

NOVEMBER 24, 2020

Nikon | LEARN &
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BEGINNER

Understanding Animal Detection AF

Featuring **DIANE BERKENFELD & MARC CUTLER**



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Even with a few hairs hanging into the dog's eye, the camera can lock focus on the eye. Z 7, NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S at 70mm focal length, 1/500 second, f/2.8, ISO 160, Aperture priority, Center-weighted metering

Beautiful portraits are easier to capture now, for even the furriest of family members. We're talking about your favorite cats and dogs. Let's face it, pets are great at being adorable. But sitting still for pictures? Not so much. We've got a technology that can help you take great portraits of man's best friend (and cats too). Its called Animal Detection AF.

One of the more helpful features that became available to Nikon Z 6 and Z 7 users with Firmware version 2.0 was Eye Detection AF which allows a photographer to set the camera to lock focus on a person's eye(s). [[Learn more about Z firmware 2.0.](#)]

With Firmware version 3.0, photographers now have Animal Detection AF. Once selected, the camera will reliably find focus on a cat or dog's eye for still images; and focus onto a cat or dog's face when in movie mode. [[Learn more about Z firmware 3.0.](#)]

Both the **Eye Detection AF** for humans and **Animal Detection AF** for cats/dogs are found in the **Custom Settings Menu > a4**. In the i menu, set the camera to Auto-area AF and then select either AF-S (single shooting mode) or AF-C (continuous shooting mode). Continuous shooting mode is helpful when you're photographing a very energetic pet.



To turn on Animal Detect AF, once you've updated the Z 6 or Z 7 camera's firmware to version 3.0, go into the custom settings menu, a4 and select Animal Detection AF.

Photographing your pets can be fun and easy if your pet is docile and doesn't move around much, but for more energetic cats and dogs, having the Animal Detection AF can make all the difference in being able to get sharp images. Just like a portrait of a person, when you take a portrait of your pet, its imperative that the animal's eyes are sharp. Using Animal Detection AF will give

you the confidence to concentrate on getting and keeping Fluffy or Fido's attention or focus on the composition of the image while the camera keeps the focus.



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Z 6, Mount Adapter FTZ, AF-S
NIKKOR 105mm f/1.4E, 1/50
second, f/4.0, ISO 1600, Aperture
priority, Matrix metering



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So long as an eye is visible to the camera, it will be able to lock focus.
Z 6, Mount Adapter FTZ, AF-S
NIKKOR 105mm f/1.4E, 1/60
second, f/4.0, ISO 1600, Aperture
priority, Matrix metering

When taking still photographs, and Animal AF is selected, the camera will detect the eyes of a cat or dog and even let you choose which eye you want the camera to focus on, similar to how Eye Detection AF works on human eyes. In movie mode, the cat or dog's face is detected.

If you're taking photos of a person or multiple people and pets in the same frame, you'll want to set the camera to Auto-area AF Face/Eye Detection to give priority to the person or people in the image, and ensure that the person's eyes are sharp.



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Animal Detection AF works great when photographing solid color animals like a black cat and is especially helpful at wide apertures. Z 6, Mount Adapter FTZ, AF-S NIKKOR 105mm f/1.4E, 1/4000 second, f/1.4, ISO 1600, Aperture priority, Matrix metering

If you've had your Z 6 or Z 7 for a while, a simple update to firmware version 3.0 or newer will give you Animal Detection AF as well as a few other enhancements. If you are an early adopter and have had your Z 6 or Z 7 since the Z series was first introduced and haven't yet updated your firmware, you should seriously consider doing so to get all of the benefits that each of the firmware updates will provide.

Whether you're looking to capture candid photos of your favorite cat and dog, or want to set up a more formal looking portrait, using the Animal Detection AF will make capturing great shots easy.



Animal Detect AF works great when photographing solid color animals like a white dog. Z 7, NIKKOR Z 50mm f/1.8 S, 1/200 second, f/1.8, ISO 400, Aperture priority, Matrix metering



Long hair pups or cats are no trouble for Animal Detect AF. Z 7, NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S at 69mm focal length, 1/320 second, f/2.8, ISO 560, manual exposure, Matrix metering

[Learn about all of the Z series firmware updates.](#)

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