



Jan Wegener
PHOTOGRAPHY

NIKON Z8 SETUP GUIDE

by

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Welcome!



The Nikon Z8 has a lot to offer, and in this guide, I'll walk you through the settings that have worked best for me after extensive real-world use.

Some settings have a clear best option, while others come down to personal preference. Sometimes different shooting situations will require adjustments, but I aim to give you as much of an insight as possible into the camera and how to get stunning results!

To simplify the setup process, I've included a **.BIN file** that you can install directly onto your Z8 via the **orange Setup Menu (Save/load menu settings)**.

However, before installing it, **I strongly recommend saving your own settings first, so you can restore them if needed. Uploading my setup file will overwrite your current settings**, including file names. After installing the file, double-check your settings with this guide to ensure everything is set up properly.

Let's set up your camera now! I'll see you again at the end of the guide.

Jan

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All items are **clickable**. Submenus are not listed and can be found by the main slides.
(...) = Only the menu item selected in the slide is named for, but all relevant items are discussed.

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CAMERA **SETUP**



DARK GREEN

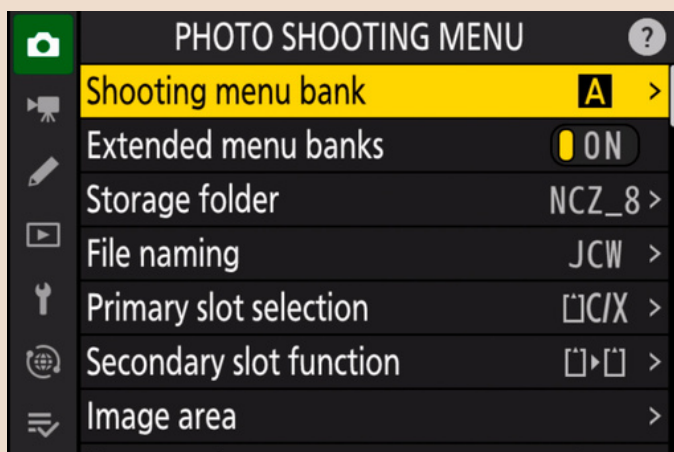
PHOTO SHOOTING

MENU

This menu controls all our *core shooting settings*—
like image quality, drive mode, white balance, metering,
and certain basic AF settings.

We will make a lot of changes in this menu.

Photo Shooting Menu



Shooting menu bank – Choose A–D banks to save different sets of photo settings – Z8 remembers last used settings like ISO, or other changes for each bank

- Assign to custom button for quick switching – i.e. video record button in photo mode – change by pressing and selecting with dial

Extended menu banks – ON (ISO, WB, etc. separate for each bank)

Storage folder – Select or create folder for image storage

File naming – **Customize** 3-letter prefix for file names (e.g., Z8_, JCW)

Primary slot selection – C/X (fast) – Choose which card slot is used first

Secondary slot function – Overflow – Overflow, Backup, or RAW/JPEG split – back up slow camera due to slower SD card

Image area – FX or DX (crop) – *I always use FX (full frame)*

Tone mode – SDR – SDR or HLG – affects tonal range

Image quality settings – RAW – Select RAW, JPEG, HEIF

Image size settings – Set JPEG/HEIF dimensions

RAW recording – Pick compression type (Lossless for best quality)

- *High Efficiency or High Efficiency* for more smaller files*
- *For most High Efficiency will be easier to work with*

ISO sensitivity settings – Set ISO, Auto ISO range & set min. shutter speed

White balance – AUTO2 – Select different WB options

- *I set it to AUTO2 & keep warm lighting colours*

Set Picture Control – SD – Select desired image look – Standard or Neutral

- *These settings affect the image look of JPEG/HEIF & the back of camera preview of RAW files*
- *I only shoot RAW, so I like to choose the **Standard** picture profile that gives me a good preview of colours and sharpness*

Photo Shooting Menu. Cont'd

PHOTO SHOOTING MENU		PHOTO SHOOTING MENU	
	Manage Picture Control >		High ISO NR OFF >
	Set Picture Control (HLG) SD >		Vignette control OFF >
	Color space Adobe >		Diffraction compensation OFF
	Active D-Lighting OFF >		Auto distortion control OFF
	Long exposure NR OFF		Skin softening OFF >
	High ISO NR mode Type A >		Portrait impression balance OFF >
	High ISO NR OFF >		Photo flicker reduction OFF

Manage Picture Control – Create, rename, delete, or load custom Picture Controls

Set Picture Control (HLG) – Choose Picture Control for HLG (High Dynamic Range) shooting

Color space – Adobe RGB or sRGB

- I use Adobe RGB, this can be adjusted later when shooting in RAW

Active D-Lighting – OFF – Boosts shadow/highlight detail – works only with Nikon's software

Long exposure NR – Reduces noise in long exposures – ON for JPEG, OFF for RAW

High ISO NR mode – Type A – Set separate NR level for playback and RAW+JPEG previews

High ISO NR – OFF – Applies NR to JPEGs/HEIFs – OFF or LOW recommended for more detail

Vignette control – OFF – Reduces dark corners in JPEG/HEIF

Diffraction compensation – OFF – Compensates for sharpness loss at high f-numbers

Auto distortion control – OFF – Corrects lens distortion in-camera (JPEG/HEIF only)

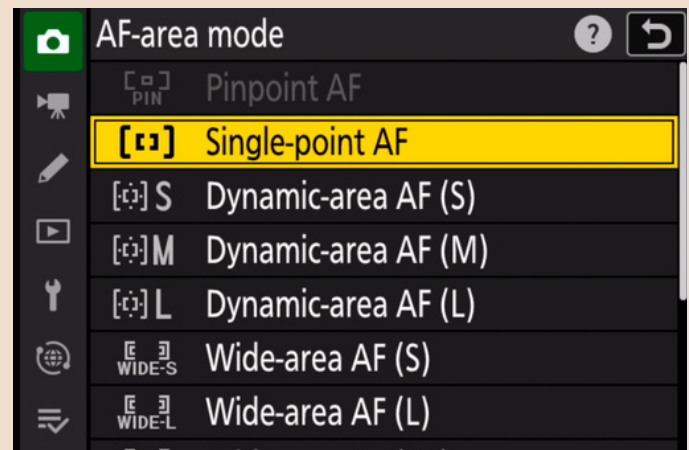
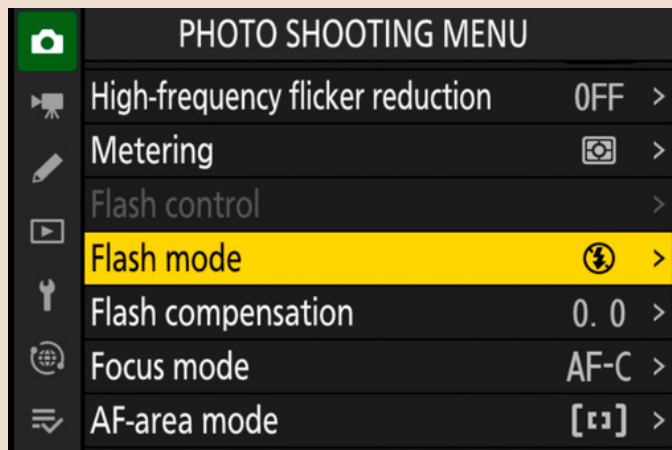
Skin softening – OFF – Smooths skin in portraits (JPEG/HEIF only)

Portrait impression balance – OFF – Adjust skin tone and brightness in portraits

Photo flicker reduction – OFF – Reduces flicker effects under artificial light

Photo Shooting Menu. Cont'd

submenu - AF-area mode



High-frequency flicker reduction – OFF – Reduces LED/panel flicker

Metering – *Matrix Metering* – Choose Metering mode (Matrix, Spot, etc.)

Flash control – Set built-in or external flash options

Flash mode – Choose front curtain, rear, slow sync, etc.

Flash compensation – Adjust flash output power

Focus mode – AF-C – Continuous AF for moving subjects

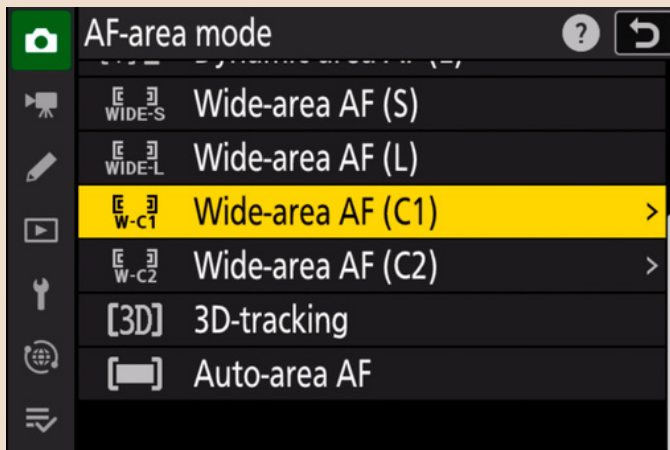
AF-area mode – Choose AF points or zones best suited to the shooting situation

On the Z8, I like to use double back button autofocus. We will set this up across a few different menus.

- My base autofocus is **Single-point AF**. It allows us to move the focus point wherever we want and focus without any tracking interfering. This is the ideal base AF mode, offering full control and making pre-focusing easy.
- We will set up Animal Eye tracking AF later. It will be assigned to the AF-ON button in the custom settings menu, not here and will overwrite this menu.



submenu - AF-area mode



submenu - Wide-area AF (C1)



In the AF-area mode submenu we can select many other AF options if needed. But for us Single-point AF as base is what we want.

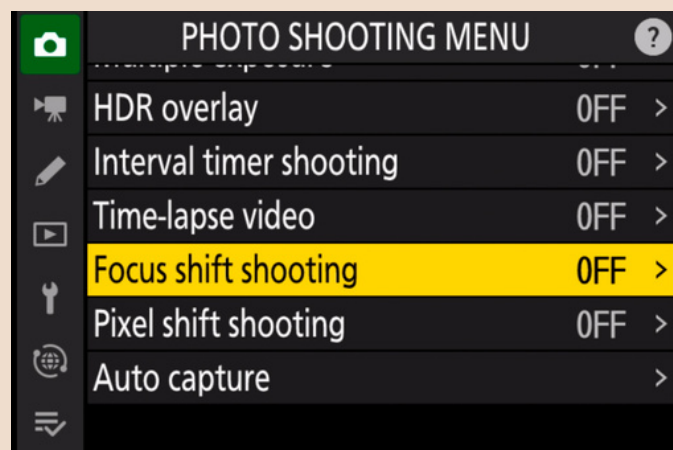
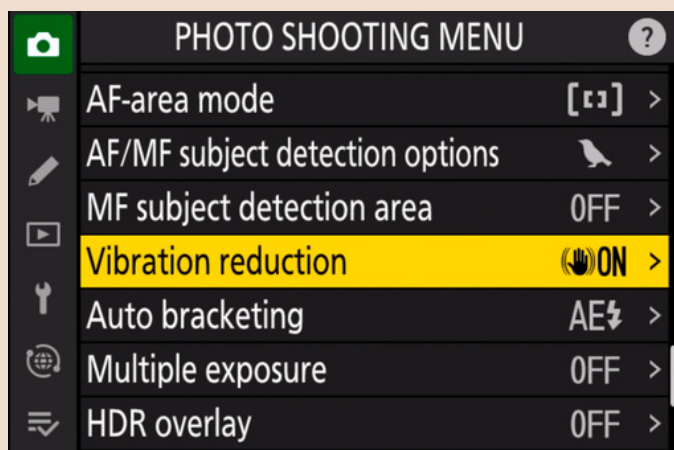
In this submenu we also **customize the Wide-area AF (C1 & C2)**

- We will assign one of these to a custom button later on, so let's give it the right shape.
- For birds in flight this mode is often the best.
- To **customize the wide area, select Wide-area AF C1 or C2** and click right on the D-pad on the back of the camera
 - In the sub menu use the D-pad to reshape the red AF area
 - For birds in flight I like it quite wide and narrow

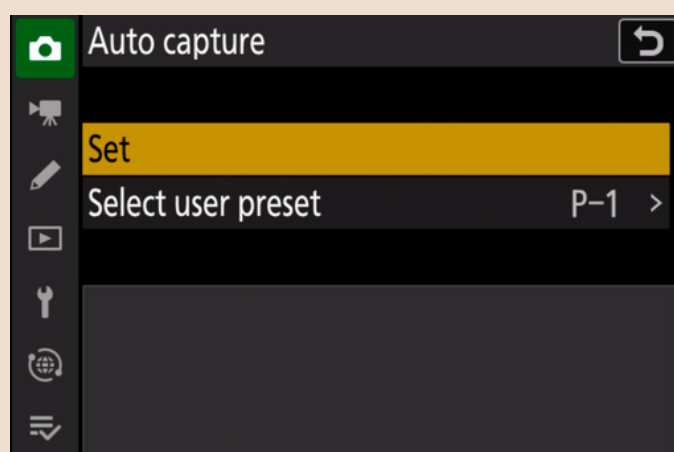


Z8 | 600PF | F 6.3 | ISO 1600 | 1/2000

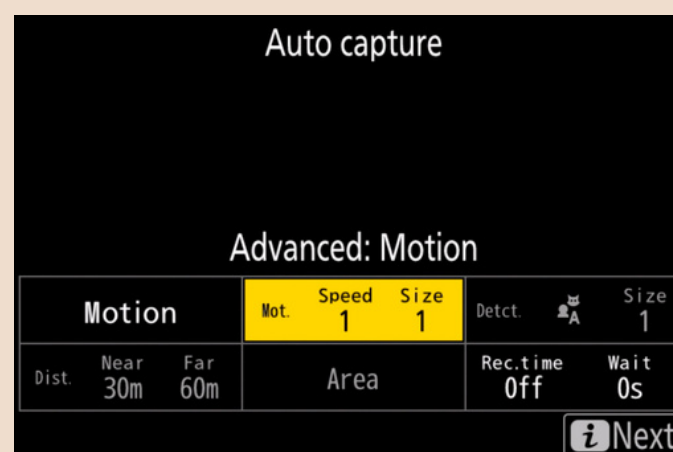
Photo Shooting Menu. Cont'd



submenu - Auto capture



submenu - Auto capture



AF/MF subject detection options – Birds – Choose subject to detect

MF subject detection area – OFF – Subject detection in manual focus

Vibration reduction – On (Standard)

