

CHAPTER 7: THE CUSTOM MENU AND THE SETUP MENU

In Chapters 4 and 6 I discussed the many options available to you in the Recording and Playback menu systems. The next menu systems to discuss are the Custom and Setup menus, which include options for controlling things such as focus, zoom, and the appearance of the display, as well as date, time, formatting, and audio options. As a reminder, you enter the menu system by pressing the Menu/Set button on the camera's back.

The Custom Menu

After pressing Menu/Set, press the Left button to move the highlight into the left column of menu choices, then use the Up and Down buttons or the control dial to move to the wrench icon with the letter C, as shown in Figure 7-1. Once that icon is highlighted, press the Right button to move to the list of menu options, which occupy 9 menu screens, discussed below. (If the camera is set to Intelligent Auto mode, the Custom menu displays only one screen with 3 items.) If necessary, use the control dial or the Up and Down buttons to navigate to the top of the menu's first screen.

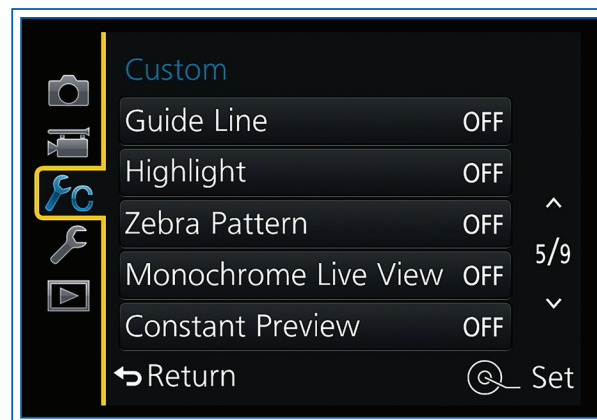


Figure 7-1. Icon for Custom Menu Highlighted

If you have to move forward or backward through several menu screens, you can press the zoom lever to move through them a screen at a time in either direction, or press the Display button to move a screen at a time in the forward direction only.

I will discuss all of the Custom menu items below, starting with the first screen, shown in Figure 7-2.

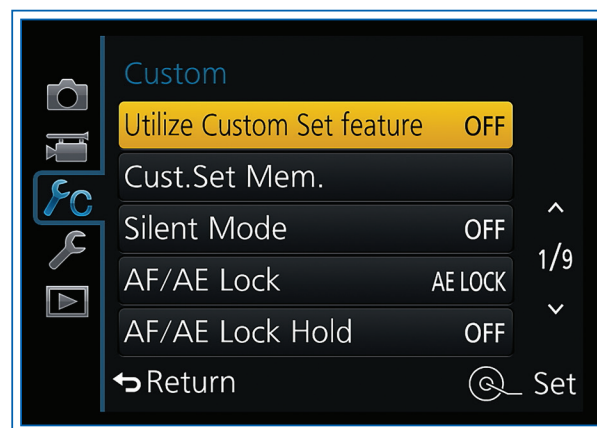


Figure 7-2. Screen 1 of Custom Menu

UTILIZE CUSTOM SET FEATURE/CUSTOM SET MEMORY

I am discussing the first 2 menu options together, because they work together to let you create what amounts to a set of custom shooting modes, with which you can save your preferred settings. This feature gives you a way to quickly change several shooting parameters without having to remember them or use menus or physical controls to set them. The camera lets you record 3 different groups of settings, each of which can be recalled instantly using the Utilize Custom Set Feature option.

Here is how this works. First, you need to have the camera set to recording mode rather than playback mode, so if it's in playback mode, press the shutter button halfway or press the playback button to exit to recording mode. Then, set the camera to Program, Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority, or Manual exposure mode (You can't use the Custom Set feature in Intelligent Auto mode.)

Next, make all of the menu settings that you want to have stored for quick recall, such as Photo Style, ISO, autofocus method, exposure metering method, White Balance, and the like. Your custom set can include all of the items on the Recording Menu except Face Recognition and Profile Setup; all items on the Custom Menu; and all items on the Motion Picture menu. You cannot include any items from the Setup menu. You can include White Balance, AF Mode, Drive Mode, and ISO, even though they are not set from the menu. You also can include Filter effects that are activated using the Filter button. Note though, that you cannot adjust White Balance if you have selected a Filter effect. So, if you try to add both a White Balance setting and a Filter

effect setting to a saved group, only the Filter effect setting will be effective.

