this and doesn't send out new cameras with dead batteries.

Most of the time the battery is not fully charged, but it has enough charge to allow you to do the initial camera setup and then take and review a few pictures. Think about it. How would you test a brand-new battery? You'd charge it and see if it will hold a charge. Nikon doesn't send batteries that are untested, so most of the time, you can play with your camera for at least a few minutes before charging the battery. I've purchased nearly every DSLR model Nikon has made since 2002, and not one of them has come in with a dead battery.

When you insert the battery in the included MH-23 battery charger, you'll notice that the small LED light—next to the words CHARGE and END—blinks orange while the battery is charging and



FIG 1H – Charging the battery



then changes to continuous orange when the battery is fully charged. FIG 1H shows the correct way to insert the light gray EN-EL9a battery into the charger.

When my D3000 arrived, the battery was about 60 percent charged. I played with the camera for an hour before I charged the battery. However, let me mention one important thing. If you install the battery and it is very low, for example below 25 percent, it's a good idea to go ahead and charge it before shooting and reviewing too many pictures. Maybe you can get the initial camera configuration done and test the camera a time or two, but go no further with a seriously low battery.

To insert the battery, make sure the camera is turned off, and then open the small door on the bottom of the grip with a fingernail. Insert the battery as shown in FIG 1I with the Nikon name exactly as shown. The battery has a small lip to prevent it from being inserted in the wrong direction. A white arrow tip painted on the battery should point toward the camera as you insert it.

Avoid Completely Discharging the Battery

The D3000 uses a lithium-ion (Li-ion) battery pack. While this type of battery doesn't develop the memory effects of the old nickel-cadmium (NiCad) batteries from years past, there can be a problem if you let them get too low. **A Li-ion battery should not be used to complete exhaustion.** The battery has an internal protection circuit that keeps it from working again if a cell gets below a certain key voltage. If you completely discharge a lithium-ion battery or let it go too long without a refresh charge, the battery may never work again. When your camera's battery gets down to the 25 percent level, please recharge it. I don't let mine go below 50 percent for any extended use.

That said, the optimum situation would be to restrain yourself from turning on the camera until after the battery is fully charged. That'll give you some time to read this section of the book and even check out the Nikon D3000 User's and Reference Manuals.



FIG 1I – Inserting the battery



Initial Camera Setup

The first time you turn the camera on, you'll be presented with five sequential screens as follows:

1. [Language](#)
2. [Time Zone](#)
3. [Date Format](#)
4. [Daylight Saving Time](#)
5. [Date and Time](#)

Following are descriptions of the screens you'll see and what you'll need to initially configure. (See the section titled **External Camera Controls** earlier in this chapter for locations of the controls mentioned.)



FIG 2 – The Language screen

Language

The D3000 is multilingual, or multinational. It can display its menus in 17 languages. Various distributors around the world will have the camera preconfigured to some degree, so it will most likely already be configured in the language spoken in your area. Here is a list of the languages available in the D3000, firmware version 1.0:

- Danish
- German
- English
- Spanish
- Finnish
- French
- Italian
- Dutch
- Norwegian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Swedish
- Traditional Chinese
- Simplified Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean

Here are the steps to select the language you want to use:

1. Refer to FIG 2 for the [Language menu](#) the camera presents on startup.
2. Use the [Multi Selector](#) to scroll up or down until your language is highlighted.
3. Press the [OK button](#) to select your language.

The camera will now switch to the next screen in the camera setup series: the [Time zone](#) screen.



Time Zone

This is an easy screen to use as long as you can recognize the area of the world in which you live on the small map.

Here are the steps to select the correct time zone for your location:

1. Refer to FIG 3 for the **Time zone** screen.
You'll see yellow arrow tips pointing to the left and right on either side of the small black and gray world map.
2. With the **Multi Selector**, scroll to the left or right until your location is highlighted in yellow. It'll show as either a vertical yellow strip or a tiny yellow outline with a red dot. At the top of the screen below the words **Time zone**, you'll see the currently selected time zone. Mine is **New York, Toronto, Lima**, as shown in FIG 3.
3. Press the **OK button** once you've positioned the yellow selection strip or outline and your time zone will be locked in place.