- Sport mode brings unwanted shake, unless camera is moved quickly

Auto bracketing – (default) – Set exposure, flash, or WB bracketing options

Multiple exposure – OFF – Combines multiple shots into one image

HDR overlay – OFF – Merges exposures for high dynamic range (JPEG only)

Interval timer shooting – Take photos at set intervals – great for timelapses

Time-lapse video – Records a finished timelapse movie in-camera

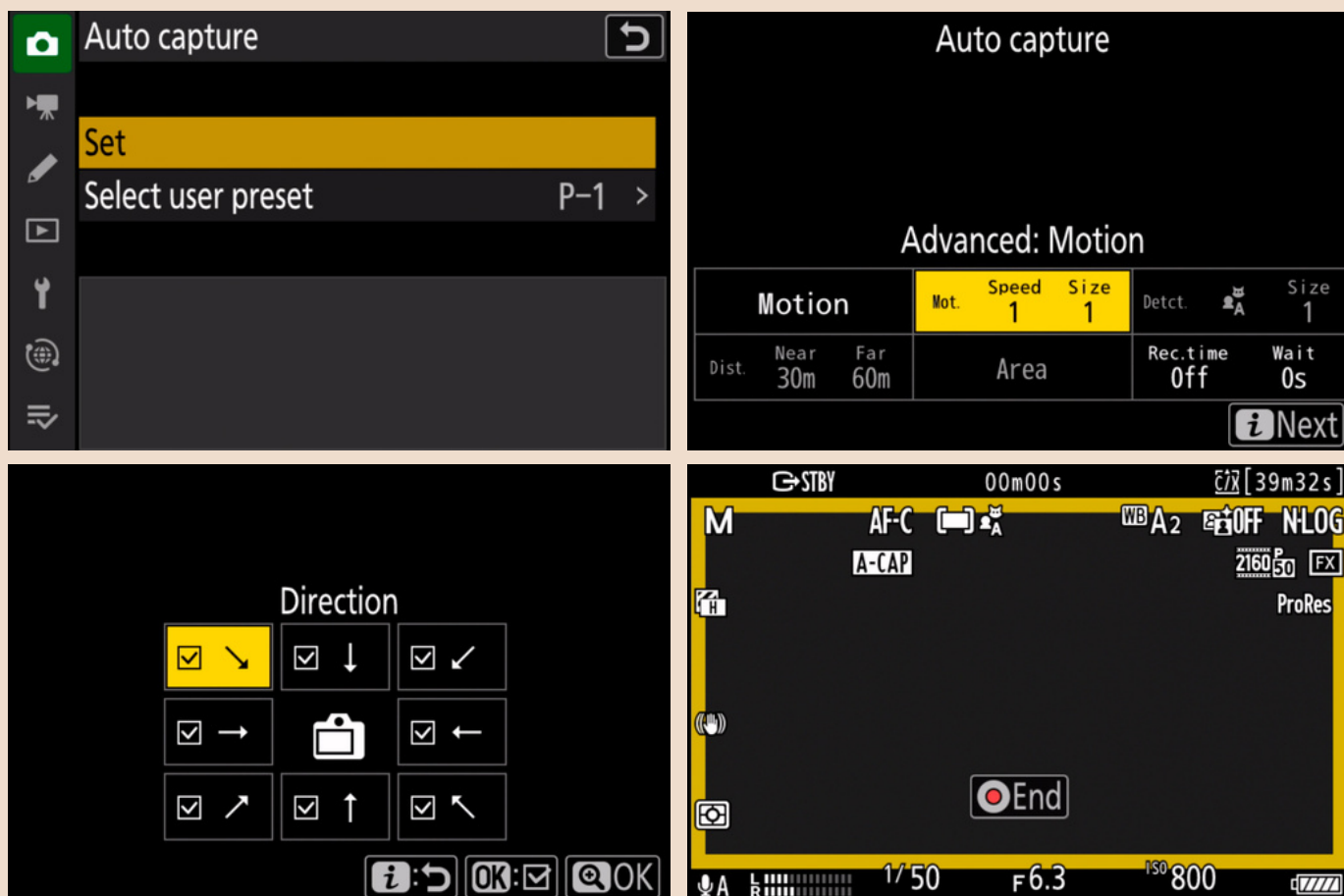
Focus shift shooting – Captures a focus stack for later merging

Pixel shift shooting – Combines multiple shots for ultra-high resolution

Auto capture – Auto capture allows you to shoot remotely. Dial in target criteria and the camera will start taking photos or videos when a subject enters the target areas and meets the target criteria. Great for camera traps or spaces you can only leave your camera for close ups. (next page)

- You can save different preset

submenu - Auto capture



Select Auto capture and the select Set.

The next submenu has 6 tab to outline the detection criteria and response

1st tab: Capture criteria - Motion, Subject, Distance

2nd tab: Select subject size and limit direction detection

- The higher the number, the faster subject has to move before camera is triggered
- Access submenu to limit direction of subject movement that triggers camera

3rd tab: Select subject to detect and size

- Narrowing down targets will avoid misfiring

4th tab: Select distance and range

- Use dials or focus with camera on desired limits

5th tab: If you have Auto-area AF selected you can select the detection area here. If you have other modes like wide-area selected, it will default to that area for detection.

6th tab: Select what camera does when subject is detected

- Set time camera will shoot/record

Once you have all your criteria set, press i for next and then press button to start Auto capture (yellow frame around EVF)

LIGHT GREEN

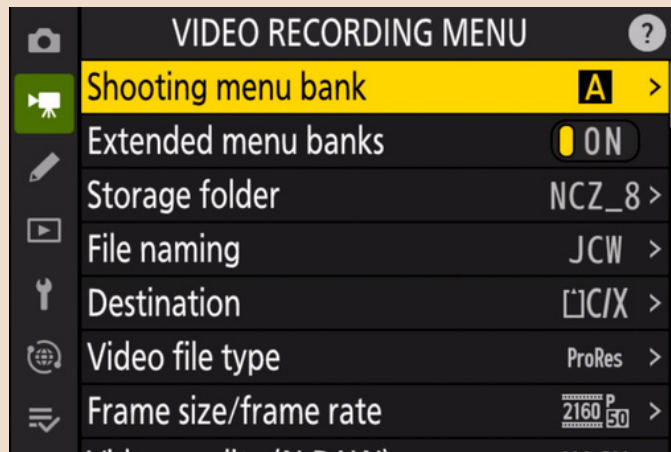
VIDEO RECORDING

MENU

This menu handles everything related to *video*. It's where we set frame rate, codecs & video AF settings.

We will make important changes here.

Video Recording Menu



Shooting menu bank – Save different video setting groups (A–D) to save sets of video settings like frame rate etc.

- Z8 remembers last used settings like ISO, or other changes
- *Assign to custom button for quick switching*

Extended menu banks – Keep ISO, WB, etc. separate for each bank

Storage folder – Choose or create folder for video files

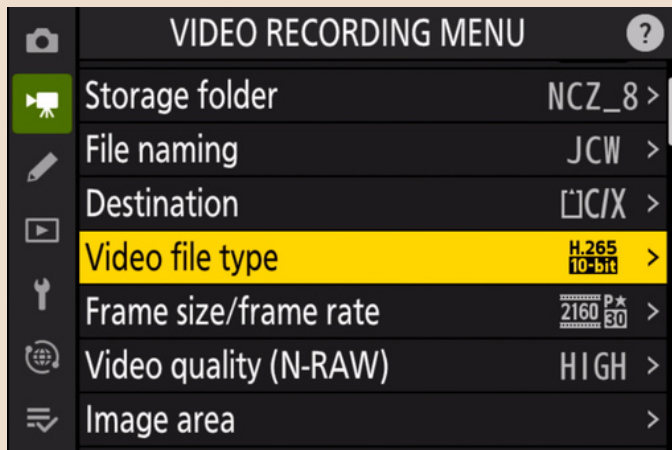
File naming – Set 3-letter prefix for video filenames e.g. JCW

Destination – Select card slot for video recording

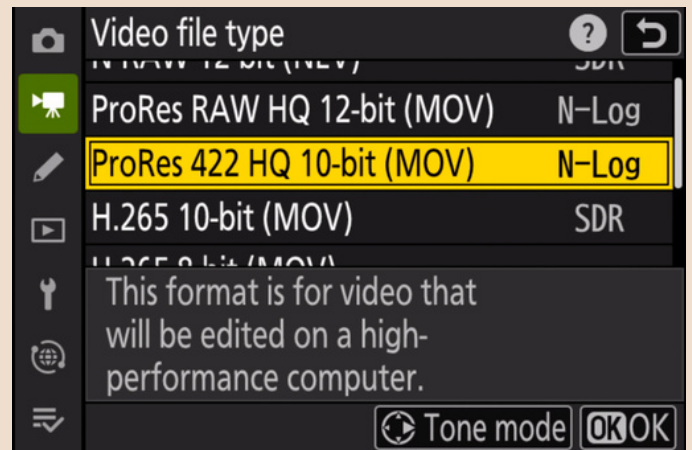


Z8 | N-LOG file | not graded |
*You can see the need for editing with these
files, but it gives max. dynamic range*

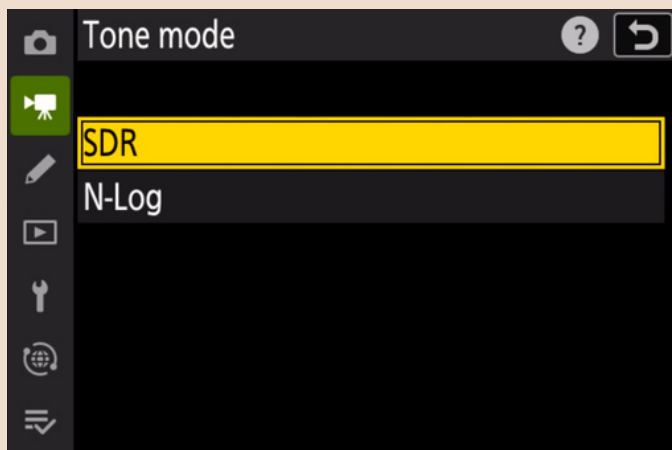
Video Recording Menu Cont'd



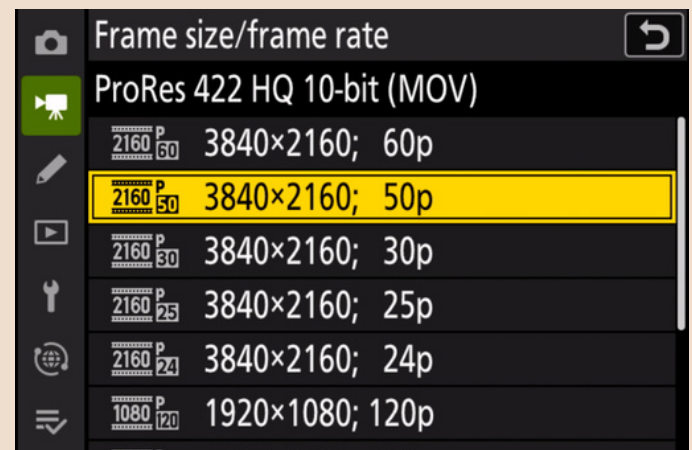
submenu - Video file type



submenu - Tone mode



submenu - Frame size/rate



Video file type – Choose codec (H.265, ProRes, N-RAW) and bit depth

- RAW gives great editing flexibility, but huge files
- *I love internal ProRes recording, but it creates large files*
- Select H.265 10bit or 8 bit for smaller files & 8k recording
- *Slow Motion (100/120fps does not work with ProRes)*

Press **right** to select Tone Mode: **SDR (Standard)** or **Log format**

- *Log format has low contrast and max dynamic range, but requires editing*
 - *Personally I always film in log*

