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Nikon D40X

in-depth
review



3. Body & Design

Body & Design



The D40/D40X are the most compact Nikon digital SLRs to date. They are proof that you can build a compact digital SLR without compromising comfort or ergonomics (well at least if your lens mount isn't too large). Built to the high standards we've come to expect from Nikon the D40X uses high grade plastic in its construction (wrapped around a metal frame) and has tight seams with no rattles or creaks.

Side by side

Your eyes do not deceive you, the D40 and D40X, apart from the badge the D40 and D40X are identical, down to the last button, dial and screw. The Nikon design still looks better to me, with cleaner lines and better ergonomics, note the additional width to the grip.



Camera	Dimensions (W x H x D)	Body weight (inc. battery & card)
Olympus E-500	130 x 95 x 66 mm (5.1 x 3.7 x 2.6 in)	479 g (1.1 lb)
Nikon D40 / D40X	126 x 94 x 64 mm (5.0 x 3.7 x 2.5 in)	524 g (1.2 lb)
Canon EOS 350D	127 x 94 x 64 mm (5.0 x 3.7 x 2.5 in)	540 g (1.2 lb)
Canon EOS 400D	127 x 94 x 65 mm (5.0 x 3.7 x 2.5 in)	556 g (1.2 lb)
Sony DSLR-A100	133 x 95 x 71 mm (5.2 x 3.7 x 2.8 in)	638 g (1.4 lb)
Pentax K100D	129 x 93 x 70 mm (5.0 x 3.7 x 2.8 in)	660 g (1.5 lb)
Nikon D80	132 x 103 x 77 mm (5.2 x 4.1 x 3.0 in)	668 g (1.5 lb)
Nikon D70 / D70s	140 x 111 x 78 mm (5.5 x 4.4 x 3.1 in)	679 g (1.5 lb)

The image below shows the two contenders in the ten megapixel DSLR slugfest which is now official on, the Canon EOS 400D (Digital Rebel XTi) and Nikon D40X with their respective 18-55 mm kit lenses.



In your hand

I may be getting a bit repetitive but with the D40/D40X design Nikon have proved that it is possible to make a compact digital SLR with a comfortable grip. Nikon may have a slight real estate advantage over Canon because of their smaller lens mount but whatever the case it's clear that they weren't going to compromise comfort, the D40X's grip is smaller than that found on the D50 but is considerably better than that found on the EOS 400D (Digital Rebel XTi). A plastic body is par for the course at this price

point but there's a range of different plastics and that used by Nikon feels more robust and higher quality.



LCD Monitor



The D40X's 2.5" LCD monitor dominates the rear of the camera, filling the space between the viewfinder and bottom and a considerable amount of horizontal real estate. That said Nikon still managed to stick with the oversized buttons down the left side. As per the D40, the D40X does away with the separate 'control panel' LCD display, instead the LCD monitor performs this function during shooting.

Camera information display

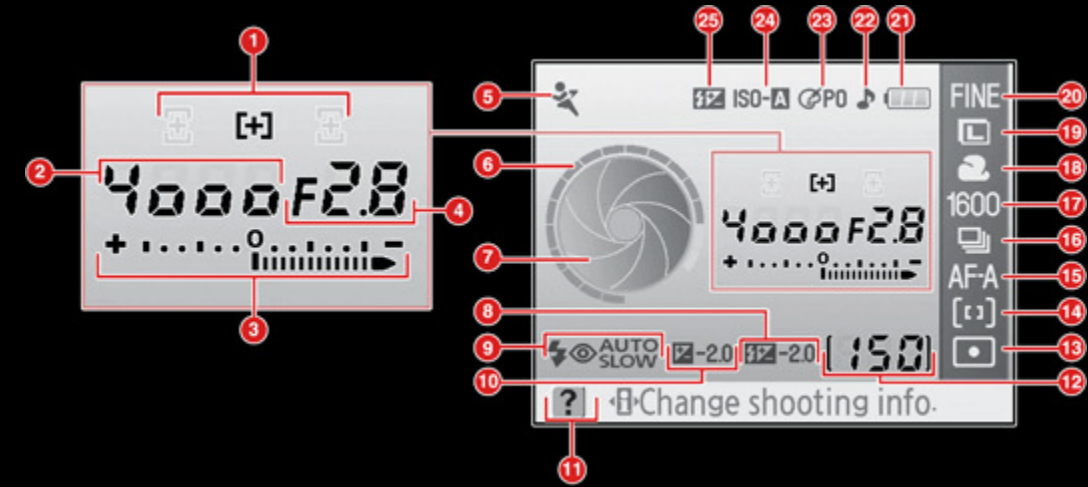
Press the 'info' button on the top of the camera and you will by default see an information screen similar to the one on the left below. This provides an overview of camera settings as well as a graphic representation of shutter speed (the line surrounding the aperture) and aperture. Press the 'set' (magnify) button and you can navigate around this screen to change settings such as image quality, white balance, ISO, drive mode etc. You can alternatively choose the 'classic' info display format which does away with the graphical representation of shutter speed and aperture and instead looks more like a standard control panel.



Graphic display format

Classic display format

The diagram below shows a breakdown of all the potential information displayed in the 'Graphic' display mode.



- 1 Focus area display

2 Shutter speed

3 Electronic meter / compensation

4 Aperture

5 Mode

6 Shutter-speed display (graphic)

7 Aperture display (graphic)

8 Flash compensation value

9 Flash sync mode

10 Exposure compensation value

11 Help indicator

12 Frames remaining / Preset WB rec / PC

13 Metering mode
- 14 AF-area mode

15 Focus mode

16 Shooting mode

17 ISO sensitivity

18 White balance mode

19 Image size

20 Image quality

21 Battery indicator

22 Beep indicator

23 Optimize image preset indicator

24 Auto ISO sensitivity indicator

25 Manual flash control / External flash comp.

Diagram reproduced with permission from the Nikon D40X user manual.

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