

Mounting torch on camera: the easy way



Setup guide by Lennart Verheuvél (naturebylennart.com)

Taking pictures of mammals at night can be a challenge. If you are with more than one (ideally the other person isn't a photographer) you have an assistant to hold the torch. This is always the preferred way to go as it will allow you to take pictures with very little eyeshine. Having a torch very close to the camera typically blows the eyeshine up which can obscure the head of the mammal. So training your spouses, children or other benign bystanders in the admirable craft of holding the torch is still an investment bound to pay off. But what do you do when nobody is around and you need a record shot? Or the person with you is too thick to quickly understand your indignantly hissed instructions on where the animal is? It's then you discover the wonderful sensation of having to both hold up the camera and the torch. Trying to keep the light steady and the animal in focus and hoping the animal will be patient enough to reward your clumsy efforts with a record shot.

Some animals are not so patient. Like the Blanford's Foxes I chased through the Wadi Rum Desert in Jordan and the European Wild Cats I saw in a forest in the Netherlands. Sometimes you really need that split second. It's for those situations that I have been looking into the possibilities of attaching a torch to my camera for a while. Until now I hadn't found a solution that allowed me to easily attach the torch or take it off. Using duct tape (although effective for one night) wasn't so great once I needed to regularly take it on and off. The setup guide [by Charles Hood and José Gabriel Martínez-Fonseca](#) was a great inspiration, but still looked a bit too complicated for me. I am not a technical guy to put it mildly. The model building kits I destroyed in my childhood can attest to that. Recently I visited that section of the website again and noticed the latest comment by a user called "rnd4" which mentioned a SmallRig Super Clamp. That was the hint I needed. It took a while to get everything together, but I think I have now found the ideal combination.

What you definitely should take away from this is that I borrowed this whole idea from more enlightened users. Others might easily have worked this out by themselves, but people new to this might still like having it laid out in front of them. So once it had all worked out I decided to write this little setup guide. If you have any questions after this contact me through my website. Let's go.

What you need

- A camera and a lens obviously (I think you will need a dslr or mirrorless camera for this as I don't think Smallrig makes the right cages for other types)
- Fenix HT18 torch (buy something else if you want, but this is a great torch and perfect for this purpose. It even comes with a red and green light filter. Singing it's praise requires a separate post. Also keep in mind a torch can't be too heavy or too thick otherwise it won't fit in the clamp)
- Smallrig Cage (this depends on your camera, I used the SmallRig 2982 Camera Cage for Canon EOS R5 and R6, so find something that looks similar and is suitable for your camera and you should be fine)
- SmallRig 1598 Easy Plate
- SmallRig 2220 Super Clamp
- **Screws (1/4"-20 and 3/8-16)**

Screws can be more trouble than you'd think. This is probably easier if you live in the US. Smallrig (like many other brands of equipment used for camera's like tripods) uses 1/4 inch and 3/8 inch screws which are diameters from the USA. These are hard to find in the Netherlands where I live. Smallrig sells some separate packs, but I didn't really find what I was looking for there as I need a bit longer screws than were in those packs.

First I bought SmallRig 1713 Hex Screw 1/4" 8pcs Pack. These screws were perfect for attaching the Clamp to the Easy Plate, but a bit too short to comfortably attach the Easy Plate to the Cage.

Because I needed longer screws I decided to look further, but it was difficult to get exactly the right ones for me. I also didn't know anything about screws. In the end I decided to order some on Amazon from a company called SG TZH. This [link](#) let me sort out exactly the ones I needed.

I ordered two kinds:

- 1/4-20 x 1" (these are the small ones)
- 3/8-16 x 1" (these are the big ones)

They are both an inch long, which is actually a bit too long, but that extra bit didn't cause any problems and I figured it was easier to saw it off than attach something to it. Since I couldn't order less than 10 this was quite a bit of money for the 3 screws I actually needed. I have enough spares at least...

Setting it up

Take your camera body. In my case the Canon R5 and attach the Smallrig Case to it. This should be really easy. If you have firmly put the big screw in place you will figure out where the smaller ones need to go. Watch a Youtube video if it is very hard for you. When it's attached you can screw the lens back on if you want.

It should look something like this:

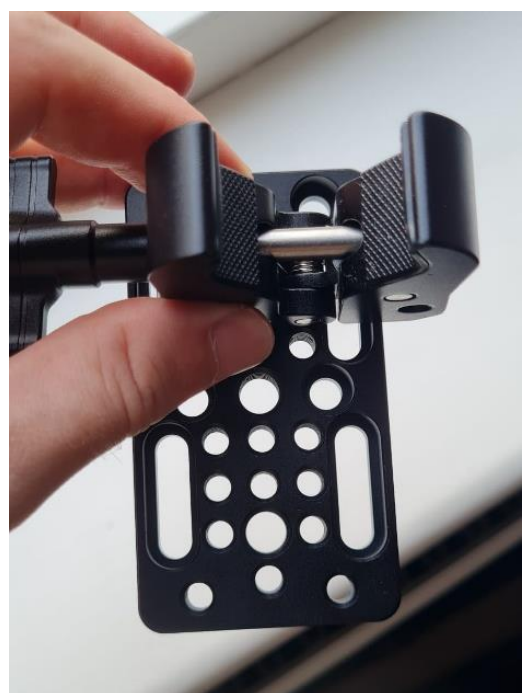


Take the Easy Plate and the Super Clamp and screw the Super Clamp on the Easy Plate. It should look like this:



I hope this is clear enough for you. When you have the Super Clamp in your hands you'll notice that from below it has screw holes. This is one big one on one side of the clamp with 3/8 inch diameter and two smaller ones with 1/4 inch diameter on the other side. I have found it more stable to use the two instead of the one. I used the shorter screws from the Smallrig 1713 kit for this. They fit perfectly. I just screwed them on until they were really tight. They don't fit perfectly but the clamp won't move anymore. I just leave them in because I don't need the plate or clamp for any other purpose.

After this you just need to screw the plate on top of the cage. Note that you could also screw the clamp directly to one of the sides of the cage. You wouldn't even need an easy plate for that. I preferred to have it right on top though because it allows me to aim my camera using the light beam.



On the left you see the part of the cage where the easy plate needs to be put on. On the right you see the easy plate. Note that close to my thumb there are three big holes. Use a 3/8"-16 x 1" screw to attach the hole in the middle to the big hole on the Smallrig cage.

Below the line of three big holes you see a line of three smaller holes. They should be perfectly lined up with the line of three holes on the Smallrig Cage. Put a 1/4"-20 x 1" screw in the one on the right and the left. The middle one I left open because it didn't fit with the 3/8" screw.

The result should be like this. Notice the screws are all sticking out. That's because they are a bit too long. It didn't cause any problems for me, but you can always saw a part off if you want.



Now all you need to do is put your torch in the clamp and you are all set!



Final thought

As I mentioned earlier the position of the torch will probably easily blow up the eyes of mammals that are looking straight into it. This won't make for a pretty picture, but you will at least have one! If the animal stays longer you can use your big torch to change the lighting situation more to your liking. If you want you could also attach an external flash to the Smallrig Cage, but personally I don't think the flash will improve the picture and I don't use it. The result depends on the animal. I used this setup to take a picture of a Garden Dormouse and was very pleased with the result.

