

## Design



The AF-Nikkor 50mm F1.4 is a pretty well-built lens, and certainly as solid as any other lens in its class. The mount is metal, and the barrel constructed of high-quality plastics; it's definitely better constructed than the relatively inexpensive AF-Nikkor 50mm 1:1.8D, although the difference isn't huge. The front element is slightly recessed from the filter thread (by about 4mm), offering a little protection against stray light, and the entire optical assembly moves backwards and forwards as a unit by about 8mm for focusing.

## On the camera



The 50mm F1.4 is about average in size for its class, making it a distinctly compact lens especially in comparison to Sigma's monster 50mm F1.4 EX DG HSM. It balances well on all Nikon DSLRs and is particularly well-matched to the more compact cameras such as the D90 (above right), with the focus ring falling readily to hand when required.

## Autofocus

The 50mm F1.4 relies on the body's built-in AF motor for focusing, which leaves it manual-focus only on the D40/D40x/D60 DSLRs. It also makes it slightly noisy (although again this is dependent upon the body), and certainly more obtrusive than the HSM-equipped Sigma 50mm F1.4 EX DG. Overall, autofocus is fast, positive and accurate on all the bodies we used for testing, although as always, it must also be noted that focus speed and accuracy is dependent upon a number of variables, including the camera body used, subject contrast, and light levels.

## Lens body elements



The lens uses Nikon's venerable F mount, and will fit all of their DSLRs, both DX and FX format. It communicates with the body electronically via an array of contact pins, with mechanical control of the aperture using a metal lever.

AF is 'screw-driven' driven from the camera body, and requires five whole turns from infinity to 0.45m.

	<p>The filter thread is 52mm, and does not rotate on autofocus, which should be welcome for polariser users.</p> <p>There's no separate bayonet mount for a lens hood, but Nikon will happily sell you an optional screw-in rubber hood; then again, so will many 3rd party manufacturers, and for rather less money.</p>
	<p>The focus ring features an 8mm-wide, deeply-ribbed hard rubber grip, and the action is smooth with a slight hint of backlash. It rotates 160 degrees anti-clockwise from infinity to 0.45m, allowing precise manual focus. As is usual for Nikon, the focus mode is selected via a switch on the camera body.</p> <p>The angle of view noticeably decreases on focusing closer, as is inevitable with unit-focusing primes.</p>
	<p>A distance scale is provided with markings in both feet and meters, and includes an infra-red focusing adjustment mark, plus a depth of field scale marked for F11 and F16. Not surprisingly given the lens's history, this is calibrated for the 35mm full-frame format, so will be less useful for DX format shooters.</p>
	<p>Traditionalists will undoubtedly be pleased to see a good old-fashioned aperture ring, which can be activated via a custom function on the higher end DSLRs, although it's completely redundant on Nikon's low- end and mid-range models (D40-D90). It is 9mm wide with a ridged hard plastic grip, features full-stop detents, and a switch it to lock it at F16 for use in auto modes. It's reasonably smooth in action, but sadly no match for the classic fully-manual lenses of old.</p>

**Reported aperture vs focal length**

This lens allows an aperture range from F1.4 to F16 to be selected.