

# How to Reduce Camera Shake – 6 Techniques

A Post By: [Natalie Norton](#)

In this classic DPS post (now updated) photographer [Natalie](#) explores 6 ways you can hand hold lenses at low apertures and low shutter speeds and still avoid blurry images caused by **camera shake**.



I'm a mover and a shaker in general, and this is particularly true when I'm on a shoot. I'm twistin' and turnin', climbin' and jumpin' and to top it all off, I DO NOT have a steady hand, *plain and simple*.

As often as possible I opt for lenses with VR (Vibration Reduction) or IS (Image Stabilization). You pay a pretty penny for this feature. For me, it's worth the extra cost, and for the point I'm at in my photography it's a reasonable expense. But that wasn't always the case, and what about uber slow shutter speeds with no tripod. No IS or VR can hold up under pressure like that. . .no matter how magical they may be. . . and magical they are, trust you me. 6 Techniques to Reduce Camera Shake

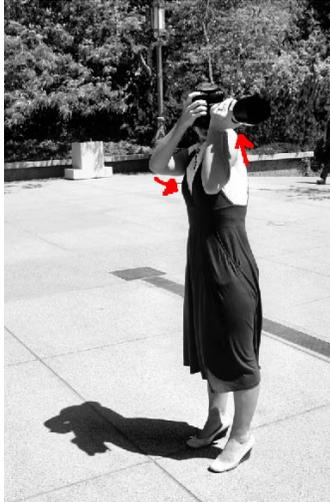
Here are 6 options for avoiding camera shake and achieving crisp, delicious images no matter the length of the lens, no matter the shutter speed.

Shooting wide open? NO PROBLEM; I've got your back!! Enjoy!



## 1. Elbows In

As often as possible pull your elbows in to your body and exhale completely before depressing the shutter. When you're working with a wide aperture or low shutter speed (or both), even a breath can introduce shake. Pulling your elbows tight to your body can really help keep you steady. I also press my elbows firmly into my chest for even greater stability.



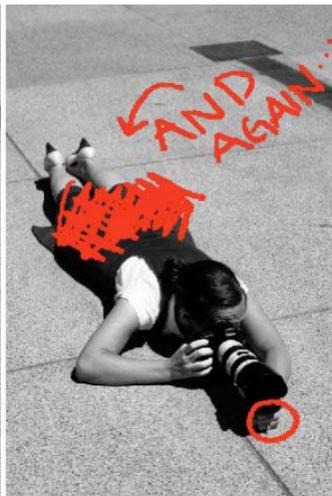
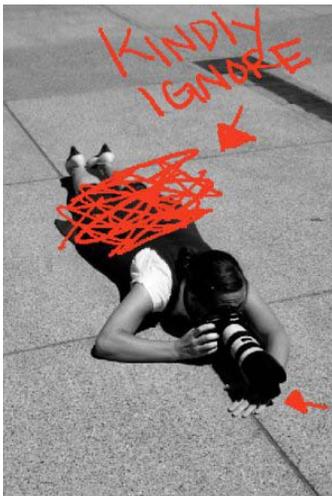
## 2. Raise Your Left Shoulder....

I am definitely a right eyed photographer, but this tip that I learned from "[The Moment It Clicks](#)" by Joe McNally, requires that I shift for a moment to my left eye. What I'm doing here is raising my left shoulder, and bracing my left elbow into my rib-cage (no arrow for this one). For further stability, you can pull your right elbow in to your chest. As always, exhale completely before depressing the shutter to avoid introducing shake.



## 3. Create a Tripod With Your Knee

You can create your own tripod by resting your elbow on your knee while in a seated position. Again, bring that other elbow in for greater support.



## 4. Lay Down

These two images illustrate perhaps the most obvious way to avoid shake without a tripod. Lie flat and let the lens sit directly on the ground. The problem with this is that you're likely to have quite a downward tilt to the lens and unless you're aiming to photograph the pavement, you probably won't end up with the shot you're hoping for. In the first image you'll notice that I placed my hand flat against the cement and balanced the lens on top of it to give myself some

height. In the second image you'll see that I created a fist with my hand to give myself even greater height.



## 5. The Machine Gun Hold

This next technique is sometimes referred to as the machine gun hold. I rarely use this technique as I find it awkward and difficult to maintain for more than a second or two. Just because it doesn't work for me, doesn't mean it won't for you. . . give it a try.

## 6. Cradle It



In this next image you'll see that I created a sort of cradle for the lens between my shoulder and my wrist. I also stabilized the hold by balancing my elbow on my knee.

Well there you have it. That's how I avoid "The Shake" (I've named him that because he's like an evil monster who comes in and ruins my otherwise perfectly delicious images). Please share YOUR tricks and techniques in the comment section below, and as always. . .



[Natalie Norton](#) is a writer and a lifestyle wedding and portrait photographer who shoots across the globe. She is based off of the North Shore of Oahu and out of Gilbert, Arizona. Enjoy more of her photography and writing at [www.natalienortonblog.com](http://www.natalienortonblog.com). You can also connect with Natalie via [Twitter](#) or on [Facebook](#).