

Getting the Lay of the Land

In This Chapter

- ▶ Attaching and using an SLR lens
- ▶ Adjusting the viewfinder to your eyesight
- ▶ Working with camera memory cards
- ▶ Getting acquainted with external camera controls
- ▶ Using the camera menus and Shooting Info display
- ▶ Choosing shooting options via the Quick Settings display
- ▶ Deciphering the viewfinder data
- ▶ Displaying onscreen help
- ▶ Customizing basic camera operations

I still remember the day that I bought my first SLR film camera. I was excited to finally move up from my one-button point-and-shoot camera, but I was a little anxious, too. My new pride and joy sported several unfamiliar buttons and dials, and the explanations in the camera manual clearly were written for someone with an engineering degree. And then there was the whole business of attaching the lens to the camera, an entirely new task for me. I saved up my pennies a long time for that camera — what if my inexperience caused me to damage the thing before I even shot my first pictures?

You may be feeling similarly insecure if your Nikon D60 is your first SLR, although some of the buttons on the camera back may look familiar if you've previously used a digital point-and-shoot camera. If your D60 is both your first SLR and first digital camera, you may be doubly intimidated.

Trust me, though, that your camera isn't nearly as complicated as its exterior makes it appear. With a little practice and the help of this chapter, which introduces you to each external control, you'll quickly become as comfortable with your camera's buttons and dials as you are with the ones on your car's dashboard.



This chapter also guides you through the process of mounting and using an SLR lens, working with digital memory cards, and navigating your camera's internal menus. And for times when you don't have this book handy, I show you how to access the Help system that's built into your camera.

Getting Comfortable with Your Lens

One of the biggest differences between a point-and-shoot camera and an SLR (*single-lens reflex*) camera is the lens. With an SLR, you can swap out lenses to suit different photographic needs, going from an extreme close-up lens to a super-long telephoto, for example. In addition, an SLR lens has a movable focusing ring that gives you the option of focusing manually instead of relying on the camera's autofocus mechanism.

Of course, those added capabilities mean that you need a little background information to take full advantage of your lens. To that end, the next four sections explain the process of attaching, removing, and using this critical part of your camera.

Attaching a lens

Whatever lens you choose, follow these steps to attach it to the camera body:

- 1. Remove the cap that covers the lens mount on the front of the camera.**
- 2. Remove the cap that covers the back of the lens.**

The cap is the one that doesn't say *Nikon* on it, in case you aren't sure.

- 3. Hold the lens in front of the camera so that the little white dot on the lens aligns with the matching dot on the camera body.**

Official photography lingo uses the term *mounting index* instead of *little white dot*. Either way, you can see the markings in question in Figure 1-1.

Note that the figure (and others in this chapter) shows you the D60 with its so-called "kit lens" — the 18–55mm Vibration Reduction (VR) zoom lens that Nikon sells as a unit with the body. If you buy a lens from a manufacturer other than Nikon, your dot may be red or some other color, so check the lens instruction manual.

- 4. Keeping the dots aligned, position the lens on the camera's lens mount as shown in Figure 1-1.**

When you do so, grip the lens by its back collar as shown in the figure, not the movable, forward end of the lens barrel.



Figure 1-1: When attaching the lens, align the index markers as shown here.

5. **Turn the lens in a counter-clockwise direction until the lens clicks into place.**

To put it another way, turn the lens toward the side of the camera that sports the shutter button, as indicated by the red arrow in the figure.

6. **On a lens that has an aperture ring, set and lock the ring so the aperture is set at the highest f-stop number.**

Check your lens manual to find out whether your lens sports an aperture ring and how to adjust it. (The D60 kit lens doesn't.) To find out more about apertures and f-stops, see Chapter 5.



Always attach (or switch) lenses in a clean environment to reduce the risk of getting dust, dirt, and other contaminants inside the camera or lens. Changing lenses on a sandy beach, for example, isn't a good idea. For added safety, point the camera body slightly down when performing this maneuver; doing so helps prevent any flotsam in the air from being drawn into the camera by gravity. See Chapter 3 for tips on cleaning your lens.

Removing a lens

To detach a lens from the camera body, take these steps:

1. **Locate the lens-release button, labeled in Figure 1-2.**

2. **Grip the rear collar of the lens.**

In other words, hold onto the stationary part of the lens that's closest to the camera body and not the movable focusing ring or zoom ring, if your lens has one.

3. **Press the lens-release button while turning the lens clockwise until the mounting index on the lens is aligned with the index on the camera body.**

The mounting indexes are the little guide dots labeled in Figure 1-1. When the dots line up, the lens should detach from the mount.

4. **Place the rear protective cap onto the back of the lens.**

If you aren't putting another lens on the camera, cover the lens mount with the protective cap that came with your camera, too.



Figure 1-2: Press the lens-release button to disengage the lens from the mount.

Using a VR (vibration reduction) lens

If you purchased the D60 camera kit — that is, the body-and-lens combination put together by Nikon — your lens offers a feature called *vibration reduction*. On Nikon lenses, this feature is indicated by the initials *VR* in the lens name.

Vibration reduction attempts to compensate for small amounts of camera shake that are common when photographers handhold their cameras and use a slow shutter speed, a lens with a long focal length, or both. That camera movement during the exposure can produce blurry images. Although vibration reduction can't work miracles, it does enable most people to capture sharper handheld shots in many situations than they otherwise could.



However, when you use a tripod, vibration reduction can have detrimental effects because the system may try to adjust for movement that isn't actually occurring. That's why your kit lens — and all Nikon VR lenses — have an On/Off switch, which is located on the side of the lens, as shown in Figure 1-2. When you do shoot with a tripod, remember to set that switch to the Off position.

