



The Beginner's Guide to Stunning iPhone Photos

Cheat Sheet Materials



Written by Jesse Hebert
Photography by Jesse Hebert

All images are © 2023 Jesse Hebert
unless otherwise specified.

All material, excluding images are
© 2023 Hello Enthusiast Project Inc.

All Rights Reserved

These materials are produced for educational purposes solely and intended to be used in collaboration with the course videos and slide deck accompanying: “The Beginner’s Guide to Stunning iPhone Photos”

You may not copy, reproduce, distribute, publish, transmit, modify, create derivative works or in any other way, exploit any part of the materials provided with this course without the prior written permission of Hello Enthusiast Project Inc.

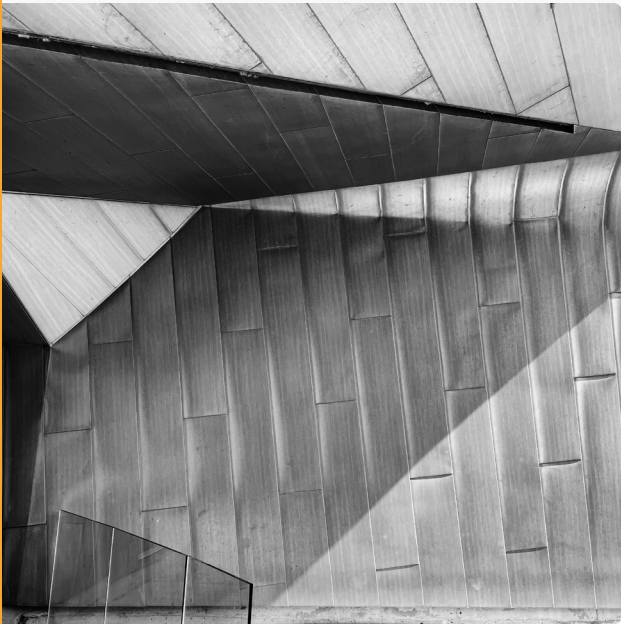
We make every effort to ensure accurate, up-to-date and relevant information. However, it’s important to note that the iPhone’s technology is under continuous development.

This course was created using:
iPhone 12 Mini – iOS 16.4

With each new model of the iPhone and/or iOS update there is the potential for alterations in the interface, camera, tools, and other software-related features. For this reason, certain information in this course may fall out of relevancy or accuracy. For up-to-date information on the iPhone and its newest features, please visit: apple.com

Quotation on Page 5: Henri Cartier-Bresson’s “The Decisive Moment”
Simon and Schuster/Editions Verve, 1952

Photography Tips
info@photographytips.com
photographytips.com



Welcome

There has never been a better time to learn iPhone photography!

The iPhone has come a long way since its initial release in 2007. Apple has steadily advanced the iPhone’s technology with a new model nearly each year since its original release. As of writing this, the newest model (iPhone 14 Pro), is taking the photography world by storm.

The iPhone 14 Pro has some of the biggest changes in the camera’s system yet. The main camera’s image sensor has been upgraded from 12MP to 48MP. That’s a huge leap for a smartphone camera! This development along with other camera improvements has caught the attention of many professional photographers that have since applauded the iPhone 14 Pro’s imaging capabilities. Some professional photographers have even transitioned to the iPhone 14 Pro as a main travel or street camera.

However, the iPhone is certainly not a *perfect* camera.. just yet. There are certain limitations that come with using the iPhone’s camera and in this course we’re going to discuss what they are and how to still take advantage of this incredible piece of technology.

This material is designed to prolong the learning experience of our iPhone Fundamental Course. Each page serves as a cheat sheet for a certain topic discussed in the course. The information provided on these sheets is not exhaustive but rather a brief overview. For a more in-depth explanation of these concepts, please look to the course video or slide deck resource.

If you have any questions or comments about the information provided in this resource, the course video or the slide deck, please reach out to us and we would be happy to assist you!

Wishing you all the best in your photography adventures,

Jesse Hebert

Instructor / Content Creator
PhotographyTips

photographytips.com
jesse@photographytips.com

1 Must-Know Terms

Terms related to the photographic process and the iPhone camera.

Fundamental Terms

IMAGE SENSOR

The piece of electronic hardware in your iPhone that converts an optical image into an electronic image.

The iPhone's sensor varies from model to model but is generally quite small.

EXPOSURE TRIANGLE

A common analogy in photography to describe the main elements that affect the exposure of a photograph: aperture, shutter speed and ISO.

APERTURE

The opening in a lens through which light travels. The aperture of a lens affects exposure and depth of field. Aperture is measured in f-stops.

The iPhone lens aperture is fixed and varies from model to model but is generally lower than f/2.4.

SHUTTER SPEED

The length of time that the film or image sensor is exposed to light. Shutter speed affects exposure and motion blur. Shutter Speed is measured in fractions of a second when it is under a second.

