Lighting for portraiture- with studio lights

For Burghfield Camera Club 17.02.22

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Lighting for portraiture-
with studio lights

(but the same principles apply to using speedlights)

1. **Split** lighting

2. **Rembrandt** lighting

3. **Broad** lighting
   with and without reflector
   or fill light

A few more lighting terms

1. **key light** – basically your main light

2. **fill light** – to brighten up the shadows cast by your key light; often half the output of the key light ……. or you can use

   a reflector

Camera settings

If no incident light meter:

- make a guesstimate eg f/8 1/125 ISO 200 to start (manual)

- switch on highlight and shadow warnings

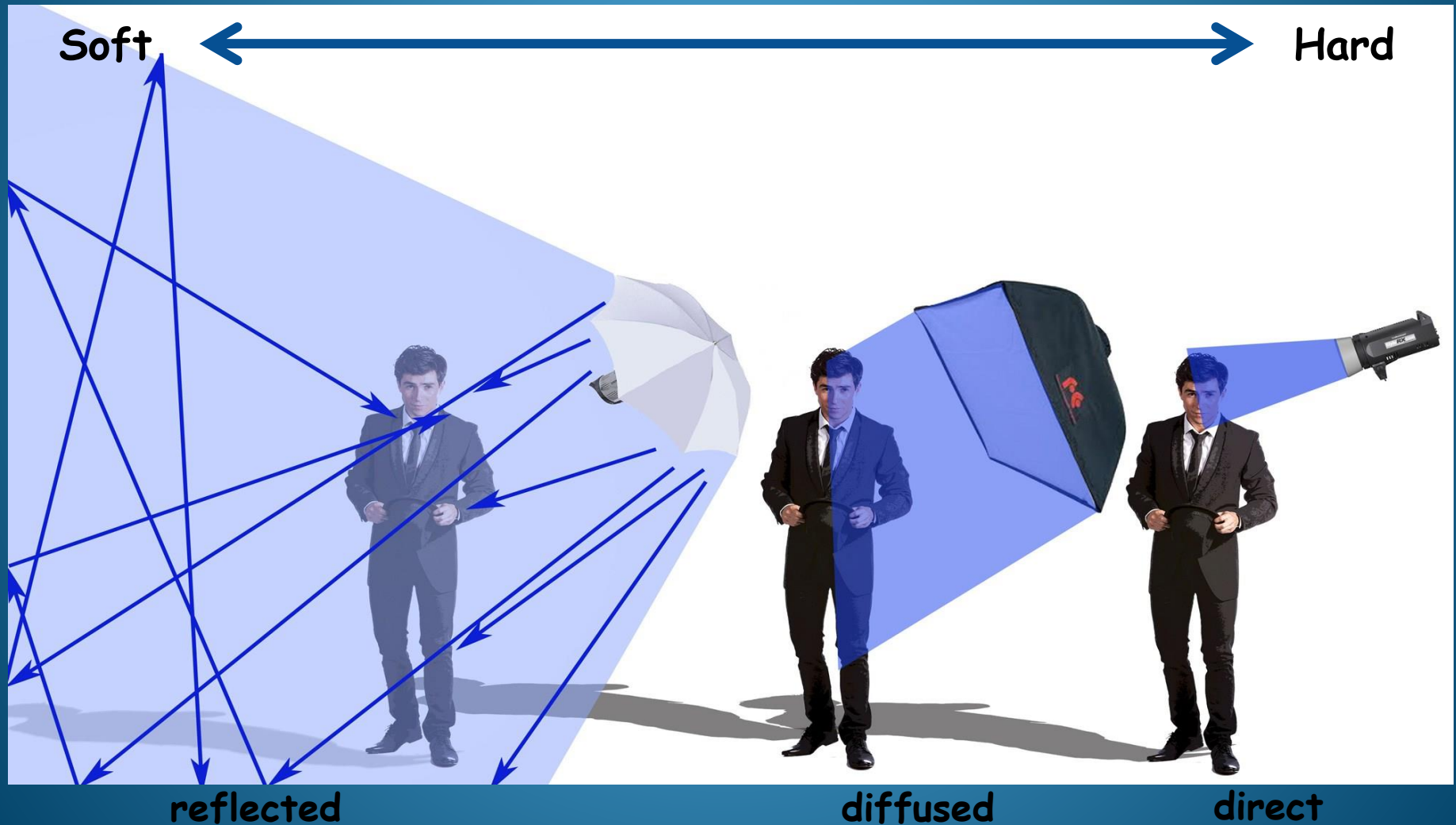- check your histogram (shoot slightly to right)

