

The Beginner's Guide to Stunning iPhone Photos

A crash course in taking better photos!

COURSE PREPARED BY: [PHOTOGRAPHYTIPS.COM](https://www.photographytips.com)

Goal of the Course

- This course will guide you through the basic understanding of the iPhone's built-in camera.
- We will discuss the basic operation of the camera and features of the iPhone camera.
- Once we're comfortable operating the camera, we will explore some fundamentals of photography that once understood, will have an immediate impact on your photos.
- This course is geared for beginner photographers or anyone simply looking to bring their iPhone photos from okay to great! The lessons learned in this course will apply to all types of photography and are not focused on any one niche.
- Disclaimer: we will only be discussing the rear camera in this course!

iPhone Photography Basics/Fundamentals

AGENDA

- 01. Introduction
- 02. About the iPhone Camera
- 03. Setting Up Your iPhone Camera
- 04. Navigation and Features
- 05. Practical Tips
- 06. Creative Tips
- 07. Key Takeaways

About the iPhone Camera

Camera Specs

iPhone Model	Sensor Size	Resolution	Aperture	Focal Length (full-frame equivalent)	Optical Zoom	Digital Zoom	Flash
14 Pro & Pro Max	23.5mm (Ultra Wide) 71.5mm (Wide) 12.2mm (Telephoto)	48MP (Wide)	<i>f</i> /1.78 (Wide) <i>f</i> /2.2 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.78 (Telephoto 2x) <i>f</i> /2.8 (Telephoto 3x)	24mm	13mm (2x out) 77mm (3x in)	15x	True Tone Adaptive
14	12.2mm ² (Ultra Wide) 44mm ² (Wide)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.5 (Wide)	26mm	13mm (2x out) 52mm (2x in)	5x	True Tone
13 Pro & Pro Max	12.2mm ² (Ultra Wide) 44mm ² (Wide) 12.2mm ² (Telephoto)	12MP	<i>f</i> /1.8 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.5 (Wide) <i>f</i> /2.8 (Telephoto)	26mm	13mm (2x out) 77mm (3x in)	15x	True Tone
13	12.2mm ² (Ultra Wide) 35.2mm ² (Wide)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.6 (Wide)	26mm	13mm (2x out)	5x	True Tone
12 Pro Max	35.2mm (Wide) 12.2mm (Ultra Wide) 12.2mm ² (Telephoto)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.6 (Wide) <i>f</i> /2.2 (Telephoto)	26mm	13mm (2x out) 65mm (2.5x in)	12x	True Tone
12 Pro	23.9mm (Wide) 12.2mm (Ultra Wide) 12.2mm ² (Telephoto)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.6 (Wide) <i>f</i> /2.0 (Telephoto)	26mm	13mm (2x out) 52mm (2x in)	10x	True Tone
12 & 12 Mini	12.2mm (Ultra Wide) 23.9mm (Wide)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.6 (Wide)	26mm	13mm (2x out)	5x	True Tone
11 Pro & Pro Max	12.2mm (Ultra Wide) 23.9mm (Wide) 12.2mm (Telephoto)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.8 (Wide) <i>f</i> /2.0 (Telephoto)	26mm	13mm (2x out) 52mm (2x in)	10x	True Tone
11	23.9mm (Wide)	12MP	<i>f</i> /2.4 (Ultra Wide) <i>f</i> /1.8 (Wide)	26mm	13mm (2x out)	5x	True Tone
SE 3	17.3mm	12MP	<i>f</i> /1.8 (Wide)	26mm	-	5x	True Tone

Camera Settings

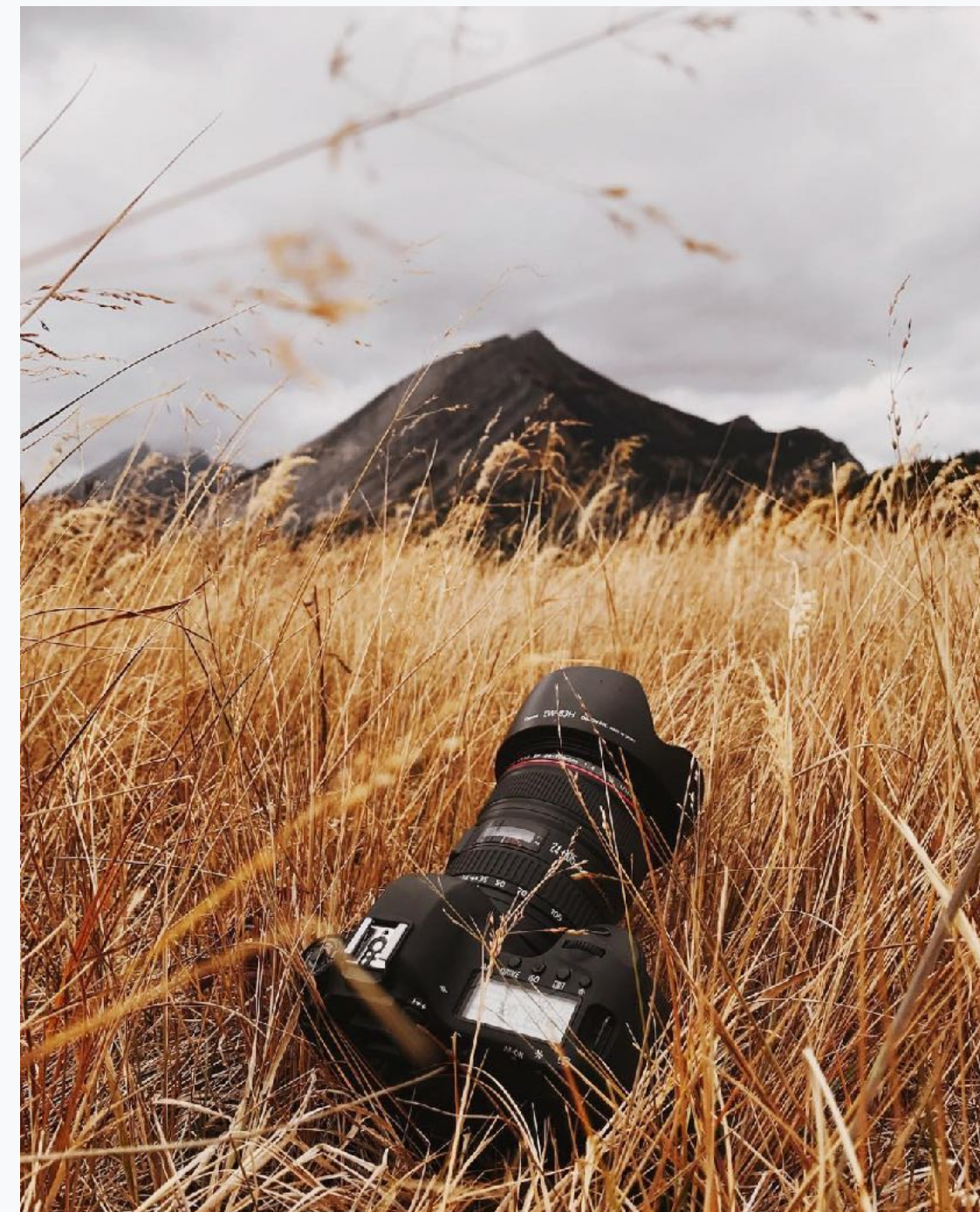
- In order to produce an image, a camera will use a combination of elements commonly referred to as the **Exposure Triangle**. This consists of:
 - Shutter Speed: the length of time that the film or digital sensor is exposed to light.
 - Aperture: the opening in a lens that controls the amount of light to pass through to the film or sensor.
 - ISO: how sensitive a digital sensor is to incoming light.
- White Balance also plays a pivotal role in the output of an image. This controls the:
 - **Colour Temperature** of your image: warm and cool tones
 - **Tint** of your image: green and magenta tones
- The iPhone's built-in camera operates on an automatic mode so we never really have to think about these elements. However, any time a camera is operated in automatic mode, issues can arise. We will get into some of the common issues that happen with iPhones and how to fix them in [Section 5: Practical Tips](#).

