

# Nightscapes Checklist

## Setup

### Camera Custom Functions and Presets

- Learn Infinity Focus position
- Mirror Lockup (no?)
- Long Exposure Noise Reduction (yes?)
- High ISO Noise Reduction (yes?)
- LCD Brightness (Dimmer)
- Auto Off (eight minutes +)
- Review time (four seconds +)
- Picture Quality/File Type (RAW + Large)
- White Balance (Tungsten—3400-4400)
- Function Dial (Manual)
- Image Stabilizer (off)
- Auto Focus (off)
- Lens Hood (yes), Filter, (no)
- Set Self-timer to 2 seconds or program remote release)

### Mount Camera

- Lock everything that can be locked on tripod
- Tie down straps, remote, etc.

## Taking an Image

### Check Setup

### Focus

- Aim at bright star (anywhere in sky)
- Wide Angle/viewfinder/center and focus
- Tele Angle/viewfinder/center
- Imaging Zoom Setting/LiveView-LCD Screen/Loupe
- Find star/Position Magnify Box,
- Magnify by 10
- Focus Manually
- Remove color fringe

### Test Image (*Composition*)

- Aim at subject
- Shutter at 10 seconds (more if needed)
- Widest aperture (F smallest possible number)
- Highest ISO available (6400/12800 is OK)
- Take and Evaluate Image
  - composition
  - sweep corners

lens aberrations at full aperture

fill frame

local lights/distractions, etc.

Adjust/Repeat until happy

Lock Tripod

### Test Image (*Exposure*)

Apply "Rule of 200" for shutter time

Exposure time=200/focal length

Widest aperture (F smallest possible number)

ISO 800

Evaluate Image

Histogram—one third across

Star shapes—magnify and check corners

Adjust ISO higher if possible

Adjust/Repeat until happy

### Final Shots

Set self timer or remote release.

Take several images at any given setting

Do both Horizontal and Vertical Alignment

Vary ISO/Time/Aperture as you like

Take Notes

For Every Exposure:

Take a deep breath

Press shutter/remote button

Wait for self timer (if no remote)

Wait for shutter

Wait for "ICNR" time if used

Review

Light Painting (Highlight foreground)

Diffused Flashlight (or Cellphone)

Wave and move around to avoid harsh shadows

Experiment

## Processing

*Do Not Work on Originals*

File Explorer or Image Viewer

Fix

Move sliders to make pleasant picture

Change Exposure, Color Balance, etc.

*These suggestions are for those just starting in Nightscape photography with basic equipment and experience.  
Experiment and change as you get comfortable.*



## Resources

**Web:** The World At Night [twanight.org](http://twanight.org)

**Web:** Wally Pacholka [astropics.com](http://astropics.com)

**Web:** Any Search Engine for *Nightscape Photography*

**Classes:** [dennismamma.com](http://dennismamma.com)

**Print:** *Photography Night Sky*, Jennifer Wu/James Martin, Mountaineer Books

**Good People:** Riverside Astronomical Society [rivastro.org](http://rivastro.org)

**Software:** Helicon Filter [heliconsoft.com](http://heliconsoft.com) (and many others)

**Presenter:** Alex McConahay [alexmcconahay@gmail.com](mailto:alexmcconahay@gmail.com)