

QuickGuide to HDR Creative Effects for Canon EOS 5D Mark III

OVERVIEW

High Dynamic Range (HDR) is a photographic technique that allows photographers to record image detail that exceeds the normal exposure range of a digital sensor. Until recently, the only way to do this would be to shoot 3 to 5 bracketed exposures of stationary subject. You would then use commercially-available HDR software to blend the bracketed exposures together into a single HDR image with visible detail from the darkest shadows to the brightest highlights.

Although this approach offers maximum control and can be extremely effective, the Canon 5D Mark III offers a simpler, faster alternative: With the press of a button you have quick access to a variety of HDR image effects that are processed in-camera and in a matter of seconds. This QuickGuide will explain how to access the EOS 5D Mark III's HDR effects, what types of effects are available, and your exposure control options.

HOW HDR MODE WORKS

In HDR Mode the camera takes a series of three consecutive continuous bracketed exposures, then automatically processes them into a single JPEG file. You can choose the range of bracketed exposures, from ± 1 stop to ± 3 stops. If you prefer, you can set the camera to automatically set the exposure range based on the subject brightness range. In either case, you will be able to view the result on the LCD display in a matter of seconds. HDR Mode also offers HDR image effects that allow you to alter the "look" of your images, from normal to bold artistic effects.

HDR Mode images are saved as JPEG files only. You can, however, set the camera to save the three source images as separate RAW (.CR2) files that you can process later with the raw converter of your choice.

TO ACCESS HDR MODE:



1. Press the **Creative Photo** button located at the top-left corner of the LCD display to go directly to the **<Creative Photo>** menu.
2. Use the Quick Control Dial to scroll to **<HDR Mode>**, then press the **Set Button** to open the HDR Menu screen.

In addition to HDR Mode, this screen offers instant access to the Picture Style and Multi-Exposure menus. If you prefer, you can also access HDR Mode menu screen via the Shooting Menu/Tab 3.

HDR MENU

The HDR menu offers the following control options:

Adjust dyn range – Enables or disables HDR mode and provides access to HDR exposure range controls.

Effect – Provides access to HDR image effects: Natural, Art Standard, Art Vivid, Art Bold, and Art Embossed

Continuous HDR – Controls whether your HDR effect will apply to a single finished shot, or continue for a series of in-camera HDR images.

Auto Image Align – Enables the 5D Mark III to automatically align a sequence of bracketed HDR source images shot hand-held. This option is not recommended or necessary for images shot with a tripod-mounted camera.

Save source imgs – Allows you to save the source images (the bracketed exposures) as separate files for use later. The camera will save the final HDR image as a JPEG file.

TO ENABLE HDR MODE

You must access all EOS 5D Mark III HDR effect functions from the HDR Mode menu.

HDR Mode	
Adjust dyn range	Disable HDR
Effect	Natural
Continuous HDR	Every shot
Auto Image Align	Disable
Save source imgs	HDR img only

1. Use the **Quick Control Dial** to scroll to **<Adjust dyn range>**, then press the **Set Button**. The exposure options sub-menu will appear.
2. Select from one of the four exposure options:
 - **Automatic** – the camera will automatically select an appropriate exposure bracket series based on its reading of the subject brightness range
 - **± 1 EV** – for low-contrast subjects with a relatively narrow brightness range
 - **± 2 EV** – for subjects with moderate contrast and brightness range
 - **± 3 EV** – for high-contrast subjects with a wide brightness range

Tips:

1. Although there is an Auto Exposure Bracketing (AEB) setting in the red Shooting Menu, do not use this setting if you want to create in-camera HDR mode images, otherwise the HDR mode will be grayed-out and unavailable.
2. You can use exposure compensation when shooting in HDR mode; just keep in mind that it will be applied to the finished HDR image as well as the individual source images. In other words, +1 compensation will brighten the final HDR image by one stop, -1 compensation will darken the final image by one stop, and so on.

TO DISABLE HDR MODE

By default, the camera will shoot one HDR exposure sequence of three bracketed exposures, after which it

■ TO DISABLE HDR MODE (CONT'D)

will automatically return to the normal exposure mode. If you have set the camera to Continuous HDR (see below), you will need to manually disable HDR mode to return to normal shooting.