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Strengths
 - One of the best and most accessible point-and-shoot cameras out there!
 - Allows you to be quick and spontaneous.
 - Discreet
 - Power-to-size ratio is off the charts!
- Weaknesses
 - Sensor Size
 - Digital Zoom
 - Processing and Computation

iPhone Photos

- With that said, iPhones are capable of producing some exceptional photos!



Setting Up Your iPhone Camera

Optimal Settings

- Before even opening the camera app there are a few settings that we can check to optimize our iPhone photography.
- Navigate to your settings by opening your settings app and scrolling to the Camera section. Tap to open.
- We're going to start things off by going into the Formats menu at the top.

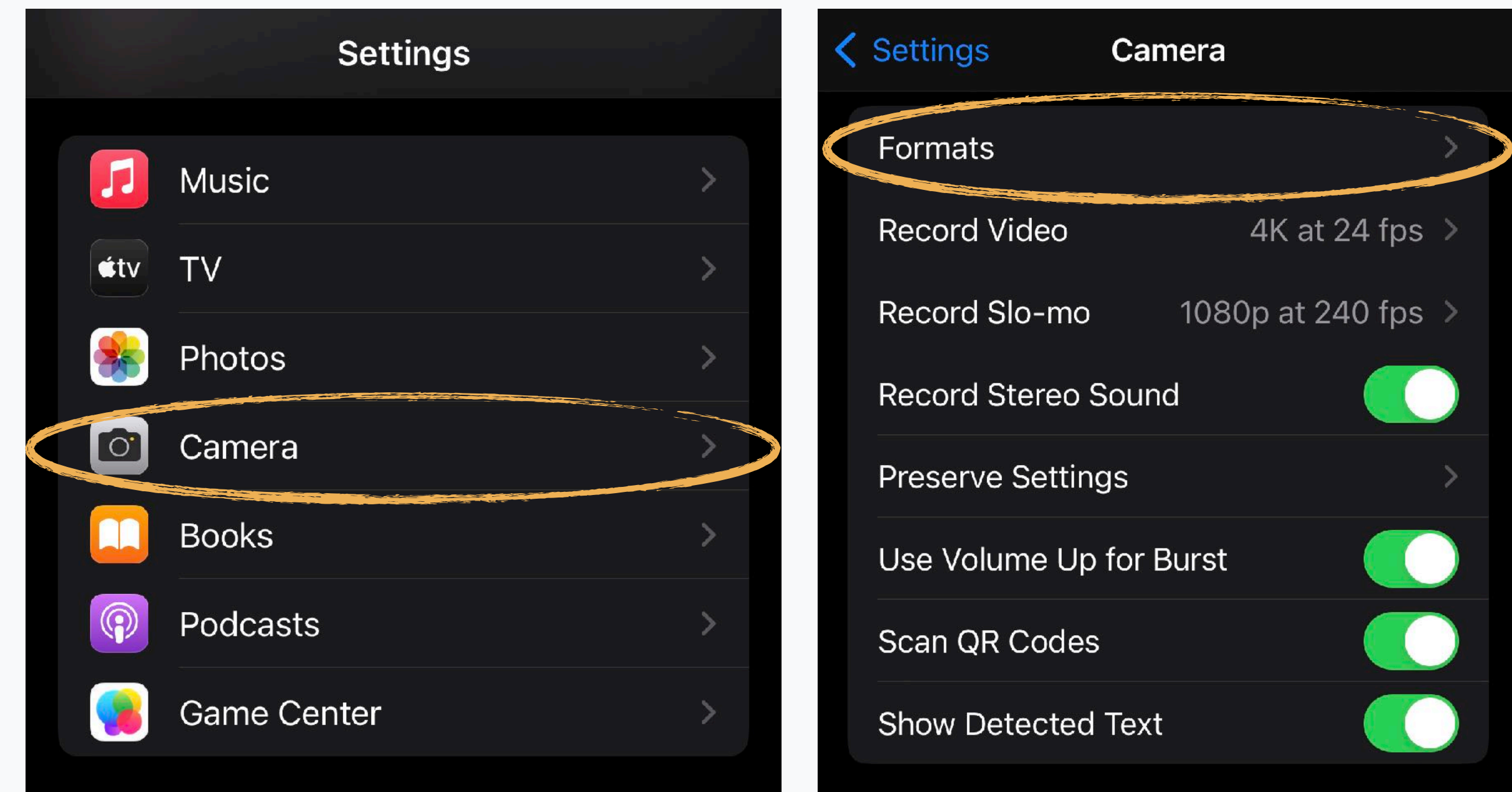


Image Formats

- Since iOS 11, iPhone cameras have taken images in “High Efficiency” mode by default.
- **High Efficiency** images are taken in HEIF format. They are smaller in size and are comparable to the quality of a standard JPEG.
- **Most Compatible** images are taken in JPEG format. This file format was introduced in 1992 and as a result is the most widely used image format. They are slightly larger in size than HEIF.
- **Apple ProRAW** was introduced among Pro-line iPhones since the 12 Pro model. This format captures an uncompressed, high-res image which allows for a wider dynamic range, more colour information and greater flexibility in editing.

