

# Product Photography — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Product Photography course and gives you a structured place to plan, practise, and document each module's core skills. Complete the exercises alongside the lessons and bring your filled-in workbook to every client shoot as an on-set reference. The templates at the back are designed to be reused indefinitely as living operational documents.

## Gear, Space, and Pre-Production

Plan your studio gear purchases and build your first shoot brief before picking up a camera.

### Exercise: Gear Budget Allocation Exercise

Using the three-tier gear guide from the lesson, build a kit at your actual budget. Look up current prices for each item and record them. Then calculate what percentage of your total budget each category receives.

- What is your total gear budget? Break it into the four categories (lighting, modifiers/backgrounds, camera body, lenses) using the 50/20/20/10 allocation. List the specific products you would buy.

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- Compare the Godox SK400II kit to building a Godox AD200Pro kit. What is the price difference and what additional capability does the AD200Pro kit give you?

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- What one piece of gear would you buy first if you had to start shooting paying clients tomorrow with a \$300 budget? Justify your choice.

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- What gear do you already own that could substitute for a purchase? List it and note any limitations.

### Worksheet: Shoot Brief Template

Fill in this brief completely before your next shoot. Share it with the client for sign-off before shooting begins.  
Client name and brand

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Job number and shoot date

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Platform destination(s) (Amazon / Shopify / Meta / Print)

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Required image dimensions and colour space per platform

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Background specification (pure white / gradient / lifestyle / transparent PNG)

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Shot list per SKU (hero / front / back / detail / lifestyle / scale reference)

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Total number of SKUs

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Total deliverables count

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Prop and styling references (links or description)

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Brand colour restrictions

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Delivery deadline

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Retouching scope (basic cleanup / full background isolation / ghost mannequin)

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Client approval notes

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### Checklist: Pre-Shoot Day Checklist

- Signed brief received and filed
- All products received, inspected for damage, and cleaned
- Camera batteries charged (minimum 2 batteries)
- Memory cards formatted and verified
- Tethering cable and Lightroom classic catalogue ready
- Gear positions measured and logged from last setup (or first-time setup diagram created)
- Strobe power settings from last shoot recorded
- White sweep or background material confirmed and clean
- X-Rite ColorChecker and grey card packed
- Shot list printed and attached to clipboard

## Lighting: Technique and Setup

Apply three-point lighting principles through hands-on exercises and build a setup documentation system you can replicate on every shoot.

### Exercise: Three-Point Lighting Build and Measure

Set up your three-point lighting configuration on a simple product (a bottle or box works well). Photograph the same product at four different key-to-fill ratios, then evaluate the results.

- Build your three-point setup. Measure and record: key light distance from product, key light angle in degrees, fill card distance, background light distance. Take a photo of the setup from above and sketch the positions here.
- Shoot four frames at key-to-fill ratios of 1:1, 2:1, 3:1, and 4:1 (achieved by moving the fill card). Describe the shadow character and mood of each ratio. Which would you use for cosmetics? For whisky? For children's toys?
- Identify one technical problem in your test frames (hotspot, grey background, hard shadow, blended edge). Describe the exact adjustment you would make to fix it.

### Worksheet: Lighting Setup Log

Complete this log for every distinct lighting setup you build. Store completed logs in a folder labelled by shoot date.

Setup name / product type

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Key light: brand and model

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Key light: power setting

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Key light: modifier type and size

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Key light: distance from product (cm)

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Key light: angle (degrees from front)

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Fill: card or light — distance from product (cm)

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Fill: card size or light modifier

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Background light: power setting

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Background light: distance from background (cm)

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Camera: focal length

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Camera: aperture

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Camera: shutter speed

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Camera: ISO

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White balance Kelvin value

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Notes / problems encountered

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### Checklist: Lighting Troubleshooting Checklist

- Check background light power if background appears grey in test frame
- Move key light closer if shadows are too soft and product lacks dimension
- Move key light further or add diffusion panel if hotspot visible on glossy surface
- Check fill-card distance if shadow side is too dark (move card closer)
- Verify strobe sync speed matches camera setting (1/200 s or below) if frames show dark band
- Shoot grey card frame after any power adjustment to confirm white balance is stable
- Review test frame at 100% zoom on calibrated monitor before committing to batch

### Exercise: Material-Specific Lighting Practice

Choose one challenging material from glass, polished metal, or apparel. Apply the material-specific technique from the lesson and photograph the same product with and without the technique.

- What material did you choose and what was the primary lighting challenge (reflection, hotspot, loss of shape)?

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- Describe the exact technique you applied. What changed in your setup compared to your standard three-point configuration?

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- Compare your before and after images. What specific improvement is visible? What would you do differently next time?

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## Composition, Styling, and Shot Direction

Develop your eye for product composition and build a prop inventory and styling reference system you can use on every shoot.

