

# How to Choose a Tripod

<http://tinyurl.com/dz285c>

**This article talks about why you should use a tripod in the first place and explains tripod features that you might come across when choosing one.**

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## *Introduction*

Tripod is one of the most well known supporting accessories for cameras. It has **three legs** (as the name suggests) and it comes in different sizes, weights and materials.

Everyone says a tripod is the best support for your camera and that it will increase the quality of your pictures dramatically. Among the professionals it is believed you have to carry and have it available at all times – without exceptions. Why do they say that?

Tripod, well a good tripod at least, can keep your camera **completely steady**: no shaking of your camera whatsoever. This is something you cannot do when [holding your camera with your hands](#), or when your camera (or lens) have image stabilization technology either (by the way, when using a tripod, image stabilization technology should be turned OFF!).

*If you are looking for a detailed article about tripod and its features, [visit my website](#). It is **very detailed** and ended up being **quite long** with **many graphics** for better understanding, which is the reason why it is not presented here in complete. Thank you for understanding.*

## *Advantages and Disadvantages of using a Tripod*

So tripod keeps your camera steady. What does this mean?

1. Images are **sharp**.
2. It is possible to take sharp images in **difficult lighting conditions**.
3. Maintaining the **best quality** of the image.
4. Using **longer focal length**.
5. Being more **precise**.
6. It is easier to control the **shallow depth of field**.
7. It makes you start **thinking about the image**.
8. You can take **self-portraits!**
9. Shooting from **different angles**.

**Downsides** of using a tripod:

1. Very hard to use (if not impossible) in crowded places.
2. It takes some time to set it up, so you can miss a moment.
3. Weight.
4. Additional cost.

In such cases it is best to [use another support accessory](#).

## *How to choose a tripod?*

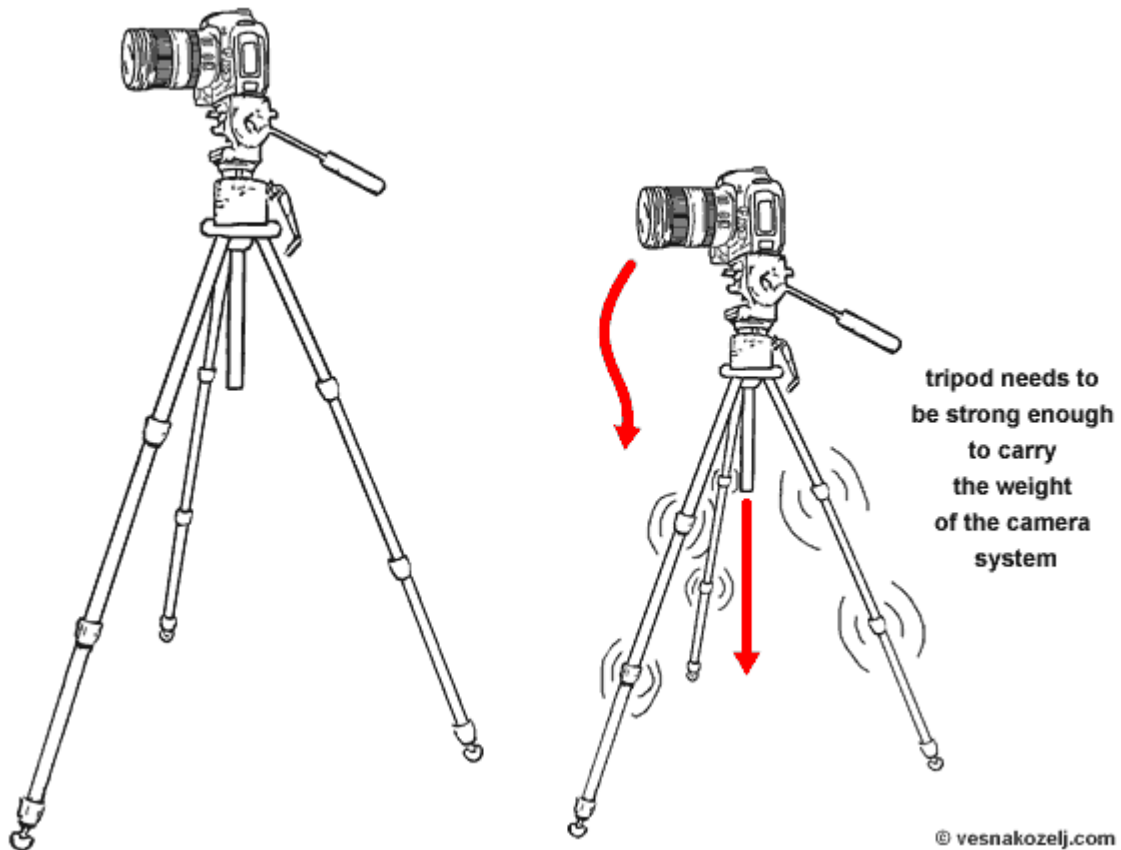
Buying a tripod is always a **compromise**. There is no perfect tripod out there. With “perfect” I mean a tripod that would be ideal for any situation. That’s the reason why it is important to think what features you want and how you want the tripod to behave before making the choice and final decision.