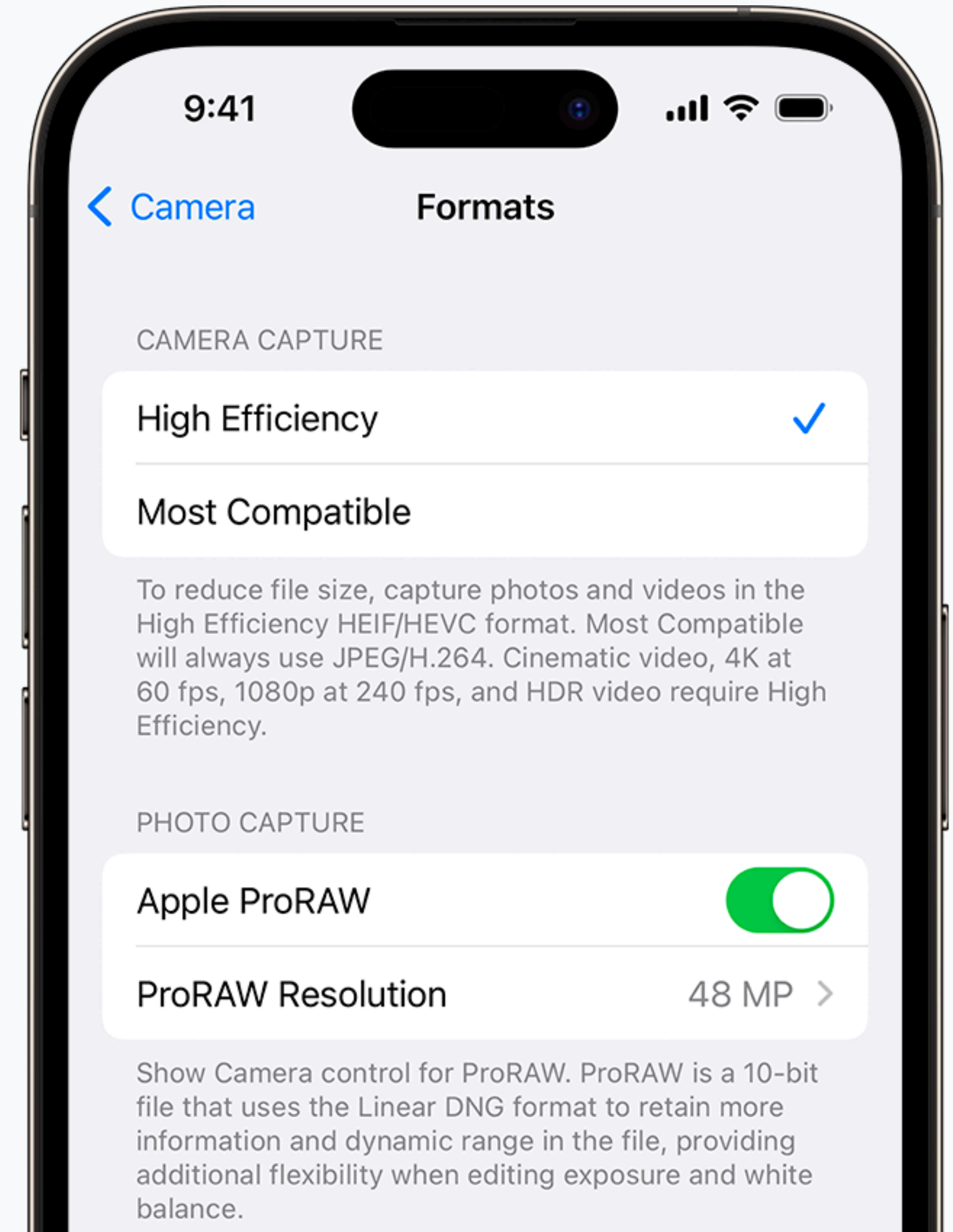


Image Formats

- If you have access to Apple ProRAW, I would almost always recommend using this format.
 - Keep in mind the increase in resolution from 12MP to 48MP. Your image files are going to be much larger than you may be used to!
 - Not ideal for situations when you're shooting a lot of photos.
 - If you're going to shoot in this format you may need to: increase your internal or iCloud storage, or consider an external storage solution and offload images from your iPhone regularly.
- If you don't have access to a Pro-line iPhone, I would recommend HEIF. The quality comparison to JPEG is nearly identical and according to Apple, these files could save up to 50% of your storage.
 - These files can easily be converted to JPEG on a Mac in Photos or Finder. Or any desktop computer at: <https://heictojpg.com/> or other similar site.
- If you know that you'll be using your photos across devices and will run into compatibility issues often then there is no harm in using JPEG (Most Compatible).



