

# When You Can't Use a Tripod

By Jim Zuckerman



I have written about this in a previous newsletter last year, but I wanted to reiterate a solution to a common problem because it's so useful. When tripods are not allowed in a museum, a cathedral, a famous monument, or in a theater, take the ball head off your tripod and use the flat, bottom surface of it pressed against a solid support like the floor, a railing, or a wall. With a continuous pressure against the ball head, you can capture tack sharp pictures

The ancient cistern from the Byzantine Empire that I shot in Istanbul on my recent photo tour is an example. No tripods are allowed here,

and the lighting is so dark it's impossible to get a sharp picture unless the ISO is raised to 5000 or so, and who wants that? The solution was to take the ball head off the camera and place it on the floor or on a railing. I mounted the camera on the ball head, set the self-timer to 2 seconds and used the mirror lock-up feature to minimize or eliminate any vibration. I wanted depth of field, so I used f/11 with my wide angle lens. The exposure time was a full 8 seconds, and the picture turned out to be perfectly. I applied a continuous pressure against the base of the ball head during the 8 seconds to make sure the results were tack sharp.