

Do You Make These Mistakes When You Photograph Your Pet?

If you're fed up with ghoulish, glowing eyes or blurred results every time you snap your pet's picture, try these professional tips that work for anyone. Grab your camera, create this perfect background, and shoot from this angle for the perfect close-up of your pet.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Many a pet owner has been disappointed, after taking a close-up shot of their dog, to see that his eyes in the photo have assumed a ghoulish shade of yellow or orange or green
- There's a simple scientific explanation for why flash photography often results in eyeshine – it's all about the construction of your dog's eye. Unfortunately, there isn't a simple way to avoid the problem
- Your best bet to avoid the eerie-eye phenomenon is to take pictures of your dog in natural light so no flash is needed. Other options include using the red-eye removal setting on your camera, or placing a diffuser over the flash
- Additional tips for taking good pet pictures including sticking with simple, colorful backgrounds, and getting down on your dog's level for photo ops

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published January 09, 2015.

If you're like a lot of people, you probably find it a near-impossible feat to take good close-up pictures of your dog's face. Your canine companion doesn't seem to understand the need to sit or stand still and look at you, when he'd really prefer to rest his head on your knee or jump into your lap.

Then suddenly, when you least expect it, the stars align and you're finally able to snap a nice, steady-handed close-up of your furry friend's precious mug. You rush to download the pic and admire your work, but all you see as your angelic pup's image appears on the screen is a set of ghoulish eyes staring back at you. Yellow or orange or green or blue devil eyes. What the heck happened?

Your Dog's Ghostly Eyeshine Explained

That unwelcome eerie light in your dog's eyes is similar to the red-eye effect that ruins so many pictures of humans.

In dogs (and many other animals, but not people), the retina has a reflective layer behind it called the tapetum lucidum, which acts like a mirror, reflecting light at the back of the eyes. The reflective layer is what helps dogs see better at night. Light is reflected outward, giving the dog's retina a second chance to absorb the rays.

This is what takes place when you snap a flash picture of your pet, and it's why your dog's eyes may take on a creepy glow. Individual dogs have different colored tapetum, which is why some dogs' eyes take on a green glow, others a yellow glow, and so on.

If your dog consistently has red-eye in photos, he might not have pigment in the tapetum. This means the red is coming from blood vessels at the back of the eyeball, which is also the cause of human red-eye.

Tips for Taking Better Photos of Your Pet

You can prevent eye shine by taking pictures in natural light, or when your dog isn't looking straight at the camera. You can also try using the red-eye prevention setting on your camera if it has one, though it's debatable whether the feature is useful for pictures of pets.

Another approach is to try a diffuser. You can diffuse the light from your camera's flash by placing a piece of tissue or opaque plastic over the flash. Just be sure to keep the diffusing material away from the lens. A few more tips for taking great pics of your pooch:

- **Clear the clutter** — Use simple, colorful backgrounds for your pet photos. Put him in front of a blank wall or a blanket. Add colorful rugs, blankets or toys to brighten things up and make your dog the focal point.
- **Get down on your dog's level** — You're more likely to get great shots if you're taking them at eye level with your dog. This should put her in a playful mood and also get her more comfortable with the camera.
- **Make a doggy collage** — Take close-ups of your pup's most adorable parts – his fluffy paws, Yoda ears, feathered tail, button nose, or droopy dewlaps. Then use all those sweet images to create a collage or photo block.

Sources and References

DogChannel.com October 7, 2014