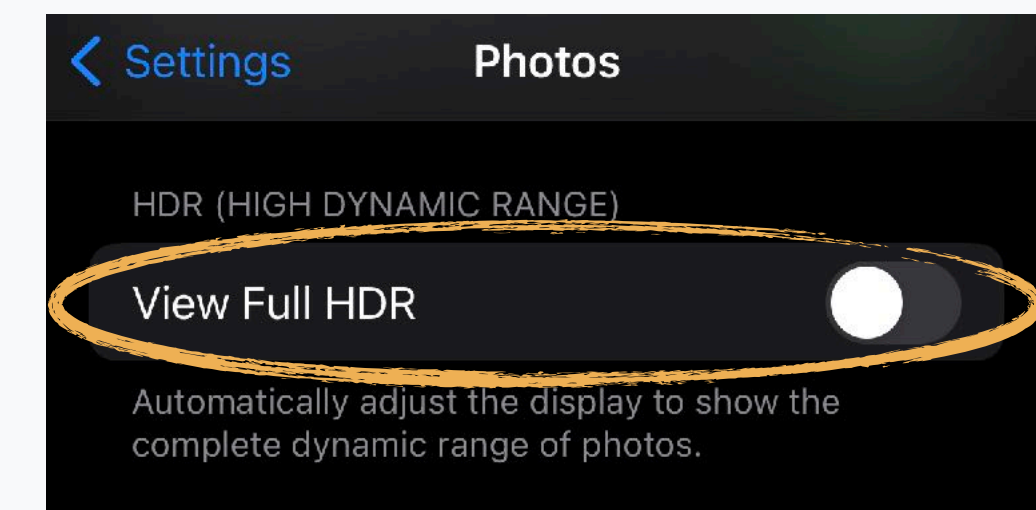
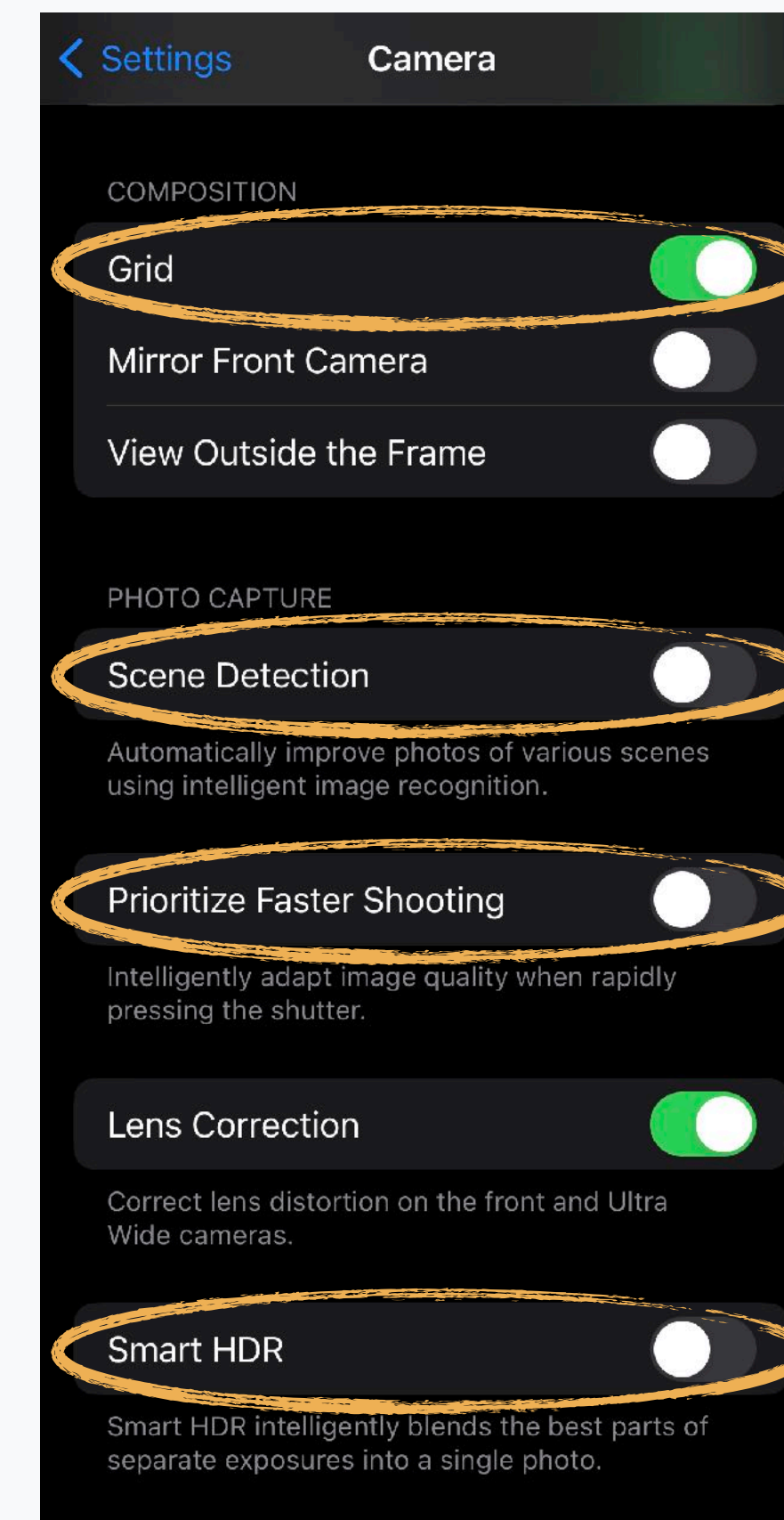
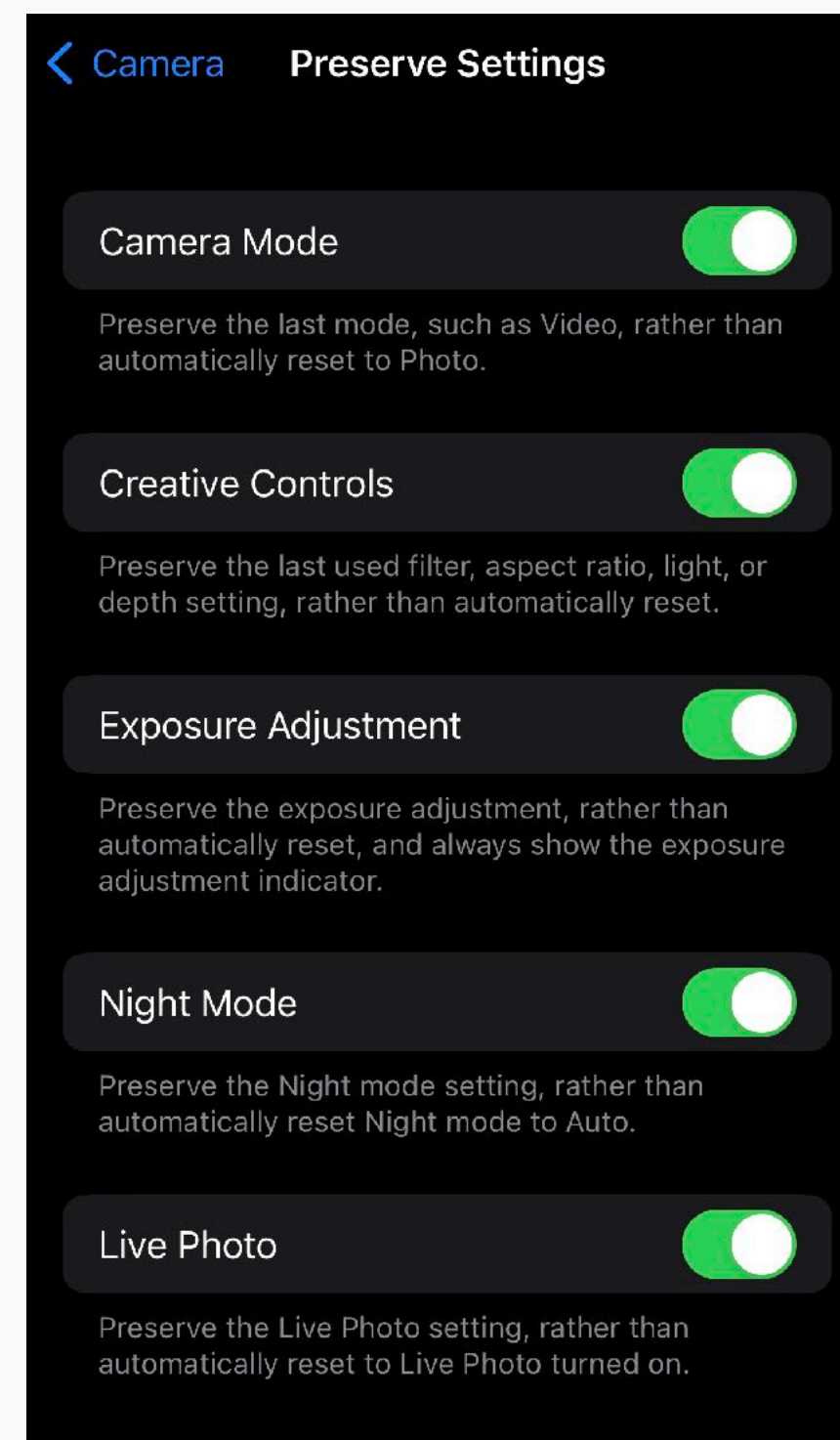
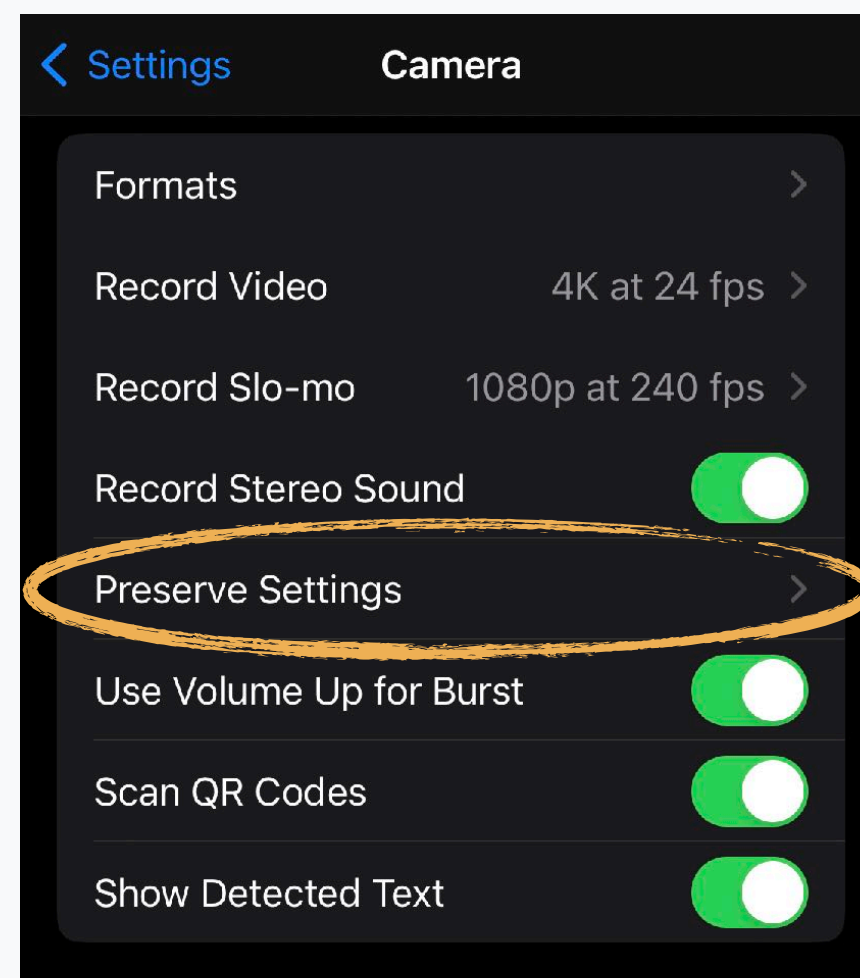
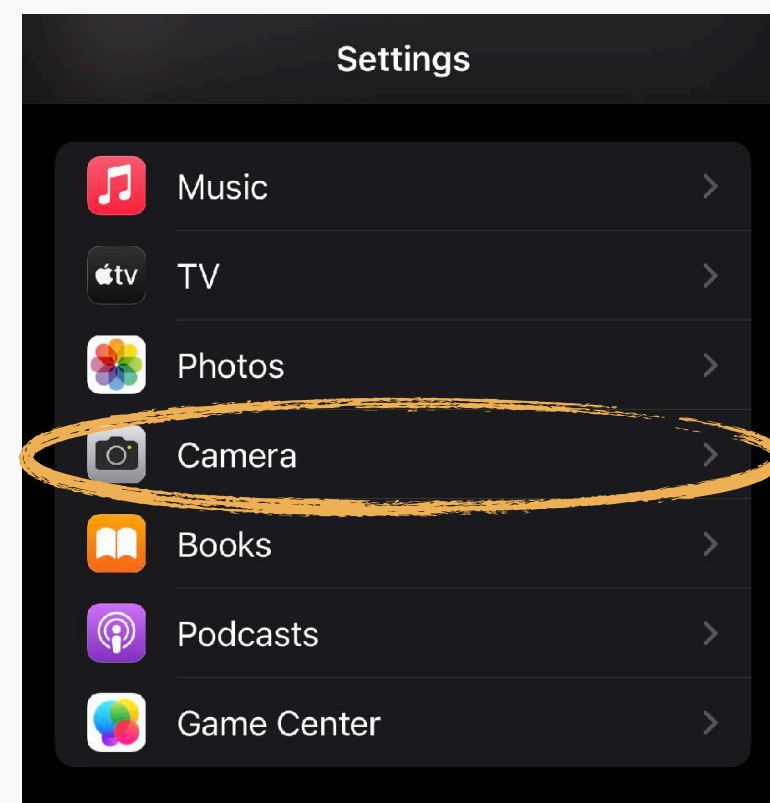
AppleProRAW Capabilities

- In this example we can see the editing potential of images taken with AppleProRAW.



Optimal Settings

- Before even opening the camera app there are a few settings that we can check to optimize our iPhone photography.



