

AF-Nikkor 180 mm f/2.8 ED-IF	5 (DX:D1X)	<p>The AF versions of the 180 mm lens introduced internal focusing (IF) with corresponding change in optical formula. IF makes for effortless focusing, but tends to give some residual colour fringing in the out-of-focus areas. Image sharpness and contrast of the AF lens is excellent, but the plastic barrel makes the lens feel cheap, this in particular holds for the first release of the AF 180 that had an inconveniently narrow focusing ring. The next version came with a hammered surface finish and improved focusing action. Both version carry a sliding sun shade of questionable length and usefulness.</p> <p>This lens operates quite sluggish in AF mode, so is difficult to apply to shooting situations in which fast focusing is demanded. In addition, its AF action never is entirely decoupled even when the lens is set to "M", so there is a perceptible drag on the focusing collar at all times. Apart from such caveats it handles nicely, with truly impressive pictorial results in the f/4-f/11 range. Wide open the image is ever so slightly soft, but stopping down helps to improve the image quality to high standards. Contrast and colour saturation are superb. It manages slightly better than the MF180 ED on all scores except for the occasional trace of colour fringing in the out-of-focus areas. This 180 must be ranked among the finest Nikkors of all times in terms of its optics, but on handling criteria alone it never will go into the Hall of Fame.</p>
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