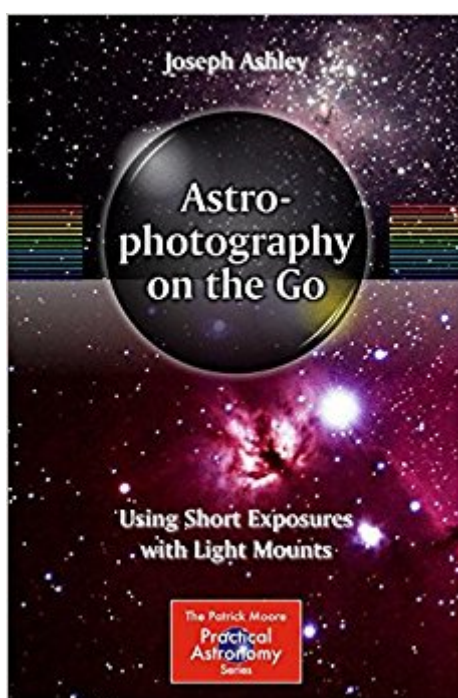


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Astrophotography On The Go: Using Short Exposures With Light Mounts (The Patrick Moore Practical Astronomy Series)



Synopsis

No longer are heavy, sturdy, expensive mounts and tripods required to photograph deep space. With today's advances in technology, all that is required is an entry-DSLR and an entry level GoTo telescope. Here is all of the information needed to start photographing the night sky without buying expensive tracking mounts. By using multiple short exposures and combining them with mostly free computer programs, the effect of image rotation can be minimized to a point where it is undetectable in normal astrophotography, even for a deep-sky object such as a galaxy or nebula. All the processes, techniques, and equipment needed to use inexpensive, lightweight altazimuth and equatorial mounts and very short exposures photography to image deep space objects are explained, step-by-step, in full detail, supported by clear, easy to understand graphics and photographs. Currently available lightweight mounts and tripods are identified and examined from an economic versus capability perspective to help users determine what camera, telescope, and mount is the best fit for them. A similar analysis is presented for entry-level telescopes and mounts sold as bundled packages by the telescope manufacturers. This book lifts the veil of mystery from the creation of deep space photographs and makes astrophotography affordable and accessible to most amateur astronomers.

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Customer Reviews

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With today's advances in technology, all that is required is an entry-DSLR and an entry level GoTo telescope. Here is all of the information needed to start photographing the night sky without buying expensive tracking mounts. By using multiple short exposures and combining them with mostly free computer programs, the effect of image rotation can be minimized to a point where it is undetectable in normal astrophotography, even for a deep-sky object such as a galaxy or nebula. All the processes, techniques, and equipment needed to use inexpensive, lightweight altazimuth and equatorial mounts and very short exposures photography to image deep space objects are explained, step-by-step, in full detail, supported by clear, easy to understand graphics and photographs. Currently available lightweight mounts and tripods are identified and examined from an economic versus capability perspective to help users determine what camera, telescope, and mount is the best fit for them. A similar analysis is presented for entry-level telescopes and mounts sold as bundled packages by the telescope manufacturers. This book lifts the veil of mystery from the creation of deep space photographs and makes astrophotography affordable and accessible to most amateur astronomers.

An American by birth, Joe Ashley currently lives in Greece. His career in the U. S. Navy included the recovery of astronauts Conrad and Cooper and their Gemini V spaceship from the sea; from there he began an engineering and research career (probably only possible at that time in history) involving submarine noise, chemical warfare defense, and energy conservation. Along the way, he obtained a doctorate in Public Administration. Now retired, he completed his career as the Program Manager for the U. S. Department of the Navy and Marine Corps Energy Conservation Program. Recently, Ashley has participated in on-line astronomy forums, primarily the Stargazers Lounge and The Astronomy Forum. In late 2009 he became a moderator on The Astronomy Forum, the world's largest (based upon membership). Parallel with that, he pitched into what he calls "the dark side of astronomy" • Ashley is concentrating on getting the best possible images from simple lightweight equipment.