The camera will now present you with the next screen in the series: the **Date format** screen.



FIG 3 – The Time zone screen

Date Format

The English-speaking world uses various date formats. The Nikon D3000 gives us the ability to choose from the most important ones.

There are three date formats you can select (see FIG 4):

- **Y/M/D** = Year/Month/Day (2010/12/31)
- **M/D/Y** = Month/Day/Year (12/31/2010)
- **D/M/Y** = Day/Month/Year (31/12/2010)

Residents in the U.S. usually prefer the middle format: **Month/Day/Year**. However, you may prefer a different format if you're from a different English-speaking part of the world.

Here are the steps to select the date format of your preference:

1. Refer to FIG 4 for the **Date format** screen.
2. Using the **Multi Selector**, scroll up or down to the position of the date format you prefer.
3. Press the **OK button** to select the format.

Once you have the date format selected, the camera will switch to the **Daylight saving time** screen.



FIG 4 – The Date format screen



Daylight Saving Time

Many areas of the United States observe daylight saving time. In the springtime, many American residents set their clocks forward by one hour on a specified day each year. Then in the fall they set it back, leading to the clever saying, “Spring forward, fall back”.

To enable automatic daylight saving time, follow these steps:

1. Refer to FIG 5 for the **Daylight saving time** screen.
2. There are only two selections, **On** and **Off**. Choose the one you prefer by scrolling with the **Multi Selector** and highlighting it.
3. Press the **OK button** to select your choice.

If you turned daylight saving time on, your D3000 will now automatically “spring forward and fall back”, adjusting your time forward by one hour in the spring and back one hour in the fall.

Recommendation: If you live in an area that observes daylight saving time, it’s a good idea to set your camera to make this adjustment automatically. I always leave

Daylight saving time set to **On**. Why not let the camera automatically change this value twice per year?

Now that you’ve made the daylight saving time decision, the camera will move on to the last screen in the series of five; the **Date and time** screen.

Date and Time

This screen allows you to put in the current date and time zone. It is in year-month-day (Y,M,D) and hour-minute-second (H,M,S) format.

Here are the steps to set the date and time:

1. Refer to FIG 6 for the screen you’ll use.
2. Using the **Multi Selector**, scroll to the left or right to select the various date and time sections. Scroll up or down to actually set the values for each one. The time values are using a 24-hour clock, or military time. Use the 12- to 24-hour time conversion chart to convert to the 12-hour time you are probably using (for example, 3:15 p.m. equals 15:15).
3. Press the **OK button** when you’ve finished inputting the date and time.



FIG 5 – The Daylight saving time screen



FIG 6 – The Date and time screen

12- to 24-Hour Time Conversion Chart

Here is a 12- to 24-hour time conversion chart for your convenience.

A.M. Settings:

12:00 a.m. = 00:00 (midnight)
 01:00 a.m. = 01:00
 02:00 a.m. = 02:00
 03:00 a.m. = 03:00
 04:00 a.m. = 04:00
 05:00 a.m. = 05:00
 06:00 a.m. = 06:00
 07:00 a.m. = 07:00
 08:00 a.m. = 08:00
 09:00 a.m. = 09:00
 10:00 a.m. = 10:00
 11:00 a.m. = 11:00

P.M. Settings:

12:00 p.m. = 12:00 (noon)
 01:00 p.m. = 13:00
 02:00 p.m. = 14:00
 03:00 p.m. = 15:00
 04:00 p.m. = 16:00
 05:00 p.m. = 17:00
 06:00 p.m. = 18:00
 07:00 p.m. = 19:00
 08:00 p.m. = 20:00
 09:00 p.m. = 21:00
 10:00 p.m. = 22:00
 11:00 p.m. = 23:00

Note: There is no 24:00 time (midnight). After 23:59 comes 00:00.