Things that are  
the most **IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER**  
and  
the **FIRST TO START IRRITATING YOU** about a tripod  
when they don’t fulfil your needs:

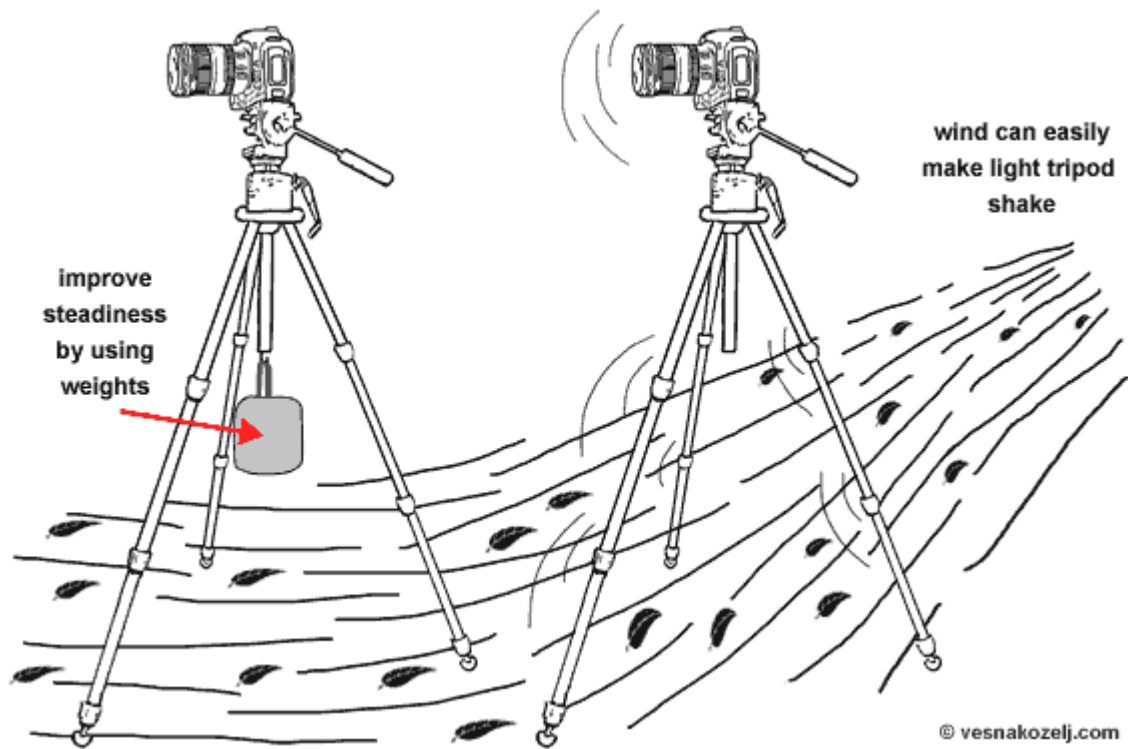
## 1. Tripod needs to be sturdy.

Tripod needs to be sturdy in order to do its job. That is the reason why you have decided to buy it in the first place and carry it around with you!

It should be strong enough to carry the weight of the camera and the lens..



..as well as retain any pressures (i.e. from your hands or the wind):



What affects tripod's sturdiness:

- [leg locks](#),
- [material](#) and design,
- [number of sections of legs](#),
- [leg feet](#).

How to improve tripod's sturdiness:

- [tripod hook](#),
- [tripod apron](#),
- [bean bag](#).

## 2. It needs to be quick and easy to adjust.

If you are shooting **outdoors** or at **events** when it is **important to catch** (and not miss) **the right moment**.

What makes tripod easy to adjust:

- [type of leg locks](#) (how quickly you extend and collapse the tripod legs),
- [leg spread](#) (how easy it is to position tripod on uneven ground),
- attachment plate (how quickly can you take camera on and off tripod).

## 3. It should allow you to be flexible.

You want to be taking photos from different [heights](#) and at different [angles](#).  
Can you go **low** to the ground to do **macro** work?

## 4. It should be light and fit on the backpack.

This is especially true when you are travelling and hiking - well, whenever you are the one carrying it around. It is not important, however, if you are working in a studio.

[Features that you should consider:](#)

- folded length,
- number of leg sections,
- tripod weight,
- construction materials.

## 5. Your camera system becomes too heavy for the tripod to hold.

It is important to know how strong tripod should be to carry all the weight you are going to put on it, that's why you should calculate the weight of your camera system:

1. Weight the camera:

- If you own a **compact camera**, weight the camera (or check the weight in its manual) and any other accessory that you might use with it. A small compact camera typically weights around 150g (5.3oz), while a more advanced compact camera typically weights around 500g (17.6oz).
  - If you own a **DSLR camera**, weight the camera (or check the weight in its manual), as well as the heaviest lens you plan to use and any other accessory (such as flash). For instance, a Nikon D700 weights 1074g (37.9oz), an AF-S VR Zoom-Nikkor 70-300mm lens weights 745g (26.3oz), which is together 1819g (64.2oz). Note that if you are using longer lenses, the point of gravity shifts, so make sure to pick up the tripod with higher maximum load capacity.
2. Include the weight of the **heaviest tripod head** you would (ever) use.
  3. Add **at least 15%** to that figure. You never want to load tripod to its maximum load capacity, at least not for longer times. Overloading can result in shorter life of tripods. They are the most vulnerable at the leg locks and heads.
  4. This is the [maximum load capacity](#) of the tripod.

One thing to note though is that the tripod manufacturers don't really use the same criteria of how to calculate the load capacity (there is no standard). Therefore use it only as guideline, and make sure you don't skip the step 3 when doing the calculations.

Think a bit in the future as well: will you want to use longer lenses? How likely is it? Should you consider it?

## **6. If shooting in nature you want to have a better grip.**

And you achieve it with spiked feet. So make sure the feet of your tripod are **removable**.

## *Conclusion*

Remember: tripod should **last a lifetime!** If you are a bit serious about photography, get yourself a "good enough" tripod from the beginning.

*Remember, if you are looking for a more detailed article about tripods, [visit my website](#).*

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