

# Information Display

## Chapter 4 Supplement to Mastering the Nikon D300/D300S

This supplemental information is intended for readers of *Mastering the Nikon D300/D300S* only. It is a downloadable resource for Chapter 4 – Custom Setting Menu. Please do not distribute this extra material to anyone other than a legitimate owner of the book. *Mastering the Nikon D300/D300S* is available at the following website: <http://www.rockynook.com/books/158.html>

Several of Nikon's lower-cost DSLR cameras depend less on the standard text-based menus and more on a graphical **Information display** with editable camera settings. The thought seems to be that users will have less trouble finding key settings if there are specific screens in the camera that show these settings in one place.

Unfortunately, unlike the lower-cost cameras, the D300(S) is much more complex. It has so many settings that it would be almost impossible to design one or two screens to contain even the critical camera functions.

Future Nikon DSLR cameras may depend more heavily on graphical screens and less on text-based menus. These cameras are getting awfully complex, and as more features are added, they will only become more so. How can all these settings be offered to the camera user in a less complex package?

The D300S adds some utility that may portend future camera functionality. A new screen series was adopted and extended from the D300's older-style **Shooting information display**. There are two graphical screens in the series, the **Information display**, and one I call the **Information display edit screen**. The first is very similar to the D300's **Shooting information display**, and the second adds links to ten specific settings in the standard text-based menus of the D300S. The **Information display edit screen** is somewhat like a shortcut screen to those ten settings.

This chapter is composed of four sections. Most of it will concern the main **Information display** screens. However, I wanted to provide you with some information on the **Control panel**—another type of **Information display**—along with the camera's built in **Help** system and **Help button**. Here are the four sections and brief descriptions of them:

- **Information Display** – Provides camera shooting configuration information. The D300 calls this screen the **Shooting information display**. The D300S calls it simply the **Information display**.
- **Information Display Edit Screen** (D300S only) – This concerns the **Information display** and its secondary screen, the **Information display edit screen**. Since the D300 does not have edit functionality built into its **Shooting information display**, this section of the chapter generally applies to the D300S only.
- **Control Panel** – We'll consider some information about the **Control panel** LCD, located on the top of the camera. This little LCD is packed with information and is often our first view of the status of settings we're using.

- **Help System** – Last, we'll look at how to use the **Help button** to save some confusion. Most don't realize it, but the D300(S) has a full-blown help system built in. It is context sensitive, which means it will give you a help screen for nearly any currently selected function. Look for the question mark above the multi-function **Protect button** (looks like a key) on the camera's back. This is the **Help button** you'll use to get help for virtually any function in the camera.

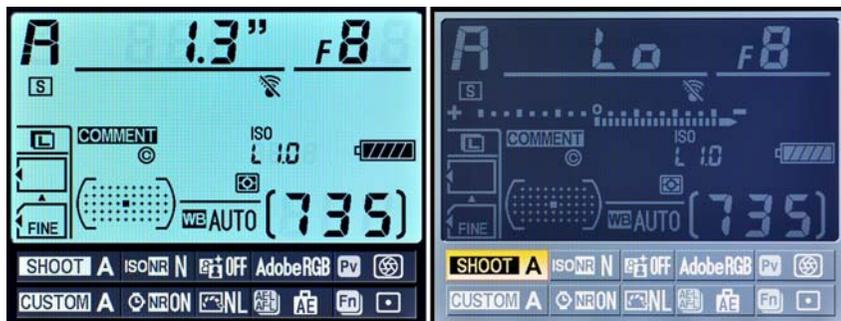
## Information Display

(User's Manual – D300S page 12; D300 page 12)

In FIG 1 we see the two new **Information display** screens. On the left is the main **Information display**, and on the right is the **Information display edit screen**. The first is rather similar to the D300's **Shooting information display**, while the second screen has no equal in the D300.