The iPhone automatically determines and sets the appropriate shutter speed to capture a well-exposed image. It will always try to use the highest possible shutter speed (Maximum: 1/8000).

ISO

Refers to the sensitivity of the camera's image sensor to incoming light. ISO affects exposure and noise (graininess).

The iPhone automatically sets the appropriate ISO to capture a well-exposed image. It will always try to use the lowest possible ISO (Min: ISO 25).

WHITE BALANCE

Camera setting that establishes the true colour of white in your image. This is the baseline from which all other colours are measured. Inaccurate white balance will produce an image with colour skews along the yellow-blue or magenta-green spectrum.

The iPhone automatically sets the white balance and can often skew slightly. This can usually be fixed in editing.

Image Formats

IMAGE RESOLUTION

Image resolution refers to the amount of detail an image holds. The way that image resolution is measured varies depending on the intended use (digital vs. print applications).

Most commonly, the term resolution is used to refer to the number of pixels. This is represented in two common ways: **(1)** width x height dimensions (2000 x 3000px) or **(2)** the total number of pixels (6MP).

JPEG

A common image format that uses lossy compression to record digital images. This format is widely supported.

Prior to iOS 11, the iPhone captured images in JPEG format by default. The resulting images were roughly 12MP.

HEIF

A lossy compression image format similar to JPEG with the ability to store files at a fraction of the file size. This format is increasing in popularity.

Since iOS 11, the iPhone captures images in HEIF format by default. The resulting images are roughly 12MP.

APPLEPRORAW

An Apple proprietary image format that combines the lossless information of a DNG/RAW image format.

Images captured in this format record more light and colour information. This allows you to control the exposure and colour balance of your image to a much greater degree in editing.

Pro-line iPhones since iPhone 12 Pro running iOS 14.3 are AppleProRAW compatible. The iPhone 14 Pro and Pro Max also allow you to increase the resolution from 12MP to 48MP.

iPhone Features

LIVE PHOTO

An iPhone camera feature that, when enabled, captures a three second video surrounding the time that an image is taken. This feature allows users to later on select a frame from the recorded video to be used as a still image or "Key Photo". Any new frame that's taken from the recorded video will be of a lower resolution than the original still image.

Images taken with this feature will increase the file size about 2x.

DYNAMIC RANGE

The ratio between the brightest and darkest tones that a camera can capture in a single exposure. A camera with a higher dynamic range allows for the capture of much higher contrast light while maintaining adequate detail across highlight, midtone and shadow.

HDR

HDR (High Dynamic Range) is commonly referring to a photographic process that blends multiple exposures of the same scene in order to increase the dynamic range of an image.

The iPhone's HDR feature works in exactly this way, except it's automated. By enabling the HDR feature, users can capture more detail in high contrast light (back-lit subject, bright sun, etc.).

BURST MODE

iPhone camera feature that allows users to capture a sequence of images. The iPhone's burst mode captures 10 frames per second.

Burst mode can be enabled by quickly tapping the shutter button and dragging to the left. A counter will appear over the shutter button indicating how many shots have been taken.

After a burst is taken, users can select the photos to keep by tapping the Burst thumbnail in their Photos gallery, then tapping Select.

NIGHT MODE

iPhone camera feature that, by default, automatically turns on when the camera detects a low-light situation. When enabled, this feature will capture images using a longer shutter speed in order to capture adequate light.



iPhone Camera Setup Guide

Optimal settings for your iPhone's camera.

PhotographyTips

IMAGE FORMATS

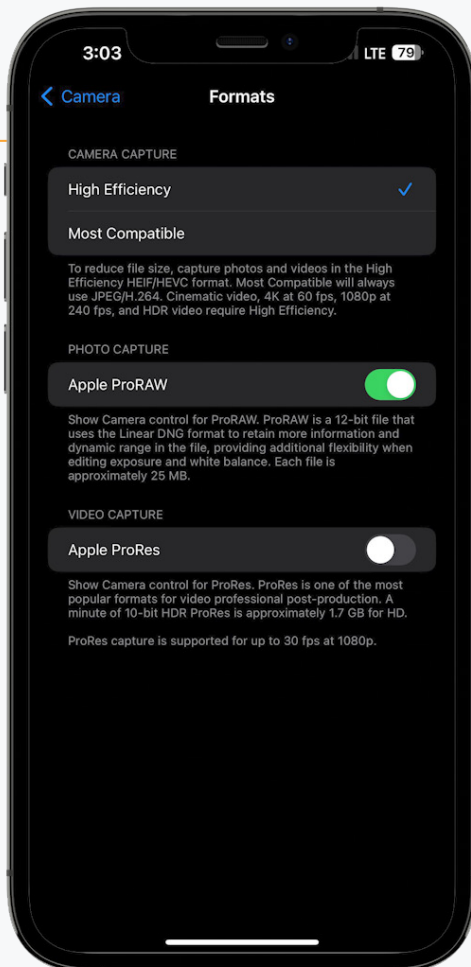
Settings > Camera > Formats

Since iOS 11, iPhone cameras have taken images in “High Efficiency” mode by default.

