Yongnuo YN 560-III speedlight
&
YN 603 transceiver

The Manual that should have been in the box

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Yongnuo YN 560-III Speedlite YN 603/602 transceiver.
The manual that should have been in the box.

Key features from Canon DSLR user perspective

It doesn't have any automatic exposure modes even when the speedlight is placed on the hot shoe of the camera.

This is strictly a Manual mode flash.

You have to manually either change the power output on the speedlight by a series of button pushes (more on that later) or else you have to physically move the flash closer or further if it is used off-camera.

No High Shutter Speed Sync

No 2nd curtain or rear curtain flash

So why are you considering this speedlight?

If you are thinking of getting into off-camera flash and you don't want to spend too much, then this is the way to go--it is that cheap, under $100

The built-in or pop-up flash that sits under the hot shoe of your Canon or

Nikon DSLR bodies can be used to trigger this Speedlight but it is strictly line-of-sight, the Speedlight must be able to see the flash from your built-in/pop up flash.

To control the your YN 560-III speedlight's output, you have to walk over to it and push either the "UP" or "DOWN" buttons.

Recommendation: buy the Yongnuo radio transceiver RF-603CII or RF-602 CII.

Radio signal triggering is more reliable than

line-of-sight/infra-red signal triggering.

Note the "C" designation is the model for Canon users.

If you shoot with Nikon be sure to choose RF-603NII or RF-602NII.

These transceivers (interchangeable as transmitter or receiver) are basically the same whether they are for Canon or Nikon except for the electrical contacts on the base of the units where they attach to your DSLR hot shoes.

By the way, the transceivers often also called radio slaves are sold in pairs. Be advised Yongnuo seems to discontinue or phase out their Speedlight and trigger/radio slave models fairly quickly. Don't be surprised by the time you read this tutorial, you might find the models I mention here are no longer available or discontinued.

BASIC OPERATIONS
1 Powering On
Turning on the Speedlight is fairly straightforward as it should be.

Hold down the round button on the bottom right for a couple seconds and you should see lights come on. If you have lots of AAs and plan to do a lot of shooting, you might want to disable the sleep function.

2 Setting the Zoom
This is a straightforward one push of the round button right above the Power button. Each push of this button changes the zoom from 24mm > 28mm > 35mm > 50mm > 70mm > 80mm > 105mm. There is some sort of electronic sound that provides feedback with each push of the button.

If you are using this as off-camera units like I do, I just set mine to 105mm. The reason is this: in off-camera flash I don't want to indiscriminately scatter my light all over the scene so 105mm setting is the narrowest of the beams I can set. In fact, sometimes I even add a grid to make my light even more focused.
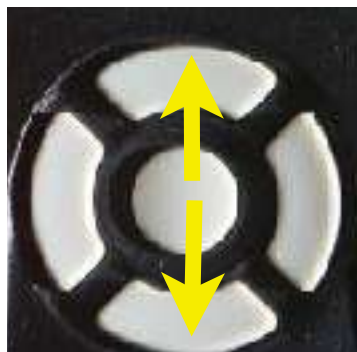
3 Exposure Modes
Manual
As I mentioned earlier, there is no frills to this Speedlight so your exposure output for your flash must be set manually whether the YN 560-III is on the hot shoe of your camera or off the hot shoe of your camera.

Suggestion: you probably should push the "Up" or "Down" buttons until you see 1/8th power underneath the "M" (manual) display.

Why 1/8th power? It's a good middle setting. If you need more output from your flash because your pictures are too dark or under-exposed, you can increase the flash output by pushing the "Up" button.

Conversely if your picture looks too light or over-exposed, you can push the "Down" button and cut the power output.

Or if you have it off-camera on a light stand, you can leave the power setting at 1/8th power but move your light stand closer or further to change the light output.

S1 (**SLAVE 1**)
According to the owner's manual **S1** mode uses E-TTL but when I used that setting and had the YN 560-III on the camera's hot shoe, pushing the shutter button wouldn't even fire the flash. So, the instruction manual was very misleading.

I also tried the following: using one YN 560-III as master to trigger a second YN 560-III set in S1 mode off-camera on a light stand.

• YN 560-III on camera on "Manual" at the lowest power setting of 1/128th
• YN 560-III off-camera on S1 mode power output also had to manually entered
• exposure had to be tweaked by trial and error changing the output of the speedlight, opening or stopping down the aperture or moving the light stand closer or further away.

This leads me to conclude that the YN 560-III is meant to be used mostly off-camera as a slave primarily.

If I had, say a Canon 580-EXII on the hot shoe of my camera set to E-TTL and a YN 560-III speedlight set to **S1** mode, only then will the power output of my YN 560-III speedlight be automatically set to give me proper exposure.

But I tested this S1 mode and I found it to be unreliable.

Since I wouldn't use a Canon Speedlite as a Master, I probably will ignore the **S1** mode.

