

# Elinchrom D-Lite RX ONE twin-head kit

<b>Price:</b> £400 (with softboxes) / £350 (with brollies)
<b>Energy (Ws/J):</b> 100
<b>F/stop (1m, ISO 100, reflector 48°):</b> f/32
<b>Power range:</b> Five stops (6–100W / 1/16–full power)
<b>Flash duration at maximum power:</b> 1/2200sec
<b>Recycling time:</b> 0.44 to 1.5 seconds
<b>Colour temperature:</b> 5500K
<b>Modelling lamp mode:</b> Proportional, min, max, off
<b>EL-Skyport (Built-in):</b> Eight channels / Four groups
<b>Sync voltage:</b> Five volts
<b>Sync socket:</b> 3.5mm mini-jack
<b>Dimensions (with protective cap):</b> 19x14x19cm
<b>Weight:</b> 900g
<b>Supplied accessories:</b> Mains cable, sync cable, flashtube, modelling lamp and protective cap
<b>Contact:</b> www.theflashcentre.com

STUDIOFLASH PHOTOGRAPHY is an area that has always appealed to amateur photographers, but proved too difficult to master for many in the pre-digital days when it wasn't possible to preview exposures and lighting effects. The instant review facility of digital cameras now means inexperienced photographers can check results on their camera and make necessary adjustments until they're happy with the results. This has led to the budget end of the studioflash market enjoying a steady demand for affordable and easy-to-use flash systems. As well as established makes like Elinchrom, Bowens and Interfit, several other brands (mostly with Chinese-made units) have emerged, giving consumers more choice than ever. The options are further supplemented by the off-camera/wireless options provided by external 'Speedlight' flashguns, offering an unprecedented level of power, features and versatility.

With lighting proving such a crowded and confusing market for consumers, new products need to offer something special to stand out from their rivals. Elinchrom's latest budget studioflash system, the D-Lite RX ONE, looks set to meet that requirement. This Swiss firm has long held a reputation for high-quality and reliable products, with emphasis placed on providing enthusiasts and professionals with well-specified, trustworthy lighting products. In 2006, it released the original D-Lite system, which gave newcomers on a budget a chance to experience what has made Elinchrom a leading name in lighting. The D-Lite range has seen a couple of upgrades since then, with the RX ONE being its latest. Its new features aim to not only make it a great choice for first-time studioflash users, but also to provide an alternative to using Speedlight systems, or indeed to be used alongside them.

The controls are neatly arranged on the rear so it's very fast and simple to adjust the



**Flashy kit** The twin-head kit is great value and a suitable alternative to using a Speedlite set-up.

power of the flash or modelling lamp, or switch the slave or audible beep on or off. The list of controls are shown on the image above.

The RX ONE system offers plenty of versatility, with power settings adjustable in 1/10th-stop increments and the modelling lamp having the option of staying on full power or proportional to the flash power setting. You can also switch the slave cell and audible beep functions on or off, too, if you so wish. The access slot for the fuse is located by the small, pronounced main on/off switch. There is a 3.5mm mini-jack socket that allows for corded operation of the RX ONE head, but you'll probably find you'll never need to use it. This is because the kit comes supplied with a hotshoe-

mounted EL-Skyport Transmitter, which allows you to move freely within the studio environment. As well as triggering the lights, the unit sports small control buttons that adjust the power settings of your heads and can be used with EL-Skyport software to offer several other functions including second-curtain sync or multi-flash. It's also worth noting that an app for iPad/iPhone/iPod Touch control is available, as is an optional WiFi module.

When used instead of or alongside Speedlites, you're able to set the flash sync as fast as 1/250sec if required and it's worth noting that the system is clever enough to read the pre-flash from flash systems and sync correctly with the flash exposure.



**Light up your life** Elinchrom's starter kit is a great first choice for studio lighting.

**"THE RX ONE IS GREAT TO TRY OUT MORE SOPHISTICATED LIGHTING THAN IS POSSIBLE WITH ON-CAMERA FLASH"**

The styling of this new D-Lite model follows earlier versions but the RX ONE has a far more compact housing that really does make it a portable option – as long as you have access to a mains power supply. The studioflash head looks stylish and feels reasonably robust, with a locking handle on the left side allowing for fast adjustments of the head's angle, as well as featuring a fitting for the attachment of a brolly. A cooling fan prevents overheating and proves quiet in operation. The RX ONE heads are able to be far smaller because they only offer a maximum power output of 100W, which is much lower than the 200W and 400W D-Lite heads in the range or most other studioflash heads for that matter. This is because the RX ONE heads are designed as

much to offer an alternative to Speedlite lighting set-ups as for more conventional studioflash shooting. While its power output is less than other studioflash systems, it's worth noting it's still around twice the power of most top-end Speedlights.

We found the kit to be very easy to work with. The controls couldn't be simpler to use and the twin softboxes were ideal in the studio for shooting portraits. We even used them in a garden and balanced the flash output with a setting sun to prove that they're versatile enough to provide fill-in in much the same way as flashguns. We had less than a fortnight to try out the Elinchrom kit, but found it to be as reliable as previous D-Lite systems, just as easy to

## RX ONE controls

- 1) Modelling lamp: proportional/on/off
- 2) Test flash
- 3) Digital power display
- 4) Slave cell on/off
- 5) Slave cell receptor
- 6) Charge audible signal
- 7) Power up & down/advanced modes
- 8) Mains on/off
- 9) 3.5mm mini-jack sync socket
- 10) Umbrella fittings
- 11) Modelling lamp fuse



## Verdict

Top-end Canon and Nikon flashguns cost £450 or more, so £400 for a well-featured two-head studioflash system represents great value. Sure, they're mains-controlled only, but buy a 10m extension lead and you've a light, easy-to-use and versatile system that can be used outdoors in the garden. With the flexibility afforded by the EL-Skyport system, as well as access to Elinchrom accessories, anyone looking for a low-cost, reliable studio starter kit should consider this excellent outfit.

Build quality	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆
Overall	★★★★☆

use and much more versatile thanks to the EL-Skyport system.

There are two twin-head kits available; one supplied with a pair of brollies for £350 and another with two softboxes for £400. Brollies are faster to set up so have speed as an advantage, but I prefer to use the softboxes for their quality of light. For that reason, I would highly recommend that you pay the extra £50. Of course, you can always add lighting accessories such as brollies, snoots and grids to your set-up at a later date. The RX ONE is certainly a great way to try out more sophisticated lighting techniques than is possible with on-camera flash and is an excellent alternative to a multiple flash set-up. 🌟