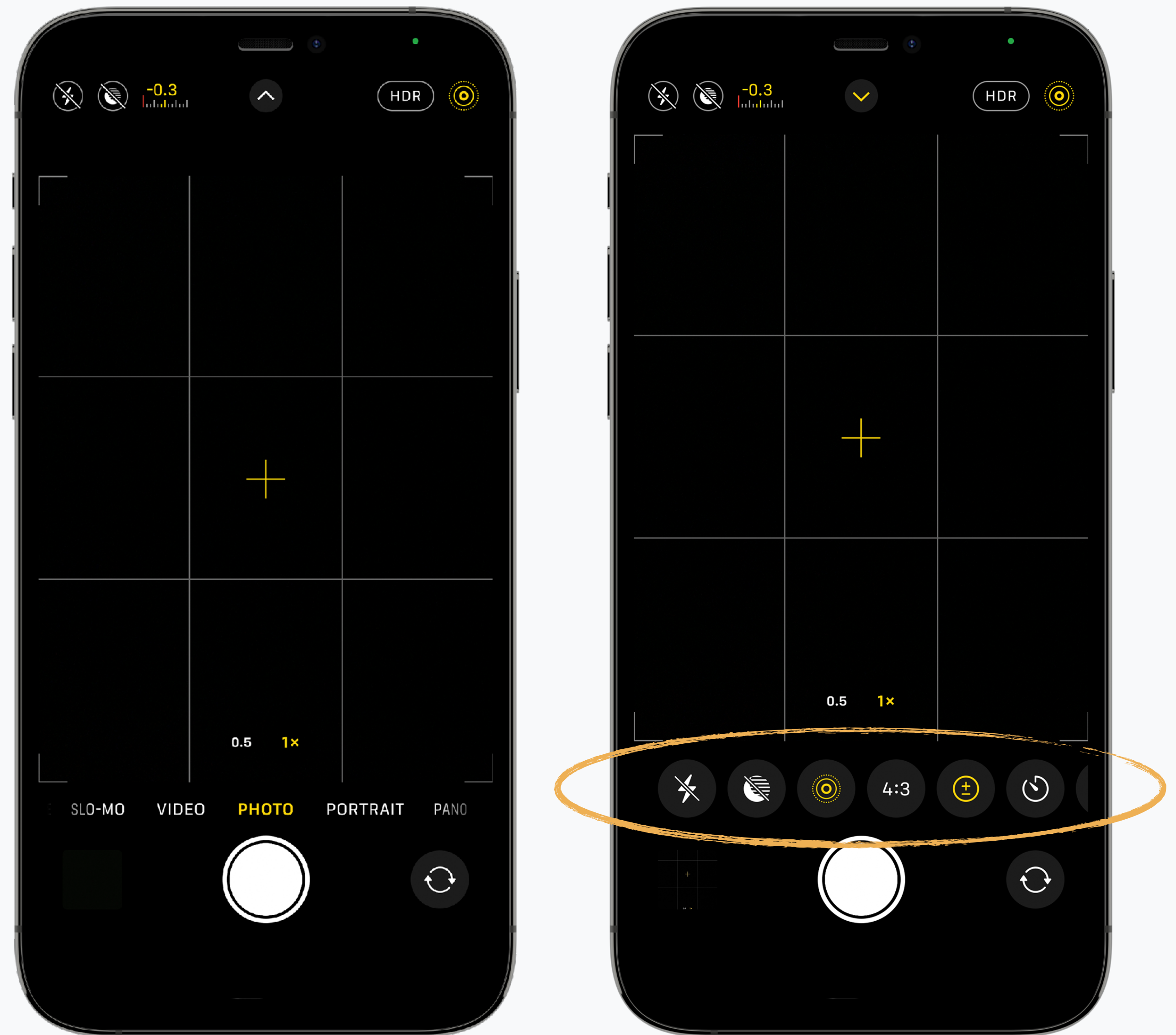
Navigation and Features

Opening the Camera

- From your lock screen, the camera can be opened by the camera icon in the bottom right corner or by swiping left anywhere on the screen.
- From your home screen, the camera can be opened by pressing the Camera app, wherever it is located on your device.

Camera Interface

- Swipe away from shutter to reveal more camera features.



Shutter Button

- Tap this to take an image.
- You can also take an image with either of the volume buttons located on the side of the phone.
- Furthermore, you can set up a Siri shortcut command to take a picture with voice command or you can control your iPhone's camera with the Camera Remote app on any Apple Watch.

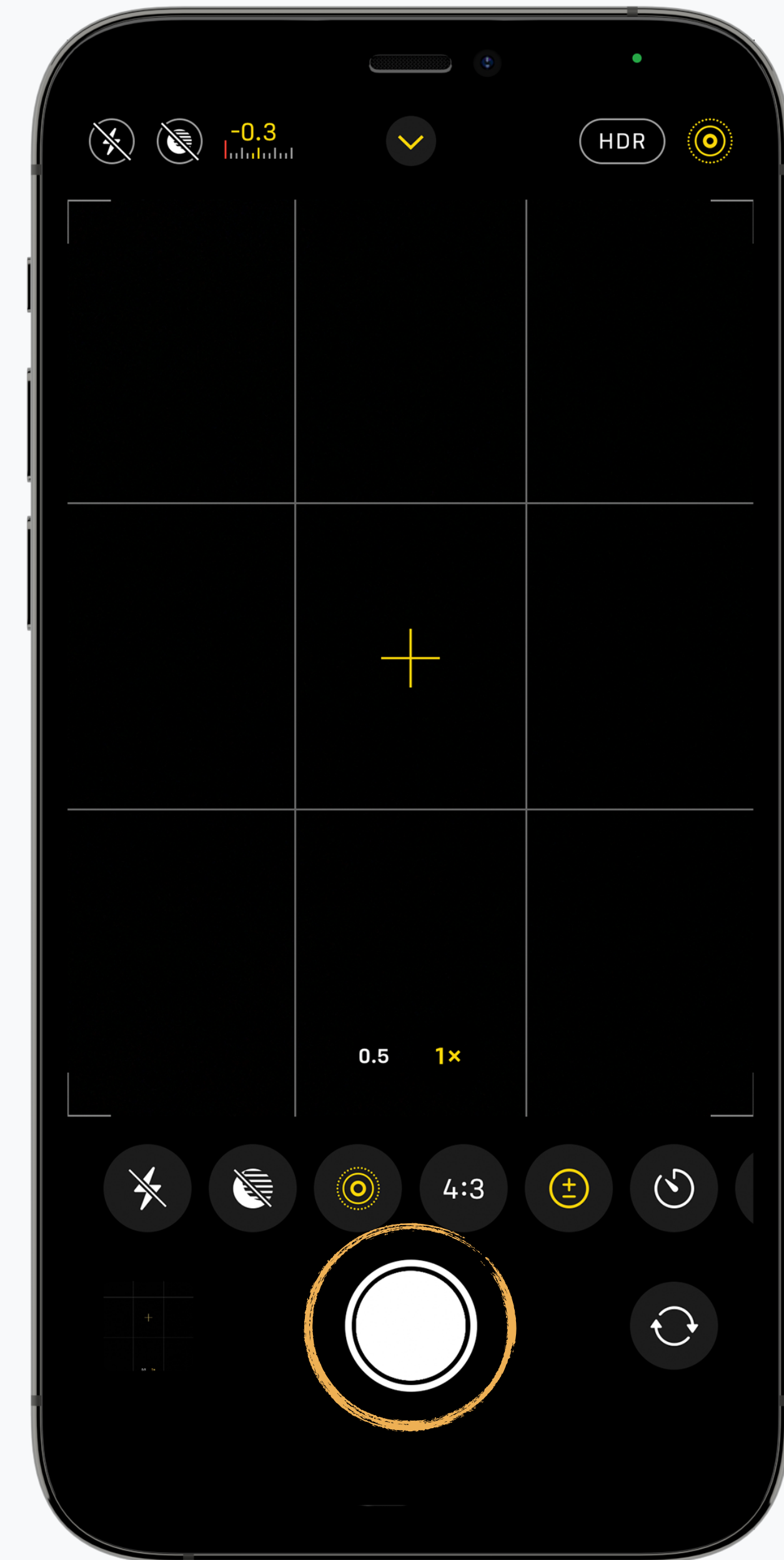
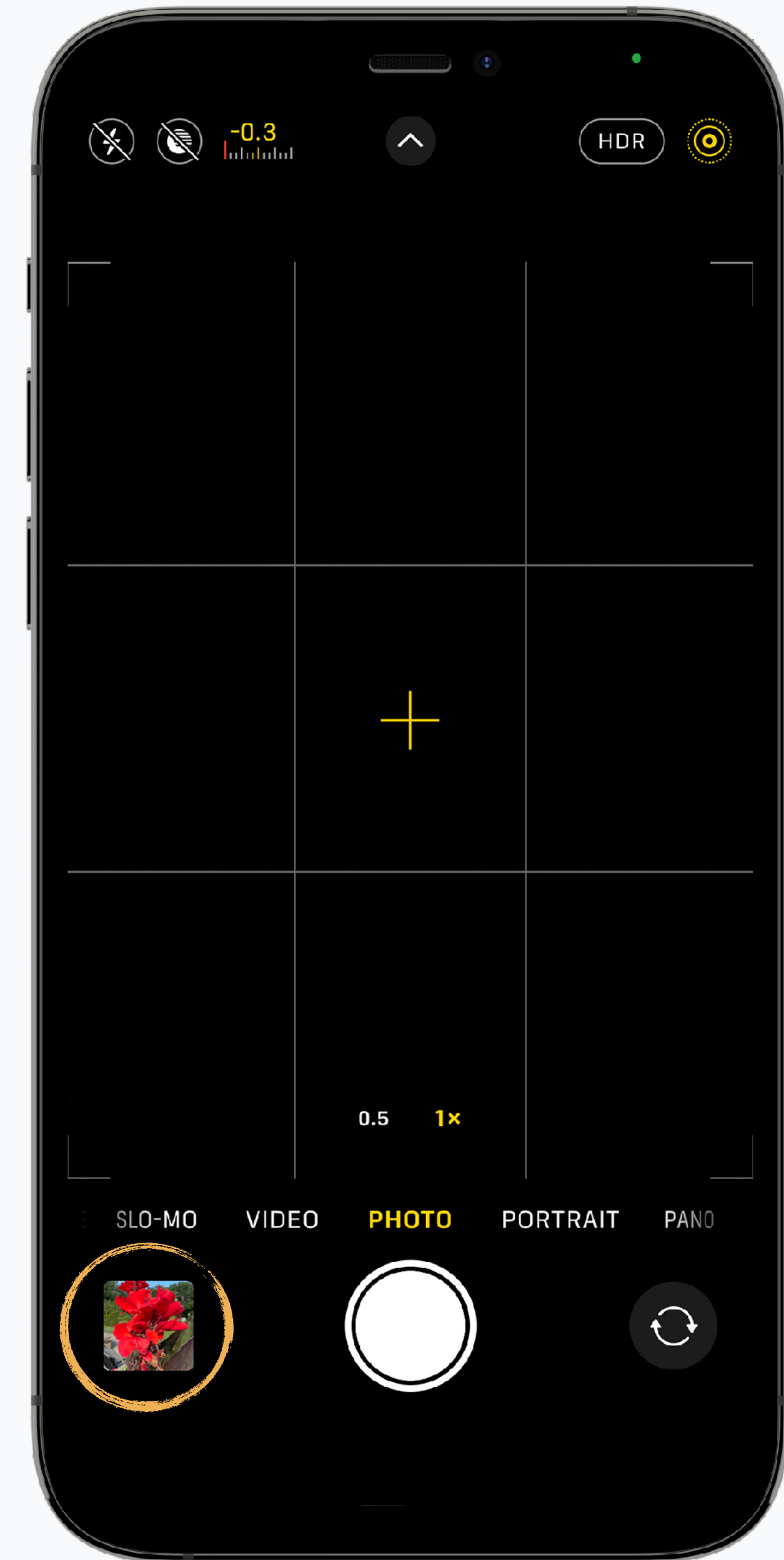