High Efficiency images are taken in HEIF format. They are comparable to the quality of a standard JPEG except the file size is 2x smaller!

Most Compatible images are taken in JPEG format. This file format is widely accepted and used, making it the ideal file format for sharing.

Apple ProRAW was introduced to Pro-line iPhones since the 12 Pro model. This format captures uncompressed information which allows for a wider dynamic range, more colour information and greater flexibility in editing. These files are about 4x larger than JPEG files.



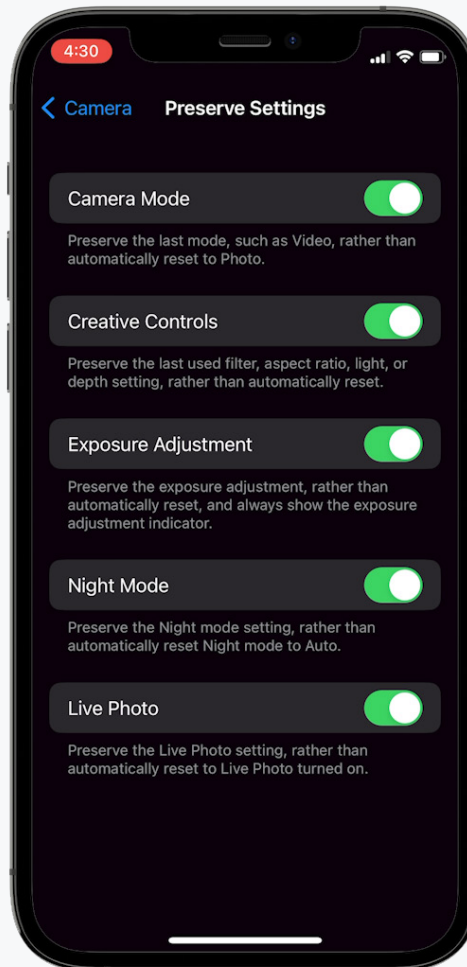
PRESERVE SETTINGS

Settings > Camera > Preserve Settings

By default, the iPhone's camera will reset to its default setup everytime that it is closed and re-opened. This can be less than ideal in many circumstances.

Preserve Settings, allows users to override this behaviour and tell the iPhone to save certain settings between uses.

This can be done by tapping the toggles next to each setting that you want to be preserved between uses.

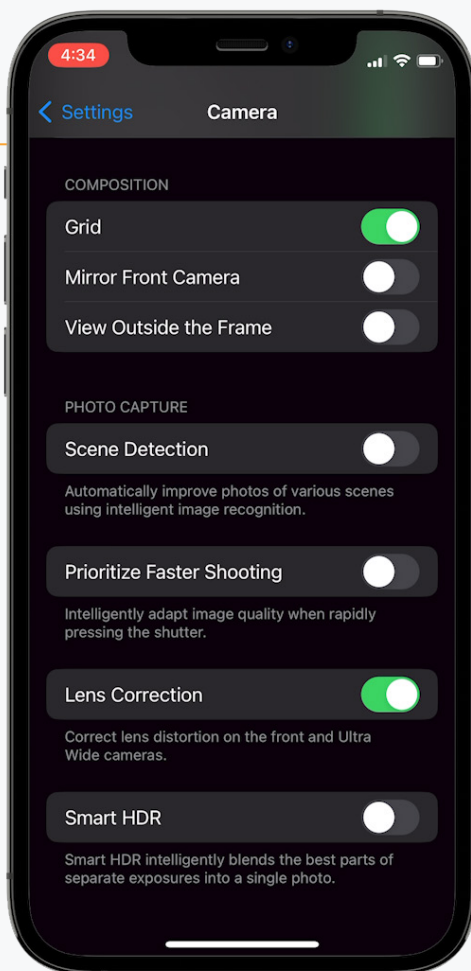


GRID & FASTER SHOOTING

Settings > Camera

Enabling the **Grid** feature will overlay a 3x3 grid over the shooting frame of the iPhone's camera. This grid helps in composition since it directly refers to the common compositional guide: Rule of Thirds. These lines can also assist in lining up a straight horizon line or straight vertical lines.

Prioritize Faster Shooting will degrade the quality of your images when shooting rapidly in order to shoot at a higher frame rate. I, personally, like to have this disabled since I want to capture the highest resolution possible always. When shooting rapidly, I will typically rely on the iPhone's Burst Mode.

