

## Re: Best way to photograph/image Mars

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- *From:* David Nakamoto <[david.nakamoto@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:david.nakamoto@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Thu, 26 Apr 2007 05:26:38 GMT
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I have to agree with Chris. To get good images of planets, you need lots of magnification, which means you need to track, although all you need there is an equatorial mount, good polar alignment, and a good enough motor on the RA axis.

So unless the original poster can get this for his travel gear, forget about imaging Mars. This is especially true because we're entering a roughly one decade period where Mars is going to be VERY small even at opposition.

--- Dave

Chris L Peterson wrote:

On 25 Apr 2007 09:28:18 -0700, [scottupnorth@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:scottupnorth@xxxxxxxxxx) wrote:

Here are some of my constraints:

I have an equatorial tracking mount for the 4" refractor I'll be using. I am anticipating a trip to Phoenix over x-mas so my travel setup will be limited to an alt-az mount (no tracking). It would be nice if I could collect several images of Mars before it drifts out of my field of view while using the alt-az mount on this trip.

This is a deal killer, IMO. You will be at high power and using a small sensor. Tracking is mandatory. Bear in mind it doesn't have to be very good tracking- a cheap equatorial mount with a single axis, non-computerized drive is more than adequate. But without tracking, you will be spending all your time trying to get the image on the chip, and then you'll just get a few frames, not enough to use effectively. Figure out a way to take a tracking mount.

It helps a lot that you'll be in a part of the country that often has good seeing, but for the best results with video planetary imaging you want hundreds of frames, if not thousands.

I have a laptop.

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Right off I am not interested in buying a digital SLR....although perhaps the cost of a system may approach the cost of a digital SLR which may make it the best option.

That's good, because a DSLR is completely the wrong camera for planetary imaging. You want an inexpensive webcam– I've had good luck with the Celestron NexImage. Many Philips and Logitech webcams are also quite good.

I was looking at Meade's DSI pro cameras. Would they work for me?

For planetary imaging, you would be better off with a simple webcam (which will be a lot cheaper, too).

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Chris L Peterson  
Cloudbait Observatory  
<http://www.cloudbait.com>