Once you have all of the settings as you want them, leave them that way and go to the Custom menu. Navigate to Custom Set Memory and press the Right button, which gives you choices of C1, C2, and C3, as shown in Figure 7-3.

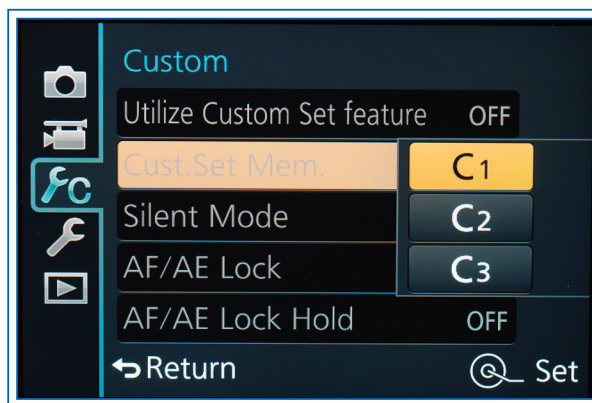


Figure 7-3. Screen to Save Custom Set

Highlight the slot you want to save your settings in and press Menu/Set. The camera will display a message asking you to confirm this action; highlight Yes and press Menu/Set to confirm.

When, at a later time, you want to use your set of saved settings, go to the Custom menu and select Utilize Custom Set Feature. On the sub-menu that appears when you press the Right button, shown in Figure 7-4, select C1, C2, or C3. Once you have selected the custom mode you want, you are still free to change the camera's settings, but those changes will not be saved into the Custom Set Memory unless you go back to the Custom menu and save the changes there with the Custom Set Memory option.



Figure 7-4. Screen to Select Custom Set

When you have finished using the saved settings, be sure to go back to the Utilize Custom Set Feature and select the final option, Off, which will return the camera to the settings it was using before you loaded the saved group of settings and will keep the saved settings from taking effect for further shooting.

If you want to speed up your ability to choose a saved group of settings, go to screen 7 of the Custom menu, choose the Function Button Set option, and assign Utilize Custom Set Feature to one of the 3 Function buttons. Then, when you press that button in Recording mode, a small menu for choosing a slot with saved settings will appear at the top of the screen, as shown in Figure 7-5. Note, though, that there is a slight trick to using this approach. When you call up the saved group of settings, you will not be able to use the Function button to turn it off using the Utilize Custom Set Feature, unless you assigned the same Function button to that menu option inside the saved group. So, if you are planning to use a Function button to switch groups of settings often, you should assign the same Function button to call up this menu option within every group of settings you will be using.

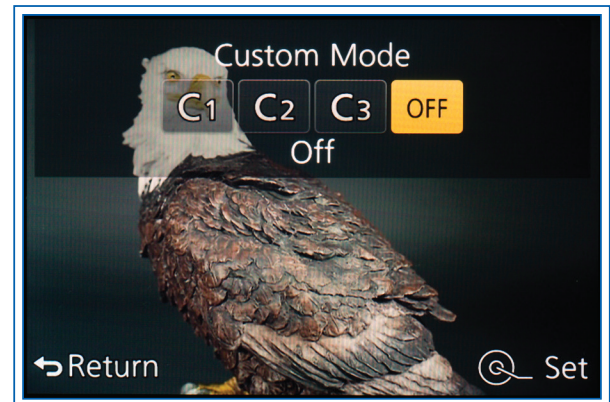


Figure 7-5. Function Button Menu for Custom Select

Although it has some limitations, Custom Set Memory is a powerful capability, and anyone who has or develops a favorite group of settings would be well advised to experiment with this option and take advantage of its power.

SILENT MODE

The Silent Mode option gives you a quick way to turn off the lights and sounds made by the camera that might distract a subject or cause a disturbance in a quiet area. When you turn this option on, the camera switches to using the electronic shutter, which is quieter than the mechanical shutter; silences all beeps and other sounds for matters such as focus and shutter operation; forces the flash off; and turns off the AF assist lamp. However, the lamp will still light up to indicate use of the self-timer, and the blue Wi-Fi connection lamp will illuminate if you use that feature. If you will often use this feature, you can include it as part of a group of saved settings with the Custom Set Memory option, or you can assign it to a Function button.