Frame size/frame rate – Set resolution and FPS

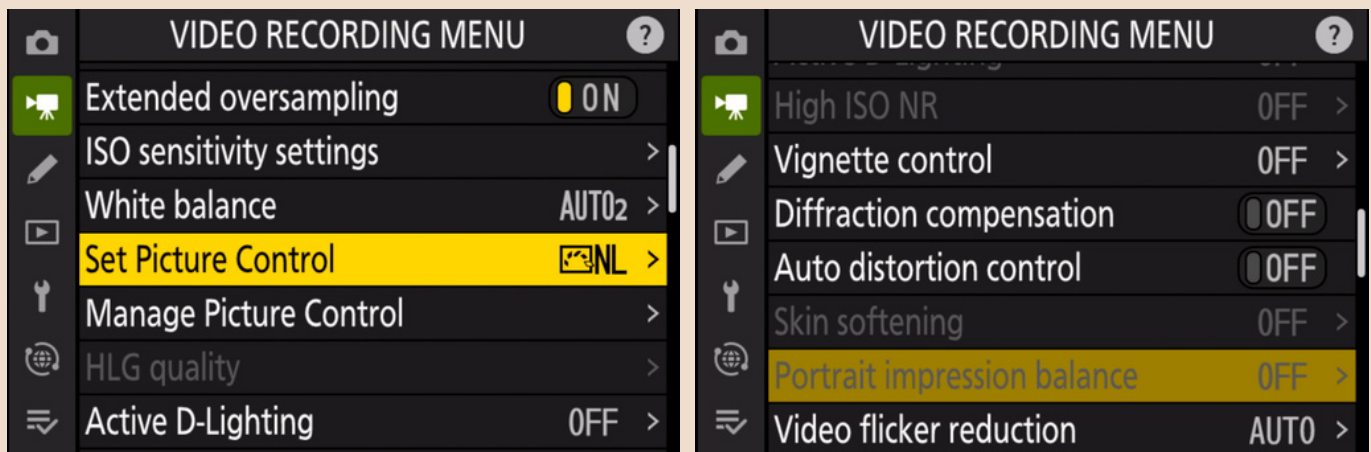
- *For animals I prefer to shoot in 4k 50/60p*
- *When filming myself I prefer 25/30p for more natural movement*

For easy changes, you could assign different frame rates to different shooting banks, rather than always going back to this menu

Video quality (N-RAW) – **HIGH** – Sets quality for N-RAW recording

Image area – **FX** – Choose DX or FX – I always use FX (full frame)

Video Recording Menu Cont'd



Extended oversampling – ON – Improves image quality by oversampling – may reduce rolling shutter

ISO sensitivity settings – Set base ISO, Auto ISO range, and max ISO for video

White balance – AUTO2 – Matches WB to current photo settings

Set Picture Control – NL (Neutral) – Select video profile for non Log recording

Manage Picture Control – Create, load, or delete custom video Picture Controls

HLG quality – Set image quality when recording in HLG mode

Active D-Lighting – OFF – Boosts shadow/highlight balance for non log video

Some of these can be turned on to suits individual video needs

High ISO NR – OFF – Reduces video noise at high ISOs

Vignette control – OFF – Corrects dark corners

Diffraction compensation – OFF – Maintains sharpness at high f-numbers

Auto distortion control – OFF – Corrects lens distortion in-camera

Skin softening – OFF – Smooths skin in video (applies to faces)

Portrait impression balance – OFF – Adjust skin tone/brightness in video

Video flicker reduction – AUTO – Reduces flicker under artificial light

Video Recording Menu Cont'd

VIDEO RECORDING MENU			VIDEO RECORDING MENU		
	Video flicker reduction	AUTO >		Vibration reduction	ON >
	High-frequency flicker reduction	OFF >		Electronic VR	OFF
	Metering	>		Microphone sensitivity	A >
	Focus mode	AF-F >		Attenuator	OFF
	AF-area mode	>		Frequency response	WIDE >
	AF/MF subject detection options	>		Wind noise reduction	ON
	MF subject detection area	OFF >		Mic jack plug-in power	ON

High-frequency flicker reduction – OFF – Reduces flicker from LED/panel lights

Metering – Matrix – Choose exposure metering method (Matrix, Spot, etc.)

Focus mode – AF-F – Full-time AF for continuous video focus

AF-area mode – Auto-area AF – Camera tracks subject all over the viewfinder - works great in video mode!

AF/MF subject detection options – Choose subject: Bird

MF subject detection area – OFF – Subject detection in manual focus

Vibration reduction – ON – Standard – *Sport too shaky in most cases*

Electronic VR – OFF – Adds digital stabilization; crops image slightly

Microphone sensitivity – AUTO – Adjust input level or set manually

Attenuator – OFF – Reduces mic input level for loud environments

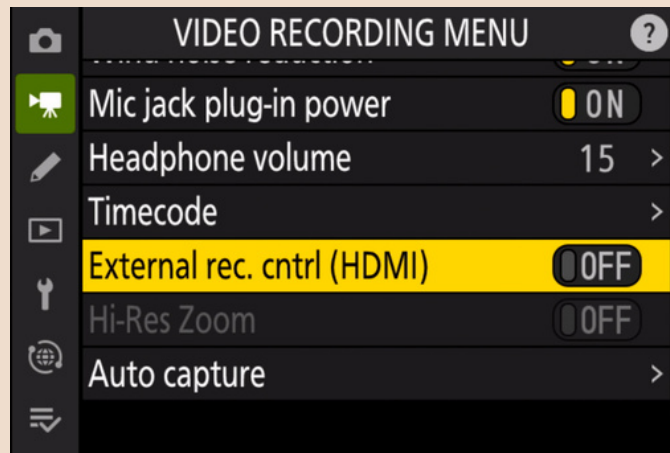
Frequency response – WIDE – Full-range audio capture; VOICE for dialogue

Wind noise reduction – ON – Reduces low-frequency wind rumble

Mic jack plug-in power – ON – Powers external mics that need it



Video Recording Menu Cont'd



Headphone volume – Set headphone output level for monitoring

Timecode – Enable and configure timecode for sync/editing workflows

External rec. control (HDMI) – OFF – Start/stop recording via HDMI (for external recorders)

Hi-Res Zoom – OFF – Allows smooth digital zoom in-camera with no resolution loss

Auto capture – OFF – Automatically records when motion, subject, or distance is detected

- Same set up as shown in photo mode already



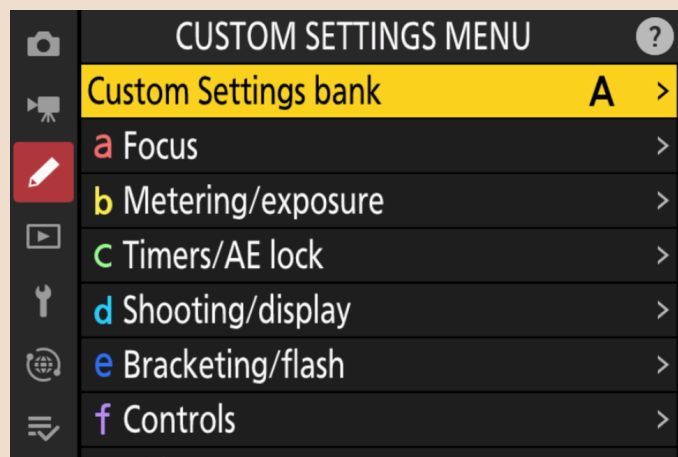
Z8 | 600 TC | F 7.1 | ISO 1600 | 1/6400

RED CUSTOM SETTINGS MENU

This menu controls how the camera behaves — from autofocus and custom buttons to critical settings and video tweaks, it's all done here.

We will make many changes here. Including our back and front button AF setup.

Custom Settings bank



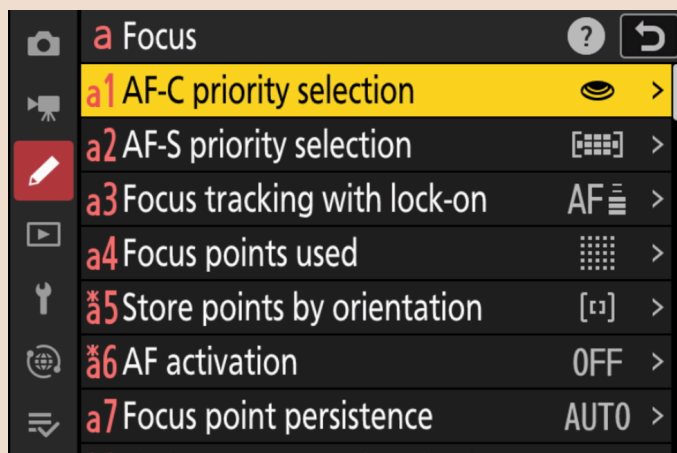
Custom settings bank – Save different sets of custom settings (A–D) for quick switching

- Z8 remembers last used settings like ISO, or other changes for each bank
- Assign to custom button for quick switching - i.e. video record button in photo mode - change by pressing and selecting with dial

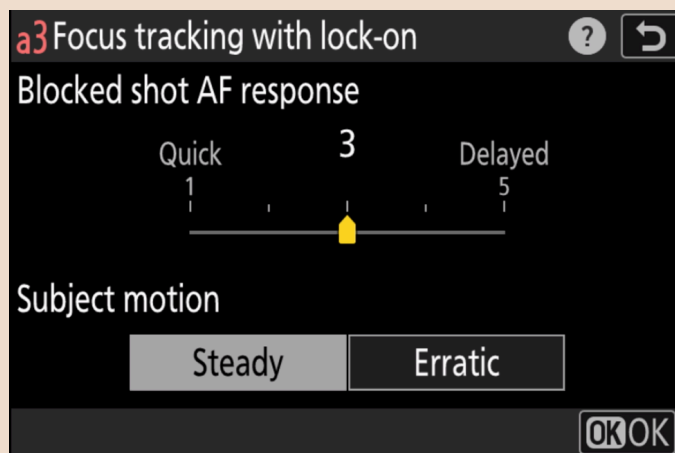


Z8 | 180-600 | F8 | ISO 1600 | 1/1600

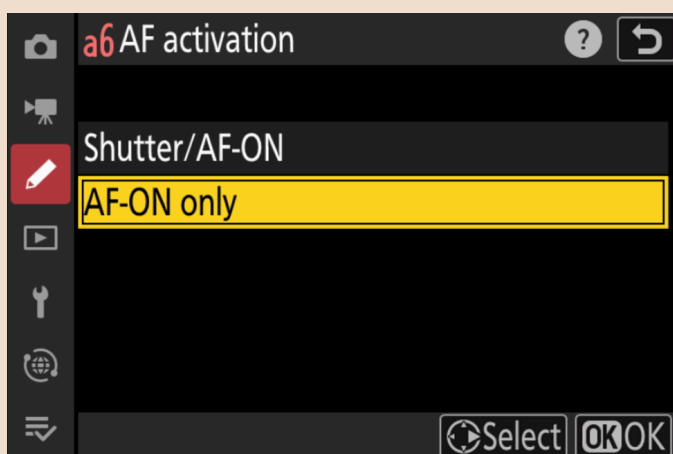
Focus Menu



submenu: Focus tracking w/ lock-on



submenu: AF activation



AF-C priority selection – *Release* – Prioritizes shutter over focus in continuous AF

- *Easier when shooting burst, otherwise camera may not fire, which can make you miss shots when tracking*

AF-S priority selection – *Focus* – Shutter only fires when subject is in focus

Focus tracking with lock-on – *3* – Controls how quickly AF shifts to new subjects

- Subject motion - *Steady*

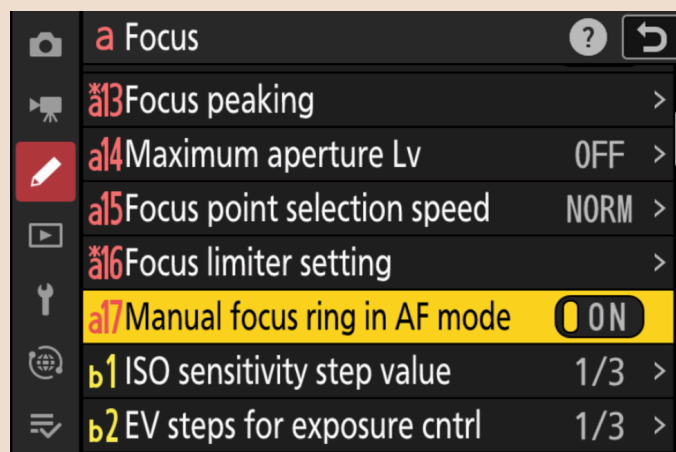
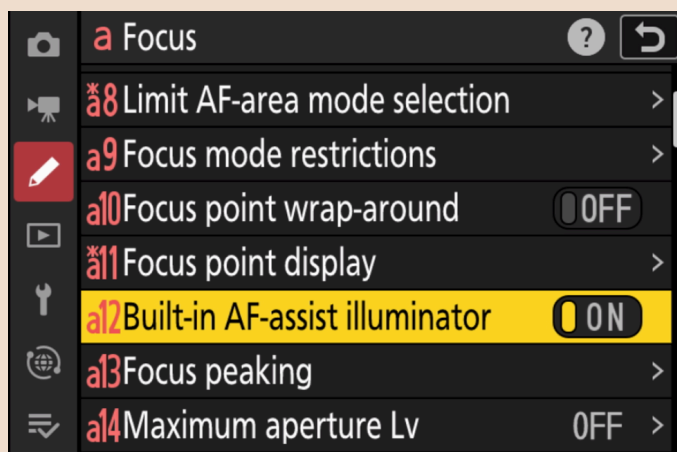
Focus points used – *All* – Enables full range of selectable AF points

Store points by orientation – *Point only* – Saves AF point separately for horizontal/vertical