In the D300 the **Shooting information display** does little else but show critical camera shooting information like shutter speed, aperture, battery level, white balance, exposure mode, ISO, image quality, etc. In a sense, it's an informational, read-only screen designed to give you a condensed overview of the current camera settings. You get to it by pressing the **Protect/Help/Info button** just below the **Menu button** next to the **LCD screen** on the top left back of the D300.

In the D300S, Nikon takes it a step further with both the similar **Information display** and the new **Information display edit screen**. The next section of this chapter will look at how the "edit" screen can be used to configure ten often-used settings. You open the **Information display** on the D300S by pressing the **Info button** once, and the **Information display edit screen** by pressing it twice. The **Info button** is next to the bottom right corner of the **LCD screen** on the D300S.



**FIG 1 – Information display and Information display edit screen**

If you look carefully at the **Information display** in FIG 1, image 1, you'll see that it provides details on a large number of settings. Nikon says that the **Information display** on the D300S provides information on 43 specific camera settings, while the **Shooting information display** on the D300 shows 36 settings. You won't see all of them on-screen at the same time, since some only show up when certain functions are in use (like **Bracketing** or **Flash/Exposure compensation**).

If you are curious about what each of the symbols on the (**Shooting**) **Information display** means, the user's manual lists a comprehensive numbered explanation on page 12 for both the D300S and D300.

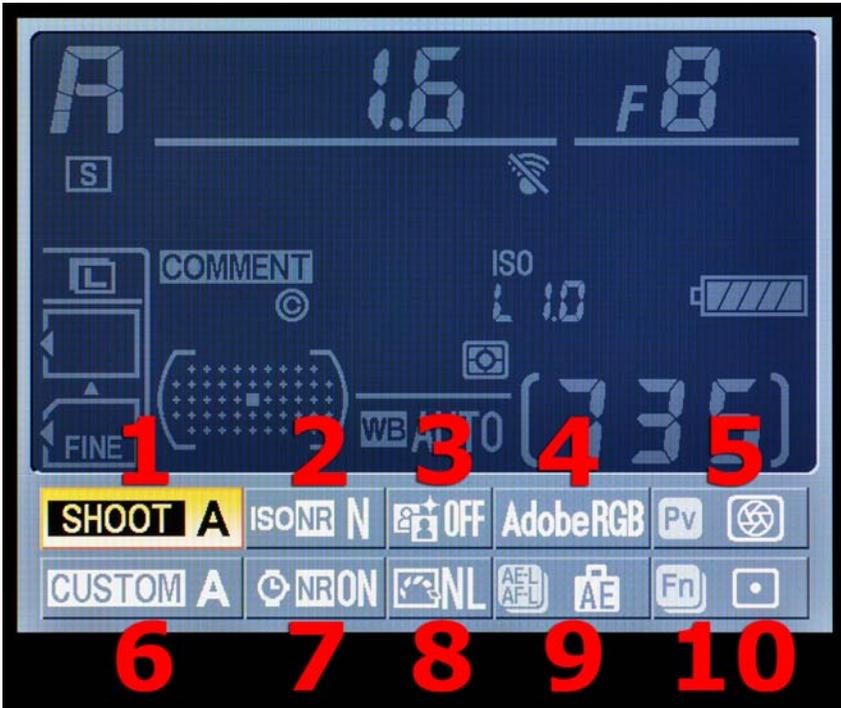
Now, let's look into the **Information display edit screen** found only on the D300S.

## Information Display Edit Screen

(User's Manual – D300S page 15)

This section of the chapter is basically devoted to the Nikon D300S. The functions discussed here are available in both cameras, but the user interface isn't. The **Information display edit screen** is merely a new user interface for ten specific functions in the D300S.

The **Information display edit screen** has a total of ten specific functions linked in a single shortcut screen. The links take you to the various text-based menus for each particular item.