AF/AE Lock

This setting lets you set the function of the AF/AE Lock button, which is located to the right of the red Motion Picture button on the back of the camera. You can use this menu item, shown in Figure 7-6, to control how that button locks autofocus (AF) and autoexposure (AE) settings.

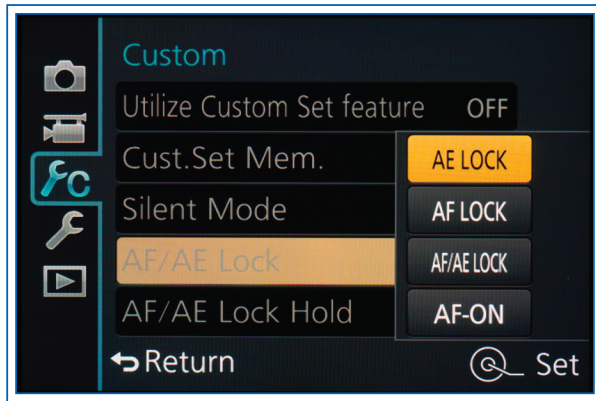


Figure 7-6. AF/AE Lock Options Screen

If you select AE Lock or AF Lock, the camera locks only the one designated setting. If you choose AF/AE Lock, the camera locks both settings at the same time.

The camera will place icons on the recording display to indicate which of the values are locked, once you press the AF/AE Lock button and the values are locked in. The AF Lock icon will appear in the upper right corner and the AE Lock icon in the lower left corner. Figure 7-7 shows the display when both values are locked. It is not possible to lock exposure using the AF/AE button in Manual exposure mode.



Figure 7-7. Recording Display with AE and AF Both Locked

If you select the final option, AF-On, pressing the AF/AE Lock button will cause the camera to use its autofocus system to focus on the subject, using whatever AF Mode setting is in effect to determine what area to focus on. If manual focus is in effect, the camera will still use the autofocus system when you press this button. This is a useful option as backup when you are using manual focus. You also can use it if you have set the Shutter AF option to Off, as discussed below, so pressing the shutter button halfway does not cause the camera to use its autofocus. You will then be able to press the AF/AE Lock button when you need to get the camera to focus again quickly.

AF/AE Lock Hold

This option determines how the AF/AE Lock button operates. If you set AF/AE Lock Hold to On, then, when you press this button and release it, the camera retains the locked value(s). If you set this option to Off, then you have to hold the button down to retain the value(s); when you release it, the locked value(s) will be released. This option is dimmed and unavailable for selection when AF/AE Lock is set to AF-On. With that setting,

pressing the AF/AE Lock button causes the camera to use its autofocus, but not to lock focus, so it is not possible to “hold” the locked setting.

The next items to be discussed are on screen 2 of the Custom menu, which is shown in Figure 7-8.



Figure 7-8. Screen 2 of Custom Menu

SHUTTER AF

This option lets you choose whether the camera will use its autofocus when you press the shutter button halfway, or not. With the default setup, with Shutter AF turned on, when the camera is set to an autofocus mode, it will evaluate the focus when you half-press the shutter button. With single autofocus (AFS), the focus will be locked as long as you hold the button in that position; with flexible autofocus (AFF), the camera will refocus if it detects movement, and with continuous autofocus (AFC), the camera will continue to adjust focus as movement occurs.

If you use this menu option to turn Shutter AF off, then the camera will not use its autofocus at all when you half-press the shutter button. There are several

reasons why you might choose that setting. First, if you are taking a series of shots at the same distance, such as when you have the camera on a tripod and are taking shots of flat objects for auctions, you might focus once and then have no need to keep focusing. You can avoid using up the camera’s battery for repeated uses of the autofocus system by turning Shutter AF off.

Another reason for using this option is if you prefer using the AF/AE Lock button to adjust autofocus. To do that, go to screen 1 of the Custom menu and set the AF/AE Lock menu option to AF-On. Then, when you press the AF/AE Lock button, the camera will adjust autofocus. With this setup, you can adjust the focus whenever you want, and once you have it set as you want it, you can compose your shot and have the camera evaluate exposure without worrying that the camera will reset the focus to a different subject. You will be able to trigger the shutter to take another shot at any time.