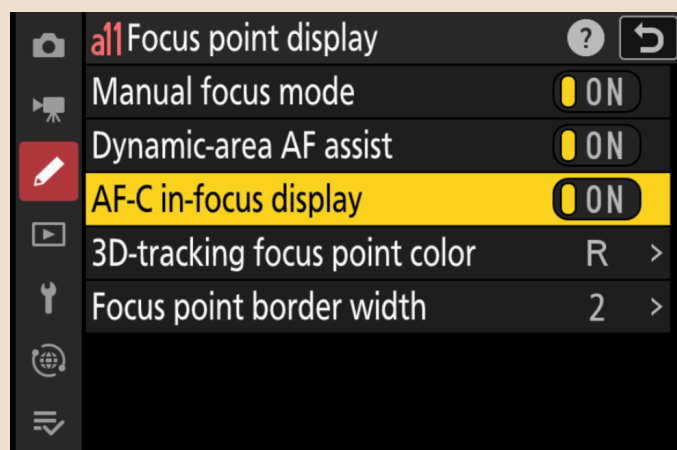
AF activation – *AF-On only* – **Important** – To set up back button AF, we are deactivating shutter button AF here

Focus point persistence – *AUTO* – Controls how long AF points stay visible/tracked

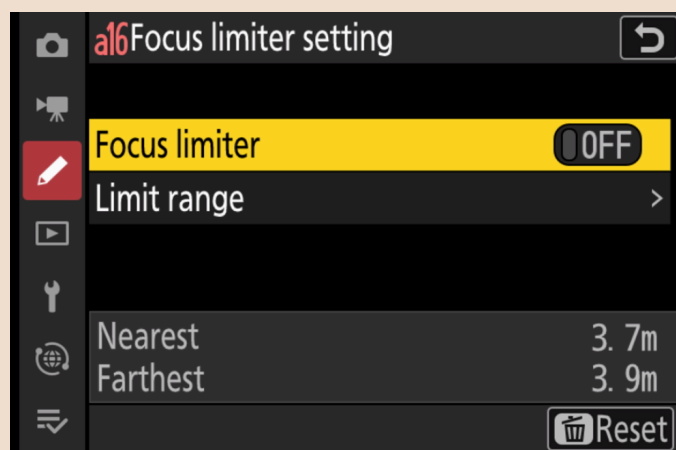
Focus Menu Cont'd



submenu: Focus point display



submenu: Focus point display



Limit AF-area mode selection – Choose which AF-area modes are available to cycle through - *limit for quicker selection*

Focus mode restrictions – Limit which focus modes (AF-S, AF-C, MF)

Focus point wrap-around – OFF – AF point does not loop around edges

Focus point display – Customize focus points display

- *I like to set it to red and border width 2*

Built-in AF-assist illuminator – ON – Built-in light to help focus in low light

Focus peaking – Highlights edges in focus during MF - If ON I select blue

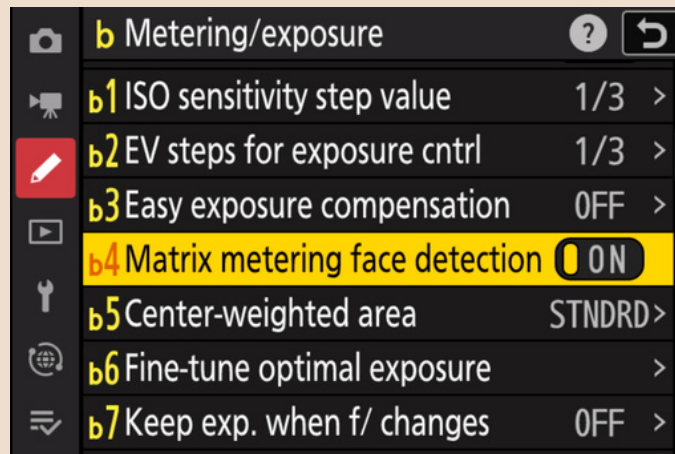
Maximum aperture (Lv) – OFF – Controls if lens opens fully during Live View/manual focus

Focus point selection speed – NORM – Adjust how fast AF point moves

Focus limiter setting – Set custom focus distance for compatible lenses

- *To use: turn it ON, then set the Limit range by either focusing on the near/far points or using the dials to define them manually.*
- *Once active, the Z8 will only autofocus within the set distance range.*
- *For quick access, assign this setting to a custom button to toggle it on/off as needed. Giving you the ability to quickly focus elsewhere*

Manual focus ring in AF mode – ON – Allows manual override while in AF



ISO sensitivity step value – 1/3 – Sets ISO adjustment increments

EV steps for exposure control – 1/3 – Sets exposure compensation increments

Easy exposure compensation – OFF – Enables exposure comp. via dials without holding a button - *can be a good option in more automatic modes*

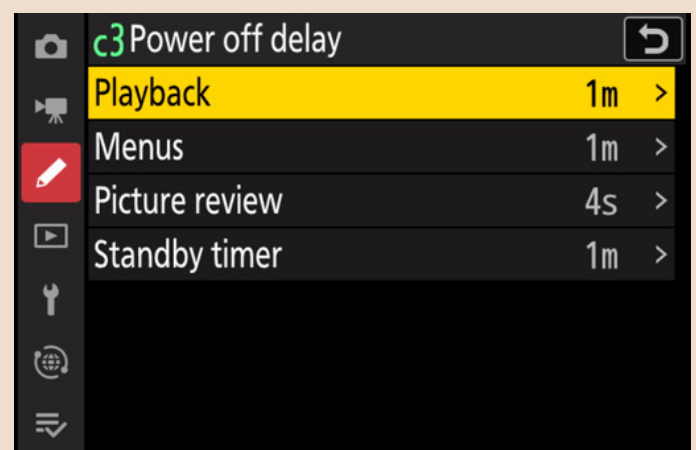
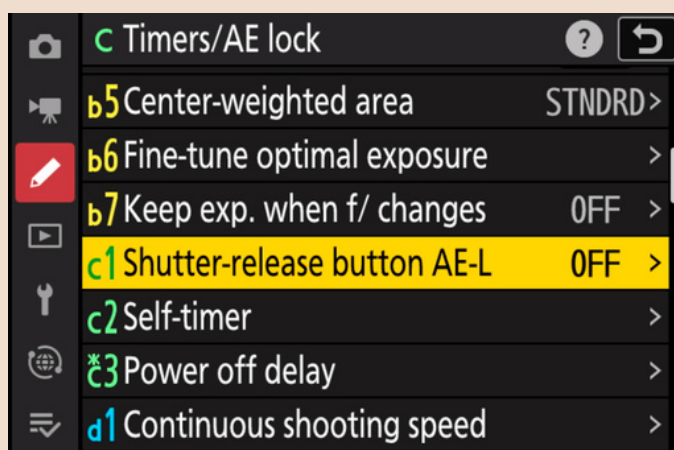
Center-weighted area – STNDRD – Sets size of metered area in center-weighted mode

Fine-tune optimal exposure – Adjust metering bias if your images are consistently over/underexposed

Keep exp. when f/ changes – OFF – Maintains exposure when changing aperture on lenses without electronic aperture

Timers/AE Lock Menu

submenu: Power off delay

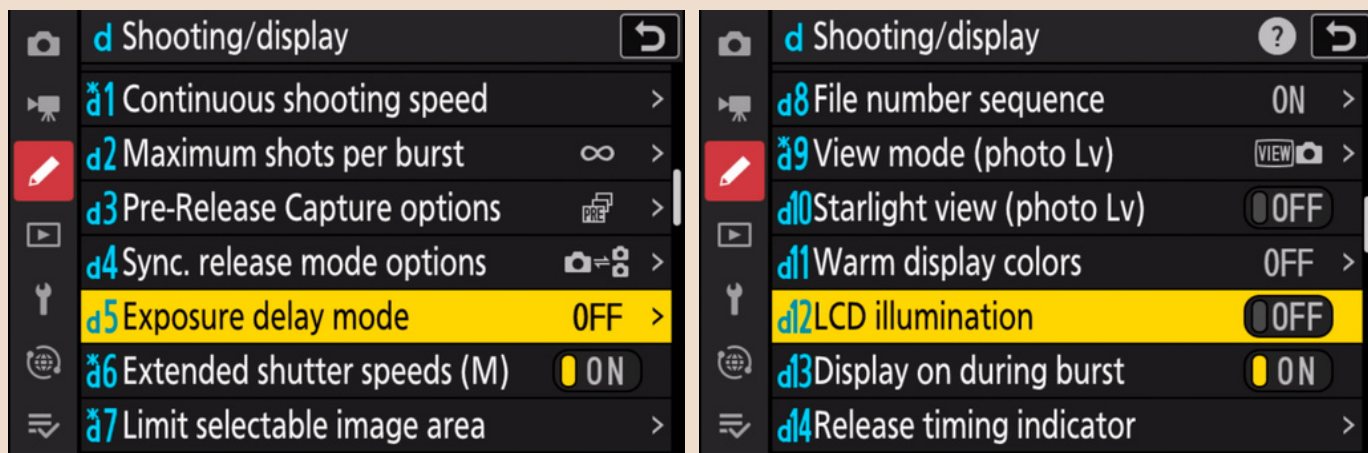


Shutter-release button AE-L – OFF – Locks exposure when shutter is half-pressed

Self-timer – Set delay, number of shots, and interval between them

Power off delay – Choose how long camera stays active before sleeping

Shooting/display Menu



Continuous shooting speed – Set FPS for continuous low and high modes - *I set high to the max 20 fps - I don't use low*

Maximum shots per burst – Limit how many frames are taken per burst

Pre-Release Capture options – Enables capture before the shutter is fully pressed - JPEG only - *OFF*

Sync. release mode options – Set how multiple cameras sync when using remote release

Exposure delay mode – *OFF* – Adds delay after mirror-up to reduce vibration

Extended shutter speeds (M) – *ON* – Allows longer exposures (beyond 30s) in Manual mode

Limit selectable image area – Restrict which crop modes can be chosen

File number sequence – *ON* – Keeps file numbering continuous across cards and sessions

View mode (photo Lv) – Choose how photos display during Live View

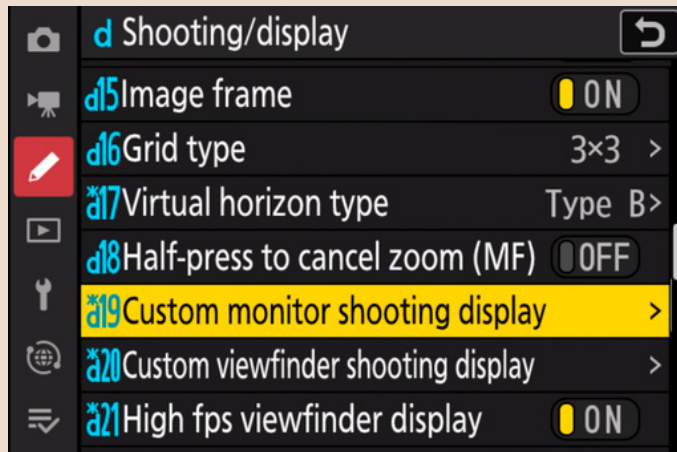
Starlight view (photo Lv) – *OFF* – Brightens display in very dark conditions

Warm display colours – *OFF* – Adds warmth to screen colours for low-light use

LCD illumination – *OFF* – Controls top LCD backlight behaviour

Display on during burst – *ON* – Keeps rear screen/viewfinder active during burst shooting

Release timing indicator – Shows visual cue when shutter is released



→ submenu: Display 1

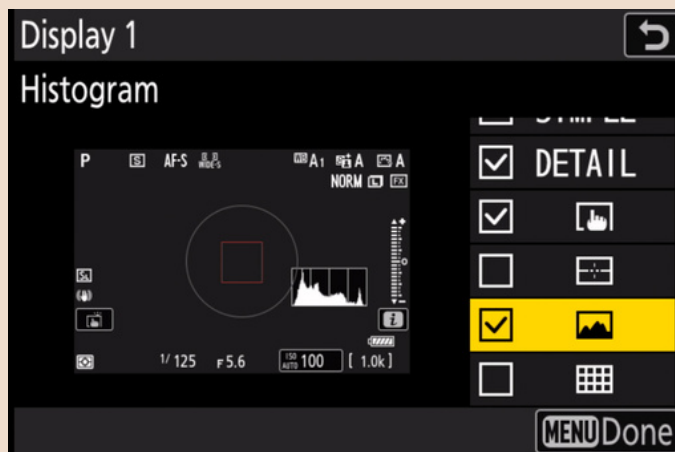


Image frame – ON – Adds a thin border around the live image for framing

Grid type – 3x3 – Choose grid overlay to assist with composition

- *I don't usually use a grid*

Virtual horizon type – Type B – Selects visual style of electronic level

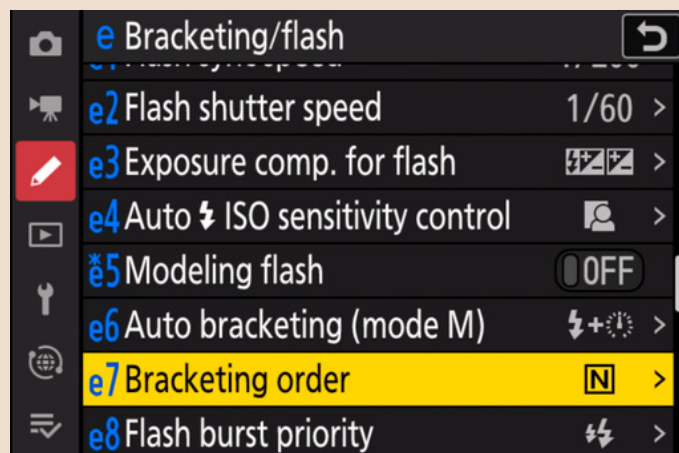
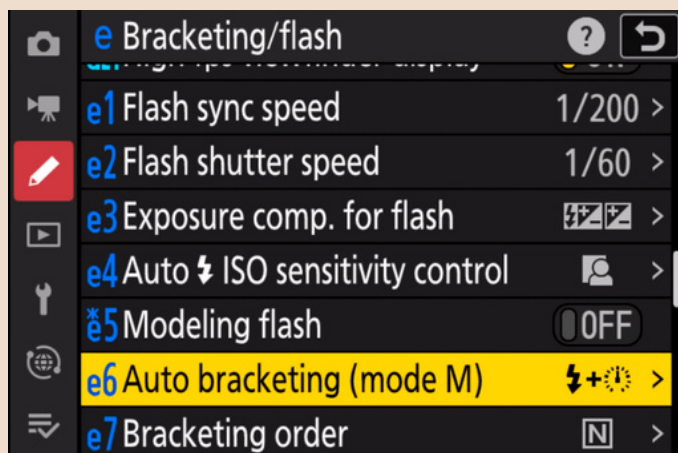
Half-press to cancel zoom (MF) – OFF – Quickly exit zoom mode when in manual focus (MF) by simply pressing the shutter-release button halfway