S2 (SLAVE 2)
This next mode is the pre-flash cancel mode. From the description the manufacturer gives in their awful manual, this mode turns the front facing panel of YN 560-III into an optical slave meaning as long as it sees any flash (possibly lighting) it fires your YN 560-III flash at the manual power setting you choose. *Rather than full power, I recommend using 1/8th power so it can recycle fairly fas*t.

This could be very useful if you use Canon or Nikon Speedlights or even have a studio strobe and you want to just throw in a light in some small discreet corner of your scene.

It frees you up from getting another expensive speedlight or radio receiver.

Radio Slave mode
You should purchase the companion YN 603 or YN 602 series of radio transceivers or you have to buy a second YN 560-III speedlite to serve as Master.

The YN 603 transceivers are sold in pairs so that is not a waste at all especially if you

have 2 cameras. You can use 1 transceiver for each camera.

To use this Radio Slave mode, push the 2nd button from the right repeatedly.

You should cycle past "M", S1, S2, and you see the icon above that shows what looks like a universal WiFi signal, a Speedlight and RX icons.

I have to make one assumption that when you receive your YN 603 transceiver and the YN 560-III, those will be set to a default channel.

Normally I would just leave this but keeping in mind how common these units are, it isn't a bad idea to select a channel that isn't the default so you won't run into interference problems if someone else nearby is using the same setup.

As long as your Speedlight and your transceiver is paired and set to the same channel, you're all set to fire away.

SETTING THE CHANNEL

Setting the channel for the transceiver isn't complicated.

It's just a matter of using your finger nail to move a set of 4 tiny dip switches up and down in a compartment which you access by removing the battery cover on the underside of the YN 603 transceiver

But to set the channel on the YN 560-III Speedlight requires you to dig into the menu system.

1. Be sure you are in the Radio Slave mode

2 Push the 3rd and 4th buttons (top right) simultaneously. When the Channel icon on the LCD blinks, you have a few seconds to choose the channel by selecting the "RIGHT" or "LEFT" buttons to go up or down from the channel that is currently selected.

3. Then turn your attention to your YN 603 transceiver. Remove the battery cover and AAA batteries and position the dip switches exactly as what you see in the LCD of your YN 560-III speedlight.
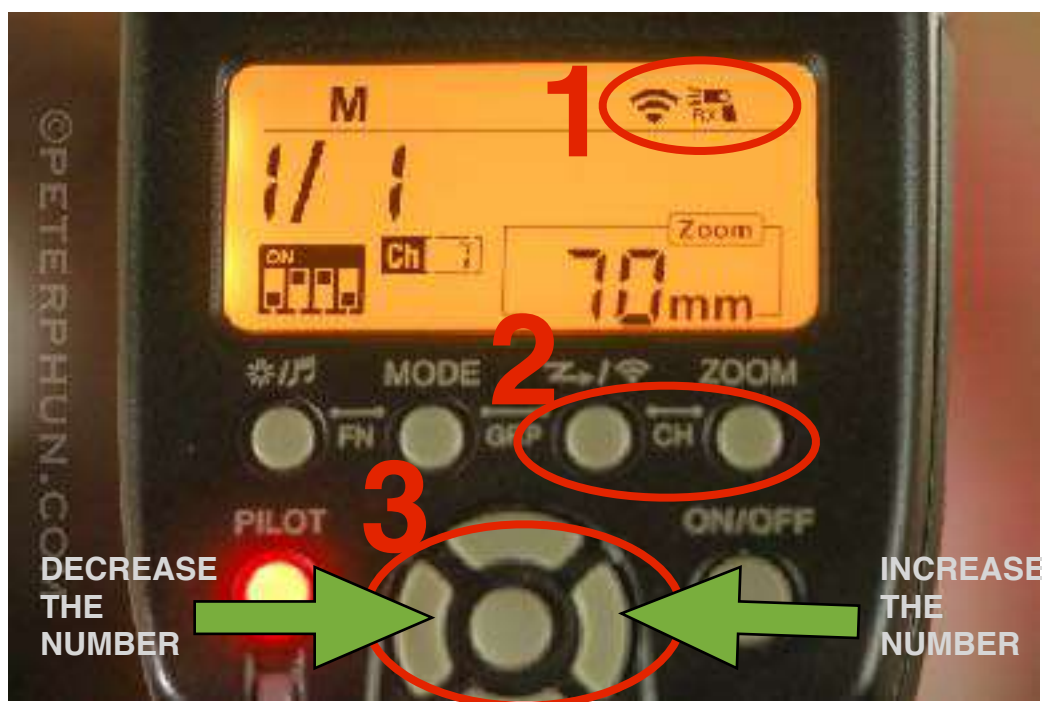
That's it. You're ready to fire away.

A word of caution: if you are firing on full power, give your flash a break between say 10 flashes or else you might burn it up.

That's another reason I suggest you set your speedlight to 1/8th power: faster recycling and prolonging the life of the flash.

FIGURING OUT EXPOSURE

The beauty of digital photography is the instant feedback. If you understand how to read the histogram on the LCD of your camera, know how to manually adjust your shutter speed, aperture and ISO, you should be able to set your exposure manually.

