

# Rating + pushing film.

## Rating film

Rating your film is basically deciding at what ISO you want to shoot your film.

It sounds tricky and confusing, but it's literally no different than how you would decide at what ISO to shoot on your digital camera! The biggest catch is knowing your film stock and how it handles light. Film LOVES light and you really don't want to underexpose your film. You can shoot at a higher ISO than your film (like at ISO 800 for a 400 speed film, which means you would PUSH your film 1 stop in development, but we'll get to that in a sec!)

Rating film is YOU deciding at what ISO speed you want to shoot your film. All film comes with a set speed (Fuji 400 is an ISO 400 film, Ektar 100 is an ISO 100 film).

You can shoot your film at "box speed", which would be shooting your film at the given film speed - OR - you can choose to manipulate the speed of your film based on the light you have or a certain look you are going for and "rate" it at a different film speed.

## Fuji 400H

- > 400 = box speed
- > 400 to 200 = 1 stop of overexposure
- > 400 to 100 = 2 stops of overexposure
- > 400 to 800 = 1 stop of underexposure

Kodak Color Plus 200



Portra 400, rated 640



Portra 160, rated 100



Ektrax 100, rated 100



Kodak Color Plus 200, rated 400



Once you “rate” your film, you have to shoot the entire roll at that speed. You cannot rate the first 10 frames at ISO 100 and shoot outside on a bright, sunny day and then shoot the remaining frames indoors in your dark kitchen at ISO 800 (with the intention of pushing just part of your film. You have to push an entire roll - not just a few frames).

If you are using an external meter, you will set your meter ISO to the film speed you want to use (ex. ISO 200) and then take your meter reading.

Thinking about rating your film is no different than how you would think about setting the ISO on your digital camera. If you are outdoors with tons of light, your ISO would probably be around 100-400; inside, you would likely be 800-1600.

### **My go-to stocks + rating preferences**

- > Fuji 400H: rate at 100, 200, 400
- > Portra 400: rate at 200 or 400
- > Ektar 100 - rate at 100  
(metering bulb in at 90 degrees in the shadows)
- > Kodak Color Plus 200 - rate at 100 or 200

## Pushing film

Pushing film is something that is done by your lab during the development of your film. In basic terms, pushing your film is leaving your film in the chemicals longer than required. You will typically hear about pushing film when someone rates film at a HIGHER ISO than the box speed of the film (like rating Fuji 400 at 800). Pushing film DOES NOT increase exposure. Like at all. For real.

Pushing film in development does three things:

- > Increases contrast
- > Makes highlights brighter
- > Makes shadows darker

For me, I generally do not push film. I used to push film indoors when I first started because I THOUGHT it was going to make my image brighter, but really all it did was add contrast that I couldn't take away and made my blacks SUPER dark. For indoor images, I very rarely push. For outdoor images, I occasionally will push one stop if I needed to rate my film higher to have a useable shutter speed (although I would prefer not to push).



Fuji 400, rated 800, pushed 1 stop



Portra 800, rated 400, pushed 1 stop