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Olympus stylus tough tg-860 review

The Olympus TG-860 is a 16-megapixel compact camera that is waterproof to a depth of 15m, shockproof from 2.1m, freezeproof to -10 °C and crushproof up to 100kg. The TG-860 features a 21-105mm zoom lens, improved video capture options, GPS with multiple satellite system support, built-in Wi-Fi, a variety of shooting modes, a 180-degree flip LCD, two customisable function buttons and Full HD video capture at 60 frames per second. Available in white, orange or black, the Olympus TG-860 costs around £230 /\$250. Premium compacts, CSCs and DSLRs aside, toughened cameras are one of the few classes of photographic device still being developed and advanced. We reviewed Olympus' TG-4 toughened camera back in October 2015. Now the same manufacturer's 16 megapixel, backlit CMOS sensor incorporating TG-860, announced back in spring 2015, arrives on the Photography Blog review slab as we enter 2016. Manufacturer's recommended retail price is an affordable £229.99, down from £269.99 on launch. A choice of bodies is available: choose from white, orange or black - the version we got to try out for the site. It's worth noting that, in an age when most compact point and shoots have been killed off by the camera facilities of our smartphones, the toughened qualities of the Olympus TG-860, perhaps more than any other factor, give it reason to still exist. For the record, the TG-860 is claimed to be waterproof to depths of 15 metres, shockproof against drops from 2.1 metres in height, crush-proofed to withstand pressures equivalent to 100kg, plus also freeze proof down to -10°C. Like the OM-D range, the camera also comes with body integral 5-axis image stabilisation in an attempt to deliver blur free photography and video (here at capture rates up to 60fps). Handy, as there is not much in the way of a handgrip provided on this almost completely flat-fronted camera. Nevertheless the TG-860 feels reassuringly solid when gripped in the palm, with no discernable 'give' to the bodywork if squeezed particularly tightly. Front of the Olympus TG-860 Unsurprisingly given the above, the standard 5x optical zoom lens is once again an internally stacked mechanism; at no point does it protrude from the body. This keeps it safe from harm, even when at maximum telephoto setting: namely a focal length equivalent to 105mm in 35mm terms. Conversely, the widest setting here is an ultra wide 21mm equivalent, thereby allowing capture of panoramic landscapes; an actual automatically self-stitching panorama mode is included as a shooting mode option here. In addition, select the Sport/'Sportcam' mode and image aspect ratio). Core spec aside, it's the other little helpful details that impress here; like the choice of two shutter release buttons, enabling easier operation if shooting in portrait rather than standard landscape fashion, as well as generally making life easier and avoid us fumbling with the camera if wearing gloves or wet handed from the pool. As one would expect, the Olympus TG-860 is Wi-Fi enabled and compatible with the free-to-download Olympus OI Share app. It also offers up built-in GPS, whilst at its heart is a TruePic VII processor wedded to that 16MP CMOS chip. Full HD videos are included as standard, at up to 60fps and with stereo sound, as is the regulation slow motion video mode for sports fanatics and dedicated selfie mode for narcissists. Also useful for this purpose is the 3-inch back plate LCD, that can be flipped up to face the subject. Resolution is a standard 460K dots. Like with nearly every digital compact these days, the battery is charged in-camera, with a mains adapter, plug and USB lead provided for the purpose. The port for the USB lead - and mini HDMI cable - is within the compartment that also houses the rechargeable battery - so the battery door must remain open for its power cell to be charged. The Olympus TG-860 in and though commendably quick to respond in just over a second or so, the simplistic menu systems and operational bleeps deployed by the TG-860 already feel like they belong to a different era. Perhaps that's partly because we don't actually get that many straightforward point-and-shoot compacts released any more. Or at least the higher priced models we usually play with don't feel the need to hold our hand through the process of setting up and capturing images. From the front then, the Olympus TG-860 doesn't resemble much of a departure from the Olympus Tough series compacts of old, or indeed its TG-850 forebear. But hey, if it ain't broke don't fix it, right? We have the familiar metal screws adorning the faceplate to give the camera a strong industrial look that suggests functionality rather than style, plus marginally raised, ridged end in lieu of an actual grip to prevent fingers slipping - plus narrow lozenge-shaped window housing the flash and AF assist/self-timer lamp. Both flash and lens are behind an extra layer of protective glass, whilst the metallic lens surround protrudes slightly in order to take any possible