Custom monitor shooting display – **Customize** info and overlays shown on the rear screen

- Enter submenu to adjust which items are displayed in each option
- press right on D-pad to further fine tune options
- To keep it simple, you could untick most options and just add whatever you want to just one or two options

Custom viewfinder shooting display – **Customize** info and overlays shown in the EVF - I create just a few options I like, like for the LCD

High fps viewfinder display – ON – Enables smoother EVF refresh rate for fast action



Flash sync speed – 1/200 – Sets max shutter speed for flash sync (can allow slower or Auto FP)

Flash shutter speed – 1/60 – Minimum shutter speed when using flash in Auto modes

Exposure comp. for flash – Choose whether flash is affected by exposure compensation

Auto ISO sensitivity control – Enable/disable Auto ISO when using flash

Modeling flash – OFF – Brief flash burst to preview lighting

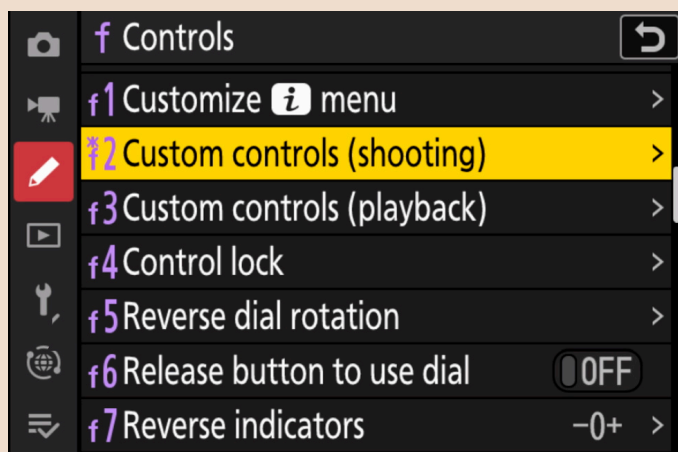
Auto bracketing (mode M) – Choose what bracketing affects in Manual mode (e.g., flash only, exposure)

Bracketing order – N – Sets order shots are taken in bracketing

Flash burst priority – ON/OFF – Prioritizes flash recycling speed during rapid firing to maintain consistent flash output



Controls Menu



submenu: Custom controls



Customize i menu – Personalise shortcuts in the quick menu

Custom controls (shooting) – Here we will assign our buttons for back button focus and assign specific settings to certain buttons. Some of these settings are 2-3 submenus deep (next pages)

Custom controls (playback) – Assign functions to buttons/dials for playback

Control lock – *not used* – Lock controls to prevent accidental changes

Reverse dial rotation – Flip direction of main command dial

Release button to use dial – OFF

- Option 1 – Hold down button while making changes (default)
- Option 2 – If enabled, press button, make changes and press again

Reverse indicators – Invert exposure and focus indicators if desired

On the Z8, different AF modes behave differently depending on the shooting situation. This can make setup a bit tricky, which is why **it's helpful to assign various AF modes to custom buttons.**

Sometimes it helps to start focusing with a mode like Wide-area or Auto-area AF, then switch to 3D tracking for more precise subject following, especially for perched birds. I often find using 3D tracking right away makes it much harder to lock onto a subject quickly.

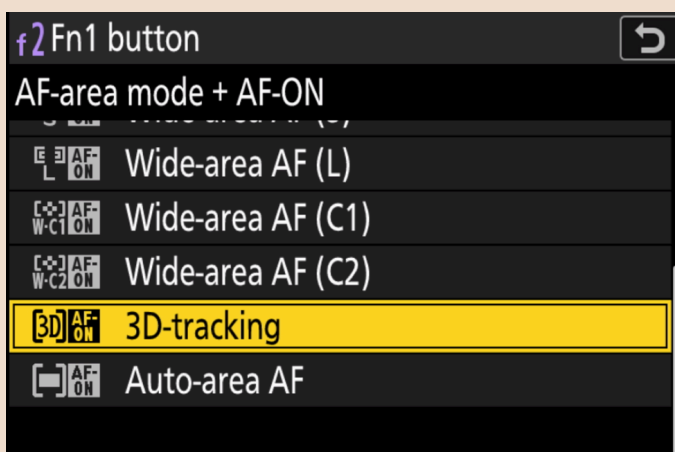
We have already set Single-point AF as our base mode. It lets us easily move the focus point around and is great for pre-focusing.

In addition, **I like to assign Auto-area AF to the AF-ON button.** It's a reliable, all-around option. Then I use two more buttons: **one for 3D tracking**, which works well for perched birds, and another for **Wide-area AF**, which is ideal for birds in flight. So we end up with **double back and double front button AF.**

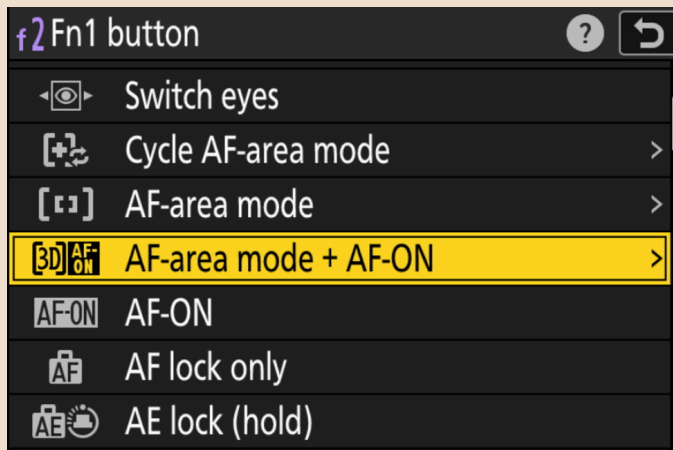
submenu: Custom controls Cont'd



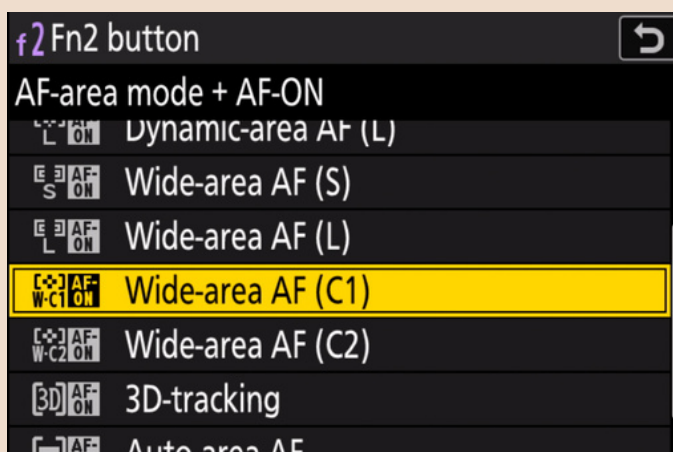
→ submenu: Fn1 - AF-area mode + AF-ON



→ submenu: Fn1 button (Identical to Fn2)



→ submenu: Fn2 - AF-area mode + AF-ON



Let's set up our custom buttons for stills 1 by 1.

To assign different AF modes to the buttons we have to select them, then go into the sub menu and navigate to the AF options and then select **AF-area mode + AF-ON**.

- Click right on the D-pad, to access the next submenu to select the desired AF mode.

Fn1 – AF-area mode + AF-ON + 3D-tracking

- So whenever we press the top and hold the top front button, the Z8 will perform precise 3D-tracking

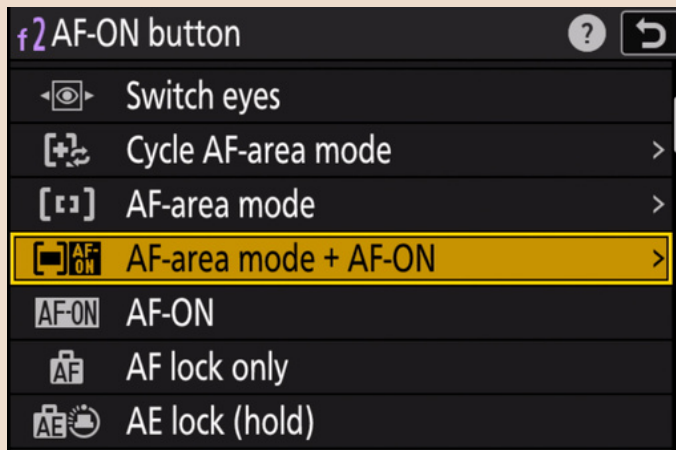
Fn2 – AF-area mode + AF-ON + Wide-area AF (C1)

- Perform same procedure as above and select wide-area AF
- When we press and hold down the second front button, camera will perform AF with our custom Wide-area (small and narrow)
- You can set the Wide-area size in the dark green Photo Shooting Menu (AF area mode)

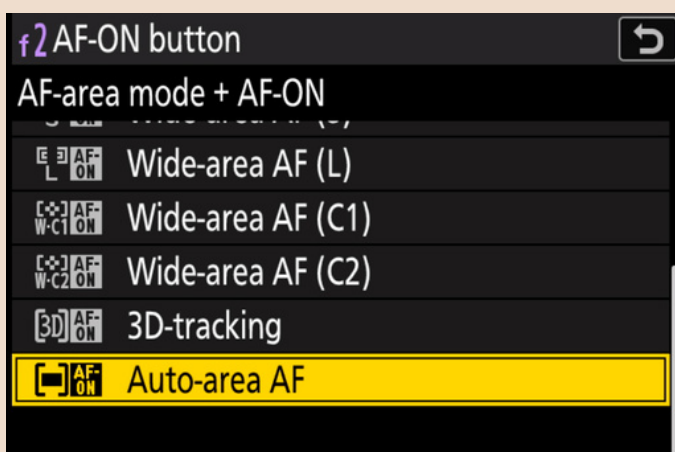
submenu: Custom controls Cont'd



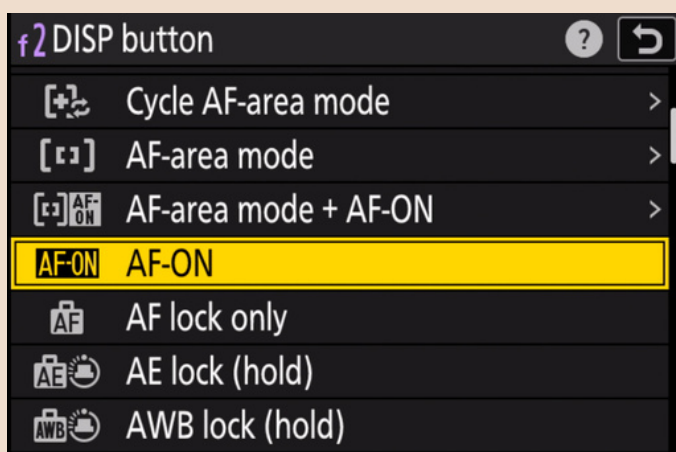
→ submenu: AF-ON button



→ submenu: AF-ON - AF-area mode + AF-ON



→ submenu: DISP button



Fn button for vertical shooting (battery grip only) – default

Focus mode button – default

Protect/Fn3 button – default

AF-ON - AF-area mode + AF-ON + Auto-area AF

- Enables subject/eye tracking all over the EVF
- Subject to detect etc. is set in the dark green Photo shooting Menu

Multicontroller/joystick – RESET – Re-centers AF point when pressing

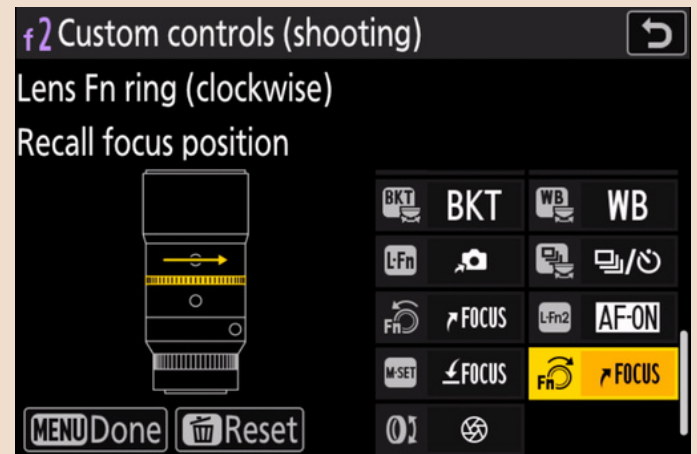
DISP – AF-ON

- The display button will now perform focusing in our base Single-point AF mode we set up in the first dark green Photo Shooting Menu
- If you assign something to the display button, you cannot cycle through the display options anymore, this needs to be assigned to a new button or you can select your favourite EVF/LCD layout before assigning this button and then that will stay.

