

Compared to Nikon AF-S Nikkor 70-200mm F2.8G ED VR



This view gives an idea of how the Nikon 70-200mm F2.8 VR II compares in size and layout to its predecessor (with a Canon EF 70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM alongside for comparison). It's just a bit shorter than the previous version, but rather broader in width down the majority of the barrel; it's also a little heavier. But that extra weight does seem to be distributed more evenly, making the lens distinctly less front-heavy.

In terms of controls and layout, the new version loses the three AF-stop buttons that were arranged around the front of the barrel, replaced by an ornamental rubber grip. The focus distance scale has moved too, away from the extreme front to a more readily visible slot between the zoom and focus rings. The control switches on the left side of the barrel have slightly revised functionality - the focus limiter switch now restricts the closest range to 5m rather than 2.5m, which should reduce hunting a fraction for the benefit of sports photographers. There's also a third position on the focus mode switch called A/M; this differs from M/A mode (which is still available) in giving autofocus priority over manual focus, such that any movement of the focus ring during an AF operation is ignored, and won't cancel it.

Nikon has updated the stabilization unit to 'VR II' spec, and claims it now offers an extra stop of benefit (4 stops vs 3). As before it has two modes; 'Normal' in which it automatically detects panning (and then turns off stabilization in the requisite direction), and 'Active' which always gives stabilization in both dimensions.

One final specification difference is the maximum magnification, which unfortunately wasn't made widely available when the lens was first released, and has since caused some degree of controversy. Because while the minimum focus distance has decreased a little to 1.4m, the magnification has significantly decreased, from 0.16x to 0.12x. This means that while the older model could in principle capture an image area as small as 9 x 6 in (22.5 x 15 cm) on FX cameras, the best the new version can do is 12 x 8 in (30 x 20 cm). This indicates that the angle of view widens significantly on focusing closer.

Specifications compared

The table below gives a summary of the key specification differences between the two lenses:

	Nikon AF-S Nikkor 70-200mm F2.8 G ED VR II	Nikon AF-S Nikkor 70-200mm F2.8 G VR
Lens Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 elements/16 groups • 7 ED elements • Nano-crystal coatings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 elements/15 groups • 5 ED elements
Minimum focus	1.4m	1.5m
Maximum magnification	0.12x at 200mm	0.16x at 200mm
Focus modes	A/M, M/A, M	M/A, M
Image stabilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 stops claimed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 stops claimed
Weight	1540g (54.3 oz)	1470g (51.9 oz)
Dimensions	87mm diameter x 206mm length (3.4 x 8.1 in)	87mm diameter x 215mm length (3.4 x 8.5 in)
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three AF stop buttons