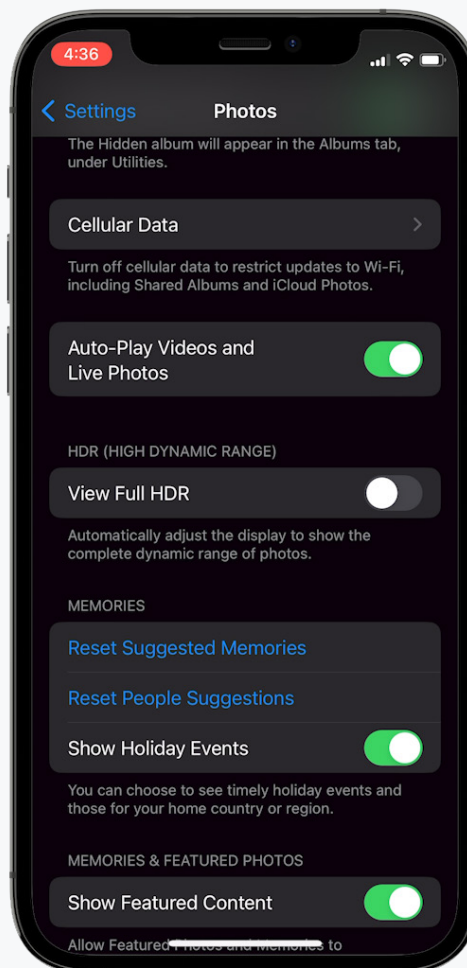


VIEW FULL HDR (DISABLE)

Settings > Photos

This setting can sometimes produce strange results when viewing images in the Photos app.

Some users, myself included, have noticed their images having blown out highlights and over-sharpened details only when viewed in Photos. Disabling this feature seems to be the solution to this rare issue.



3 iPhone Camera Interface

Diagram of the iPhone's default camera.

REVEALS HIDDEN CAMERA TOOLS/FEATURES

FLASH

Tap to enable or disable the Flash.

LIVE PHOTO

Tap to enable or disable the Live Photo feature.

This feature records 1.5s before and after the shutter button is pressed, allowing users to use a different frame from the recording, create a gif animation or a long exposure image.

EXPOSURE COMPENSATION

Tap to adjust the iPhone's exposure. The exposure setting locks until the next time the camera app is opened.

HDR

Tap to enable or disable the HDR feature.

This feature blends multiple exposures of the same image in order to produce a photograph with a higher dynamic range.

VOLUME UP/DOWN

Click the volume up or volume down button to capture a single image.

EXPOSURE/FOCUS ADJUSTMENT

Tap the iPhone's screen to set the automatic focus and exposure point.

Drag the sun icon up or down to increase or decrease the exposure.

Tap and hold on the screen to enable the AE/AF Lock feature.

SWITCH LENSES

Switch between different focal lengths. Pro-line iPhones since iPhone 11 have a third lens available: 3x (approx. 77mm).