If you use a non-Nikon lens, the vibration reduction feature may go by another name: *image stabilization*, *optical stabilization*, *anti-shake*, *vibration compensation*, and so on. In some cases, the manufacturers may recommend that you leave the system turned on or to a special setting when you use a tripod, so be sure to check the lens manual for information.

Chapter 6 offers more tips on achieving blur-free photos, and it also explains focal length and its impact on your pictures. See Chapter 5 for an explanation of shutter speed.

Focusing and zooming the lens

When paired with a compatible lens, your camera offers autofocus capabilities, which you can explore in detail in Chapter 6. But with some subjects, autofocus can be slow or impossible, which is why your camera also offers manual focusing. The process is quick and easy: You just turn the focusing ring on the lens until your subject comes into focus. To try it out, take these steps:

- 1. Locate the A-M (Auto/Manual) focusing switch on the side of the lens.**

Figure 1-3 shows the switch as it appears on the D60's kit lens. The switch should be in a similar location on other Nikon lenses; if you use a lens from another manufacturer, check the lens instruction manual.



- 2. Set the switch to the M position, as shown in the figure.**

Don't try to move the focusing ring on the kit lens with the switch set to the A (autofocus) position; doing so can damage the lens.

- 3. While looking through the viewfinder, twist the focusing ring to adjust focus.**

If you have trouble focusing, you may be too close to your subject; every lens has a minimum focusing distance. (See Chapter 6 for more tips on focus issues.) You may also need to adjust the viewfinder to accommodate your eyesight; see the next section for details.



Figure 1-3: Set the focusing mode switch to M before turning the manual focus ring.



Again, the option to switch between autofocus and manual focusing depends on matching the D60 with a fully compatible lens, as I mentioned in the introduction to this section. The short story is this: The D60 doesn't have an autofocus system built into the camera body, which means that the lens itself must sport that mechanism in order for you to autofocus. You can still use the lens if it doesn't have an autofocus system; you simply have to focus manually at all times. When you use such a lens, visit Chapter 6 to find out how to set the camera's Focus mode option, found on the Custom Setting menu, to Manual.

In addition, some lenses (although not the one sold with the D60 kit) enable you to use autofocus to set the initial focusing point and then fine-tune focus manually. Check your lens manual for information on how to use this option, if available.

If you bought a zoom lens, a movable zoom barrel lies behind the focusing ring, as shown in Figure 1-3. To zoom in or out, just move that zoom ring forward and backward.

The numbers on the zoom ring, by the way, represent *focal lengths*. I explain focal lengths in Chapter 6. In the meantime, just note that when the lens is mounted on the camera, the number that's aligned with the lens mounting index (the white dot) represents the current focal length. In Figure 1-3, for example, the focal length is 55mm.

Adjusting the Viewfinder Focus

Tucked behind the right side of the rubber eyepiece that surrounds the viewfinder is a tiny vertical switch, called a *diopter adjustment control*. With this control, labeled in the left image in Figure 1-4, you can adjust the focus of your viewfinder to accommodate your eyesight.

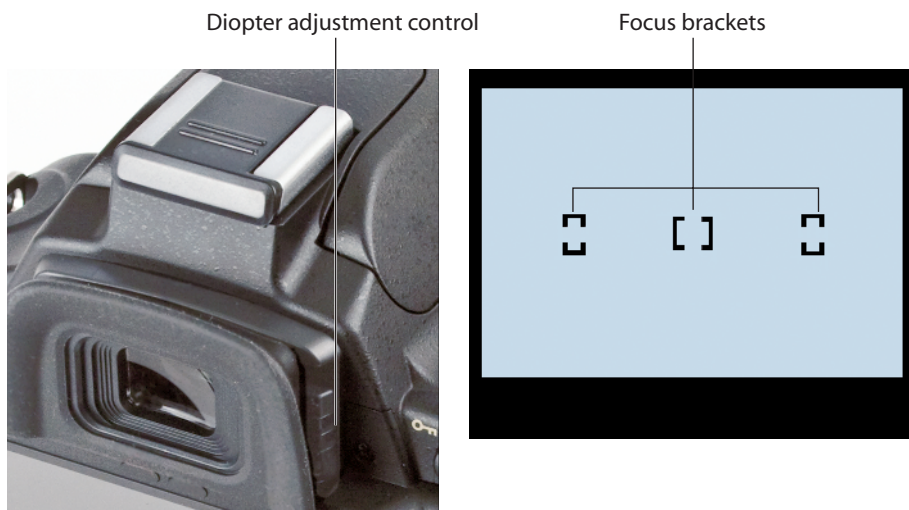


Figure 1-4: Use the diopter adjustment control to set the viewfinder focus for your eyesight.



If you don't take this step, scenes that appear out of focus through the viewfinder may actually be sharply focused through the lens, and vice versa. Here's how to make the necessary adjustment:

1. **Remove the lens cap from the front of the lens.**
2. **Look through the viewfinder and concentrate on the three pairs of brackets shown on the right side of Figure 1-4.**

The brackets are officially called *focus brackets*, but don't worry about focusing the actual picture now; just pay attention to the brackets.

3. **Slide the diopter adjustment control up or down until the brackets appear to be in focus.**



The Nikon manual warns you not to poke yourself in the eye as you perform this maneuver. This warning seems so obvious that I laugh every time I read it — which makes me feel doubly stupid the next time I poke myself in the eye as I perform this maneuver.

Working with Memory Cards

Instead of recording images on film, digital cameras store pictures on *memory cards*. Some people, in fact, refer to memory cards as *digital film*, but I hate that term because film and memory cards actually have little in common. Film must be developed before you can view your pictures, a process that involves time and some not-so-nice chemicals. Film can be damaged when exposed to some airport security scanners; memory cards are immune to those devices. The cost per picture is also much higher for film: You have to develop and print each negative, whether the shot is a keeper or a clunker. With digital, you print only the pictures you like — and you can reuse your memory cards over and over and over, saving even more money.