blows, rather than them being received by the lens itself. So much, so familiar then - and it's easy to at first overlook the secondary shutter release button that sits unobtrusively on the camera's fascia, just below the Olympus logo, which automatically falls under the middle finger of your right hand as the camera is gripped. More familiar than the above are the features on the camera's top plate: tiny pin pricks housing the stereo microphone/s, a main power button with a roughened surface the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head of a tack/metal nail, plus larger (main) raised shutter release button the size of the head press prompting the camera to take the shot. A maximum 16 megapixel, 4:3 format image is committed to memory in just over a second - so the camera is reasonably modest price tag and frill free menu systems. Top of the Olympus TG-860 Just to the right of this shutter release, if viewing the Olympus TG-860 from the back, is a lever with ridged, non-slip surface for operation or possibly compromise ease of use in difficult shooting circumstances. Moving to examine the rear of the TG-860, and more than four fifths of the camera's back plate is taken over by a large, tilting LCD screen that seems to exist purely for the taking of self portraits, as it flips upwards to face whatever is in front of the camera, but doesn't tilt downwards or flip outwards to allow for further creative framing. On the plus side, this minimizes the potential for possible damage to hinges should the camera be dropped or take a knock - and there is potentially more creativity to be had than from a standard fixed screen. To the right of said LCD is a selection of thumb-operated controls that will be immediately familiar to anyone who has handled a digital camera over the past 15 years. This includes the five pence piece sized shooting mode dial, with intelligent Auto (iAuto) and Program mode settings, sitting alongside a panorama option that automatically stitches together elongated shots in-camera, selectable scene modes; so far, so Olympus. Selfie Mode Top right of the Olympus TG-860 back is a self-explanatory dedicated red video record button, that sits within a slightly raised thumb pad, and requires a precise press with your thumbnail to commence operation - so it's therefore difficult to accidentally activate it. Directly beneath this again a familiar four-way control pad for selecting menu settings, implementing them with a press of the centrally positioned 'OK' button - also used for tabbing through images. Again, the TG-860 is very straightforward and easy to use, which is exactly as it should be for a toughened model; you don't want to be fiddling around with manual settings in the midst of the moment - this isn't a camera that will, by and large, be used for considered framing and photography. With the southern most tip of the thumb controller doubling up as a delete button, below this we have another dual use control - the button for calling up the camera's menu options and activating Wi-Fi. Adjacent is a larger than average industrial-looking lug for attaching a wrist strap - everything about this Olympus' design suggests rigidity and chunkiness, even though it will comfortably and portably slip into any jacket pocket. Practicality is the key here, obviously, an ethos carried over into the double lock mechanisms (both a lever and a switch) protecting the dual compartment housing the camera's battery and its SD memory card slot from the ingress of water, dust and other undesirables. Front of the Olympus TG-860 The dual mechanism obviously ensures that this door to the internal workings of the camera doesn't come open accidentally. Incidentally, battery life is put at an expected 300 shots maximum for the Olympus TG-860, which isn't at all bad for this class of camera, and certainly a match for more premium priced compacts or small format CSCs. We shot well over 150 shots and the battery indicator was still showing just a third depleted. Also housed in this same compartment are the ports for optional mini HDMI cable and provided USB lead, so this is the hub of the camera that you'll truly want protected. The base of the camera by contrast is unremarkable save for the fact that it features a screw thread not in the usual central position, but right over to one far side. There's also a second tripod socket on the opposite side of the camera to the location of the input ports, SD and battery slots, which means that the camera can be mounted in such a fashion as to shoot portrait fashion if so desired. Directly above this secondary screw thread sits the built-in GPS antenna, and below this is the built-in speaker. Playing with the Olympus TG-860 in the depths of an English winter, we were only able to test its waterproofing qualities when using it in the driving rain, and subsequently dunking it underwater in the bathroom, holding it under a running tap with the camera activated and its back screen visible. Happily the Olympus' screen was still working after the fact, as was the camera itself. Though there