Various types of flash use

1. Direct Flash on camera
   Direct Flash on camera will give you flat lighting with little volume or texture, but it is the quickest and easiest method of flash use. Many journalistic photographers have used this “style” to give a sense of the captured and even stolen moment. This method is harsh, yet can be effective as in the photographs of Weegee’s done in the 1940 and 50’s or the early work of Richard Misrach.

2. Diffused flash on camera
   Diffused flash on camera gives a softer look, prevents glare and gives a wider angle of coverage for slightly wide-angle lenses. You can use a diffusion filter to soften the flash and there are kits for this use. If you don't have a diffusion filter for your flash, you can tape a translucent material such as tissue paper or tracing paper over the flash or use a white handkerchief rubber banded over the head. Be careful not to obscure the electronic eye and bracket!

3. Direct flash off camera
   Direct flash off camera requires a pc cord (a flash power cord) to get the flash away from the camera. This technique can give a more three-dimensional feeling. You must be aware of the angle of the light and where your shadows will fall, but this can be a very effective lighting technique.

4. Bounce Flash
   Bounce Flash will give you a softer more natural light. You can bounce from the side or above using existing structures like white walls or ceiling or using tools like a reflector or an umbrella. If using existing structures, beware of beamed ceilings, colored surfaces, and distance! The light must have a clear path from the flash to the subject. Any obstruction will cause a shadow. If your bounced surface has a color, your subject will get a colorcast. And, remember, flash to subject distance—not camera to subject distance—determines flash exposure. If the light must travel to the ceiling and down to the subject, the flash to subject distance range can be as much as double the camera to subject distance! Double the distance means 1/4 the light!
   If you have a swivel head, your automatic exposure will work if the subject is in your flash distance range with the bounce.
   If you do not have a swivel head, you will use a pc cord to get the flash off the hot shoe and pointed toward the reflective surface. You must calculate your exposure manually since the electronic eye that determines exposure will be pointed toward the bounce surface and give an incorrect reading.
   Helpful hint: In portraits with the light bounced from the ceiling, a white index card attached to the swivel head will fill in the shadows and make a more pleasing portrait.

Reminders for Flash Photography
1. Always calculate on Flash-to-Subject Distance, not Camera-to-Subject distance
2. Pay attention to the location and direction of the flash’s electronic eye.
3. Be sure that you wait for a full power charge on the flash; many flashes will fire at less than full power giving an underexposure.
4. Be sure to bracket using the f-stop. Changing the shutter speed will not affect the flash exposure.
5. Pay special attention to the surface quality of the place you choose to bounce from. This can have significant affect on the quantity of your exposure and the quality of the light on the subject.