Whatever term you prefer, your D60 uses a specific type of memory card called an *SD card* (for *Secure Digital*), shown in Figures 1-5 and 1-6. Other card types — CompactFlash, Memory Stick, or any others — aren't compatible with your camera. However, if you use SD cards in your cell phone, portable music player, or other device, you can use the same cards in your camera.

Safeguarding your memory cards — and the images you store on them — requires just a few precautions:

- ✓ **Inserting a card:** First, be sure that the camera is turned off. Then put the card in the card slot with the label facing the back of the camera, as shown in Figure 1-5. Push the card into the slot until it clicks into place; the memory card access light (circled in Figure 1-5) blinks for a second to let you know the card is inserted properly.

- ✓ **Formatting a card:** The first time you use a new memory card, take a few seconds to *format* it by choosing the Format Memory Card option on the Setup menu. This step simply ensures that the card is properly prepared to record your pictures. See the upcoming section “Cruising the Setup menu” for details.

- ✓ **Removing a card:** After making sure that the memory card access light is off, indicating that the camera has finished recording your most

Memory card access light



Figure 1-5: Insert the card with the label facing the camera back.



recent photo, turn the camera off. Open the memory card door, as shown in Figure 1-5. Depress the memory card slightly until you hear a little click and then let go. The card should pop halfway out of the slot, enabling you to grab it by the tail and remove it.

- ✓ **Handling cards:** Don't touch the gold contacts on the back of the card. (See the left card in Figure 1-6.) When cards aren't in use, store them in the protective cases they came in or in a memory card wallet. Keep cards away from extreme heat and cold as well.

- ✓ **Locking cards:** The tiny switch on the left side of the card, labeled *lock switch* in Figure 1-6, enables you to lock your card, which prevents any data from being erased or recorded to the card. Press the switch toward the bottom of the card to lock the card contents; press it toward the top of the card to unlock the data.

You can protect individual images from accidental erasure by using the camera's Protect feature, covered in Chapter 4.

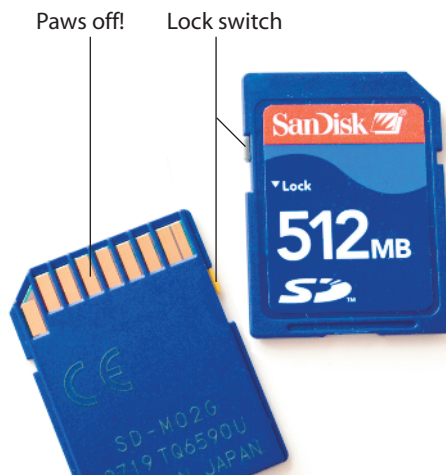


Figure 1-6: Avoid touching the gold contacts on the card.



Exploring External Camera Controls

Scattered across your camera's exterior are a number of buttons, dials, and switches that you use to change picture-taking settings, review and edit your photos, and perform various other operations. Sometimes a single twist of a dial gets the job done; other times, you press several buttons in sequence.

In later chapters, I discuss all your camera's functions in detail and provide the exact steps to follow to access those functions. This section provides just a basic road map to the external controls plus a quick introduction to each. You may want to put a sticky note or other bookmark on this page so that you can find it for easier reference later. (The cheat sheet at the front of the book offers a similar guide, albeit with less detail.)

With that preamble out of the way, the next three sections break down the external controls found on the top, back, and front-left side of the camera.

Topside controls

Your virtual tour begins at the top of the camera, shown in Figure 1-7. There are four controls of note here, as follows:

✓ On/Off switch and shutter button:

Okay, I'm pretty sure you already figured this combo button out. But check out Chapter 2 to discover the proper shutter-button-pressing technique — you'd be surprised how many people mess up their pictures because they press that button incorrectly.

✓ Active D-Lighting button:

Your D60 offers an exposure feature called *Active D-Lighting*, which is designed to help you get better results when you shoot high-contrast scenes — a dark subject against a bright background, for example. To turn the feature on and off, you press this button while rotating the Command dial, covered in the next section. Chapter 5 explains Active D-Lighting in detail.

✓ Exposure Compensation button:

This button activates a feature that enables you to tweak exposure when working in three of your camera's autoexposure modes: programmed autoexposure, aperture-priority autoexposure, and shutter-priority autoexposure, represented by the letters P, S, and A on the camera Mode dial. Chapter 5 explains.

✓ Mode dial:

With this dial, you set the camera to fully automatic, semi-automatic, or manual photography mode. The little pictographs, or icons, represent the Nikon Digital Vari-Program modes, which are automatic settings geared to specific types of photos: action shots, portraits, landscapes, and so on. Chapter 2 details the Digital Vari-Program and Auto modes; Chapter 5 explains the four others (P, S, A, and M).

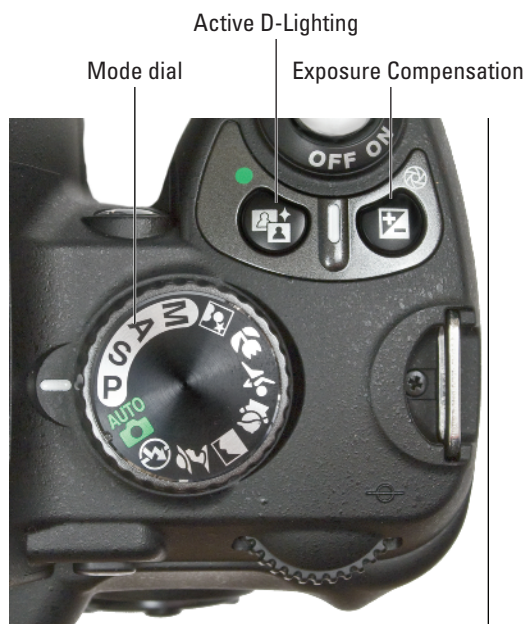


Figure 1-7: The tiny pictures on the Mode dial represent special automatic shooting modes.