I got into visual amateur astronomy about ten years ago and had an interest in astrophotography but did not know where to start and certainly did not want to spend thousands of dollars on an unknown hobby. Mr. Ashley's book is geared toward someone just like me, a novice with little knowledge of AP and a small budget to get me started. Step by step in clear, understandable language, Mr. Ashley takes you through the minimalists approach to AP on a budget and on the go. Mr. Ashley is not only an excellent writer with the ability to teach what can be a difficult, hard to

understand subject in a way that is enjoyable and understandable, but he also has hands-on, personal experience of the subject matter he writes about with dedication and passion. His personal AP examples are inspiring and he is quick to help others who may have questions as they start their journey down the AP road. This book is a must read for anyone with an interest in AP while not breaking the family bank.

There are quite a few good books on AP out there but this one has special appeal for me. It details how someone like me who doesn't suffer from "deep pockets" can turn out some serious images. All the information is presented in a thorough and well organized manner that makes it do-able without spraining one's brain. I'm eager to get started! For those who may be more financially fortunate, it offers a way to "get one's toe in the water" without committing thousands of dollars to learn if AP is for them. And, it proposes an alternative for those who live in light polluted areas to assemble a small "kit" which can easily be transported to a dark sky site. Clear dark skies everyone, and enjoy this book! Bob

Very detailed. Tons of useful information. Assumes you are a complete beginner but is very detailed, comprehensive, informative and specific about both the theory and the doing of astrophotography. Covers everything from telescopes, cameras, mounts, software, etc.

Excellent!!!!

wonderful. saved me from making big purchases i would regret.

I like this book quite a lot as it tends to fit with what I like to do in astrophotography - which is not exactly what the book is aimed at. This is a very worthwhile book and I think almost anyone who has an interest in using relatively short exposures for astrophotography - or using relatively modest equipment will benefit from reading it. Unfortunately, the book suffers from relatively poor editing. The author is a very smart guy (I've been reading what he has written in non-book form for some years and know this to be true), but everyone needs a good editor with decent knowledge in the subject matter and the author didn't have that. This means the book should get about 4.7-4.8 stars (4.7-4.8 is closer to "5" than it is to "4" so I give it a "5") because it is still a very valuable book which accomplishes its primary goal beautifully. The biggest problem is with the description of how the CCD sensor works and of the Bayer matrix. You will get information which will generally allow you to

understand how you need to interact with the equipment and to make it work for you and it is thus not a fatal flaw, but the information is incorrect nonetheless. In any case, a full understanding of how a CCD and/or CMOS sensor works and of the Bayer matrix is not the reason you should read this book. You should read this book because Mr. Ashley will show you how to choose and use relatively small telescopes and lightweight mounts (which tend to be relatively inexpensive) and the relatively short exposures required in this context to do some really good astrophotography. I do not know of any other source which will give you as much help toward that goal and it is why I am going to keep my paperback copy and am contemplating getting the Kindle version as well. So yes, it is flawed, but not in the most important particulars. Highly recommended.

Astrophotography has been revolutionized by digital cameras, webcams, computerized telescopes and computer software, and this book provides an excellent introduction. Though still not an inexpensive hobby, the price and time involvement has come way down. This book is mostly about deep-sky strophotography, though it does cover nightscapes and star trails. (I believe there is another book in this series that covers lunar and planetary photography.) Much of it is devoted to selecting and using telescopes and mounts, with an eye towards an easily portable "observatory". If you haven't bought equipment yet, or have a large telescope and want something more portable, there is much good solid advice. There are budget comparisons of different levels of equipment. The many sample photos show what can be done with a 3-4" telescope. Key to the approach is taking many short (no more than 30 seconds) exposures then combining them in a computer. This eliminates the need for precise tracking over long periods (hours). Priceless to me was the walkthrough of using the freeware program DeepSkyStacker- which I used for pictures taken with a DSLR on a tracking mount. The author mentions that this program can have a steep learning curve, but his directions made it very easy. There is also much information on software programs at different price levels. As I continue expanding my astrophotography techniques, I am sure I will return to this book over and over.

Not enough meat in this book.

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