Subject

- avoid 'convict 99' ie straight on
- sitting or standing …. ? props
- stool elongates – less 'slouching'
- do you want direct gaze ("look at the camera") or 'windmill hands' & tripod
- pre-set everything and chat for a more natural look and more relaxed subject (but you are not behind the camera so they look at you) with tripod
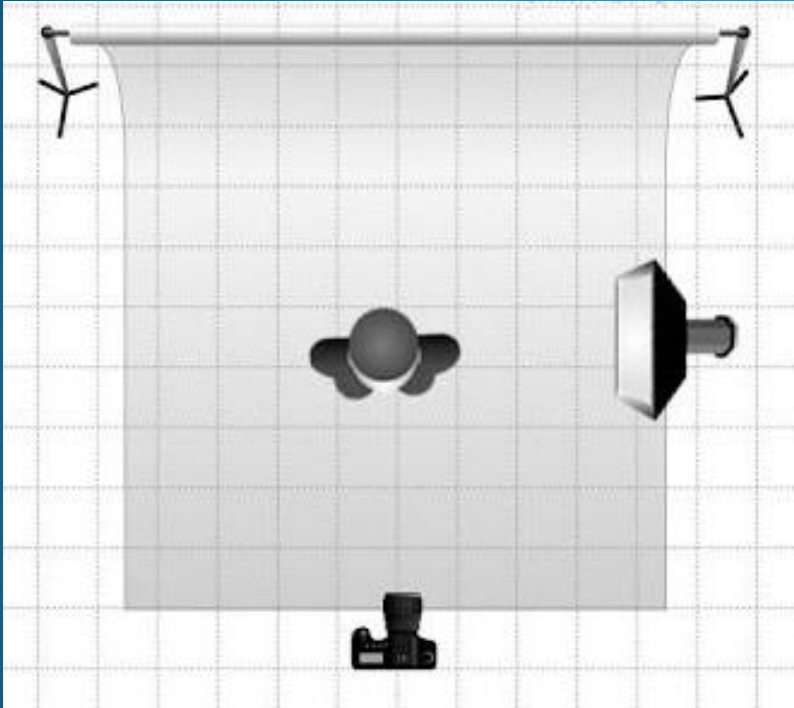
Background

- subject should be a good distance from background to avoid shadows

- also background will go dark (as flash not reaching it)