Some photographers use this system with the autofocus mode set to AFC for continuous autofocus. Then, they can adjust focus at any time using the AF/AE Lock button, and press the shutter at any time without being concerned about focus. It’s probably a good idea to give this setup a try and see if it works well for your type of shooting.

HALF PRESS RELEASE

This option lets you set the camera to capture an image when the shutter button is pressed halfway down, rather than requiring a full press, as is the normal situation. If you turn this setting on when Shutter AF is turned on, the camera will still adjust focus just before the image is captured, so the half-press of the button

carries out both the autofocus operation and the image capture. If you have Shutter AF turned off, then you would have to use the AF/AE Lock button to adjust autofocus, with the AF On option turned on for that button.

Using the Half Press Release option can speed up your shooting, because you don't have to go through the sequence of half-press followed by full press of the shutter button; you can just touch the button lightly to capture an image, or a burst of images if the camera is set for burst shooting. This system can work well if you won't be needing to make adjustments to focus or exposure after half-pressing the shutter button. When you are shooting in predictable, steady lighting at a constant distance and you need to shoot quickly, this option can be useful. Also, the ability to trigger the shutter with a light touch can help reduce the risk of motion blur from camera shake.

Quick AF

This next function on the Custom menu, Quick AF, can be turned either on or off. If you turn this setting on, the camera will focus on the subject whenever the camera has settled down and is quite still, with only minor movement or shake. You do not need to press the shutter button halfway down to achieve focus; the camera focuses on its own.

The advantage of turning Quick AF on is that you will have a slight improvement in focusing time, because the camera does not wait until you press the shutter button (or the AF/AE Lock button, if it is set for focusing) to start the focusing process. The disadvantage is that the battery will run down faster than usual. So, unless you believe that a split second for focusing time is

critical, I would stay away from this setting, and leave this menu option turned off. The camera will still focus automatically when you press the shutter button halfway down; it just will take a little bit longer to bring the subject into focus.

Eye Sensor AF

When this option is turned on and the camera is set to an autofocus mode, the camera will automatically use its autofocus mechanism to adjust focus as soon as your head approaches the eye sensor and turns on the electronic viewfinder. However, the autofocus system will work only once with this system, even if the camera is set for continuous autofocus. So, when you first put the camera up to your eye, the focus will be adjusted for whatever subject the camera is aimed at at that instant. The camera will not readjust the focus unless you then press the shutter button halfway or use the AF/AE Lock button, if that button is set up to adjust focus.

This option can give the autofocus system a head start by bringing the scene into focus with an approximate setting, so it can quickly reach an exact focusing position when you press the shutter button halfway or use the AF/AE Lock button to make the final focus adjustments. I generally leave it turned off, but for snapshots it can be useful to have an approximate first cut at focusing take place as soon as you use the viewfinder.

This option works only when the viewfinder is turned on, either permanently or as your eye approaches it, through use of the LVF button or the Eye Sensor option on screen 9 of the Custom menu.

PINPOINT AF TIME

As I discussed in Chapter 4, one of the options for setting Autofocus Mode using the Left button is Pinpoint AF, with which you can set a precise point for the focus area. Then, when you press the shutter button halfway to evaluate focus, the camera focuses at that point and enlarges the display briefly with that point centered, so you can judge the sharpness of the focus. The Pinpoint AF Time menu option controls how long the display stays enlarged when you press the shutter button halfway. The choices are Short (0.5 second), Medium (1.0 second), or Long (1.5 second). If you release the shutter button before the specified time has passed, the display will revert to normal size. Because of that behavior, I prefer to set this option to Long. Then, the display will stay enlarged for a long enough time to let me judge the focus, but I can always release the shutter button early to revert the display to its normal size.

The next items to be discussed are on screen 3 of the Custom menu, shown in Figure 7-9.