were a couple of tiny beads of moisture around the seal, no droplets had made contact with any sensitive inner workings. What's more, water droplets simply run off the camera's fascia and lens, quickly leaving both facets clear and dry. We look forward to taking the camera on an extended test diving in the Caribbean ... at a later date. So how does the TG-860 stack up as an image taking and making tool? Read on to find out. Image Quality All of the sample images in this review were taken using the 16 megapixel JPEG setting, which gives an average image size of around 6Mb. The Olympus TG-860's widest-angle setting of 21mm equivalent is certainly useful for squeezing a lot of your subject matter into frame, even if, when taking portraits up close, it can result in a very slight fish eye effect and an elongation or widening of features. Colours are, for the most part, however, realistically rendered, with an additional vivid colour option available to draw on should you be faced with otherwise drab, sludgy skies and environs that could do with a saturation boost to maintain visual interest. In addition we have Olympus' Art Filter digital effects to dip into, which are best used sparingly. We found the high contrast, gritty looking monochrome option could work well with otherwise dreary grey skies. In terms of performance, when shooting in the dim as well as the dank, this Olympus's light sensitivity range stretches from ISO 125 to ISO 6400. Again, fairly basic range when compared to more premium (non destruction-proofed) models, but in fairness just what we'd expect of a point and shoot camera with this size of sensor at its heart. Above ISO800 detail begins to take on an obviously smeared appearance, congruent with a camera with the aid of a steady surface produced some quite pleasing low light results that were a definite improvement on the camera simply being left to its auto everything devices. Noise There are 7 ISO settings available on the Olympus TG-860. Here are some 100% crops which show the noise levels for each ISO setting. Focal Range The Olympus Tough TG-860 has a 5x optical zoom which starts at 21mm and zooms out to a modest 105mm. There's an amount of barrel distortion at wide-angle but not as much as we expected to see. Sharpening Although we only used a standard sharpening amount in order to test the JPEG files, we found that, while very sharp on there own, the TG-860 does benefit from a little boost in an editing suite. However, if there's a lot of noise in the picture, this can have a tendency to exacerbate and reduce the overall quality of viewing. Chromatic Aberrations We managed to identify some chromatic aberration at the far edges of the frame. However, because of the wide-angle view of the lens, this tends to be quite distorted and blurred, so not very easy to see. You may therefore decide that it's not harsh enough to consider a problem. Macro The Olympus Tough TG-860 has a Supermacro mode on its command dial which you need to switch to in order to focus down to 1cm. We found that the main issue with this mode is getting enough light between the lens and the subject. If you don't use the Supermacro mode, the closest that the TG-860 will focus to is 10cm, which isn't a useful close focusing result. However, it has to be noted that the camera can focus to 10cm even at full zoom, which is very useful for sending backgrounds out of focus. Flash With the flash turned off, the camera doesn't show any obvious signs of vignetting at wide-angle or full zoom. However, it does occur when the flash is on. Certainly at wide-angle, at least. It's less so at full zoom, but on a plain white wall, it's still noticeable. We're pleased to see that the red-eye reduction is switched on there is a definite reduction in the pupil. Fill-in (100% Crop) Night The TG-860 has a dedicated Night scene mode in the Scenes setting on the command dial. The advantage of using this mode is that the camera is allowed to select a higher ISO in order to get a balanced exposure. The camera will also assume you're resting the camera, so will choose a low ISO. Our test used a 2.5sec exposure, so hand holding the camera isn't an option. Sample Images from the Olympus TG-860 camera, which were all taken using the 16 megapixel JPEG setting. The thumbnails below link to the full-sized versions, which have not been altered in any way. Download 1/400s to the full-sized versions, which have not been altered in any way. · f/6.8 · ISO 125 25mm (35mm) Download Original ISO 125 31mm (35mm) Download Original Download Original Download 1/640s · f/5.7 · ISO 125 105mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/250s · f/5.3 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download Original Downloa 66mm (35mm) Download Original Download Original Download 1/300s · f/3.5 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/320s · f/3.5 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/320s · f/3.5 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download 1/320s · f/3.5 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/320s · f/3.5 