Back-of-the-body controls

Traveling over the top of the camera to its back side, shown in Figure 1-8, you encounter the following controls:



Figure 1-8: You use the Multi Selector to navigate menus and access certain other camera options.

- ✓ **Command dial:** After you activate certain camera features, you rotate this dial, labeled in Figure 1-8, to select a specific setting. For example, when you shoot in the A exposure mode (aperture-priority autoexposure, detailed in Chapter 5), rotating the Command dial changes the aperture (f-stop).
- ✓ **AE-L/AF-L and Protect button:** Like several buttons, this one serves multiple purposes. When you're taking pictures in some automatic modes, you can lock in your focus and exposure settings by pressing and holding this button. Chapter 5 explains why you may want to do so. In picture playback mode, pressing the button locks the picture file — hence the little key symbol that appears on the camera body next to the button — which protects the picture so that you can't accidentally delete it. See Chapter 4 for details on that option.



You can adjust the performance of the button as it relates to locking focus and exposure, too. Instructions in this book assume that you stick with the default setting, but if you want to explore your options, see Chapter 11.

- ✓ **Eye sensor:** See those two tiny black bars under the viewfinder? (Refer to Figure 1-8.) They enable the camera to automatically shift from displaying critical shooting data on the monitor to showing it in the viewfinder. As soon as you put your eye to the viewfinder, the monitor shuts down, and the viewfinder is activated. Take your eye away from the viewfinder, and the reverse happens. This setup saves battery life because both displays aren't active at once. But if you prefer, you can disable the eye sensor via the Setup menu, covered later in the chapter. The viewfinder then remains on while the shooting data is displayed on the monitor.



- ✓ **Multi Selector:** This dual-natured control plays a role in many camera functions. You press the outer edges of the Multi Selector left, right, up, or down to navigate camera menus and access certain other options. At the center of the control is the OK button, which you press to finalize a menu selection or other camera adjustment. See the next section for help with using the camera menus.



- ✓ **Delete button:** Sporting a trash can icon, the universal symbol for delete, this button enables you to erase pictures from your memory card. Chapter 4 has specifics.



- ✓ **Playback button:** Press this button to switch the camera into picture review mode. Chapter 4 details the features available to you in this mode.



- ✓ **Menu button:** Press this button to access five menus of camera options. See the next section for details on navigating menus; see the appendix for a complete listing of all menus and menu options.



- ✓ **Thumbnail/Help button:** In playback mode, pressing this button changes the number of picture thumbnails displayed on the monitor. You also can reduce the magnification of a thumbnail — zoom out, in other words. (The minus sign in the magnifying glass is the universal symbol for zoom out.) In other modes, the button accesses the camera's built-in help system. See “Asking Your Camera for Help,” later in this chapter, for details.



- ✓ **Zoom/Setting/Reset button:** Even more multifunctioned, this button has three main roles:
 - In playback mode, pressing this button magnifies the currently displayed image and also reduces the number of thumbnails displayed at a time. Note the plus sign in the middle of the magnifying glass — plus for zoom in.

- When you're in picture-taking mode, the button enables you to display the Shooting Info screen or the Quick Settings screen (both covered later in this chapter) or turn the LCD monitor off. (The *I* marking below the button reminds you of the button's connection to the Shooting Info screen.) See the upcoming section "Using the Shooting Info and Quick Settings Displays" for details.
- The little green dot that appears under the button indicates the button's Reset function. Pressing this button and the Active D-Lighting button — which is also neighbored by a green dot — simultaneously for more than two seconds restores the most critical picture-taking options, such as Image Quality and Image Size, to their default settings. See "Browsing the Custom Setting menu," later in this chapter, for more on this topic.



In this book, I refer to these last two buttons as the Thumbnail button and the Zoom button, respectively. This isn't the approach that Nikon takes in its manuals — instructions therein call the button by the name that's relevant for the current function. I think that's a little confusing, so I always refer to each button by one name only.

Front-left buttons

On the front-left side of the camera body, you find two final external controls, labeled in Figure 1-9. These work as follows:



✓ **Fn/Self-Timer button:** The *Fn* is short for *function*, in case you were wondering. By default, pressing this button puts the camera into Self-Timer mode, in which the camera snaps the picture automatically a few seconds after you press and release the shutter button. This feature allows for hands-free picture taking — useful for times when you want to include yourself in the shot, for example.



If you don't use the Self-Timer mode often, you can set the button to control one of four other functions instead. Chapter 11 shows you how.



Figure 1-9: You press the Flash button to pop up the built-in flash.








✓ **Flash/Flash compensation:** Pressing this button pops up the camera's built-in flash (except in automatic shooting modes, in which the camera decides whether the flash is needed). By holding the button down and rotating the Command dial, you can adjust the flash mode (normal, red-eye reduction, and so on). In advanced exposure modes (P, S, A, and M), you also can press this button, along with the Exposure Compensation button, and then rotate the Command dial to adjust the flash power. See Chapter 5 for all things flash related.

Ordering from Camera Menus



You access many of your camera's features via internal menus, which, conveniently enough, appear when you press the Menu button. Features are grouped into five main menus, described briefly in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 D60 Menus		
<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Open This Menu . . .</i>	<i>to Access These Functions</i>
	Playback	Viewing, deleting, and protecting pictures
	Shooting	Basic photography settings
	Custom Setting	Advanced photography options and some basic camera operations
	Setup	Additional basic camera operations
	Retouch	Built-in photo retouching options

After you press the Menu button, you see on the camera monitor a screen similar to the one shown in Figure 1-10. Along the left side of the screen, you see the icons shown in Table 1-1, each representing one of the five available

menus. The icon that is highlighted or appears in color is the active menu; options on that menu automatically appear to the right of the column of icons. In the figure, the Shooting menu is active, for example.