**FIG 2 – Information display edit screen's 10 functions**

Here is a list of the ten settings connected to the **Information display edit screen** (see FIG 2). Use the matching numbers to identify each setting:

1. Shooting menu bank
2. High ISO noise reduction
3. Active D-Lighting
4. Color space
5. Depth-of-field preview button assignment
6. Custom settings bank
7. Long exposure noise reduction
8. Set Picture Control
9. AE-L/AF-L button assignment
10. Fn button assignment

Now, let's look at each of the 10 functions and how to use the interface. Remember that these are the same settings we covered in previous chapters. The **Information display edit screen** is simply another user interface that provides access to some of the same functions found on the text-based menus.

Since that's the case, we won't go into detail on how each function works. That's already been well covered in previous chapters. Instead, we'll only discuss how to use the individual function.

In the 10 sections below, I have enabled **Custom Setting d4 > Screen tips** in my D300S. **Screen tips** turns on a little explanation box that points to each of the ten settings individually as a way to help you understand what each does. All the graphics from this point forward will have **Screen tips** enabled.

I'll briefly describe each setting and give you a graphical look at the screens connected to it. Most of the screens should be familiar since the **Information display edit screen** is merely a secondary interface into these 10 specific functions. It's a shortcut to the settings so that you don't have to wade through lots of menus to find them.

## Shooting Menu Bank

(User's Manual – D300S page 254)

**Shooting menu bank** is a shortcut to the normal **Shooting Menu > Shooting menu bank** setting, and provides the exact same functionality. You can choose your favorite **Shooting menu bank** from the four available banks. Rapid access is the whole point of the **Information display edit screen**. See FIG 3 for the sample screens.



FIG 3 – Information display edit screen – Shooting menu bank

## High ISO Noise Reduction

(User's Manual – D300S page 259)

**High ISO noise reduction** allows you to turn noise reduction (NR) on and off very quickly. NR blurs the image slightly to remove digital noise when shooting at ISO 800 and above. It does not provide NR for ISO sensitivity below ISO 800. You can select from the three levels of NR—**Low**, **Normal**, or **High**—or simply select **Off**.

This is a shortcut to the **Shooting Menu > High ISO NR** setting. The sample screens are found in FIG 4.



FIG 4 – Information display edit screen – High ISO noise reduction

## Active D-Lighting

(User's Manual – D300S page 164)

**Active D-Lighting** lets you open up detail in the shadows of an image, and reign in the highlights so that they don't blow-out to pure white. They'll still blow out with excessive exposure, but this function tries to prevent it as long as possible.

A side effect of using **Active D-Lighting** is introducing noise into the darker areas of the image. There are five levels of **Active D-Lighting** available, along with **Off**.

This is a shortcut to the **Shooting Menu > Active D-Lighting** function.

FIG 5 shows the screens and choices.



FIG 5 – Information display edit screen – Active D-Lighting

## Color Space

(User's Manual – D300S page 166)

**Color space** lets you choose between **sRGB** and **Adobe RGB** as the **Color space** your camera will use to take pictures. **Adobe RGB** encompasses about 50 percent of the colors your eye can see, while **sRGB** covers about 35 percent (based on the LAB-CIE color space).

**Adobe RGB** has a 15 percent wider color gamut, so is often better for **NEF (RAW)** shooters who demand maximum quality from their images. It also offers the best compatibility with the CMYK offset printers used to make books and magazines. Many **JPEG** shooters use **sRGB**, since it is so compatible with inkjet printers and local color labs.

This setting is a shortcut to the **Shooting Menu > Color space** function. The sample screens are found in FIG 6.



FIG 6 – Information display edit screen – Color space

## Depth-of-Field Preview Button Assignment

(User's Manual – D300S page 296)

**Depth-of-field preview button assignment** allows you to assign various functionalities to the camera's **Depth-of-field preview button**. It also lets you configure what happens when you hold down the **Depth-of-field preview button** while turning one of the **Command dials**. This is a shortcut to **Custom Setting Menu > f Controls > f6 Assign preview button**.