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/320s · f/3.5 · ISO 125 21mm (35mm) Download Original Downlo 105mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/100s \cdot f/5.3 \cdot ISO 200 82mm (35mm) Download Original Do 105mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/25s · f/5.1 · ISO 800 57mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/25s · f/5.7 · ISO 800 105mm (35mm) Download Original Download 1/30s · f/3.5 · ISO 400 21mm (35mm) Download Original Download Original Download 1/30s · f/3.5 · ISO 400 21mm (35mm) Download Original Download Origina (35mm) Download Original Download 1/30s · f/3.5 · ISO 400 21mm (35mm) Download Original Sample Movie & Video Product Images Front of the Olympus TG-860 Front of the Olymp Image Displayed Tilting LCD Screen Tilting LCD Screen Top of the Olympus TG-860 Bottom of the Olympus TG-860 Side of the Olympus and-shoot camera, the only reason for its existence in a modern world where we already have cameras in smartphones and tablet PCs is that we'll be able to shoot images in conditions in which it would otherwise be treacherous to use such alternative devices. And it's fair to say that the need for optimum image quality is of secondary consideration to being able to achieve any image at all. It is easy enough to use, its menus are deliberately simplistic it seems, and it does the job for which it was designed in a functional and competent fashion, which is exactly what we were hoping for. While it hasn't re-invented the wheel in terms of what we'd expect from a toughened model, perhaps that self same wheel didn't actually need re-inventing. All things considered, the TG-860's price tag of just over £200 feels fair - not too cheap at just shy of £230, but hardly prohibitively pricey either. As you won't be considering this camera unless you really do need to capture photos or videos in the wet, the grime-y or the dusty, and want something that feels a bit more like a traditional camera than an action camera you might otherwise mount on the handle bars of your bicycle, it feels like in making a choice of the Olympus TG-860 you wouldn't be going far wrong. Ratings (out of 5) Design 3.5 Features 4 Ease-of-use 4 Image quality 4 Value for money 4 Main Rivals Listed below are some of the rivals of the Olympus TG-860. The Canon PowerShot D30 is an action compact camera that's waterproof to an impressive 25m, as well as being dust, freeze and shock proof. The Canon PowerShot D30 is an action compact camera that's waterproof to an impressive 25m, as well as being dust, freeze and shock proof. The Canon PowerShot D30 is an action compact camera that's waterproof to an impressive 25m, as well as being dust, freeze and shock proof. The Canon D30 also offers 12 megapixels, a 5x zoom, 1080p HD video, built-in GPS and a 3-inch screen. Read our in-depth Canon PowerShot D30 review now... The Fujifilm FinePix XP80 is a tough water, freeze, shock and dust proof compact camera. The XP80 offers a 16.4 million pixel 1/2.3 inch BSI-CMOS sensor, built-in wi-fi, 10fps burst shooting, 1080i HD movies, a 5x zoom lens and a 2.7 inch LCD screen. Read our Fujifilm FinePix XP80 review now... The Coolpix AW130 is Nikon's latest all-action compact camera. The 16 megapixel Nikon AW130 features a 5x zoom lens, 3 inch OLED 921K-dot screen, built-in GPS. NFC and wi-fi, 8fps burst shooting and can record full 1080p video. Read our Nikon Coolpix AW130 review to find out if it's the right tough camera for you... The Panasonic Lumix DMC-FT5 is a new freeze, shock, water and dust proof camera. The well-appointed Panasonic FT5 also features built-in GPS, wi-fi and NFC functionality, a compass, altimeter and barometer, 4.6x zoom, 1920x1080 full-HD movie recording and a 16 megapixel sensor. Read our Panasonic Lumix DMC-FT5 review to find out if this is the best do-it-all camera for your family.... Review Roundup Reviews of the Olympus TG-860 from around the web. Following an underwhelming tough compact named the TG-850, Olympus clearly had some kinks to work out. The TG-860 has inherited its predecessor's two best features—the 21mm wide angle and the 180° adjustable screen—but it's also received numerous upgrades: Wi-Fi, GPS, a second shutter release, a second tripod mount thread, a Sportcam mode and even new colours. Are these changes enough to make the old armchair adventurer into a genuine all-terrain machine, ready for the dust and extremity of the outside world? Read the full review » The Olympus Stylus Tough TG-860 updates the TG-850, and adds built in Wi-Fi and GPS, and increases the waterproof rating down to 15 metres, whilst other features remain the same, including the ultra-wide angle 21mm equivalent 5x optical zoom lens, 16 megapixel sensor, and a tilting 3inch screen. Read the full review » The Olympus TOUGH TG860 is a water-proof, shock-proof, freeze-proof and dust-proof compact. Launched in April 2015 it's an update to the year-old TG850 iHS. It retains the earlier model's 16 Megapixel CMOS sensor and the 21-105mm equivalent optical zoom, still the widest lens available on any waterproof compact. Also retained is the 3 inch 460k dot LCD screen which can flip forward for selfie shooting. Read the full review » The Olympus Tough TG-860 adds the GPS and Wi-Fi that were missing from the TG-850, but takes a step back in terms of image quality. Read the full review » Specifications Image Sensor Effective pixels 16 Megapixels Filter array Primary colour filter (RGB) Full resolution 16.8 Megapixels Type 1/2.3" CMOS Lens Optical zoom 5x (WIDE) Focal length 3.74 - 18.7mm Focal length (equiv. 