I explain all the important menu options elsewhere in the book; for now, just familiarize yourself with the process of navigating menus and selecting options therein. The Multi Selector, shown in the margin here, is the key to the game. You press the edges of the Multi Selector to navigate up, down, left, and right through the menus.



In this book, the instruction “Press the Multi Selector left” simply means to press the left edge of the control. “Press the Multi Selector right” means to press the right edge, and so on.

Here’s a bit more detail about the process of navigating menus:

- ✓ **To select a different menu:** Press the Multi Selector left to jump to the column containing the five menu icons. Then press up or down to highlight the menu you want to display. Finally, press right to jump over to the options on the menu.

Menu icons

- ✓ **To select and adjust a function on the current menu:** Again, use the Multi Selector to scroll up or down the list of options to highlight the feature you want to adjust and then press OK. Settings available for the selected item then appear. For example, if you select the Image Quality item from the Shooting menu, as

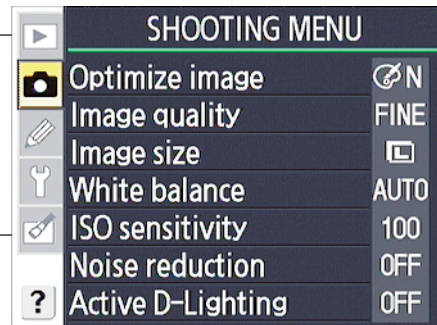


Figure 1-10: Highlight a menu in the left column to display its contents.

shown on the left in Figure 1-11, and press OK, the available Image Quality options appear, as shown on the right in the figure. Repeat the old up-and-down scroll routine until the choice you prefer is highlighted. Then press OK to return to the previous screen.

In some cases, you may see a right-pointing arrowhead instead of the OK symbol next to an option. That’s your cue to press the Multi Selector right to display a submenu or other list of options.



Figure 1-11: Select the option you prefer and press OK again to return to the active menu.

Again, I present this information just as a general introduction, so don't worry about memorizing it. I tell you exactly which Multi Selector actions to take whenever I explain a function that requires its use.

Using the Shooting Info and Quick Settings Displays

As you advance in your photography and begin to move beyond the automatic settings, you need a way to keep track of what camera settings are currently active. That's the purpose of the Shooting Info display, shown in Figure 1-12. The figure shows the display in its normal, horizontal orientation; if you rotate the camera to shoot a picture in the vertical orientation, the display automatically rotates on the monitor, too, so that the information is always easily readable.

If what you see in the figure looks like a big confusing mess, don't worry. Most of it won't mean anything to you until you make your way through later chapters. The figure does label the following two key points of data that are helpful even in fully automatic mode, though:

- ✓ **Battery status indicator:** A “full” battery icon like the one in the figure shows that the battery is fully charged; if the icon appears empty, go look for your battery charger.
- ✓ **Pictures remaining:** The number you see here indicates how many additional pictures you can store on the current memory card. If the number exceeds 999, the value is presented a little differently. The initial K appears above the value to indicate that the first value represents the picture count in thousands. For example, 1.0 K means that you can store 1,000 more pictures (K being a universally accepted symbol indicating 1,000 units). The number is then rounded down to the nearest hundred. So if the card has room for, say, 1,230 more pictures, the value reads as 1.2K.

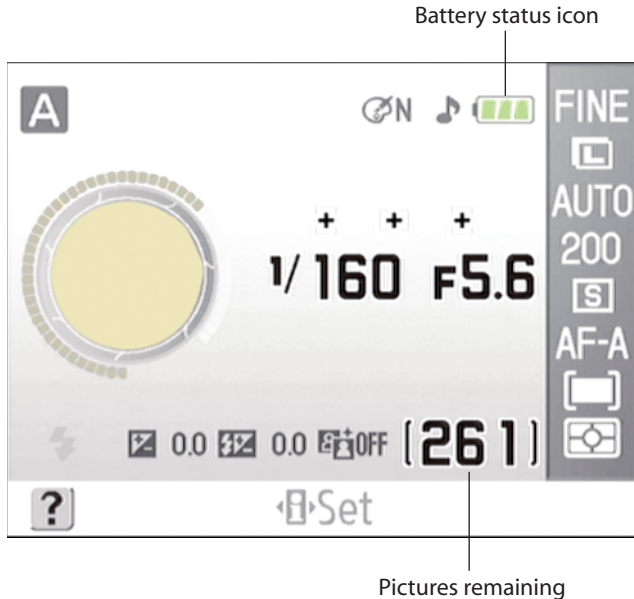


Figure 1-12: View picture-taking settings in the Shooting Info display.



After viewing current camera settings in the Shooting Info display, you can switch to the Quick Settings display, shown on the left in Figure 1-13. From here, you can adjust the most critical picture-taking settings via the screen instead of digging through menus.



Figure 1-13: You can adjust some camera settings more easily by using the Quick Settings display than by using the regular menus.

Follow these steps to try it out:

1. Display the Shooting Info screen, if it isn't already visible on the monitor.

The display appears automatically when you first turn on the camera and then turns itself off after about eight seconds of camera inactivity. Use either of these techniques to bring the display back to life:



- Press the Zoom button.
- Press the shutter button halfway and then release it.

The screen also appears automatically in a couple of other situations, such as when you press the Flash button, or if you set the camera to the P, S, or A exposure mode and then press the Exposure Compensation button. But I find the first two techniques the easiest to remember, especially because the Zoom button is labeled with the little *I* (for *information*).