Now that you have completed the five basic setup screens, your camera is ready to use. Hopefully you have a nice fresh SD or SDHC memory card ready to go. If so, let's look at how you can format it for first-time use in the camera.

Formatting the Memory Card

You'll need to learn the location of this particular function on the **Setup menu**—either in the Nikon Guide Mode or the old-style text menu mode—since you'll be using it frequently. It's a good idea to use your camera, not your computer, to format the memory card that holds your pictures. That way, the card's format is customized to the camera. It's a relatively simple process to format the card.

First, let's look at how the memory card is inserted in the D3000.

To the right of the **Multi Selector** there's a small door for the memory card. You'll find the word "Card" on the door along with three raised lines to help you get some traction on it. With a finger, pull the little door toward you. When you pull it toward the back of the camera, it will pop open as FIG 7 shows.

Insert the card into the card slot in the camera with the label facing toward you. The cut-off corner of the SD/SDHC card will be up when you insert the card. Press it in all the way until you feel it latch. To



FIG 7 – Inserting a memory card





remove it, just press in on the end of the card and it will pop out a short distance so that you can grasp it and pull it the rest of the way out.

Now that you've inserted the card, let's get it formatted and ready for use. Shown in FIG 7A and FIG 7B are the screens involved in formatting a memory card.

First we'll look at the Nikon Guide Mode menu screens to format a memory card. Follow these steps to format a memory card from the **Guide menu** (see FIG 7A):

1. Set the **Mode dial** on top of the camera to **GUIDE**. That will enable the Nikon Guide Mode and its graphical menu screens.
2. Press the **Menu button** and you'll see the **Guide menu** screen as shown in the leftmost screen in FIG 7A.
3. Scroll to the right with the **Multi Selector** until you've selected **Set up**.
4. On the next screen—in the middle in FIG 7A, image 2—scroll down several times with the **Multi Selector** until you see that **Format memory card** is highlighted.

5. Press the **OK button** and the **Format memory card** screen will ask you *All images on memory card will be deleted. OK?* (see the screen on the right in FIG 7A).
6. With the **Multi Selector** scroll up to the **Yes** selection.
7. Press the **OK button** to start the formatting process. During formatting, a black screen will show displaying the words *Formatting memory card*. When it is done formatting, the screen will briefly show *Formatting complete*, and then the camera will switch back to the **Set up menu**.

At this point the camera's memory card is formatted and ready to accept images. Now let's see how to format the card using the standard text menu system. These text menus are what most previous Nikon DSLR owners have grown accustomed to. The D3000 is the first camera to use the new Nikon Guide Mode screens.



FIG 7A – Formatting a memory card – Guide mode



FIG 7B – Formatting a memory card – Text Menu Mode

In FIG 7B are the screens to format the memory cards. Make sure that you've moved the **Mode dial** (on the camera's top) away from the **GUIDE** selection. Try setting it to one of the **P, S, A, or M** settings for this formatting operation. Here are the steps:

1. Press the **Menu button** and scroll to the **Setup menu** screen as shown in FIG 7B. The icon looks like a little orange wrench.
2. Scroll to the right once with the **Multi Selector** to enter the **Setup menu**, then scroll down and highlight **Format memory card**.
3. Press the **OK button** and the **Format memory card** screen will ask you, *All images on memory card will be deleted. OK?*
4. Scroll up to the **Yes** selection with the **Multi Selector**.
5. Press the **OK button** to start the formatting process. During formatting the screen will show *Formatting memory card*. When the memory card is formatted, the screen will briefly show *Formatting complete*, and the camera will switch back to the **Setup menu**.

These are the two ways to format a memory card. Use whichever you are most comfortable with. The results are exactly the same, a freshly prepared memory card formatted for the Nikon D3000.