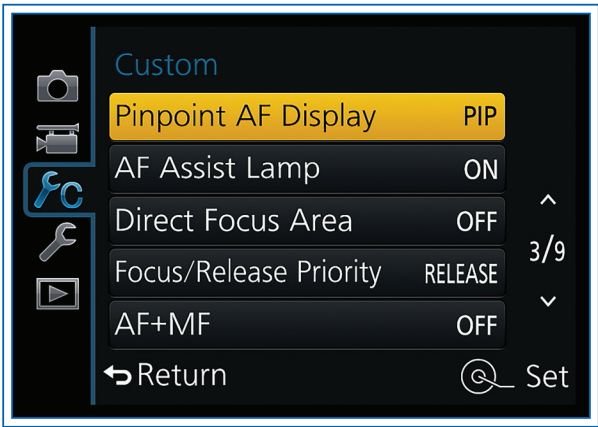


Figure 7-9. Screen 3 of Custom Menu

PINPOINT AF DISPLAY

This option lets you choose one of 2 options for the size of the enlarged display that appears when you use the Pinpoint option for Autofocus Mode—Full or PIP (picture-in-picture). With Full, the entire display is enlarged by a factor of between 3 and 10 times; with PIP, only the central part of the display is enlarged, by a factor of between 3 and 6 times. You can vary the enlargement factor by turning the control dial when the enlargement is active as you are setting the focus point. That enlargement factor will then take effect when you half-press the shutter button to focus using the Pinpoint AF option.

AF ASSIST LAMP

The autofocus (AF) assist lamp is the reddish light on the front of the camera, near the lens below the shutter button and the shutter speed dial. The lamp illuminates when the ambient lighting is dim, to help the autofocus mechanism achieve proper focus by providing enough light to define the shape of the subject. Ordinarily, this option is left turned on for normal shooting, because the light only activates when it is needed because of low-light conditions. However, you have the option of turning it off using the AF Assist Lamp menu option, so it will never turn on to help with autofocus. You might want to do this if you are trying to shoot your pictures without being detected, or without disturbing a subject such as a sleeping animal.

In Intelligent Auto mode, you cannot turn off the AF assist lamp using this menu option, but you can turn it off, along with the flash and camera sounds, using the Silent Mode option on the Custom menu. The lamp does not illuminate when you are using manual focus

(unless you have set up the AF/AE Lock button to use the AF-On option and you press that button to cause the camera to autofocus).

Note that the AF assist lamp also serves as the self-timer lamp. Even if you set the AF Assist Lamp menu option to Off, the lamp will still light up when the self-timer is used; there is no way to disable the lamp for that function.

DIRECT FOCUS AREA

This is another option that can be turned either on or off; it is off by default. If you turn it on, then, in recording mode, if you press any of the 4 direction buttons, the camera immediately displays a screen for adjusting the position of the autofocus area. For example, if AF Mode is set to 1-Area, Pinpoint AF, or Face/Eye Detection, then, when you press, say, the Left button, that button immediately activates the focus frame and starts moving it across the display. If you have AF Mode set to 49-Area or Custom Multi, then, when you press a direction button, the camera immediately displays the screen for selecting the focus zones to be included in the focus area. You can then keep pressing any of the direction buttons to adjust the area or use other controls to make other adjustments.

This option could be useful if you were in a situation when you need to adjust the focus area often, particularly with the 1-Area or Pinpoint AF options. I would not recommend using it with the 49-Area or Custom Multi options, because you need to do considerable adjusting with those options, and a split second of added speed will not be of that much use.

I do not use this option myself, because it is so easy to adjust the focus area without it. Just press the Left

button to bring up the AF Mode option, then press the Down button to get to the screen for moving the focus frame. Also, if you turn on Direct Focus Area, you lose the other functions of the direction buttons while this option is in effect. So, if you wanted to set White Balance or ISO, you would have to use the Quick Menu, assign those functions to another button or to the control ring, or turn off this menu option before making that adjustment.

FOCUS/RELEASE PRIORITY

You can set this option to either Focus, the default option, or Release. If it is set to Focus, then the camera will not take a picture until focus has been confirmed, when autofocus is in effect. So, if you aim the camera at a subject that is difficult for the autofocus system to bring into sharp focus, such as an area with no sharp features in dim lighting, the camera may display a red focus frame and beep 4 times, indicating focus was not achieved. In that situation, if this menu option is set to Focus, the camera will not take the picture when you press the shutter button. If you set this option to Release, then the camera will take the picture even if it is not in focus. If you are using manual focus, then the camera will take the picture regardless of focus, even if you set the priority to Focus.

The use of this option is a matter of personal preference and the situation you are faced with. If you are taking images of a one-time event, you may want to use the Release option so you don't miss a shot just because focus is slightly off. It's much better to get an image that is slightly out of focus than no image at all. But if you have time to make sure focus is sharp, you can use the Focus option to make sure you have focus properly adjusted before you capture an image.