OK – RESET (default) – Re-centers AF point when pressing – I prefer to have this on joystick

Playback – Display photos/videos captured

submenu: Custom controls Cont'd



Fn button for vertical shooting (grip only) – default

AF-ON button for vertical shooting (grip only) – default

Video record button – *Focus limiter* - You could also assign *SHOOT* to cycle quickly through Shooting Banks

Exposure Compensation button – *Exp comp.* (default)

ISO – ISO

Command Dials – default

BKT – *Bracketing* (default)

WB – *WB* (default)

L-Fn – *Recall shooting functions* (next page)

Release mode button – *Change fps* (default)

Lens Fn ring (counterclockwise) – *Recall focus position* (default)

L-Fn2 – *AF-ON* (default)

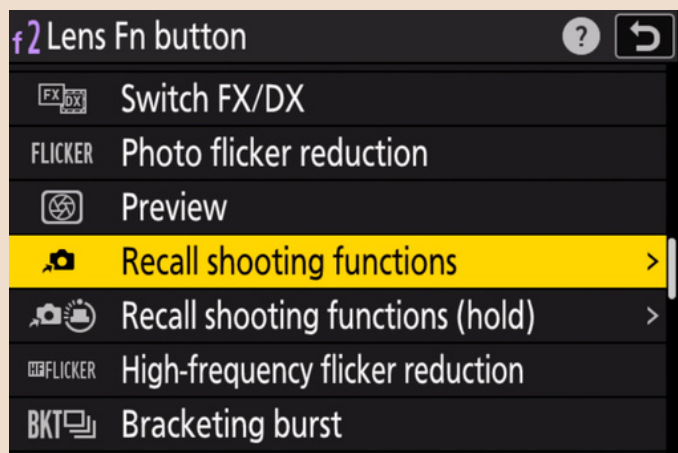
Lens memory set button (M-SET) – *Save focus position* (default)

Lens Fn ring (clockwise) – *Recall focus position* (default)

Lens control ring – *Aperture* (default)

As you can see, I have not assigned all of these buttons, so with daily use you may come across some other functions you would like to assign to some of these buttons. I think we have assigned the most important ones





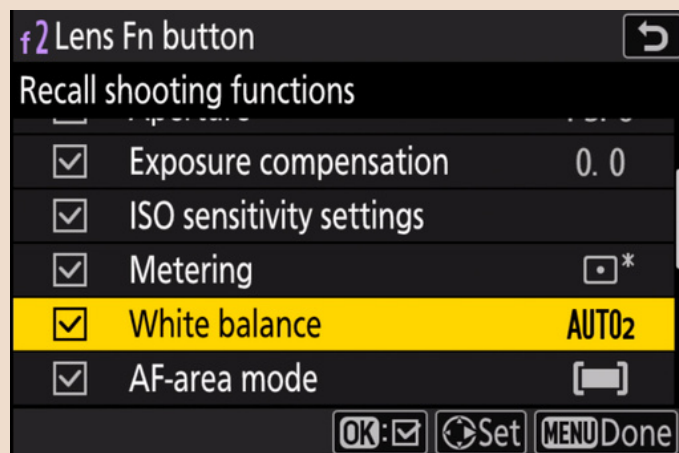
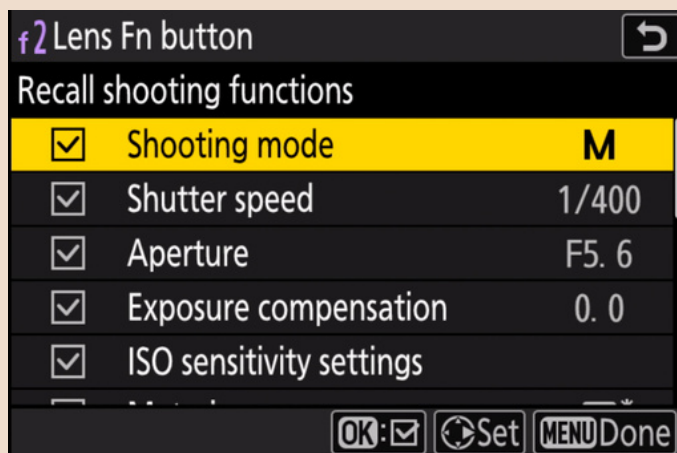
Next, I like to set up another button, which I call either **action or high image quality button**, depending on which settings you choose.

- The idea is that we can press this button to quickly either get a **high shutter speed with high ISO for action** or a **slow shutter speed with low ISO for maximum image quality**
- On the Z8, I often dial in settings for fast action. This means: When I want to take a portrait, I get noisy files, because I have a high shutter speed and high ISO dialled in.
 - *That's why I assign the L-Fn or L-Fn2 button depending on your lens to be my high image quality button*
 - *Most bigger lenses have that button and it's easy to reach and press*
 - *We could also assign this to one of the Fn buttons in the front, but then have to give up on one AF mode*
- **Whenever I press that button, the camera will jump to a slow shutter speed and auto iso**, allowing me to take nice portraits at lower ISOs. When I let go, it reverts back to the main settings.

Let's set it up!

L-Fn – Recall shooting functions

- *Press right on the D-pad to access the sub settings menu*



All adjustments you make in this menu and activate (✓) will overwrite your current camera settings while the button is pressed. Unticked settings will default to the ones in the main menu.

✓ **Shooting mode – Manual**

- This lets us lock in shutter speed and aperture

✓ **Shutter speed**

- 1/320 - 1/500 for high image quality mode
- 1/2000 to 1/4000 for action mode

✓ **Aperture – Adjust depending on the lens**

- I like to set it to around f/5.6
- If the aperture set here is larger than your lens can do, it will default to the max aperture on your lens, 6.3 for instance

✓ **Exposure compensation – Depends on the shooting situation**

- I leave it at 0 or set it to $-\frac{1}{3}$ for generally decent exposure

✓ **ISO sensitivity settings – Auto ISO**

- This will guarantee us good exposure without having to make any changes

✓ **Metering**

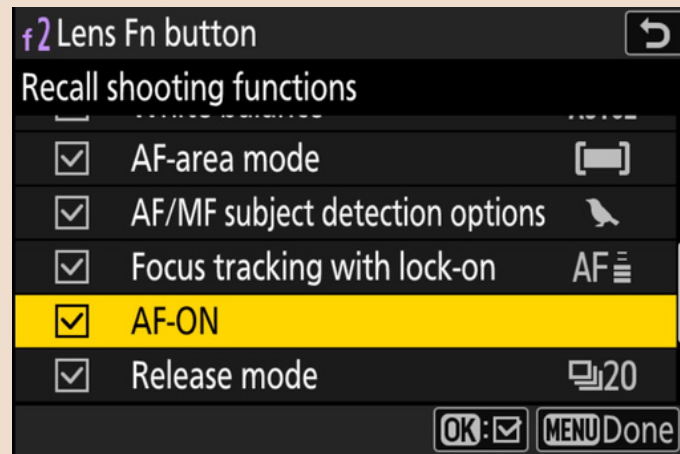
- Matrix – For balanced result

✓ **White balance – Auto2**

✓ **AF area mode – Auto-area AF**

- Let's camera find and track subject all over the EVF

Rest on next page



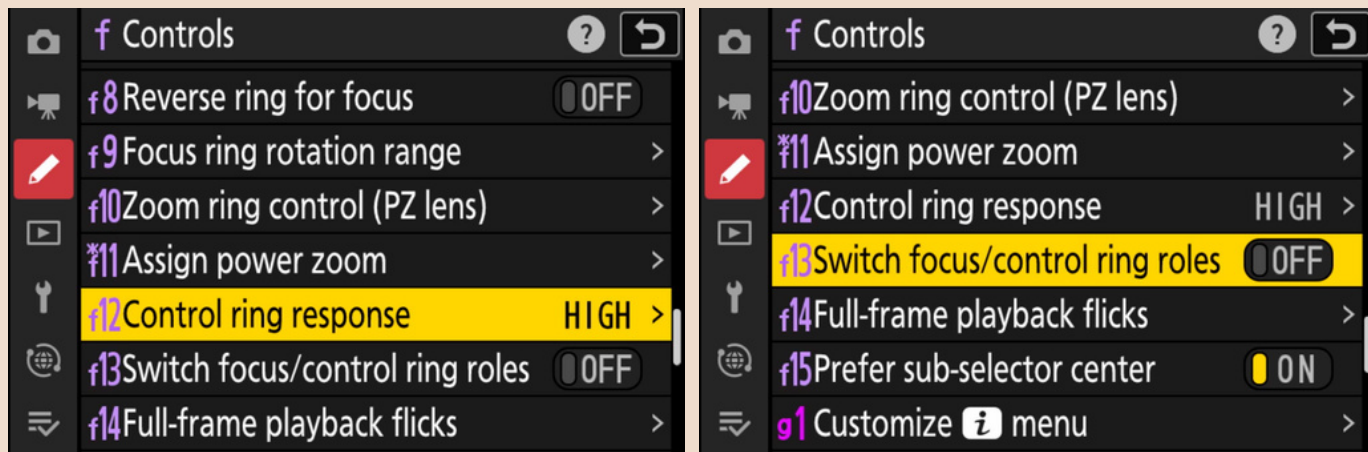
- ✓ **AF/MF subject detection options** – *Birds*
- ✓ **Focus tracking with lock-on** – *3*
- ✓ **AF-ON** – *Starts AF*
 - Let's camera find and track subject all over the EVF
- ✓ **Release mode** -- *High speed (20fps)*

DONE!

Press MENU to confirm and return to main custom controls menu.

Now we have all our buttons for the AF set up. DISP for our base single-point AF mode, AF-ON to do Auto-area AF tracking all over the EVF, Fn1 for 3D-tracking, Fn2 for Wide-area (C1) & L-Fn, L-Fn2 or one of the Fn buttons as our emergency/high IQ button.





Reverse ring for focus – Reverses the direction of manual focus ring rotation

Focus ring rotation range – Choose how far the ring turns to shift focus

Zoom ring control (PZ lens) – Set how the zoom ring functions on Power Zoom lenses

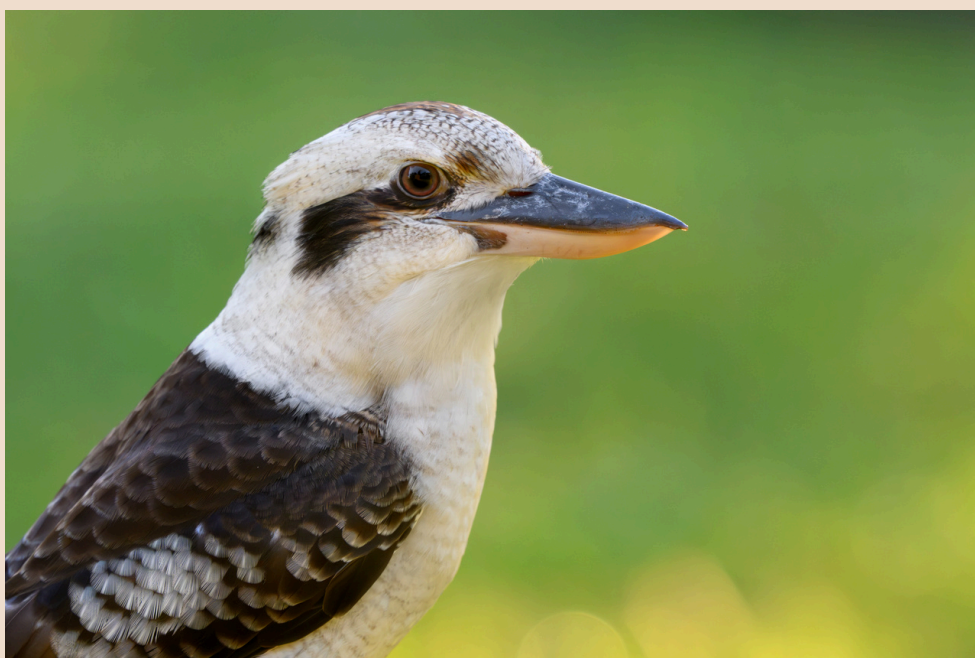
Assign power zoom – Assign power zoom controls to specific buttons or rings

Control ring response – Choose how fast the control ring responds (HIGH is more responsive)

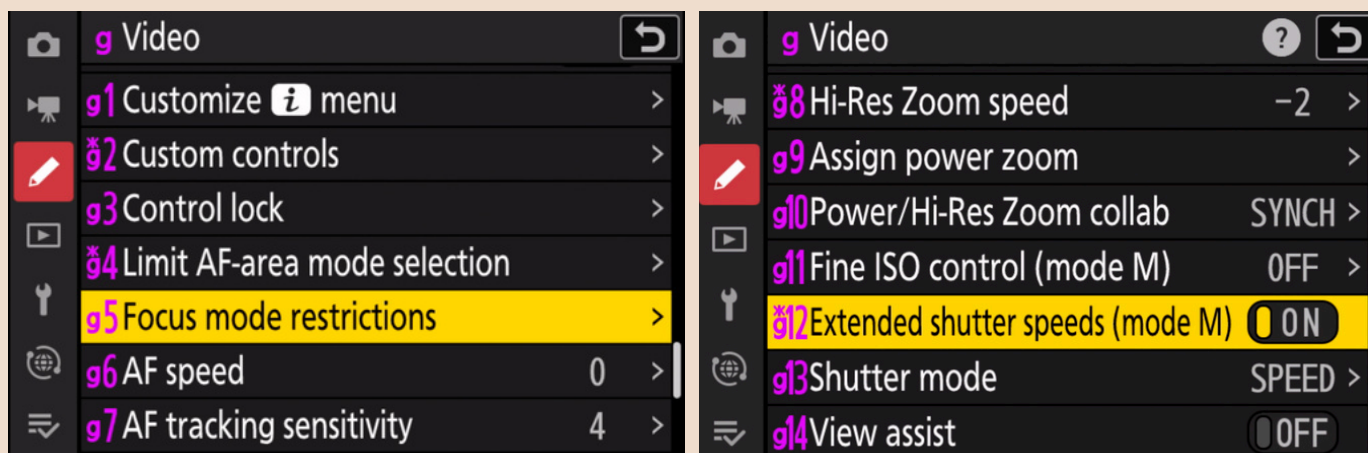
Switch focus/control ring roles – Swap function of focus and control rings (on lenses with both)

Full-frame playback flicks – Enable flick gestures to scroll through full-frame images during playback

Prefer sub-selector center – Prioritizes pressing the center of the sub-selector (joystick) over directional input when both are used at once.