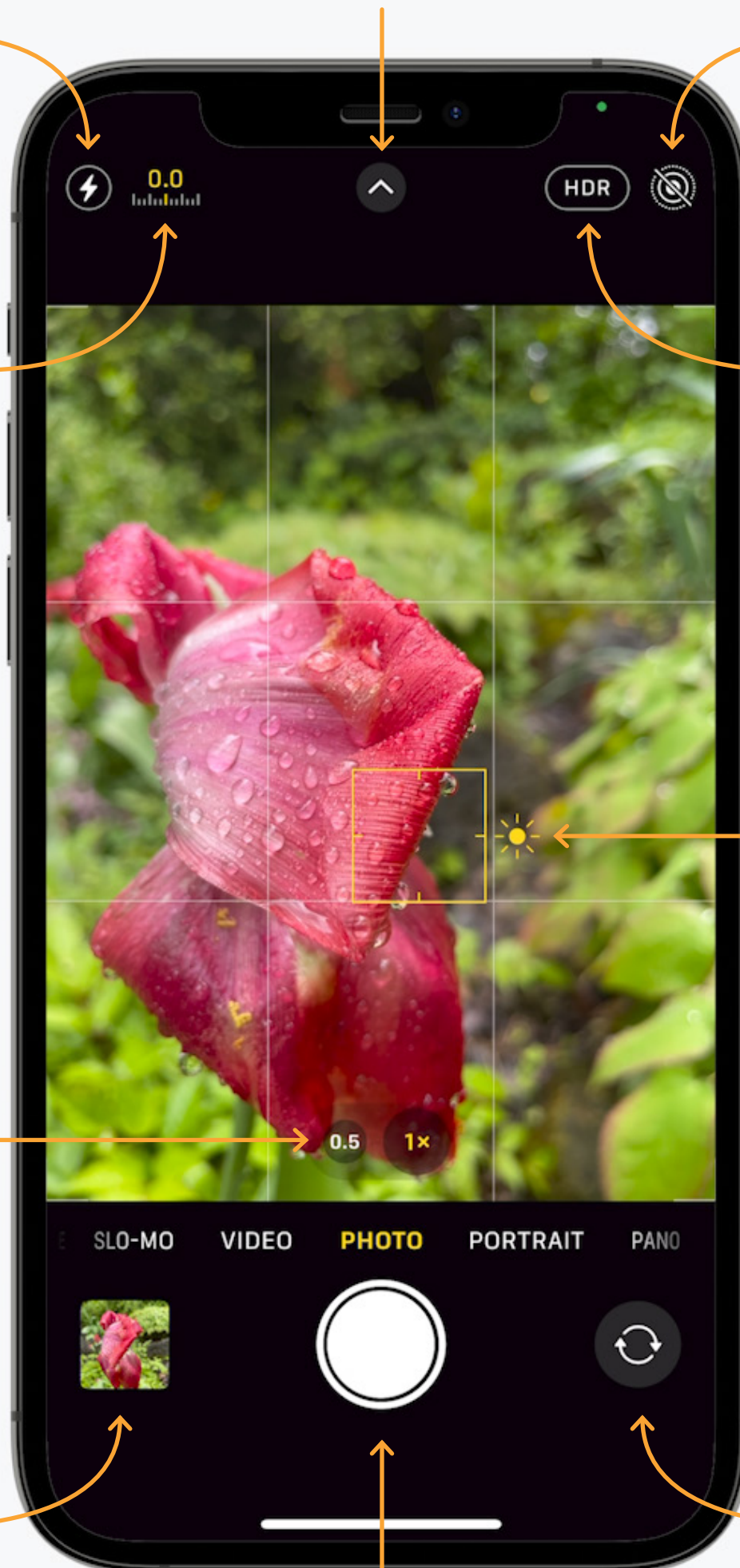
PHOTOS GALLERY

If the camera was opened from the home screen, only the images taken in that session will be viewable.

SHUTTER BUTTON

SWITCH CAMERA

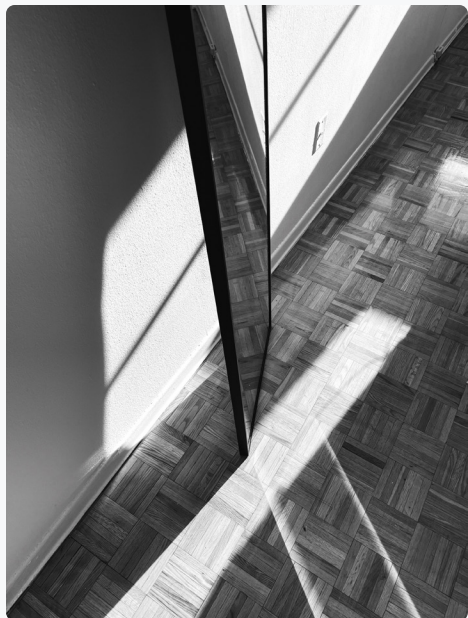
Tap to switch between the iPhone's rear and front-facing camera.



4 The Three Ingredients to Any Image

How to use light, composition and subject as a tool.

PhotographyTips



LIGHT

Capturing good light is the most effective way to see improvement in your images. Unfortunately, there is no single type of light that is “good” in every situation. Very generally speaking, good light will: create interest, illuminate your subject adequately, create depth and dimension or shape and contrast.

In order to use light as a tool, you must first be able to *notice* light. In your everyday life, practice seeing light and mentally characterizing it (using the characteristics on p.3). Good light is not always easy to come by, especially when you rely on natural light. When you notice good light, capture it! Don't be afraid to move a subject *into* good light.

EXERCISE: CHASING LIGHT

Over the course of a week, observe and characterize your lighting conditions to the best of your ability. You can do this mentally or by taking notes. The following week, simply look for those moments when the light is “good” or interesting. Capture at least one image that you're happy with in this light. At the end of this week, reflect on the images that you took.

IPHONE TIP:

The iPhone excels in bright, high contrast light. Use the HDR feature when you're capturing a wide spectrum of highlight and shadow or in backlit situations.

COMPOSITION

Composition simply refers to the arrangement of the elements in an image. The use of composition can indicate a photographer's unique voice or point of view.

The deliberate placement of elements in a frame can create harmony and balance, emphasize or hide certain details, and simplify complex scenes.

Composition is not only an aesthetic tool but a powerful tool for visual storytelling. Elements can be arranged to create a certain emotion or mood, highlight a theme or concept, or draw relationships between certain elements.