Each of these actions—**Preview button press** and **Preview + command dials**—has several assignable functions, as shown in FIG 7A and 7B.

FIG 7A covers the **Preview button press** assignment choices.



FIG 7A – Information display edit screen – DOF preview button assignment

FIG 7B shows the **Preview + command dials** assignment selections.



FIG 7B – Information display edit screen – DOF preview button assignment

## Custom Setting Bank

(User's Manual – D300S page 262)

**Custom setting bank** allows you to select one of the four banks found under the **Custom Setting Menu > Custom setting bank** selection. This is similar to the **Shooting menu bank** setting mentioned earlier in this chapter.

In fact, you can see that I have named my **Shooting menu banks** and **Custom setting banks** by the same names, so that I can easily match them when changing settings. This is entirely optional.

FIG 8 shows the sample screens.



FIG 8 – Information display edit screen – Custom setting bank

## Long Exposure Noise Reduction

(User's Manual – D300S page 258)

**Long exposure noise reduction** lets your camera use a special black-frame-subtraction method to remove noise from exposures longer than 8 seconds. **Job nr** will blink in the **Viewfinder** and on the **Control panel** while the noise reduction is taking place. Each long exposure will be doubled in time, since **Long exposure noise reduction** creates a second blank, black frame for noise subtraction purposes.

This is a shortcut to the **Shooting Menu > Long exp. NR** function. The sample screens are found in FIG 9.



FIG 9 – Information display edit screen – Long exposure noise reduction

## Set Picture Control

(User's Manual – D300S page 154)

**Set Picture Control** lets you choose one of the camera's Picture Controls without using the other camera menus. You can select a Nikon Picture Control or one of your own Custom Picture Controls from the **Information display edit screens**. Picture Controls change the overall look of the image, with major differences in **Sharpening**, **Contrast**, **Brightness**, **Saturation**, and **Hue** between each control.

This is a shortcut to the **Shooting Menu > Set Picture Control** function. The sample screens and choices are shown in FIG 10.

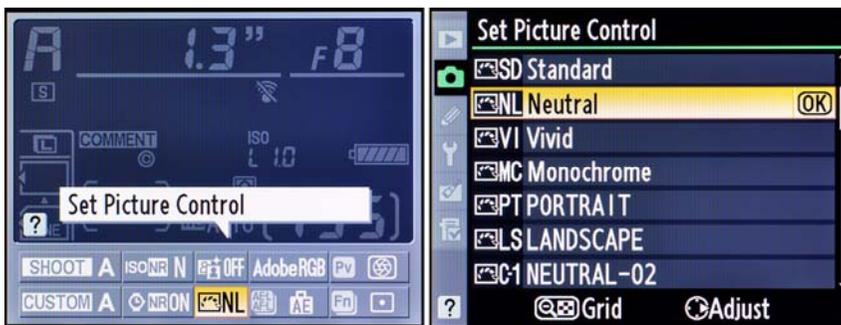


FIG 10 – Information display edit screen – Set Picture Control

## AE-L/AF-L Button Assignment

(User's Manual – D300S page 296)

**AE-L/AF-L button assignment** allows you to assign various functionalities to the camera's **AE-L/AF-L button**. It also lets you configure what happens when you hold down the **AE-L/AF-L button** while turning one of the **Command dials**. This is a shortcut to **Custom Setting Menu > f Controls > f7 Assign AE-L/AF-L button**.

Each of these actions—**AE-L/AF-L button press** and **AE-L/AF-L + command dials**—has several assignable functions, as shown in FIG 11A and 11B.

FIG 11A covers the **AE-L/AF-L button press** assignment choices.



FIG 11A – Information display edit screen – AE-L/AF-L button press

FIG 11B covers the **AE-L/AF-L + command dials** assignment selections.