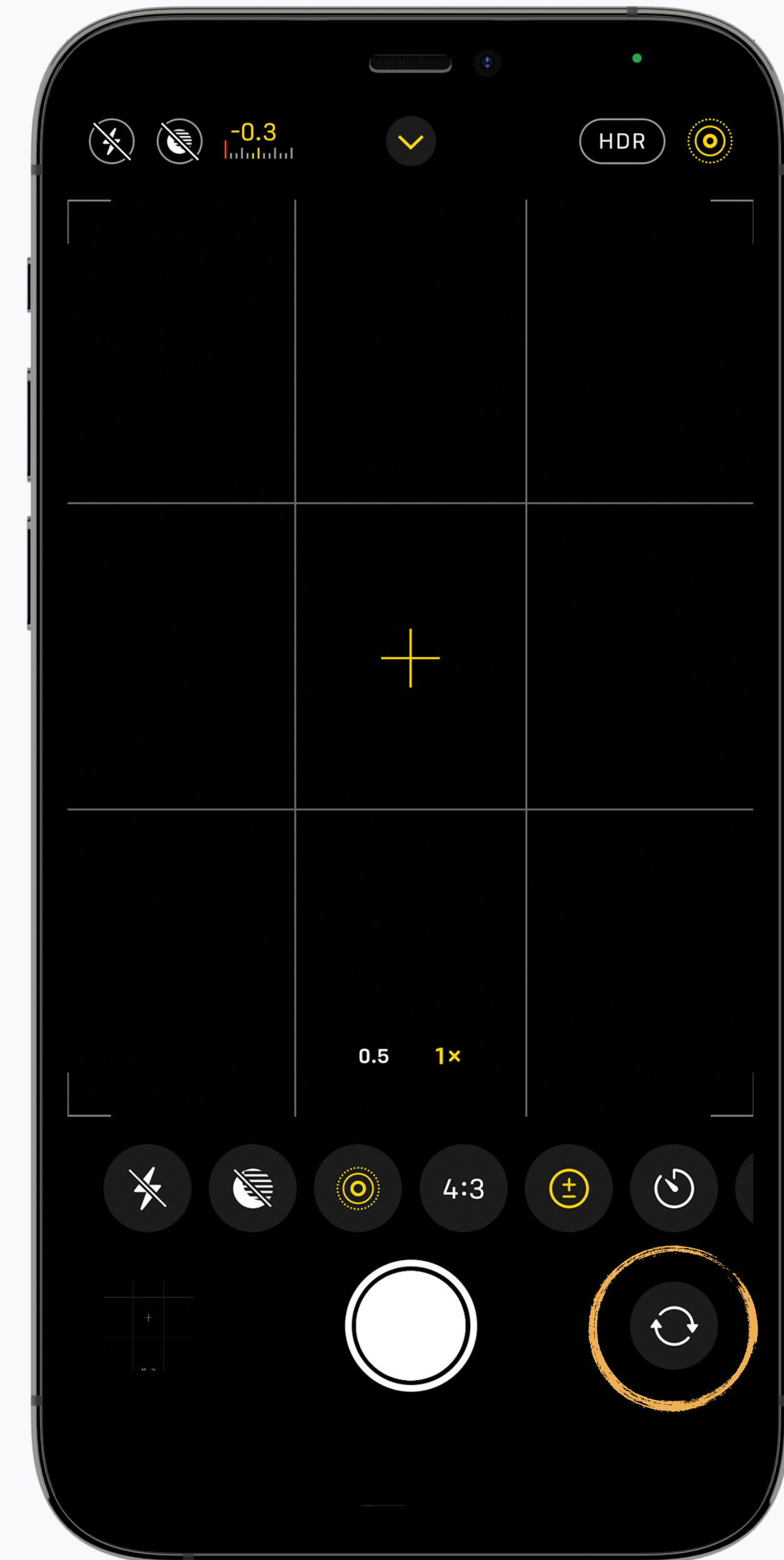
Image Gallery

- Your most recent image will appear here. Tap this to open your image gallery.