Thank you for downloading and purchasing this manual. I hope it gets you exactly where you need to be without the frustration of trying to decipher the manual which came with your flash.

MULTIPLE FLASH MODE

Depending on your ambition, skill level and the kinds of subjects you photograph, you may or may not need to ever use this mode. Generally speaking the use of this mode requires you to work in near or total darkness because your shutter speed will likely be

longer than 1 sec.

As an example above, I used this mode when I photographed professional belly dancer Hadia Habibi in the basement of Back to the Grind coffeehouse. I kept the shutter open for 5 seconds and I had my speedlight on the Multiple Flash mode.

She brought along her fire sticks which she lit. In this mode, to figure out the shutter speed to use, you have to divide the number of flashes by thefrequency to give you the shutter speed to set on your camera.

Number of flashes / Frequency = Shutter Speed

So if you want to make your speedlight fire 10 flashes and you want the duration of each flash to fire (frequency or how often it fires) say 5 Hz, then the shutter speed you set is 2 full seconds. You could theoritically go longer but the ambient might build up and over-expose your picture.

You should keep the power output of your speedlight to 1/16 and possibly lower. Firing in such rapid succession at higher output may overheat your speedlight or may permanently damage it if you aren't careful.

You might notice when you engage the Multiple Flash mode, the power setting will default to 1/4 power. Realistically this is mode might not allow your speedlight to recycle fast enough if you want several pops of flash in rapid succession.

So it's better to reduce the power output even more to perhaps to 1/16th power by pushing the "LEFT" button twice changing it from

This is the number of flashes you want the Speedlight to fire

1/4
> 1/8

> 1/16.

Next, you'll push the round button in the center and you'll notice the "2X" start to blink in your LCD.

Push the "LEFT" or "RIGHT" buttons to make your selection. In my example, if I wanted to increase the number of flashes to 10, so I pushed the "RIGHT" button until I see the display change to "10" then I would push the round button in the center again to confirm.

As soon as "10" is displayed, you'll notice the "60 Hz" start to blink. This time, I'll just push the "LEFT" button to reduce the 60 Hz to 5 Hz

Anytime you use the Multiple Flash mode, as in my example where I've set my flash output to 1/16th power, the aperture you use for proper exposure to make your picture will need to be determined by trial and error.

That simply means you may have to increase the ISO if you're under-exposed. If that doesn't work, then you may have to bring the speedlight closer to your subject.

It will be a bit of experimentation and a compromise between faster recycling times, number of flashes you want and the kind of moving subject you're shooting.

CUSTOM FUNCTIONS

If you think you'll be using one for while, then it might be worth customizing some of the settings.

Otherwise having to dig into the menu system is extremely annoying especially when the owners' manual is so poorly written.

I bought these for the sole purpose of using them off-camera so I have their Sleep Mode set to stay awake for 120 minutes (Documentation that came with the speedlight fails to clarify if it's 120 seconds or minutes but I"m sure the latter makes more sense)

I usually have these speedlights mounted on light stands or sitting off-camera lighting the various areas of my scene. I don't want to have to walk over to them and wake them from sleep every time there's a period of inactivity when I pause and don't take pictures. You might think of doing that as well.

To access the Custom Functions, press the left 2 buttons simultaneously as shown in the picture above. The first screen you see is the Sleep mode which is "ON" as the factory default.

Press the "DOWN" button to cycle through the various settings from Sleep, LCD, Quick, Sound rF, and Clear.
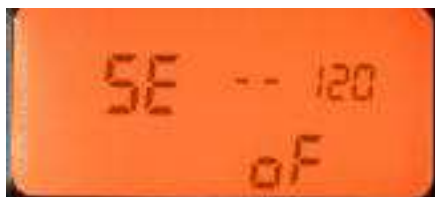
I changed all the sleep settings to the maximum of 120 (I assume is 120 minutes) I also changed the LCD setting from 7 to 30 (Again, I'm unsure if it's seconds or minutes)

Don't over complicate your short life with the other settings. It took me the longest time to figure out what "60 3" meant on the LCD when you first turn on the speedlight.

That's the setting to indicate the speedlights are set for the YN603 series transceivers. Note the strange spacing between "60" and the number "2" in the LCD and you'll know why I was so confused.

If you own the YN 602 series transceivers, you can change this in the custom function menu for **fF** which I'm making a educated guess is short for **radio frequency**.

You have to keep your sense of humor when using these knockoff speedlights.

About the author

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Peter Phun wrote this manual the way a news reporter at a newspaper would, using the inverted pyramid style.

What he feels is the most important is first, and positioned up top followed by the less crucial information below.

After spending many frustrating hours helping his workshop students figure out the poorly written owners manual that came with the Yongnuo Speedlights, Peter felt it was time to work smarter.

Rather than going over the same ordeal every single time he teaches his Small Flash workshop, this e-Book is a resource that should have come with your purchase of your YN 560-III Speedlight.

Feel free to contact Peter with your corrections, gripes and suggestions. He promises he won't be offended.

Subscribe to his blog http://peterphun.com for more tips on photography.