Video Menu



Customize i menu – Set up the video quick menu

Custom controls – Assign custom button for video

- I leave most buttons as default for video, because we set up fully automatic tracking AF
- I assign the shutter & DISP button to start/stop recording
- You could also assign a button to bring up the custom shooting banks

Control lock – Lock certain buttons or dials to avoid accidental changes

Limit AF-area mode selection – Hide AF-area modes you don't need

Focus mode restrictions – Restrict focus modes (AF-F, MF, etc.)

AF speed – 0 – Set how fast the autofocus shifts during video (lower values = smoother transitions) – Adjust to taste

AF tracking sensitivity – 4 – Adjust how quickly the focus re-acquires a new subject if the original moves (lower = more stable tracking)

- Depending on your shooting scene, this may need adjusting

Hi-Res Zoom speed – Set zoom speed when using Hi-Res Zoom (lower = slower and smoother) – Allows digital zoom without loss of resolution

Assign power zoom – Assign a button or control to activate power zoom

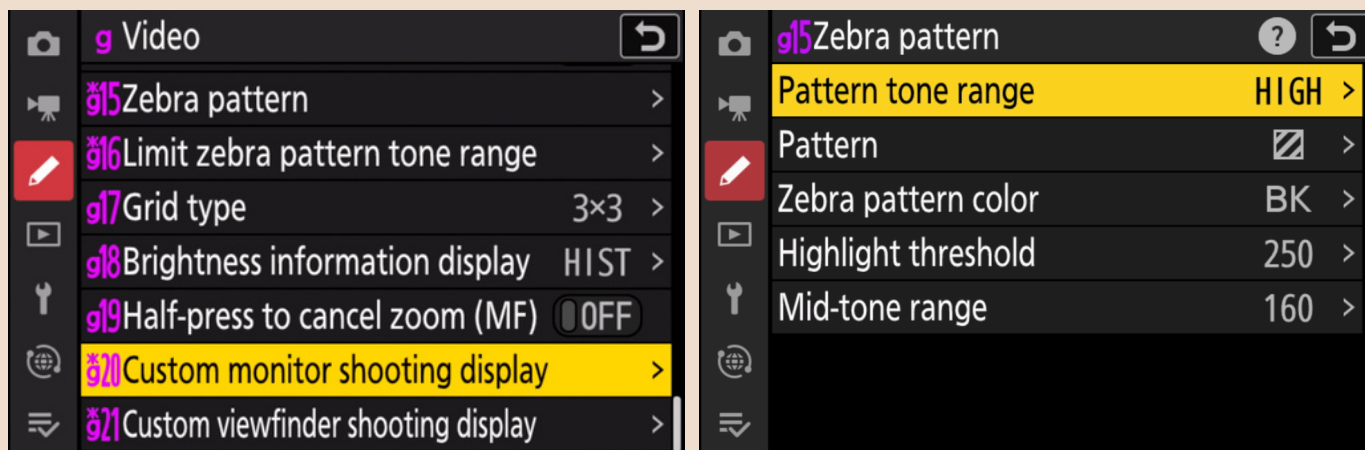
Power/Hi-Res Zoom collab – Link power zoom controls with Hi-Res Zoom when both are available

Fine ISO control (mode M) – Allows for finer manual ISO adjustments

Extended shutter speeds (mode M) – Enables slower-than-standard shutter speeds in manual video mode.

Shutter mode – Speed (default) or Shutter Angle (shutter speed = 2x frame rate) – 180 degree rule

View assist – Simulates standard contrast and brightness when shooting in Log or HLG profiles.



Zebra pattern – Visually shows over- and/or underexposed areas

- *Set to taste - helps to avoid blown out areas, which cannot be recovered*

Limit zebra pattern tone range – Restrict zebra display to a specific brightness range

Grid type – Choose on-screen grid overlay i.e. 3x3 grid

Brightness information display – Set display style (e.g., histogram) to monitor exposure while recording - *I like to use the Histogram*

Half-press to cancel zoom (MF) – OFF – Quickly exit zoom mode when in manual focus (MF) by simply pressing the shutter button halfway

Custom monitor shooting display – **Customize** what's shown on the rear LCD during video shooting - *similar to photo setup we did at the start*

Custom viewfinder shooting display – **Customize** what's shown in the EVF during video shooting - *similar to photo setup we did at the start*

Red REC frame indicator – ON – Adds a red border around the screen during video recording to confirm that recording is active. (not on slide)

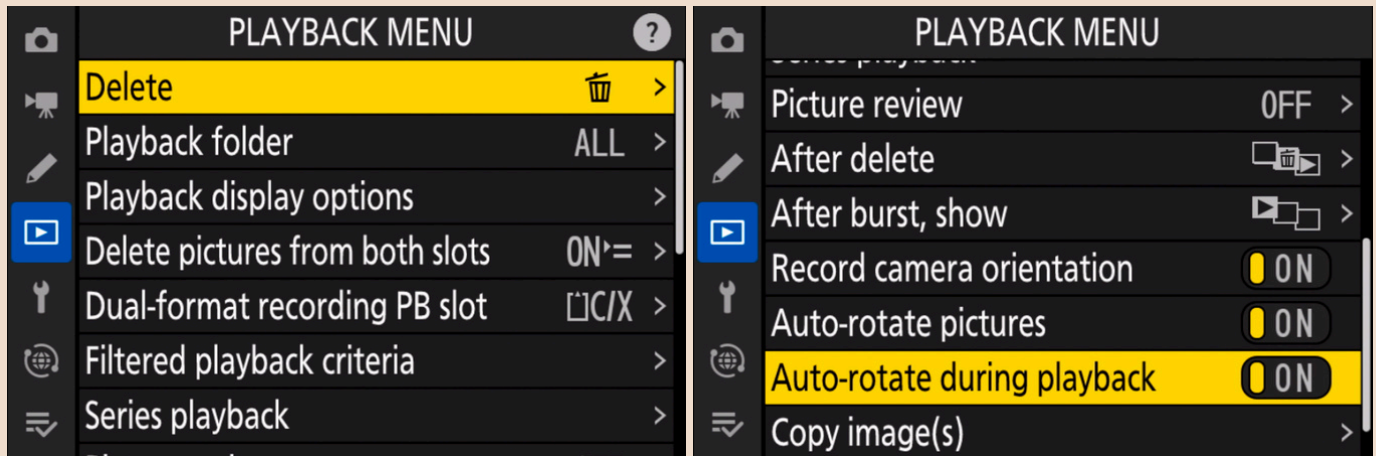


Zebra pattern

BLUE PLAYBACK MENU

This menu manages *playback settings* like image review time, playback options, and how photos or videos are shown on the screen. It's all about how you view and manage your captured content.

We don't make many changes here.



Delete – Remove images from memory card

Playback folder – Select which folders are shown in playback

Playback display options – Choose what info is displayed during playback – AF point etc. – Set Highlights to be alerted of blown highlights

Delete pictures from both slots – Deletes duplicates from both cards when using dual slots

Dual-format recording PB slot – Select which slot to view when recording RAW+JPEG

Filtered playback criteria – Filter playback by rating, file type, etc.

Series playback – View images from bursts or brackets as a group

Picture review – OFF – Automatically display image after shooting

- *Highly distracting and not needed*

After delete – Choose which image is shown after deleting one

After burst, show – Set what's displayed after a burst (first image, last, etc.)

Record camera orientation – ON – Save orientation info in image metadata

Auto-rotate pictures – ON – Rotate images automatically for correct orientation

Auto-rotate during playback – ON – Rotate displayed images to match orientation

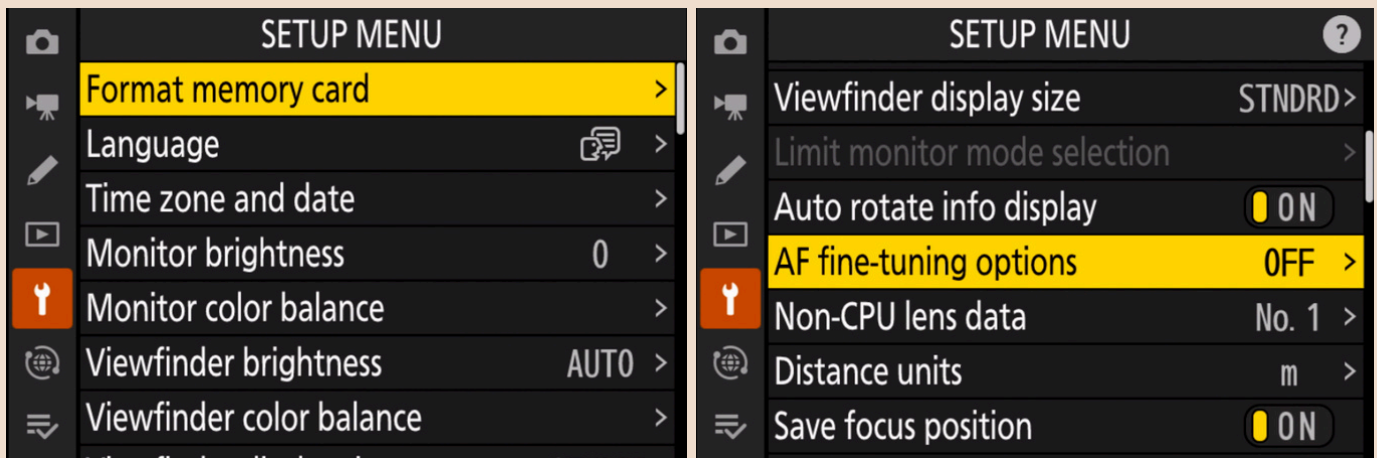
Copy image(s) – Copy photos between memory cards

ORANGE SETUP MENU

In this menu we customize camera behaviour and basic functions. Includes settings for time/date, monitor brightness, card formatting, camera sounds, save/load camera settings and more.

We will make some important adjustments here.

Setup Menu



Format memory card – Erase and reformat memory card

Language – Choose display language

Time zone and date – Set time zone, date, and time

Monitor brightness – 0 – Adjust LCD brightness

- I usually go as bright as possible to be able to see well in bright sun

Monitor colour balance – Adjust LCD colour tint

Viewfinder brightness – Auto – Adjust EVF brightness (Auto or Manual)

Viewfinder colour balance – Adjust EVF colour tint

Viewfinder display size – STNDRD – Choose standard or small EVF display

Limit monitor mode selection – Limit which monitor/viewfinder modes can be cycled

Auto rotate info display – ON – Auto-rotate screen info based on camera orientation

AF fine-tuning options – OFF – Enable and configure lens-specific AF adjustments

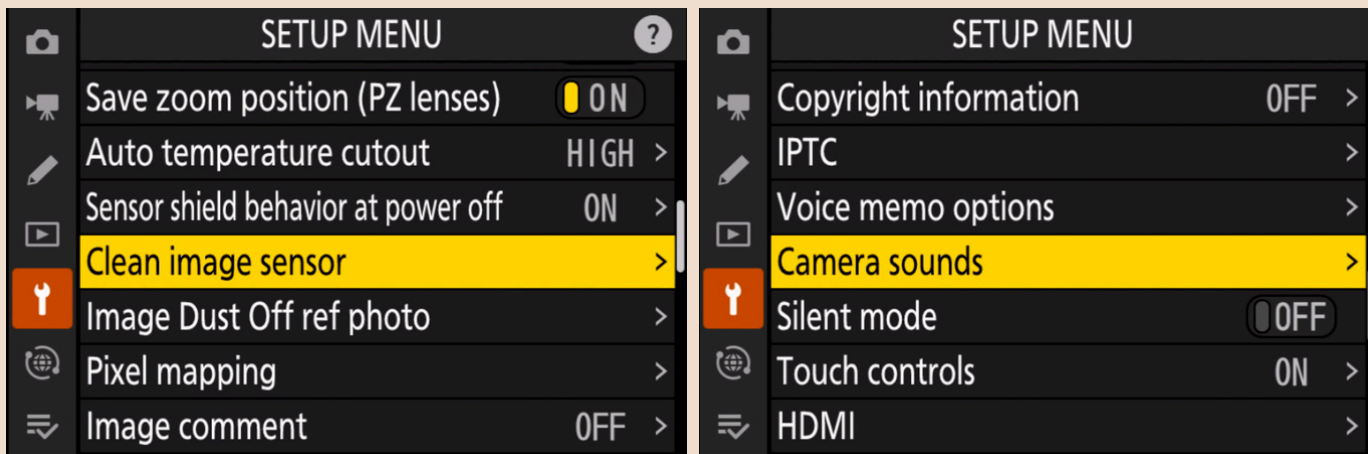
Non-CPU lens data – Enter lens data for non-CPU lenses

