

MERCURY QUICK START GUIDE

First of all: Read the User Guide (www.mercurycamera.com/downloads/instructions/)

Step 1: Attach lens to shutter plate/board

If you have a view lens, you will need to remove its retaining ring with a spanner wrench (and probably its rear glass element), fit its rear threads through the hole in your Mercury shutter plate, and then fasten it to the plate with your retaining ring again. Many built-in shutters contain a tiny post on the back side that prevents it from sitting flat against the shutter plate. If so, remove this post with a small flathead screwdriver (they are always removable).

If you have a system lens, mount it to your lens adapter, then carefully screw your lens adapter into your Ilex or Copal shutter. Mount this shutter in the same way to your square Shutter Board.

Step 2: Bolt Lens Stack to Front Panel

Using the included bolts, mount your entire lens stack on the front of your camera (the numbers on your square front spacers should be facing the ground) and bolt it into place with the four included M4 bolts/washers. These should only be screwed in finger-tight! Overtightening these will result in focus inaccuracies due to warping, or damage to your camera.

Step 3: Attach Focus Scale to Focus Ring

Your focus scale comes as an adhesive vinyl strip that needs to be pressed onto a focus ring. Mount the ring on your focus unit (taking care to line up the indicator mark on the ring with the indicator mark on your helical ring). If you have a digital or ground glass back, focus (with your lens at max aperture-



“wide open”) on several different targets at different but precisely measured distances. Make small pencil marks on the ring at each of these positions. Hold the adhesive strip to your ring and position it so that its marks line up with your marks, then stick it on! If you don't have any way to calibrate your own camera, use the focus scale's built-in mark (the line that spans the entire width of the scale) and align it with the focus indicator mark on top of your focus unit when it is fully retracted.

Step 4: Add a back

You will need to add a back to your camera. This can be a medium format film back (which typically takes 120 film), a digital back, a sheet film holder, etc. The back needs to match the “back adapter” included with your Mercury.

Step 5: Add a viewfinder

If you wish to shoot without a ground glass back (handheld), you need a viewfinder for framing. You can use nearly any vintage accessory viewfinder, or one from Mercury:

<http://mercurycamera.com/accessories-2/mercury-viewfinder-guide/>

Step 6 (optional): Add range finder, camera strap, and cable release

PRECAUTIONS AND TIPS

Don't Overtighten! Mercury is made mostly from plastic. Though it is robust in many ways, it is fragile in others. To prevent deforming or damaging parts, only tighten front bolts to finger-tightness. Rear bolts can be tighter, but only by a bit. The camera is designed to operate normally and with the most accuracy when everything is finger tight. However, it is important that threaded elements such as lens barrels and shutter plates be screwed in all the way, leaving no gaps between parts. Still, once the gap has disappeared, you should not force every last millimeter out of threaded components. The same goes for metal inserts, which can strip out of their surrounding plastic if too much pressure is applied to them.

Concentrated Heat: Most Mercury components are quite resistant to sun and heat, but some are sensitive due to the material they are constructed of. These include large format back adapter shells, front spacers, and sportfinders. The camera should not be left in a hot car, outside unattended, or near a window that could focus and intensify sunlight (this is actually the only problem that we have experienced directly).

Fast Film: It is highly recommended that you start by shooting film that is rated no slower than 400 ISO. This will give you the depth of field and action-stopping shutter speed you need to take sharp photos. As your skills and knowledge of Mercury improve, you can try slower film.

Ground Glass: The best way to get to know your Mercury is with a ground glass back. Not only can you preview settings and modifications in real time (displayed on a screen), but your first photos will also be more intuitive, as you will be able to pre-visualize them with absolute control. We recommend handheld shooting only after you have mastered ground glass shooting.

Where to Get More Info

- If you are new to medium/large format photography, read Chapter 3: *Shooting with your Mercury* in the User Guide (<http://mercurycamera.com/downloads/Mercury%20User%20Guide.pdf>)
- If you ordered or are considering ordering multiple possible Merc configs, read Chapter 2, *Assembling and Configuring Mercury* in the User Guide.
- If you need help choosing lenses, read our online Lens Buying Guide.
- If you need help choosing backs, read our Graflok 23 Guide or Graflok 45 guide
- If you need help choosing or using a range finder, read our online Range Finder Roundup
- If you have a Valeo digital back, read our Valeo Digital Back Manual, available in Downloads.
- If have further questions, post them in the Mercury Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/mercury-works
- If you need to contact Mercury Works, email us at mercurycameraworks@gmail.com

Shooting procedure:

1. Set shutter speed and aperture
2. Cock shutter (unless you have a self-cocking or “press” shutter)
3. Focus using range finder; transfer value to focus ring
4. Pull darkslide (if your back has one)
5. Trigger exposure
6. Advance film back

Thank you for
supporting the
Mercury
project! We
hope you do
beautiful
things.