2. Press the Zoom button again to switch to the Quick Settings display.

In this display, the center area of the screen is dimmed and bordered on the right and below by a variety of options, as shown on the left in Figure 1-13.

3. Press the Multi Selector to highlight the camera setting that you want to change.

In Figure 1-13, for example, I highlighted the Image Quality setting. The name of the selected setting appears in the upper-left corner of the screen.

4. Press OK.

Now you're taken to a screen that contains all the available options for the setting that you selected in Step 3. For example, the right image in Figure 1-13 shows the screen that appears if you select the Image Quality setting and press OK.

5. Use the Multi Selector to select the option you want to use.

I selected Raw in Figure 1-13.

6. Press OK to apply the change and return to the Quick Settings display.

If you want to change other settings, just repeat Steps 3 through 6.



7. Press the Zoom button once to turn the monitor off; press it twice to return to the Shooting Info screen.

The monitor turns itself off automatically when you put your eye to the viewfinder — or if you don't press any other buttons or perform any camera functions for about eight seconds.

Again, don't worry now about what any of the symbols or options in the Shooting Info and Quick Settings displays mean — I explain all of that in later chapters. For now, just familiarize yourself with this method of adjusting camera settings.



Through the Setup menu, you can adjust the appearance and behavior of the Shooting Info screen. The section “Cruising the Setup menu,” later in this chapter, spells out two of the pertinent options (Auto Shooting Info and Shooting Info Auto Off). Chapter 11 discusses how to change the look of the display. But while working with this book, I recommend that you stick with the default settings so that things look and work as described in these steps and elsewhere.

Decoding Viewfinder Data

When the camera is turned on, you can view some camera settings and other critical information in the viewfinder as well as on the Shooting Info display. The viewfinder data changes depending on what action you're currently undertaking. For example, if you simply turn on the camera and look through the viewfinder without pressing the shutter button, you see the data labeled in Figure 1-14.

When you depress the shutter button halfway to initiate autofocus — a topic that I discuss in Chapter 2 — you see a slightly different set of information.



Figure 1-14: You also can view some camera information at the bottom of the viewfinder.

Rather than give you a full guide to all the possible viewfinder readouts here, which would only boggle your mind and cause lots of unnecessary page-flipping, I show you the relevant viewfinder displays as I cover the various photographic topics later in the book.

Asking Your Camera for Help



Programmed into your camera's internal software is a handy information help line — a great tool for times when you forget the purpose of a particular feature or would like a little picture-taking guidance. This digital 411 offers assistance in two ways:



- ✓ Press and hold the Thumbnail button to display information about the current shooting mode or selected menu option. For example, Figure 1-15 shows the Help screen associated with the Image Quality setting. If you need to scroll the screen to view all the Help text, keep the Thumbnail button depressed and scroll by using the Multi Selector. Release the Thumbnail button to close the information screen.

- ✓ If the camera thinks you're headed for a picture problem, it may display a blinking question mark on the monitor or in the viewfinder. Again, press and hold the Thumbnail button to see what's up.



Figure 1-15: Press and hold the Thumbnail button to display onscreen help.

Reviewing Basic Setup Options

You know how sometimes you visit someone's house, and their kitchen cabinets are arranged in a way that doesn't make sense to you? Why are the mugs above the microwave instead of above the coffeepot? And wouldn't it be better if the serving spoons were next to the stove instead of by the dishwasher? Well, that's how I feel about the two menus discussed in this section, the Setup menu and the Custom Setting menu.

Both menus contain options that control basic camera functions, such as how long the monitor displays a recorded image after you press the shutter button and how certain information appears on the monitor. But mixed in with those options are totally unrelated controls, such as those that adjust the exposure metering mode, covered in Chapter 5.

Well, I can't rearrange the menus for you any more than I can put those mugs near the coffeemaker, so instead, the following sections describe in detail only the basic setup options found on each menu. For options related to other aspects of camera operation, I list the chapter where you can find more information.



The figures in this section show only the first handful of options on each menu, again in the interest of saving page space for more critical information. Note, too, that I cover the Setup menu first, even though it's listed after the Custom Setting menu on the camera; the Setup menu contains the bulk of the basic settings and also contains one setting that affects the appearance of the Custom Setting menu. (See the earlier note about kitchen reorganization.)

If you don't yet know how to select options from the menus, see the earlier section, "Ordering from Camera Menus," for help.

Cruising the Setup menu

Start your camera customization by opening the Setup menu. It's the menu marked with the little wrench icon, as shown in Figure 1-16.

Here's a quick rundown of each menu item, with those related to basic operations listed first:



Figure 1-16: Set the CSM/Setup Menu option to Full to access hidden functions.

- ✓ **CSM/Setup Menu:** Guess what? You can even customize the Setup menu and its neighbor, the Custom Setting menu! At the default setting, Simple, some options are hidden on both menus. Choose Full to access the hidden settings. You can also choose My Menu and select exactly which options appear and which are hidden.



While working with this book, choose Full so that what you see in your menus matches my figures. When you're ready to head off on your own, though, see Chapter 11 for details on how to establish your own, custom menus.

- ✓ **Format Memory Card:** The first time you insert a new memory card, you should use this option to *format* the card, a maintenance function that wipes out any existing data on the card and prepares it for use by the camera. If you previously used your card in another device, such as a digital music player, be sure to copy those files to your computer before you format the card.
- ✓ **Info Display Format:** With this setting, you can alter the visual design of the Shooting Info display, covered earlier in this chapter. You can establish this setting independently for the Digital Vari-Program modes and the other shooting modes (manual, aperture-priority autoexposure, and so on). Use the default setting, Graphic, for both categories so that your display matches what you see in this book. Chapter 11 gives you a look at the other modes.