This option also has an impact on the speed of burst shooting. As I discussed in Chapter 5, if this option is set to Focus, shooting may be slowed down as the camera attempts to adjust focus before recording each image, when you are using a burst setting with continuous focus adjustments.

AF + MF

This is an on-or-off option that is turned off by default. If you turn it on, then, when the autofocus mode is set to AFS, for single autofocus, once you have pressed the shutter button halfway to lock focus, while you are holding the button in that position, you can turn the control ring to fine-tune the focus manually. This option also takes effect if you have locked focus with the AF/AE Lock button, when that button is set to lock autofocus or to the AF-On setting through screen 1 of the Custom menu.

This option is useful when, for example, you have locked focus on a group of small objects, and you want to make sure the focus is precisely set on one of those objects, such as on an object behind the others, or on a portion of one of them. Once the autofocus system has locked on the group, just start turning the control ring while keeping the shutter button pressed halfway (or the AF/AE Lock button pressed, if applicable) to adjust the focus manually until you have it set exactly as you want.

Figure 7-10 shows screen 4 of the Custom menu.

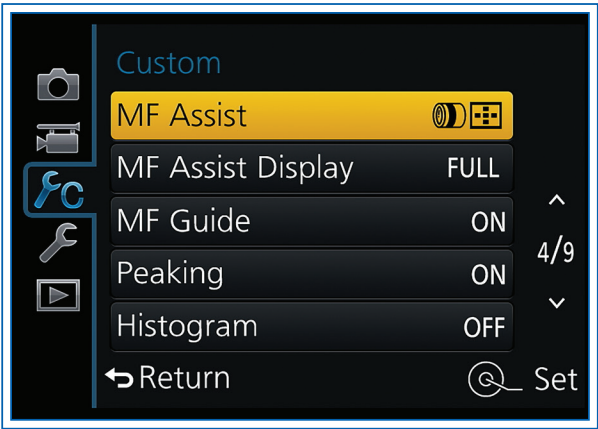


Figure 7-10. Screen 4 of Custom Menu

MANUAL FOCUS (MF) ASSIST AND MF ASSIST DISPLAY

These next 2 Custom menu options let you set whether and how the recording screen display is magnified when you’re using manual focus. With the MF Assist option highlighted, press the Right button to pop up the sub-menu that lets you choose you choose 1 of 4 settings, as shown in Figure 7-11.



Figure 7-11. MF Assist Options Screen

If you choose Off, there is no magnification when you press the Left button to activate the MF Assist focus frame or turn the control ring to adjust focus. If you choose the top option, which shows icons for the control ring and the AF Mode button (Left button), then, when you start turning the control ring to focus or you press the Left button, the screen will immediately be magnified to help you adjust the focus.

With the second option, turning the control ring will immediately magnify the display, but pressing the AF Mode button will not immediately magnify the screen, though it will still activate the manual focus assist frame, so you can move that frame around the display. With the third option, pressing the button will immediately enlarge the display, but turning the control ring will not immediately enlarge the display, though it will still adjust the manual focus.

With the Off setting, when you activate the MF Assist frame and move it around the display, once you press Menu/Set to set the frame in place, the display will be magnified in the area where the frame is located.

The MF Assist Display menu option lets you set the area of magnification with MF Assist to Full or PIP (picture-in-picture). If you choose Full, the magnification will take up the whole display and will vary between 3 and 10 times normal; you control that factor by turning the control dial when the display is magnified. If you choose PIP, the enlargement factor varies between 3 and 6 times normal.



Figure 7-12. MF Assist Magnified Screen

As soon as you press the Left button, turn the control ring, or press Menu/Set to start the magnification (depending on the settings discussed above), the display will appear similar to Figure 7-12, which shows the MF Assist display when the Full setting is in effect.

You can use all 4 direction buttons to move the focus area around the display, and you can turn the control dial to change the magnification factor. To reset the focus point to the center of the display, press the Display button. To dismiss the MF Assist display, press the shutter button halfway or press the Menu/Set button. Or, if you turned the control ring to start the magnification, the screen will return to normal size on its own after about 10 seconds. You can then press the Left button or turn the control ring (depending on menu settings) to bring the MF Assist display back on the screen if you want, or you can just press the shutter button to take the picture.

The MF Assist option is not available for recording motion pictures or when Digital Zoom is activated.