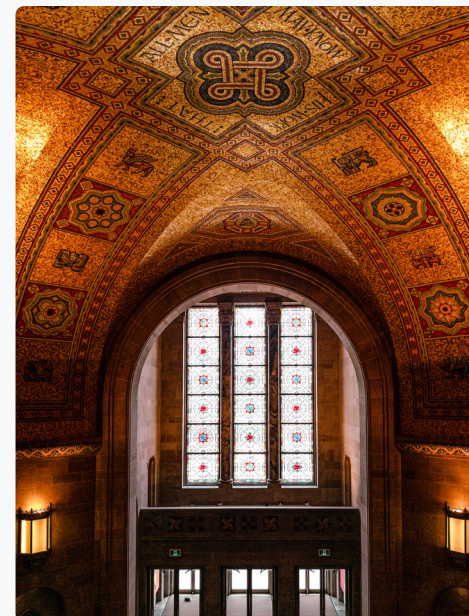
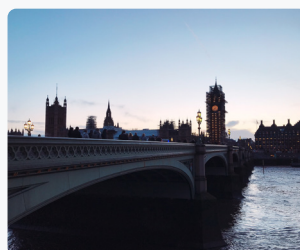
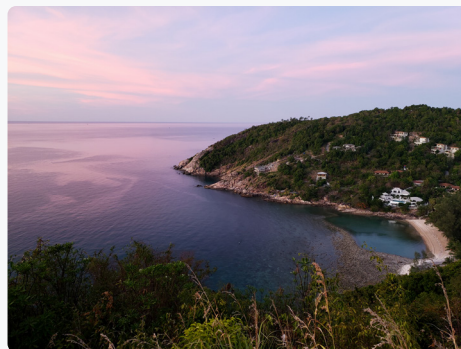
EXERCISE: VIEWPOINT: MOVE YOUR FEET

Select a single subject. Attempt to photograph it from as many different angles and positions as possible. Bigger subjects will allow for more opportunities to explore different compositions. Reflect on the images taken.

IPHONE TIP:

Enable the “grid” on the iPhone's default camera to assist in composition. **Settings > Camera > Grid (Toggle ON)**

This grid can be used in reference to the Rule of Thirds (p.4) or to simply line up elements in your frame.



SUBJECT

The subject of an image is what the image is about or portraying. The subject of an image is the main element in an image that draws attention.

There is no limit to what can be considered a subject in photography. People, food, landscapes, light, colour and texture are all viable options and this is only chipping the surface!

The subjects that a photographer chooses to turn their lens toward is very telling of that photographer's voice.

EXERCISE: PHOTO-WALK

Embark on a walk with your camera accessible. Every 50-100 paces-stop and push yourself to find a subject to take a picture of from that place.

IPHONE TIP:

Use Live Photos to never miss a spontaneous moment. This feature allows you to select a new frame from the recorded moment at a later time.

Use Burst Mode to capture movement or action.

Characteristics of Light

How to classify and describe lighting conditions.

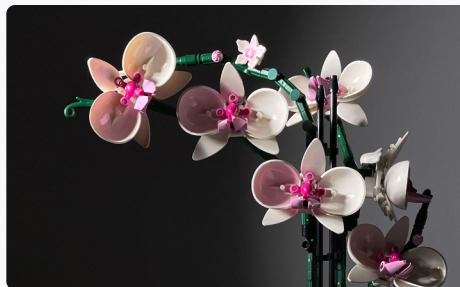
PhotographyTips



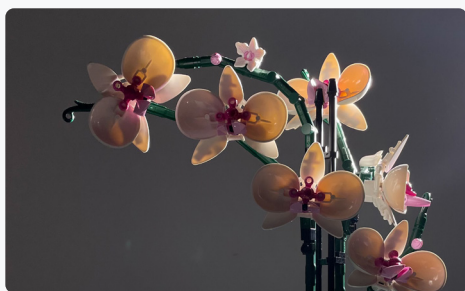
Front Light



Side Light (Left)



Side Light (Right)



Back Light



Top Light



Bottom Light

DIRECTION OF LIGHT

The angle at which light hits your subject or scene plays an important role in not only what parts of your subject/scene are illuminated but the amount of perceived depth and dimension.

Light casts shadows. The direction or prominence of these shadows impacts the perceived depth, dimension and shape of our subjects. When working with **hard light**, it is very important to consider direction since shadows under hard light are more prominent.

The direction of light can be classified as: front light, side light, back light, top light and bottom light (example images).

FOR BEGINNERS: I recommend positioning the subject at a 45° side angle to the light. This will illuminate the front of the subject and provide essential shadow detail.

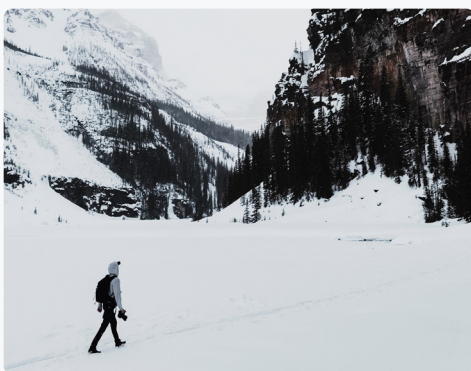
QUALITY OF LIGHT (SOFT VS. HARD)

Hard light is bare. There is a high contrast between light and shadow. Hard light casts distinct shadows, is often more dramatic and makes textures more pronounced.