Distance units – Set distance display units (m/ft)

Save focus position – ON – **Important**

- If this is set to OFF the camera will lose focus every time it goes into standby mode or gets turned off
- This mode is there to protect certain lenses that protrude out when zooming or focusing, but useless for long lenses

Setup Menu



Save zoom position (PZ lenses) – On - Retains zoom position

Auto temperature cutout – *HIGH* - Prolongs camera operation before overheating

Sensor shield behavior at power off – *ON* – Enables sensor protection when powering off

Clean image sensor – Trigger sensor cleaning manually

Image Dust Off ref photo – Capture reference image for dust removal in software

Pixel mapping – Detect and correct hot or stuck pixels

Image comment – Add a custom comment to image metadata

Copyright information – Add your name and copyright notice to image metadata

IPTC – Embed standard metadata info (e.g., location, creator)

Voice memo options – Record and manage voice memos for images

Camera sounds – Enable or disable shutter and operation sounds

- *I like silent shooting, but sometimes I add a very quiet shutter sound*

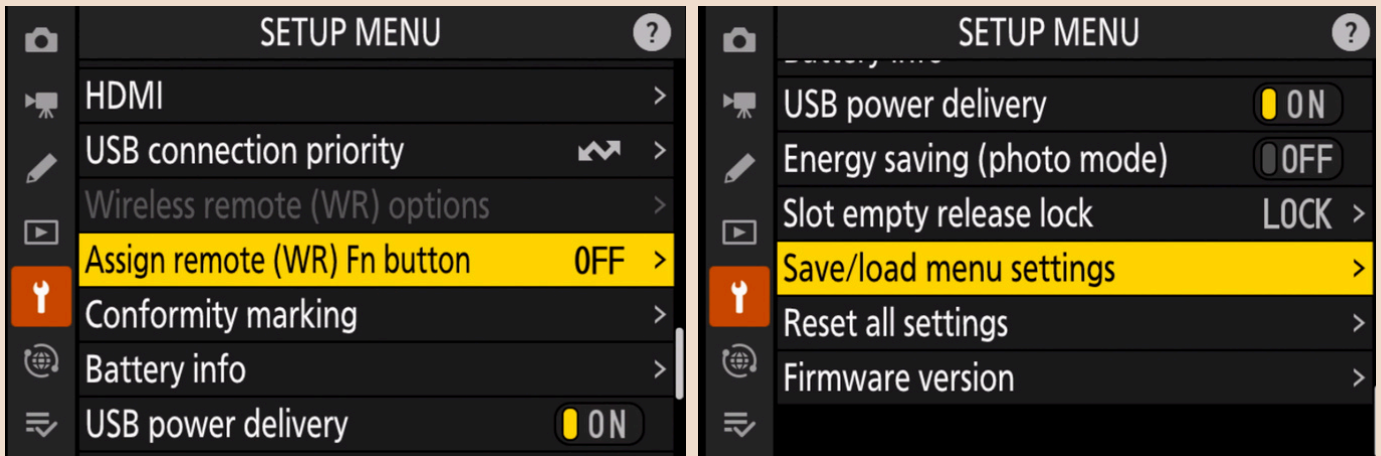
Silent mode – Suppress all operational sounds and lights

- *Disables all camera sounds, even sensor shield going down*

Touch controls – Enable or disable touchscreen functionality

HDMI – Adjust HDMI output settings for external displays or recorders

Setup Menu



USB connection priority – Choose whether USB defaults to file transfer or tethering

Wireless remote (WR) options – Configure settings for compatible wireless remotes

Assign remote (WR) Fn button – Set a custom function for the wireless remote's Fn button

Conformity marking – Displays regulatory compliance information

Battery info – View battery status, charge level, and condition

USB power delivery – Enable or disable charging the camera via USB

Energy saving (photo mode) – *OFF* – Reduce power consumption during shooting

Slot empty release lock – *LOCK* – Prevent shutter release if no card is inserted

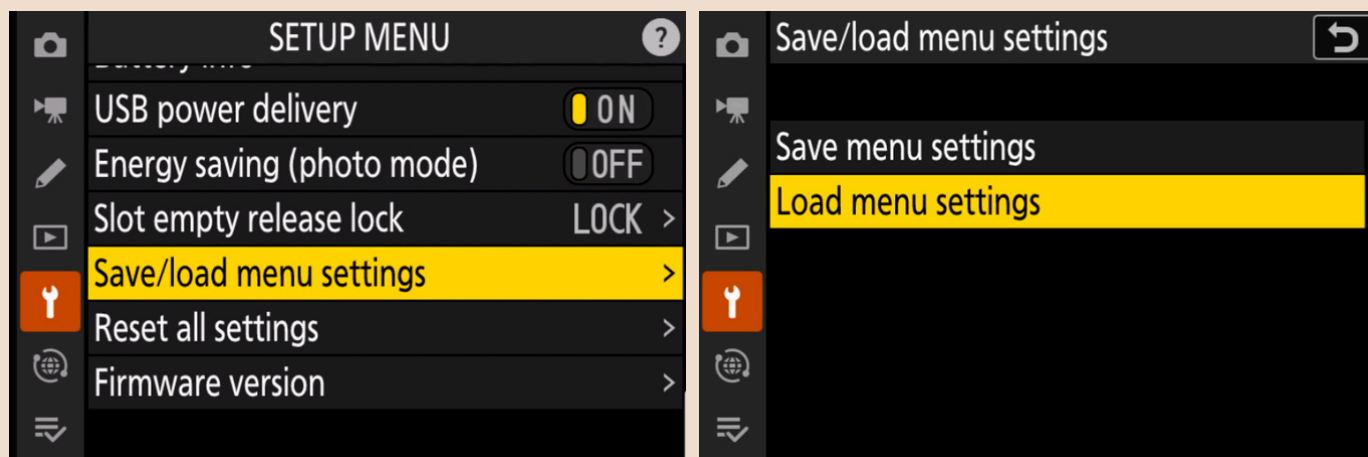
Save/load menu settings – Backup or restore camera settings to/from memory card – **this is where you install the .BIN setup file (next page)**

Reset all settings – Restore camera to factory defaults

Firmware version – Displays the currently installed firmware version



Setup Menu



This is the menu where you can install the camera set up file that comes with this guide.

(Save/Load menu settings)

WARNING!

Before installing my camera set up file, go to *Save/load menu settings* and make a copy of your current settings first (*Save menu settings*), so you can put them back onto your camera in case you do not like my settings!

Save menu settings – Save current camera settings to a new settings file

- To save your current settings navigate to '**Save/load menu settings**' and then select '**Save menu settings**'. This will create a **.BIN file** on your memory card you can save onto your computer as a back up. *You can choose a custom name.*

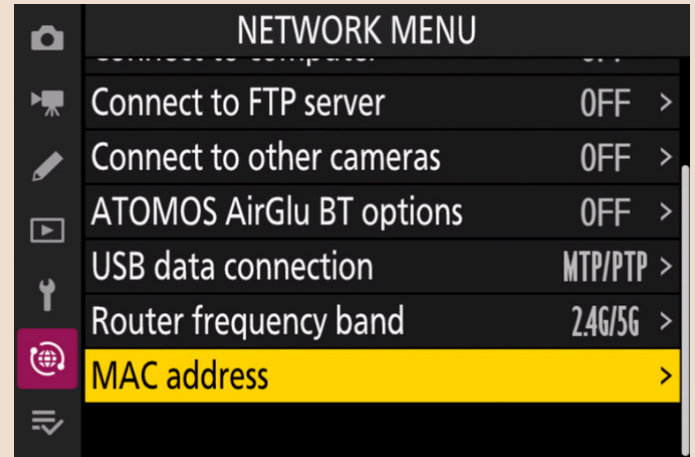
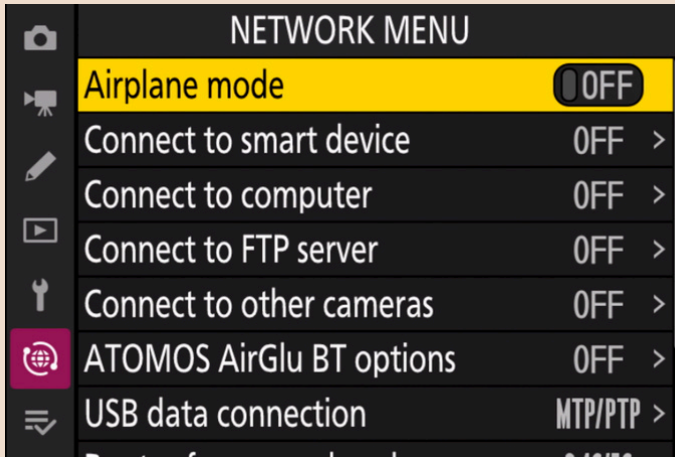
Load menu settings – Load settings from a camera settings file

- **To install my camera set up file**, save the .BIN file onto an **empty memory card**
- *Make sure there are no other cards inside the camera*
- Navigate to '**Save/Load menu settings**' and select '**Load menu settings**'
- That will install *most* of my settings onto your Z8.
- In some cases not all settings are copied over and you can either try it again or manually check with this guide to make sure everything is set up correctly. You may need the latest FW version.

PURPLE NETWORK MENU

This menu covers *communication settings* – including Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and other connectivity options. It's where you set up how your camera connects to smartphones, computers, or cloud services.

I don't make any changes here, except that I like to connect my phone to use the Canon Camera Connect app for remote shooting.



Airplane mode – OFF – Disable all wireless functions

Connect to smart device – OFF – Enable Wi-Fi connection to smartphone/tablet

Connect to computer – OFF – Enable tethered shooting or file transfer

Connect to FTP server – OFF – Upload images directly to FTP server

Connect to other cameras – OFF – Link multiple cameras for synchronized shooting

ATOMOS AirGlu BT options – OFF – Control Atomos recorders via Bluetooth

USB data connection – Manage USB data transfer mode

Router frequency band – Select Wi-Fi frequency band for wireless connection

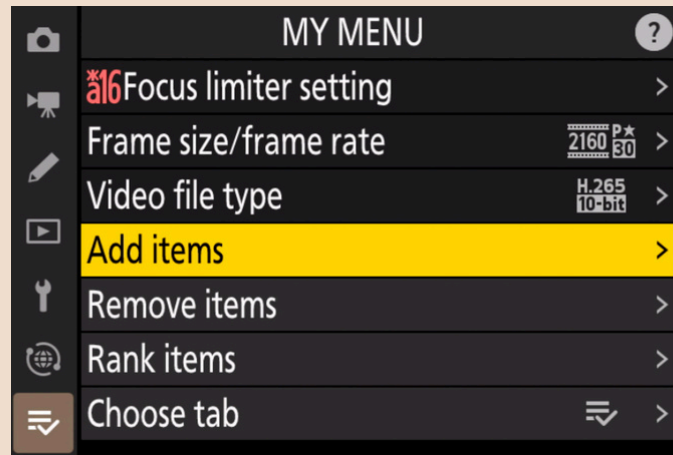
MAC address – Displays the camera's network hardware address



BROWN 'MY MENU'

This menu lets you create a *personalized menu page* with your most-used settings and functions. It's designed to give you quick access to the features you use most, all in one place.

This menu is the same for photo and video.



My Menu – Create a custom menu for your most used settings

- This gives you quick access to menu items, without having to search through the whole
- *I added 3 examples here – Focus limiter and 2 video settings*

Add items – Add items to My Menu tab from the rest of the Z8 menu

Remove items – Delete items from your My Menu list

Rank items – Rearrange the order of items in My Menu

Choose tab – Select if you want to see My Menu or The most recent changed settings



You've made it!



I hope my guide has helped you find the best settings for your Z8. Now it's time to take it outside and take some amazing photos!

And: *Capturing great RAW files is just the beginning – **editing makes them truly stand out.***

Feeling stuck or overwhelmed just thinking about editing? Not sure where to start or how to finish? *I can help you.*

I created my **Lightroom** and **Photoshop Masterclasses** to guide you through the entire editing process and teach you my **fast & efficient workflow** – step by step and in easy-to-follow chapters.

You will be able to confidently transform even your most difficult to edit RAW files with ease and get stunning results every single time.

Let's turn editing from a chore into your favourite part!

		<p><u>Next-Gen Photoshop Class</u></p> <p><u>Lightroom Class</u></p> <p>or</p> <p><u>Or roam the rest of my shop for more photography courses!</u></p>
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Find me here



I would love to hear your thoughts – please feel welcome to reach out, if you have further questions, feedback or want to share your ideas for future editions. I'm here to help you along the way and can't wait to hear about your photography progress, if you would like to share.

In the meantime, if you haven't already, you can head on over to YouTube and watch my other setup videos as an additional resource or find me on my other platforms. You can always say hi.

Find me and contact me here:



[@jan_wegener_](https://www.instagram.com/jan_wegener_)



[JanWegener](https://www.youtube.com/JanWegener)



[jan_wegener_](https://www.youtube.com/jan_wegener_)



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[janwegener.com](https://www.janwegener.com)

That is all for now! See you online or in the field!
Sending you all much love.



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