Mercury Shift System

The Mercury Shift System acts as a front spacer, but allows you to shift your lens up to 17mm in a vertical (rise) or horizontal direction. It consists of a universal mounting plate and a baseplate. Baseplates come in horizontal or vertical orientation. A single shift spacer can shift in either a vertical or horizontal direction, but not both. If you need both simultaneously, you would need two complete systems. However, because the mounting plate (the most complex/expensive part) works with both types of baseplate, you can swap it between the horizontal and vertical versions.

When a Mounting Plate and a spacer Baseplate are combined, they act as a 10mm Front Spacer, and can take the place of any standard front spacer. The shift spacer should, in most cases be mounted as the last element in the lens stack before the focus unit (and exception being XL focus units; see below).

For configurations that don't make use of a front spacer, a Shift Front Panel is also available. It builds the shift into the camera body rather than into a front spacer. It accepts the same universal mounting plate and enables an FS-0 shift configuration.

Mounting:

1. To assemble a shift spacer, first select a horizontal or a vertical Baseplate. These mount onto the lens stack (either directly to a camera front or over other front spacers) using standard front bolts (M4 socket head). However, the length of the bolts should be *10mm less than if you were mounting a focus unit in that position*. For example, if you are mounting this over a 20mm standard front spacer (for a total FS value of 30), you would use 25mm bolts instead of the usual 35mm. In the special case of mounting directly to a camera front, *use 6mm bolts*.

Do not overtighten these bolts. They should be only loosely finger tight. Some bowing of the Baseplate is normal, but if you experience too much bowing, it will impede the shift movement. In this case, loosen the mounting bolts. In any case, the heads of the bolts should end up roughly on level with the front of the Baseplate.

2. After you've mounted the Baseplate, slide the Mounting Plate over it. It should fit tightly but still slide. Center it over the Baseplate.

3. Mount your focus unit. It will fit in either orientation directly into the grooves of the Mounting Plate. Secure it with standard mounting bolts, as if mounting the focus unit directly to the camera body. *However, you will need 4-6mm of washers on each bolt.* You can achieve this with special 4mm thick washers or by doubling up two standard 3mm washers on each bolt.

If mounting an XL focus unit, you need to have at least a 10mm front spacer in between the focus unit and the Mounting Plate. It will not mount directly to the Mounting Plate as will standard and ultrawide focus units.

4. Once the focus unit has been mounted, insert two (M4 x 14mm) thumb screws through the slots in the Mounting Plate, screwing them into the the Baseplate. To swap focus units or remove the Mounting Plate from the Baseplate, you will need to remove these first.

Usage:

Loosen (but do not remove) the two thumbscrews to enable shift. Shift the Mounting Plate to your preferred position (up to 17mm from center), in most cases using a ground glass back as a visual reference. Tighten the thumbscrews to lock the shift function.

Your maximum shift can be reduced by certain camera configurations and certain lenses. 6X9 configurations will have reduced vertical shifting range. 4X5 and larger configurations will enable the most room inside the camera for the lens to move. Lenses with larger rear elements will restrict the maximum amount of shift.

When used with a Graflok 23 back adapter (a medium format configuration), the shift spacer will block top and side cold shoes.

Vertical Shift Notes:

When used in a vertical orientation, you will not be able to shift downward unless your lens stack is long enough to clear your QR plate or other tripod plate. Rise is not affected.

In any orientation, if you wish to use this with a QR or tripod plate and your lens stack isn't long enough for the Baseplate to clear the QR/tripod plate, it is recommended that you use a "foot spacer" when mounting the QR plate. This small plate is included with every Baseplate. It should be inserted in between the QR/tripod plate and the bottom of the camera when you mount it. It will extend the QR/tripod plate down very slightly so that it can clear the bottom of the shift system. (Note that the Mercury Shift Camera Front does not require this spacer; only Shift Spacer configurations do.)

Horizontal Shift Notes:

When used with a standard camera front, the Horizontal Baseplate requires at least a 10mm spacer in between it and the camera front in order to clear the camera's handle. When used with an XL Front Panel, it will mount fine with no spacer, but it's ability to shift to the right will be restricted. When used with a Mini Front, it is not restricted.