Hard Light

Soft light is diffused. There is a low contrast between light and shadow. Soft light casts diffused shadows, is often less dramatic and makes textures less pronounced.



Soft Light

INTENSITY OF LIGHT

Bright light produces high contrast light with, often, deep dark shadows and more saturated colours. The HDR feature can work wonders in this light to expose for both highlight and shadow.



Bright Light

Dimmer light produces low contrast light and less saturation. If light is too dim, digital artifacts known as noise will start to appear and degrade the quality of the image.



Dim Light

COLOUR TEMPERATURE

Colour temperature is a measurement of light's colour, usually represented as a **kelvin** value. The colour temperature of natural light varies depending on the time of day, weather, latitude and season.

Blue Hour is the time of day just before sunrise or just after sunset where there is a faint blue-ish glow from the sun.

Golden Hour occurs during and immediately following sunrise or sunset. The light at this time of day is warm, low in the sky and glowy.

Daylight's colour temperature shifts slightly throughout the day but generally stays in or around neutral colour.



Blue Hour



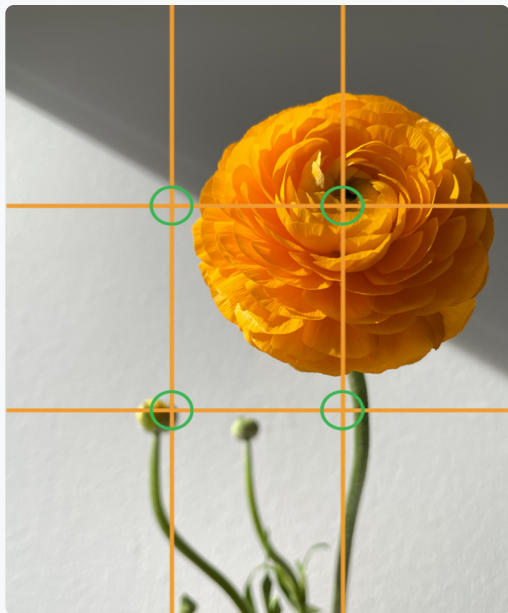
Daylight



Golden Hour

6 Compositional Guides

How to arrange elements in your image.



RULE OF THIRDS

The rule of thirds divides an image into three equal rows and columns. The guideline suggests that when elements are placed on these gridlines, the overall composition will feel more harmonious and balanced. The four points where horizontal and vertical lines intersect are considered hot spots where key elements should be placed. The eye is naturally drawn to these areas of an image.

This compositional guide encourages dynamic, asymmetric compositions.



LEADING LINES

This technique uses lines to guide (or lead) the viewer's eye to a subject. In this image example, the bridge line leads the eye through the frame right to Big Ben.

There are many things that can serve as a leading line: sidewalks, fences, staircases, etc. Leading lines do not need to be straight. Some of the most interesting and effective leading lines are not linear: winding roads, spiral staircases, rivers.

This compositional guide can help guide the viewer's eye and increase the perceived depth of an image.

LAYERING

This technique breaks an image down into three separate layers: **foreground**, **middle ground** and **background**. Images that have elements across multiple layers will have more perceived depth and dimension.

These elements can be placed in two similar but distinct ways:

- (1) In distinctly separate layers. This will emphasize shape and form (image example).
- (2) Crossing *through* layers which will draw the viewer's eye *into* the image.

This compositional guide is the best way to add depth and dimension to a flat image.

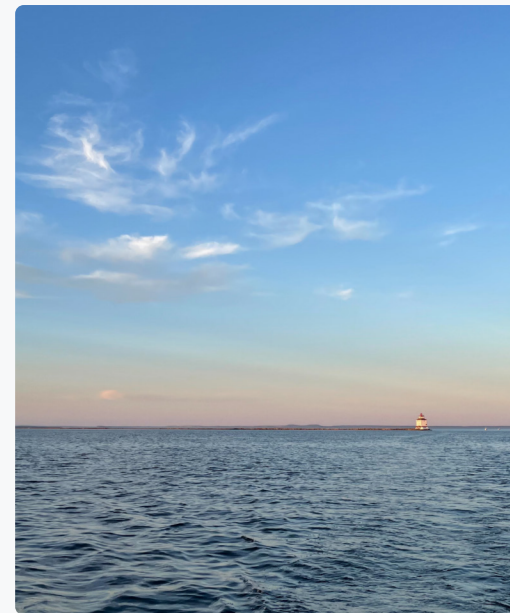


NEGATIVE SPACE

This technique puts more visual weight on the *negative* elements of a photograph or the empty space surrounding positive elements.