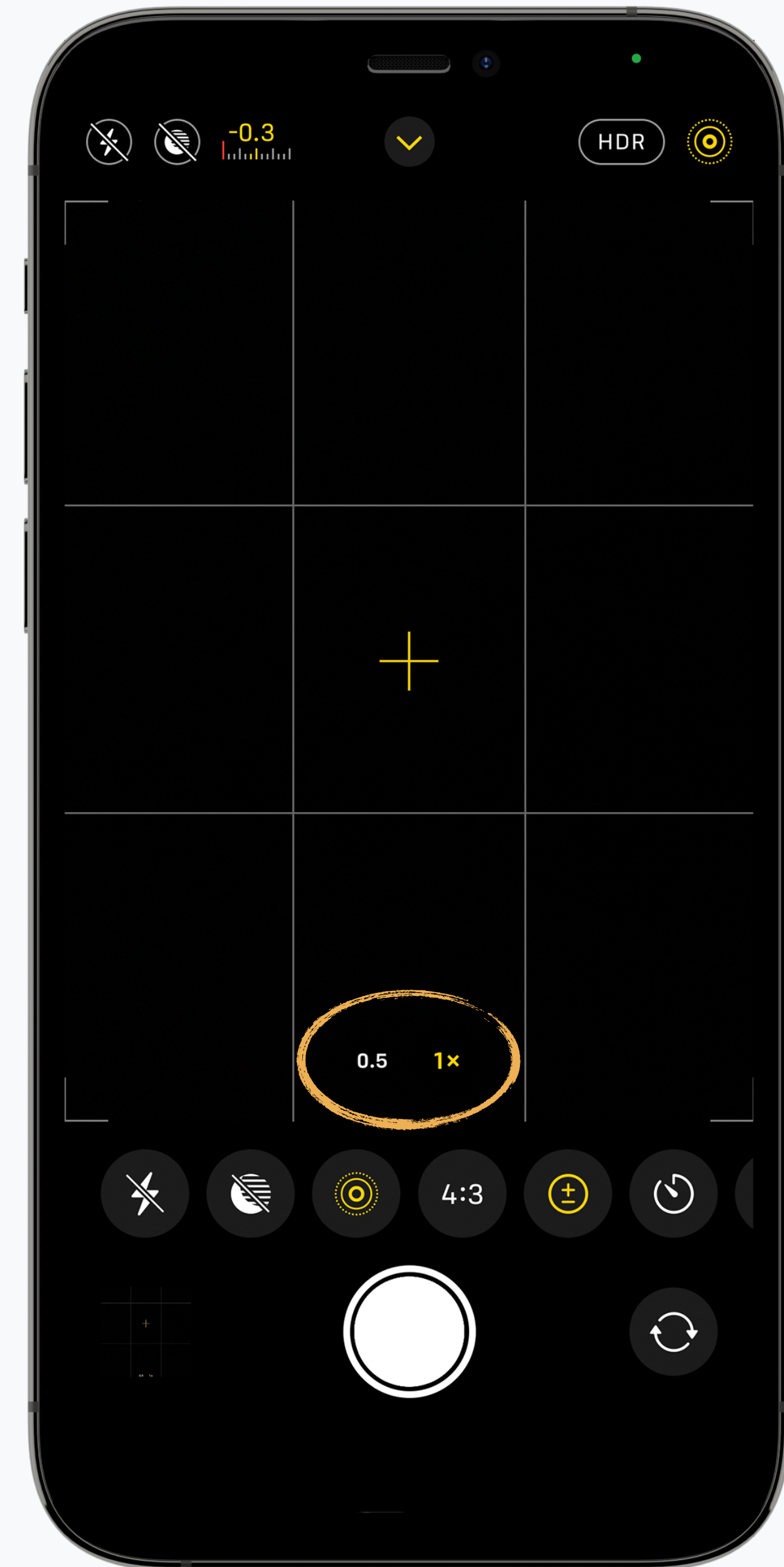
Front-Facing Camera

- Tap this to switch to the front-facing camera.



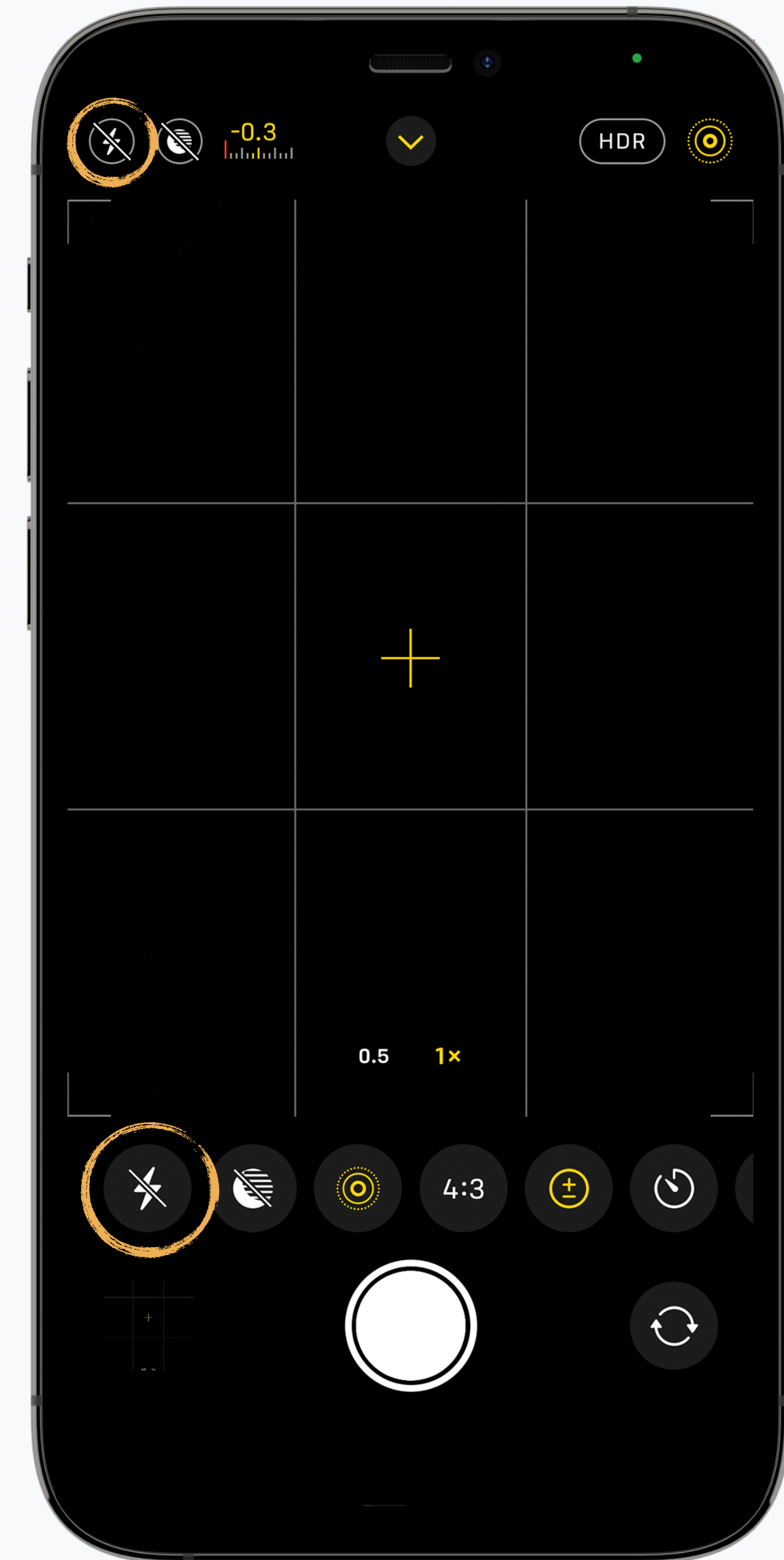
Zoom

- These icons will zoom your camera in or out **optically** according to your iPhone model's camera. It will switch between the different lens/camera options.
 - I recommend sticking to the optical lenses your iPhone model offers.
- You can also pinch on the screen to zoom in or out. Keep in mind that this is **digitally** zooming which is essentially just cropping and reducing the quality of your image more as you go.
- On most iPhone models the 1x zoom is equivalent to 26mm (24mm on 14 Pro/Pro Max), the 0.5x zoom is equivalent to 13mm and the 2x or 3x zoom depends on your iPhone model.
 - View comparison chart [here](#).