### Exercise: Composition Comparison Shoot

Photograph the same product in three compositional arrangements: centred on white background, off-centre rule-of-thirds on a lifestyle surface, and flat-lay overhead. Compare all three side by side on a monitor.

- Which arrangement would you use as the primary Amazon listing image and why? Which would you use for a Meta ad and why?

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- How does the perceived value or premium quality of the product change across the three arrangements? What specific visual elements drive that perception?

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- What one prop would you add to the lifestyle shot to strengthen the brand story? Why that specific prop?

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### Worksheet: Prop Styling Reference Card

Build a reference card for each product category you shoot. Fill in one card per category and keep them in your studio folder.

Product category

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Primary brand positioning (luxury / natural / technical / playful / minimal)

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Surface option 1 (material, colour, supplier)

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Surface option 2 (material, colour, supplier)

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Prop palette: colour 1

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Prop palette: colour 2

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Prop palette: neutral

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Specific props that work well (list up to 5)

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Props to avoid for this category

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Reference images or links (Pinterest board, tearsheet)

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## Checklist: Flat-Lay Execution Checklist

- Surface is level (confirmed with spirit level or phone app)
- Camera sensor plane is parallel to surface (no keystone visible in test frame)
- Overhead key light provides even illumination across the entire surface (no hot centre)
- Product placed on rule-of-thirds intersection or centred depending on shot purpose
- Odd number of props (3 or 5, not 2 or 4)
- No prop is larger than the hero product or positioned to draw the eye first
- Colour palette of props is analogous to dominant product colour
- Final frame checked at 100% for sharpness across all product text and labels
- Shot matches approved brief styling reference

## Post-Processing and Delivery

Build your Lightroom preset stack, practice core Photoshop retouching techniques, and create your client delivery system.

### Exercise: Lightroom Base Preset Build

Using the preset settings from the lesson, build and save a Product — White BG Base preset in Lightroom Classic. Apply it to a batch of 20 product images and record how long the batch took to process compared to processing them manually.

- List the exact Lightroom develop settings you saved in your base preset and your reasoning for each value. Did you deviate from the lesson recommendations? Why?

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- Import a batch of 20 images, cull to selects, apply the preset, and export. How long did the entire post-processing pipeline take? What steps took the most time?

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- Identify one image in your batch that the base preset did not handle well. What adjustment did it need? Would you modify the base preset to handle this case, or correct it as an exception?

### Worksheet: Photoshop Retouching Action Log

Record the Photoshop steps you use on a specific product image. This log becomes the basis for building a Photoshop Action to automate the repeatable steps.

Product type

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Background isolation method used (Select Subject / Pen Tool / Channels)

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Time spent on isolation (minutes)

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Number of dust and defect corrections made

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Time spent on cleaning (minutes)

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Additional adjustments applied (dodge-and-burn / colour correction / sharpening)

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Total retouching time (minutes)

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Steps that could be automated in a Photoshop Action

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Any technique that did not work as expected and what you tried instead

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## Checklist: Client Delivery Quality Checklist

- [ ] All delivered files named using agreed ClientCode\_SKU\_ShotType\_Sequence convention
- [ ] Folder structure matches brief specification (root folder, SKU subfolders, Low-Res subfolder)
- [ ] All final images exported in sRGB colour space
- [ ] Amazon primary images confirmed at 2000x2000 px minimum with white background (RGB 255,255,255)
- [ ] Shopify images confirmed at 2048x2048 px, consistent square crop
- [ ] No clipped highlights on product (verified in Lightroom histogram on final exports)
- [ ] Background on all white-BG images is clean white with no grey bleed or shadow contamination
- [ ] All retouching reviewed at 100% zoom on calibrated monitor before export
- [ ] Proof gallery link sent to client for approval before final delivery
- [ ] RAW files archived with job number folder to external drive

## Your Action Plan

1. Set your gear budget and purchase the minimum viable kit (one light + modifier + foam-core fill card + tripod) before anything else
2. Download and install Lightroom Classic; create a catalogue folder structure: Year > Client > JobNumber
3. Build your Product — White BG Base preset using the lesson settings and save it as an import default
4. Create your first shoot brief using the worksheet template and get a friend or sample client to review it
5. Shoot a 6-image test series on a product you own using your three-point setup; log all settings in the Lighting Setup Log
6. Time your full post-processing pipeline on the 6-image test series; identify the bottleneck step
7. Build a Photoshop Action that automates your most repetitive steps (background clip to white, export at 2000x2000)
8. Create a prop kit for one product category with at least two surface options and a 3-colour analogous palette
9. Quote a hypothetical 20-SKU shoot using the cost-per-SKU model; calculate your floor price and your target rate
10. Deliver a polished 6-image product portfolio from your test shoot using your full delivery checklist