- ✓ **Auto Shooting Info:** When you turn this option on, as it is by default, the Shooting Info display automatically appears when you depress the shutter button halfway. The camera is smart enough, however, not to activate the display when your eye is close to the viewfinder. As with the preceding option, you can establish different settings for the two categories of shooting modes; I suggest that you keep both categories set to On while working with this book. See the earlier section “Using the Shooting Info and Quick Settings Displays” for details about the display. If you do turn the option off, you can still use the Zoom button to activate the Shooting Info display.
- ✓ **Shooting Info Auto Off:** Also related to the Shooting Info display, this option determines whether the camera turns off the Shooting Info display and fires up the viewfinder display when you put your eye to the viewfinder. In other words, it enables or disables the little eye sensor under the viewfinder. I suggest that you leave this option turned on, as it is by default.
- ✓ **World Time:** When you turn on your camera for the very first time, it automatically displays this option and asks you to set the current date and time.

Keeping the date/time accurate is important because that information is recorded as part of the image file. In your photo browser, you can then see when you shot an image and, equally handy, search for images by the date they were taken. Note that the date and time *are not* imprinted on your picture; however, if you want that to happen, you can make it so via the Date Imprint option on the Custom Settings menu, covered in the next section.

Also, if you see the message “Clock Not Set” on the camera monitor, the internal battery that keeps the clock running is depleted. Simply charging the main camera battery and then putting that battery back in the camera sets the clock ticking again, but you need to reset the camera time and date.
- ✓ **LCD Brightness:** This menu selection offers two options, as shown on the left in Figure 1-17. If you select LCD brightness, you can make the camera monitor brighter or darker, as shown on the right image in the figure.

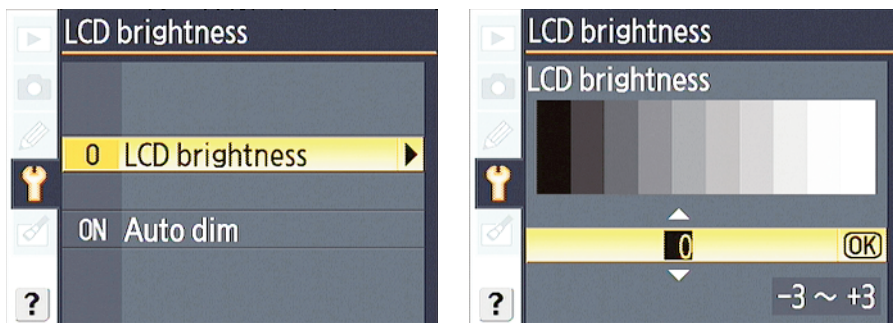


Figure 1-17: You can adjust the brightness of the camera monitor.



If you take this step, keep in mind that what you see on the display may not be an accurate rendition of the actual exposure of your image. Crank up the monitor brightness, for example, and an underexposed photo may look just fine. So I recommend that you keep the brightness at the default setting (0). As an alternative, you can display the *histogram*, an exposure guide that I explain in Chapter 4, when reviewing your images.

When the second monitor control, Auto Dim, is turned on, as it is by default, the monitor gradually dims after a few seconds when the Shooting Info screen is displayed. You can disable that feature by setting the option to Off.

- ✓ **Video Mode:** This option is related to viewing your images on a television, a topic I cover in Chapter 9. Select NTSC if you live in North America or other countries that adhere to the NTSC video standard; select PAL for playback in areas that follow that code of video conduct.
- ✓ **Language:** You're asked to specify a language along with the date and time when you fire up your camera for the first time. Your choice determines the language of text on the camera monitor. Screens in this book display the English language, but I find it entertaining on occasion to hand my camera to a friend after changing the language to, say, Swedish. I'm a real yokester, yah?



- ✓ **File No. Sequence:** This option controls how the camera names your picture files. When the option is set to Off, as it is by default, the camera restarts file numbering at 0001 every time you format your memory card or insert a new memory card. Numbering is also restarted if you create custom folders (an advanced option covered in Chapter 11).

Needless to say, this setup can cause problems over time, creating a scenario where you wind up with multiple images that have the same file name — not on the current memory card, but when you download images to your computer. So I strongly encourage you to set the option to On. Note that when you get to picture number 9999, file numbering is still reset to 0001, however. The camera automatically creates a new folder to hold for your next 9999 images.

As for the Reset option, it enables you to assign the first file number (which ends in 0001) to the next picture you shoot. Then the camera behaves as if you selected the On setting.

- ✓ **And the rest:** The remaining functions on this menu, listed below, relate to image playback, organization, and camera maintenance:
 - *Image Comment:* See Chapter 11 to find out how to use this feature, which enables you to add text comments into a picture file. You then can read that information in Nikon ViewNX, the software that shipped with your camera. (The text doesn't actually appear on the image itself.)

- *Folders*: This feature is an advanced file-organization option; leave the option set at the default until you read about it in Chapter 11.
- *Clean Image Sensor*: Your D60 is set up at the factory to perform an internal cleaning routine each time you turn the camera on or off. This cleaning system is designed to keep the image sensor — that's the part of the camera that actually captures the image — free of dust and dirt.

By choosing the Clean Image Sensor command, you can perform a cleaning at any time, however. Just choose the command, press OK, select Clean Now, and press OK again. You also can tell the camera to perform automatic cleaning only at startup, only at shutdown, or never; to do so, select Clean At instead of Clean Now. Then press the Multi Selector right, highlight the cleaning option you prefer, and press OK.

