

## Elinchrom D-Lite

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I first saw Elinchrom's new D-Lites at the Focus exhibition this year and I've just had the opportunity to play with one, it's a nice kit, ideal for the enthusiast who wants to get started in studio photography.

The D-Lites will be available in three versions, the D-Lite100W/s model, the D-Lite 2 at 200W/s & the D-Lite 4 at 400W/s. All have the same accessory fitting as the standard heads, so the D-Lites will accept all of Elinchrom's accessory range.



The D-Lite range comes from Elinchrom's factory in India which has enabled them to produce these lower cost units. They all have plastic bodies and the build quality is not bad although the carrying handle and locking knobs could be a little bit more substantial. Having said that they are very small and light, at around 20cm long and 16cm in diameter and only weighing in between 900gms to 1200gms.

The controls on the D-Lite 2, 200W/s version that I looked at are very simple and operated by white buttons on the rear panel. These include power up & down, slave cell, audible beep, modelling lamp and flash test. The mains plug, On/Off switch, slave receptor and sync socket are also on the rear panel.

The power is calibrated in 1/10th of stops over a 5 stop range (4 stops on the D-Lite 100 version) and using both my flash meters I found that the D-Lite 2 was pretty accurate in both measurements. It actually measured just over 4 & 3/4 stops. The colour temperature of the plug in tube is 5650K with a respectable flash duration of 1/1200 on this model. Recycling is only .8 of a second at full power and it has auto dump when the power is reduced. I did find this a little slow from max to min so just used open flash to speed things up.

Elinchrom have also introduced an interesting feature on the D-Lite range in terms of the flash duration and colour temperature. A 'management' system is built in to the unit that ensures that when the power is reduced, both flash duration and colour temperature remain stable. This of course is

a nice feature and gives the photographer one thing less to worry about!

I phoned them up to ask exactly how it works, although they wouldn't explain it, I guess that its something to do with stabilising the output from the capacitors when they are running on less than 100%.



The modelling lamp, a 100w Leuci lamp on the D-Lites has several options and can be used at max, min or proportional, all on a continuous setting. Unfortunately you can't select an intermittent setting, so the modelling lamps are on all the time, even during the flash. As this same 100w lamp is used in all the three models, there will be a slight difference in modelling output when using D-Lites of different powers. If you were using a 100 & 200 together with the modelling lamp on half power, the actual output of each head would be around a stop different. Not a major problem for most photographers who will realise this and use their flash meters to take accurate measurements.

The D-Lite kits come with 2 heads, 2 very light 'cliplock' stands, 2 soft boxes, one 53cmx53cm and one slightly larger 65cmx65cm, both in bags., mains leads, and a sync lead. The kit is really very small and very lightweight and fits into 2 shoulder bags.

The D-Lite 2 kit was nice to use and very simple to operate, because of its size and weight it will be ideal for women who don't want to buy anything that's too heavy to lug about. I know it may not be politically correct to say 'women', but I get so many emails from women asking about the weight of heads and especially lighting kits, it's a bigger issue than most people think. So please don't shout at me I'm only trying to help!!

I think that the D-Lite is a nice kit to use and it has some very interesting features.

Because it takes the standard range of Elinchrom accessories it will be easy to build up the kit as required. On the plus side I felt that the heads performed very well and I liked the small size and weight of the kit. It comes with a DVD which gives good information to get started. The build quality is Ok, but I did think that the handle and locking knobs on the head were a little flimsy. That said you can buy the D-Lite 2 kit for around £400.00 which is pretty good value for what you get. So if you are looking for a good starter kit that you can build up later, the D-Lites are well worth considering.

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