- plain wall or curtains (neutral) grey is good and easier to change in post

Difference between direct light and diffused or reflected light

Soft ← → Hard

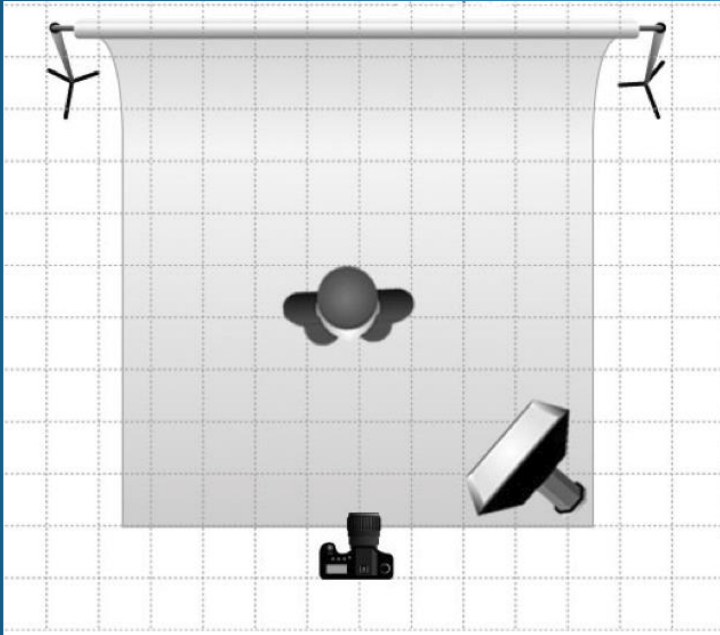reflected   diffused   direct

Split lighting - demo

- dramatic
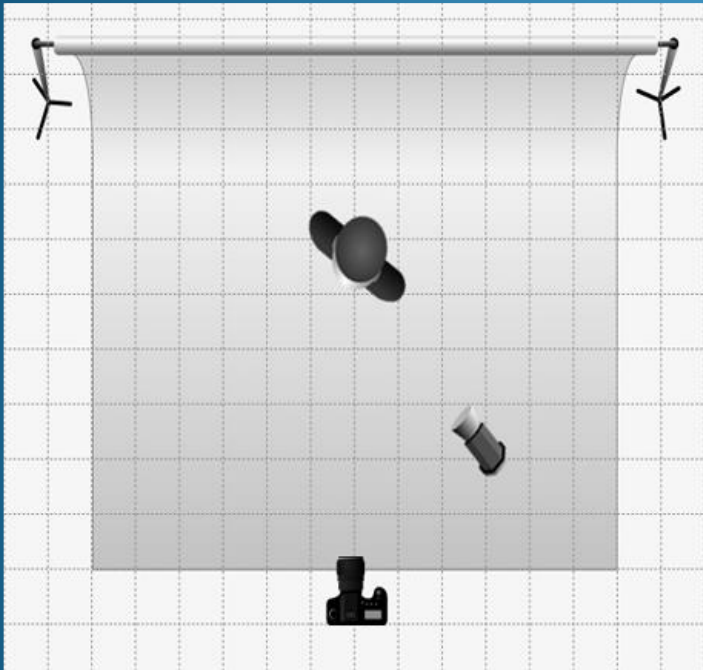- adjustable with reflector or fill light
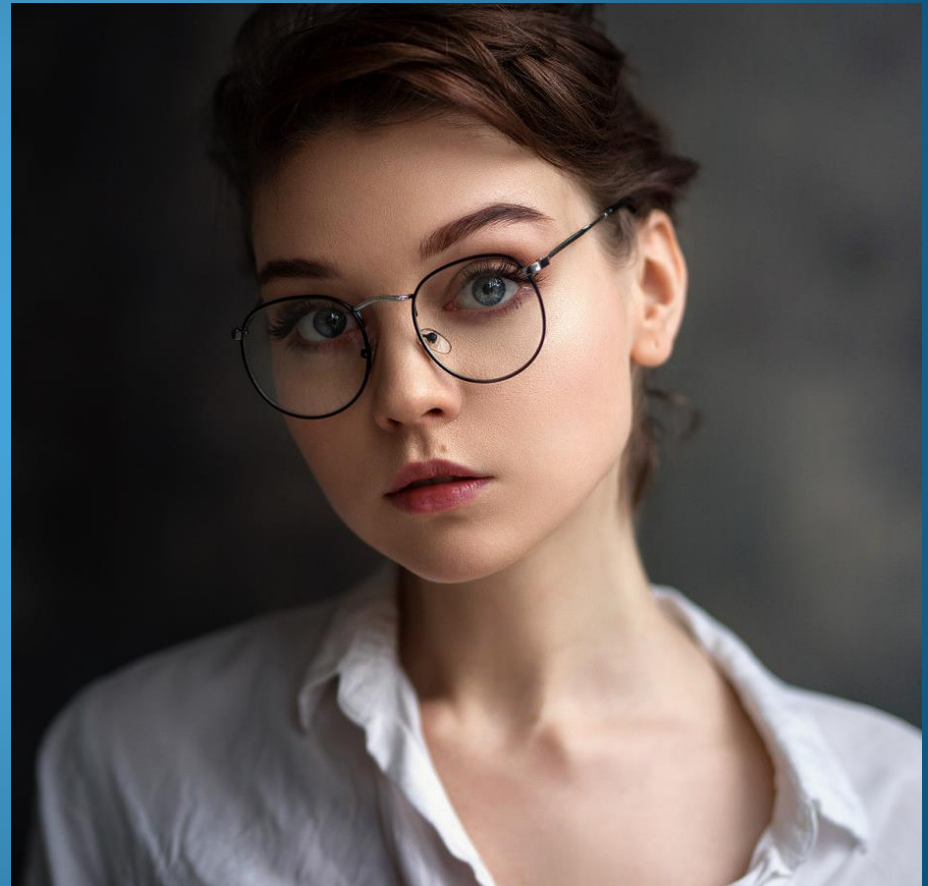
Rembrandt lighting - demo

- head shot with triangle on far cheek
- vary dark side with reflector of fill light

Broad lighting - demo

- good for variety of people with same lighting set –up
- good for glasses
- headshot or full length subject

Practical

A chance to try out lighting for yourselves.

Useful portrait lighting guide:

https://vaillantmartien.wordpress.com/2015/09/17/free-portrait-lighting-guide-24-essential-studio-lighting-set-ups/

(scroll down to find the lighting effect you want – final table shows nearly all possibilities!)