1. Use the **Quick Control Dial** to scroll to **<Adjust dyn range>**.
2. Press the **Set Button**.
3. Scroll to **<Disable HDR>**.
4. Press the **Set Button**.

■ HDR Image Effects

The camera applies the following image effects to the final JPEG image only, not the source images. You must choose the effect you want before you begin your HDR exposure sequence. Also keep in mind that the “look” of the photograph will depend not only on the image effect but the characteristics of your subject, lighting, brightness range, and so on. Feel free to experiment and to base your choice on what looks best to you.

1. Use the **Quick Control Dial** to scroll to **<Effect>**, then press the **Set Button**. The following list of HDR image effects will appear.
2. Use the **Quick Control Dial** to scroll to the effect you want, then press the **Set Button**.



Natural – This setting combines the extended highlight and shadow detail and reduced contrast typical of HDR images with moderate color saturation and image sharpening.

Art Standard – This setting heightens the HDR effect, as well as color saturation and image sharpening. The contrast between light and dark tones will be emphasized by dark or light edge outlines.

Art Vivid – The setting is an enhanced version of Art Standard, with more vivid color saturation. This can be useful for adding visual “pop” to otherwise flat or pastel colors.

Art Bold – This setting further increases the color saturation of Art Vivid without affecting highlight and shadow detail.



Art Embossed – This setting reduces color saturation while enhancing edge contrast to the extent that light and dark edges produce an effect similar to embossing. This effect generally works best with subjects that have bold and simple shapes with clearly defined edges.

■ CONTINUOUS HDR VS. ONE SHOT

By default, the camera will shoot one HDR exposure sequence of three bracketed exposures, after which it will return to the normal exposure mode. If you want to shoot a continuous series of HDR exposures, you will need to: Use the **Quick Control Dial** to scroll to **<Continuous HDR>**, then press the **Set Button** and select **<Every Shot>**. Press **Set** again. The camera will remain in HDR mode until you disable it. The menu sequence for disabling HDR is **HDR Mode > Adjust dyn range > Disable HDR**.

■ AUTO IMAGE ALIGN

Because HDR images require overlaying three consecutive exposures of the same subject, precise registration is essential to maximum image sharpness. You will achieve the most consistent and precise registration when you shoot with your camera mounted on a tripod, the subject itself is motionless, and the lighting is continuous.

That said, you have the option to shoot hand-held in bright light for speed and convenience. (Low light exposures require longer shutter speeds and are therefore likely to introduce image blur caused by handheld camera motion.)

Enabling the **Auto Image Align** option will automatically adjust for minor differences in subject position between the bracketed exposures and align them in the final image.

Because this auto-alignment process will result in a slight cropping of the final image, you should frame your composition more loosely to compensate. If you are shooting with your camera tripod-mounted, Auto Image Align should be disabled and your framing will not be affected.

■ SAVE SOURCE IMAGES

By default, HDR mode will save all source images as well as the finished HDR file. If you don't want or need the individual source images, select the **<Save source images>** option in the menu, and select **<HDR img only>**. Press the **Set Button** to lock-in your choice.

■ GENERAL TIPS:

1. HDR Mode is not compatible with the following camera settings: BULB, Automatic Exposure Bracketing, White Balance Bracketing, Multi-exposure Mode, flash photography, ISO expansion, and AF Point Display.
2. Regardless of which exposure mode you use (Manual included), the camera will bracket HDR exposures by adjusting the shutter speed or ISO rather than the aperture. Because one of the bracketed shutter speeds may be up to three stops lower than the middle/normal exposure, you must be careful to avoid subject and camera motion. Any subject movement during the HDR exposure sequence, such as wind-blown flags and foliage, or moving water, automobiles, and people, can cause ghost images and other unpredictable results.
3. The auto-alignment feature may not work properly in situations such as excessively bright or dark exposures, repetitive patterns in the scene, and broad areas of flat, single-toned subject matter.
4. Fluorescent and LED lights may cause unnatural color effects caused by flicker and their non-continuous color spectrum.
5. In situations where your subject is stationary and your camera is tripod-mounted, it's to your advantage to experiment with different exposure settings and HDR image effects to see which you prefer.