Negative space often takes the form of completely empty space like a sky, field or body of water but it can also exist in a city environment. In order for an image area to be considered negative space it should create a receding, peripheral space that draws the viewer into the main subject. Repeating elements or patterns can help to create negative space in busy environments.

This compositional guide can create isolation, focus and scale.



BALANCE

This technique seeks to place image elements in a manner that provides equal visual weight between elements. An image has balance when the areas of importance equally command a viewer's attention.

Balance can be done symmetrically (image example) or asymmetrically.

In order to use balance, one must consider the camera-subject relationship and how it impacts the arrangement and visual weight of elements in the frame.

This compositional guide can create a sense of harmony and order.



FRAMING

This technique uses elements of a scene to create a sub-frame within an image's frame. The subject of the image should ideally be placed within the sub-frame.

Framing is a great technique to use to focus the attention of the viewer. It can also be used to explore a slightly different aspect ratio within the confines of an image's ratio. (e.g. photographing a square window within a 2:3 ratio image).

This compositional guide gives the illusion of an image within an image and can be a strong tool to use to focus the viewer's attention.

7 Working with Subjects

How to capture captivating subject matter.

INTERESTING SUBJECTS

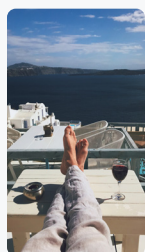
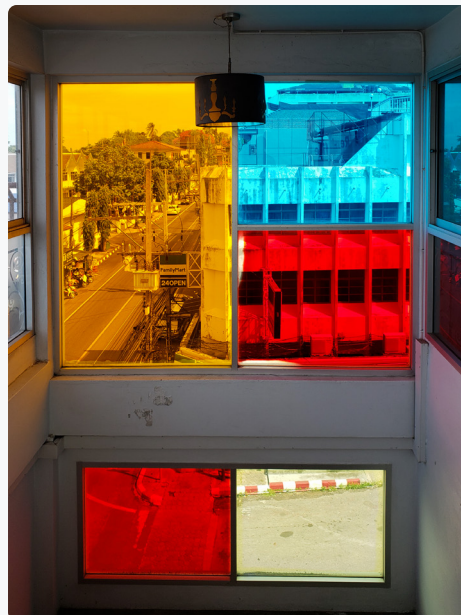
Finding interesting subjects to take pictures of is one of the more difficult aspects of photography and one that relies on external factors as much as it relies on your ability to *notice* interesting subjects.

It's all too easy to feel overwhelmed at the immense amount of subjects that you could focus your lens on. It's just as easy to feel discouraged because of challenges that limit your ability to capture certain subjects. Resist the urge to fall into these creative road blocks and instead consider what is readily accessible for you.

Much of my early photography was taken in public spaces and public

parks because that's what I had available at the time. The subjects that I photographed were largely limited to the confines of these public spaces however I was still able to find interesting subjects.

Rely on taking pictures of what **you** find interesting! It's much easier to show a subject at its best when it's something that we are interested in. The resulting image will also be much more rewarding for you. When shooting, make a conscious effort to observe your surroundings and stay aware. Exercise patience and soon enough interesting encounters, characters and moments will start to emerge.



STORYTELLING

Photography is often regarded as a form of visual storytelling. The popular phrase: “a picture is worth a thousand words” is a good indication of this idea.

There are more limitations for photographic storytelling since all of the information must be visual. Character, environment, clothing/costume, objects/props, symbols, colours, movement, facial expression and body language are all tools that can all be manipulated and used to convey a certain story or theme.

Storytelling is not only a popular device in documentary photography and photojournalism; it can be used in any genre of photography.

Storytelling can be as big as a photo-series covering a sporting event or as small as the interaction between a bride and flower girl (image example).

In order to capture the story of a certain moment, consider what you include and exclude in your image. For example, to tell the story of a child's first birthday, the inclusion of something visual that communicates “birthday” like a cake, gifts, balloons.. is essential. Reducing your image to only essential story elements will help focus to focus the story and perhaps make it more apparent to the viewer.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

The legendary street photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson coined the term “The Decisive Moment” in his book by the same title in 1952.

In this book, he describes composition as: “...the result of a simultaneous coalition, the organic coordination of elements seen by the eye...” He continues on to describe The Decisive Moment when he says: “But inside movement there is one moment at which the elements in motion are in balance. Photography must seize upon this moment and hold immobile the equilibrium of it.”

In order to capture these moments where things seem to naturally fall in perfect balance, the photographer needs to be in the right place at the right time and know how to capture that moment. This often hinges on an intuition of sorts. It requires you to carefully observe the world around you, anticipate an event before it happens and exercise perfect timing.

This technique lies at the intersection of composition and storytelling. The proper employment of this technique is not something that comes easily. However this type of photographic excellence is something that beginners and experts alike can strive for in their photography.



PhotographyTips