- *Mirror Lock-Up*: This feature is necessary when cleaning the camera interior — an operation that I don't recommend that you tackle yourself. See Chapter 3 for more information on camera cleaning. And if you've used mirror lock-up on a film camera to avoid camera shake when shooting long-exposure images, note that in this case, the lock-up feature is provided for cleaning purposes only. You can't take pictures on the D60 while the mirror lock-up is engaged.
- *Firmware Version*: This screen is informational in nature only; it tells you the current version of the camera *firmware* (internal operating software). The appendix explains how to check which version is installed in your camera and how to update it via Nikon's Web site if needed.
- *Dust Off Ref Photo*: This specialty feature enables you to record an image that serves as a point of reference for the automatic dust-removal filter available in Nikon Capture NX. I don't cover this accessory software, which must be purchased separately, in this book.
- *Auto Image Rotation*: Keep this option set at the default setting (On) so that the image is automatically rotated to the correct orientation (horizontal or vertical) in playback mode. The orientation is recorded as part of the image file, too, so the auto-rotating also occurs when you browse your image thumbnails in ViewNX. Note, though, the rotation data may not be accurate for pictures that you take with the camera pointing directly up or down.

Browsing the Custom Setting menu

Figure 1-18 shows the Custom Setting menu, whose icon, for reasons I can't figure out, is a little pencil. At any rate, many options here involve photographic functions, such as using the flash, selecting an exposure metering mode, and so on.



As with the Setup menu, some options are hidden unless you set the CSM/Setup Menu option to Full, as requested in the preceding section. Go ahead and take that step now if you haven't already.

With that task out of the way, the following list describes just the Custom Setting menu items related to basic camera operations:

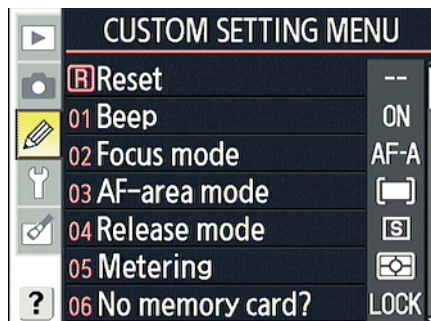


Figure 1-18: The Custom Setting menu contains additional basic options.

- ✓ **Reset:** Select this option to restore all features on the Custom Setting menu to their default settings. Note that the two-button reset technique I describe earlier in the chapter, in the section “Back-of-the-body controls,” affects only a few options on this menu, all of which fall in the category of critical image-capture settings (such as focus mode and shooting mode). If you're interested, you can find a complete list of all the camera's default settings in the back of the camera manual.
- ✓ **Beep:** By default, your camera beeps at you after certain operations, such as after it sets focus when you shoot in autofocus mode. If you're doing top-secret surveillance work and need the camera to hush up, set this option to Off. On the Shooting Info display, a little musical note icon appears to the left of the battery icon when the beep is enabled. (Refer to Figure 1-12.) Turn the beep off, and the icon appears in a circle with a slash through it.
- ✓ **No Memory Card?:** Keep this one set at the default (Release Locked), which disables the shutter button when no memory card is in the camera. If you set it to Enable Release, you can take a temporary picture, which appears in the monitor with the word “Demo” but isn't recorded anywhere. (The feature is provided mainly for use in camera stores, enabling salespeople to demonstrate the camera without having to keep a memory card installed.)
- ✓ **Image Review:** Leave this option set to On if you want the camera to automatically display each picture briefly in the monitor after you press the shutter button.

If you're shooting fast-paced action and you want to speed up *shot-to-shot time* — how long the camera makes you wait after taking one picture before you can take another — try turning this feature off. You can then review your pictures by pressing the Playback button.
- ✓ **AF-Assist:** On the front of your camera, there's a little light tucked right below the Mode dial. This light is the *autofocus-assist illuminator*. In dim lighting, it shoots out a beam of light to help the camera's autofocus system find its target. In general, leaving the AF-Assist option enabled is



a good idea, but if you're doing a lot of shooting at a party, wedding, or some event where the light from the lamp may be distracting, you may want to disable it.

Regardless of the setting you choose here, however, the illuminator doesn't light in manual focus mode or in the Sports or Land-scape Digital Vari-Program modes. In addition, the feature doesn't operate in continuous-servo autofocus mode or when the center autofocus area mode is not selected. You can explore those two focus options in Chapter 6.

- ✓ **Self-Timer/Fn Button:** Here's where you establish the operation you want to assign to this button, introduced in the earlier section "Front-left buttons." See Chapter 11 for more details.
- ✓ **Auto-Off Timers:** When your camera is turned on but idle for a period of time, it conserves battery power by automatically turning off the monitor and exposure meter. Options on this menu determine how much time must pass before this occurs:
 - *Short:* The monitor turns off after eight seconds of inactivity; the exposure meter, after four seconds. After you take a picture, it is displayed on the monitor for four seconds, assuming that the Image Review option, explained earlier, is enabled.
 - *Normal:* The monitor goes dark after 12 seconds; the exposure meter, eight seconds. The image-review period remains at four seconds.
 - *Long:* Monitor shutdown occurs after 20 seconds; the exposure meter turns off after one minute. The image-review period is 20 seconds.
 - *Custom:* Choose this option to specify your own timing for monitor and meter shutdown and for the image-review period.

If you know you're perilously close to complete battery drainage, select the Short auto-off settings and turn off Image Review altogether.

- ✓ **Date Imprint:** If you want the shooting date and time to appear on your image, this feature provides that option. By default, it's turned off; you can choose instead to print the date or the date and time. You also can imprint a date counter, which indicates the number of days between the shooting date and a date that you select. Whichever data you choose, it appears in the lower-right corner of your photo.

This information is permanently imprinted in your image and *can't be removed* after the fact. So I suggest that you leave the option disabled and instead add date information in your photo editing program. Some programs can even automatically add that data when you print the image. Chapter 8 shows you how to determine the shooting date and time for a photo by looking at its internal file data, or *metadata*.



That wraps up all the basic customization settings. For details about other items on the Custom Setting menu, flip to the appendix, which points you to the chapter where I cover each option.