FIG 11B – Information display edit screen – AE-L/AF-L + command dials

## Fn Button Assignment

(User's Manual – D300S page 292)

**Fn button assignment** allows you to assign different functions to the camera's **Fn button**. It also lets you configure what happens when you hold down the **Fn button** and turn one of the **Command dials**. This is a shortcut to **Custom Setting Menu > f Controls > f5 Assign Fn button**.

Each of these actions—**Fn button press** and **Fn button + dials**—has several assignable functions, as shown in FIG 12A and 12B.

FIG 12A covers the **Fn button press** assignment choices.



FIG 12A – Information display edit screen – Fn button press

FIG 12B covers the **Fn button + dials** assignment selections.



FIG 12B – Information display edit screen – Fn button + dials

## Control Panel

(User's Manual – D300S page 8; D300 page 8)

The **Control panel** is a small LCD display on the camera's top that displays up to 30 different indicators in the D300S, and 31 in the D300. FIG 13 shows the **Control panel** for both the D300S and D300.

I shot the image of the D300S **Control panel** with the backlight turned on to show the color you'll see when you use the backlight selection on the camera's **Power switch**. I took the D300 version with a Speedlight unit so that you can see the actual look of the panel in normal light.



FIG 13 – Control panel LCD screen – D300S (green) and D300 (silver)

There is little difference between the two cameras' **Control panels**. The **Battery charge** indicator has been moved, but the screens are mostly the same otherwise. You may notice that the D300S has both **CF** and **SD** card slot indicators, which the D300 does not have since it only has one CF memory card slot.

Page 8 of the user's manual for both cameras gives a detailed description of each of the 30 or 31 indicator icons and what they mean.

Primarily, you'll use the **Control panel** to quickly review the shutter speed and aperture, image capacity remaining, image quality and size, exposure mode, battery charge, exposure compensation, white balance, AF-area mode, and GPS status.

## Help Button

(User's Manual – D300S page 21; D300 page 29)

The **Help** function connected to the **Help button** is a very cool feature in the rather complex D300(S). The camera has a nice help screen for nearly any menu item you can display on the camera's **LCD screen**.

Press the **Menu button** on your camera and select one of the menu items. You'll see a small question mark surrounded by a gray box in the lower-left corner of the screen. You can see this in FIG 14, in the lower left corner of image 1.

This little question mark tells you that there is a handy help screen for whatever setting you have selected. If you are out in the field shooting and don't have any manuals with you, help is still available for easy or obscure functions.

In FIG 14, I have randomly selected a function called **AF activation**. What does it mean? Here are the steps to use the help system so that you can find out:



FIG 14 – Help button for Custom Setting a5 > AF activation

1. Press the **Menu button** to open up a menu and scroll to virtually any setting on it (see FIG 14, image 1).
2. Check to see if there is a small question mark (?) in the lower left corner.
3. If the question mark is there, a help screen is available. Use the reference images in FIG 14, image 2, to select the **Help button** for your camera. It is right below the **Menu button** and shares a role with the image **Protect** function, so there is a key icon on the **Help button**, as shown. Press the **Help button** for your camera.
4. A screen like you see in FIG 14, image 3, will appear on the **LCD screen**. Sometimes the text is several screens long, in which case you can scroll up or down with the **Multi Selector**. The help text is useful most of the time, and will give you a quick answer to “What does this menu item do?”

Strangely, the **Help button** will not work when you are looking at the **a-f** sections in the root of the **Custom Setting Menu**. However, if you drill down one level into the actual **Custom Settings a-f**, the **Help button** works fine.

**My Recommendation:** I like to use this **Help** functionality often. With so many functions available in this complex camera, it's even hard for a camera book author to keep up with all of them. If someone asks me what a certain function does—and I go blank—I'll immediately hit the **Help button** with that function selected and give them a wise answer. It makes me look smart, and helps me remember how some of the less-used functions work, too.