35mm) 21 - 105mm Structure 10 lenses / 8 groups Aspherical glass elements 5 Maximum aperture 3.5 - 5.7 Digital Zoom Enlargement factor 4x / 20x combined with optical zoom Monitor type LCD Monitor size 7.6cm / 3.0" (16:9) Resolution 460000 dots Brightness adjustment +/- 2 levels LCD backlight boost Yes Frame assistance Yes Protection panel Yes Focusing System Method TTL iESP auto focus with contrast detection Modes iESP Face Detection AF Spot AF Tracking Standard mode 0.1m - october (wide) / 0.1m - october Mode Closest focusing distance: 1cm AF lock Yes AF illuminator Yes Light Metering Histogram in shooting mode Yes Modes ESP light metering Spot metering Exposure System Modes i-Auto Programme automatic Super Macro Scene Modes Art Filter Sportcam Panorama Self Portrait Shutter speed 1/2 - 1/2000s / < 4s (Night scene) Exposure compensation +/- 2 EV / 1/3 steps Enhancement function Mechanical Image Stabiliser (Lens shift) Advanced Face Detection Technology Shadow Adjustment Technology Scene Modes Number of scene with portrait e-Portrait technology Scene Modes Portrait Endscape Interval shooting Hand-held Starlight Night Scene with portrait Endscape Interval shooting Hand-held Starlight Night Scene with portrait Endscape Interval shooting Hand-held Starlight Night Scene with portrait Endscape Interval shooting Hand-held Starlight Night Scene with portrait Endscape Interval Scene Wide 2 Underwater Macro Backlight HDR Self-portrait Art Filter Modes Pop Art Soft Focus Pale & Light Colour Grainy Film Pin Hole Diorama Dramatic Tone Sensitivity Auto AUTO / High AUTO Manual ISO 125, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200, 6400 White Balance AUTO WB system Yes Preset values Overcast Sunlight Tungsten Underwater Flourescent 1 Onetouch white balance 1 custom settings can be registered Internal Flash Modes AUTO Red-eye reduction Fill-in Off LED Slave Working range (wide) 0.1 - 2.5m (ISO 1600) Working range (tele) 0.1 - 2.5m (ISO 1600) External Flash Control Sequence Shooting Reduced resolution 7fps / 7 frames (Full Image Size) 2.5fps / 200 frames Interval shooting Yes Image Processing Pixel mapping Yes Noise reduction Yes Engine TruePic VII Distortion compensation Yes Engine TruePic VII Distortion of saturation Red-eye reduction Shadow Adjustment Movie Editing Still Image Cropping Yes Edit movie Yes View Images Modes Single Index Zoom Slide show Index 5 x 4 frames Zoom Yes; 1.1 - 10x Auto rotation Yes Image Protect mode Yes Histogram in playback Index jump Still Image Recording DCF Yes EXIF 2.3 PIM III DPS PictBridge DPOF Yes Movie Recording System Recording format QuickTime Motion JPEG® Image Stabilisation Mode Hybrid lens shift + digital (5-axis) HD Movie quality 480 60P Recording time: Up to card capacity Note: maximum file size 4GB When shooting 1080P/720P movies, use SDHC / SDXC class 6 or higher. Movie Specialties High-Speed Recording 480x360 (4:3) / 640x360 (16:9) / 240fps Up to 4GB 640x480 (4:3) / 854x480 (16:9) / 120fps Recording time: Up to 4GB Time lapse 1080p, 820p, 480p Art Filter Pop Art Soft Focus Pale & Light Colour Grainy Film Pin Hole Diorama Dramatic Tone Sound Recording System Voice Playback Yes Sound recording Yes; PCM Internal microphone Stereo Image footage 4s Speaker Yes Memory Internal memory 37MB Removable Media SD / SDHC / SDXC (UHS-I class supported) Capacity 128GB Eye-Fi Card compatible Yes Image Size 16M 4608 x 3456 8M 3264 x 2448 3M 2048 x 1536 VGA 640 x 480 Aspect ratio 4:3 / 3:2 / 16:9 / 1:1 Menu Menu languages in camera 39 Tough Features Shock resistant Shock-proof from heights of up to 2.1m * Waterproof Waterproof down to -10°C *** Crushproof Crushproof Up to 100kg **** Dustproof Yes * Equivalent to MIL Standard (Olympus test conditions) ** According to IEC standard publication 529 IPX8 *** According to Olympus test conditions **** According to IEC standard publication 529 IPX6 Other Features Premium functions iHS Technology GPS Yes Perfect Shot Preview Yes Panorama function Smart Panorama Self timer Delay: 2 / 12s / Custom Menu guide Yes Date imprint Yes SNS upload Yes LED Illuminator Yes Customisation Options Power Supply Battery LI-50B Lithium-Ion Battery LI-50B Lithium-Ion Battery Literace HDMI | Yes; Micro connector (Type D) * Wireless connectivity WiFi Eye-Fi Card compatible DC input Yes Combined A/V & USB output Yes USB 2.0 High Speed Yes * "HDMI", the HDMI logo and "High-Definition Multimedia" Interface" are trademarks or registered trademarks of HDMI Licensing LLC. Size Dimensions (W x H x D) 112.9 x 64.1 x 27.6mm Weight 224g (including battery and memory card) Your Comments

