How to use Multiple Exposures to Blur Water

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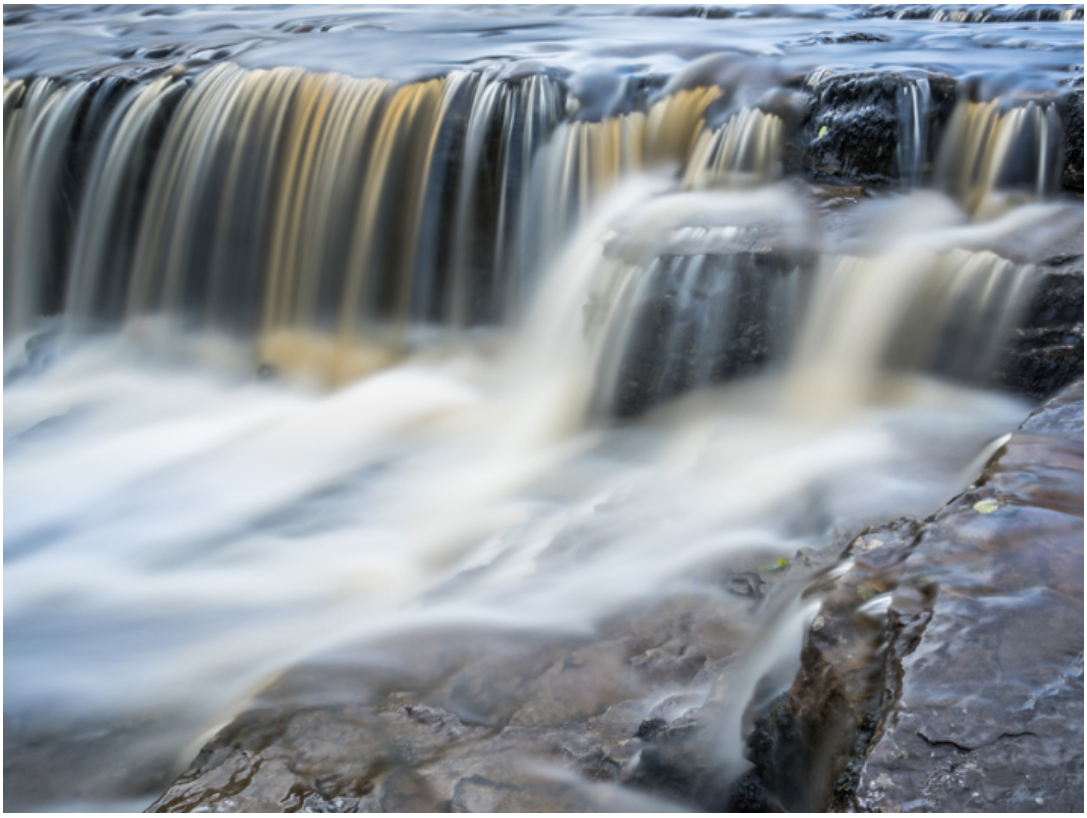
Achieving the classic “smooth as milk” look with flowing water usually involves setting a slow enough shutter speed that the movement of the water in the frame appears to softly blur during the exposure. The key to this technique is stopping the shot from overexposing, which means lowering the ISO, closing down the lens to its smallest aperture (largest f-number), adding a neutral density filter to reduce the amount of light hitting the sensor, or a combination of all three.

If that sounds a bit off-putting, there is another way that works without a neutral density filter even in full sun – using the multiple exposure setting in your camera’s shooting menu.



Step 1: selecting the multiple exposure settings

- In the multiple exposure function, go to the sub-setting for the number of exposures, and select the biggest number on offer.
- Keep the auto gain setting on. That's the key to the camera being able to combine all the exposures and then produce the right exposure for this technique.
- In the options for series or single, go for series (remember to turn it back to single once you have finished).

Step 2: setting up the exposure

- Steady the camera on a tripod.
- Put it in aperture priority mode and select the smallest possible exposure (largest f-number) to give the greatest depth of field so the shot is in focus from front to back.
- Select ISO 100.
- Compose the shot.
- Half-depress the shutter to lock-on the focus.
- Without moving the camera, turn off the autofocus.

Step 3: take the shot

- Start by taking a test shot so you can fine-tune the settings if necessary – for example, you may want to dial in some exposure compensation, or tweak the composition.
- Use a remote release to fire the shutter as this will minimise camera movement.
- You'll hear the camera fire off multiple times, but the results are blended in-camera so you just see one single photo with that beautiful milky, blurred water, created as the water is moving so differently in each frame that went into the composite.