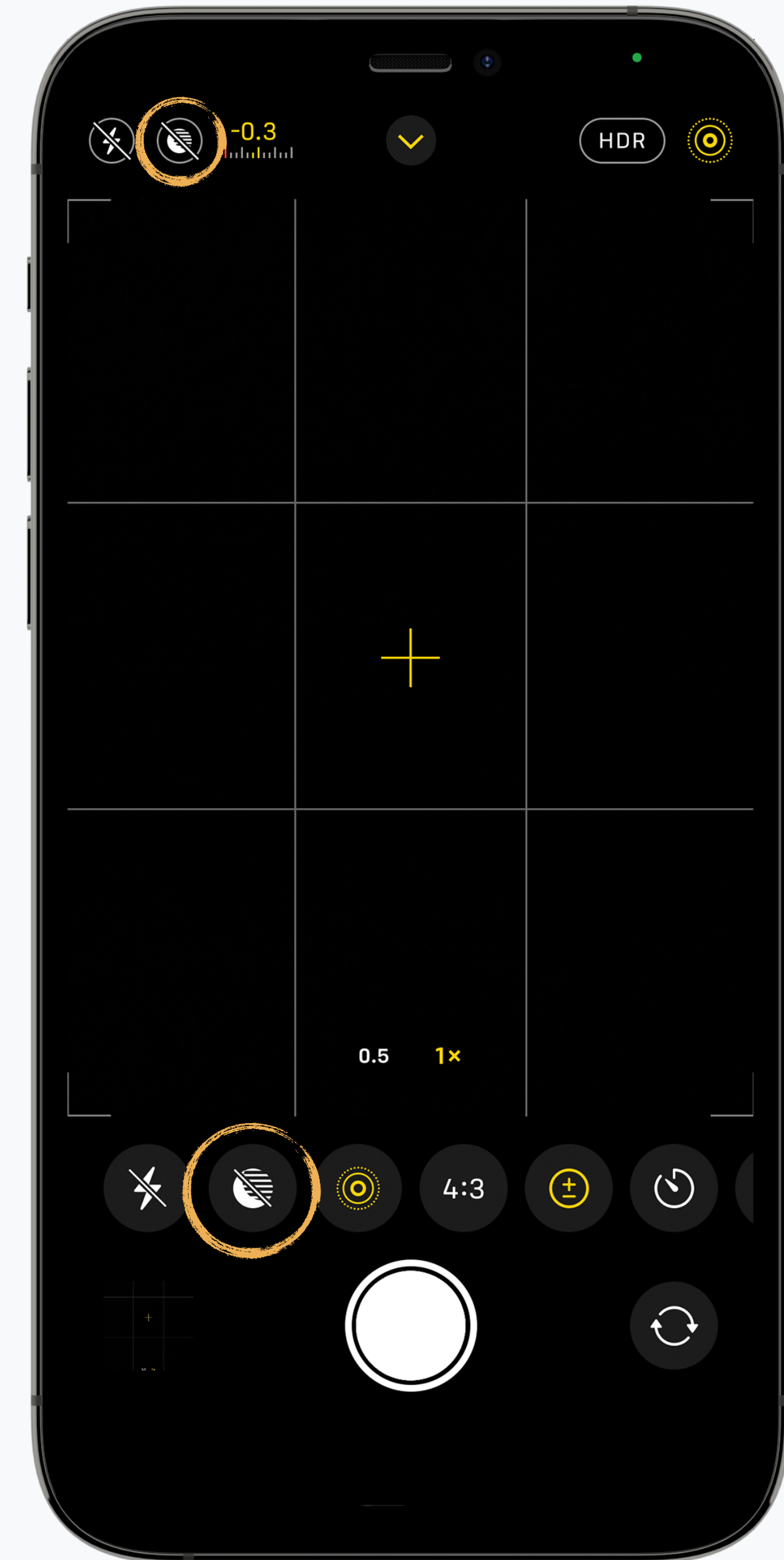
Flash

- This icon will allow you to turn your camera flash ON, OFF, or in AUTO mode by default.
- Talk about flash variation between models?



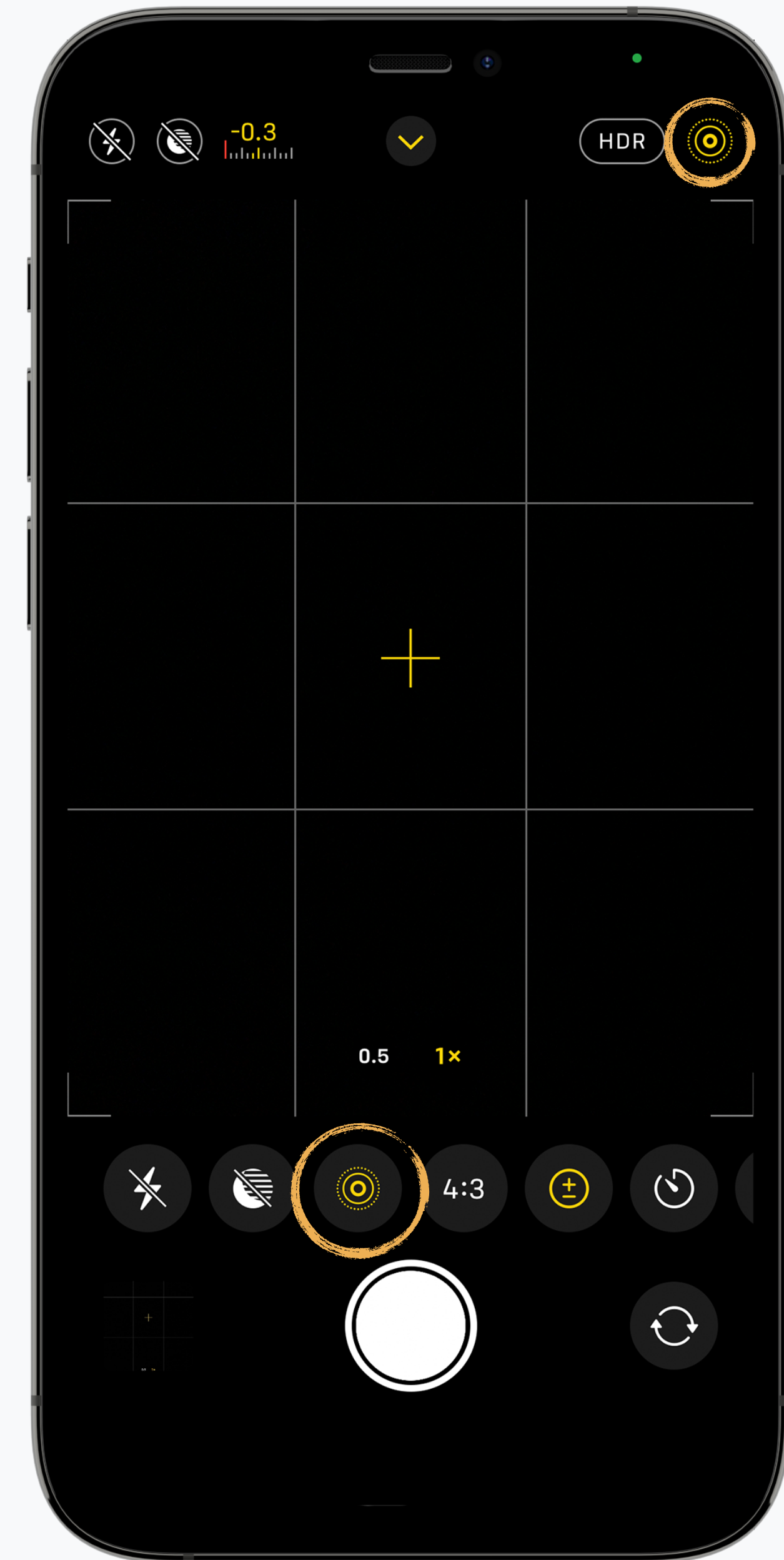
Night Mode

- This feature allows you to take longer exposure images.
- This is great for night photography but will require a steady hand or tripod.



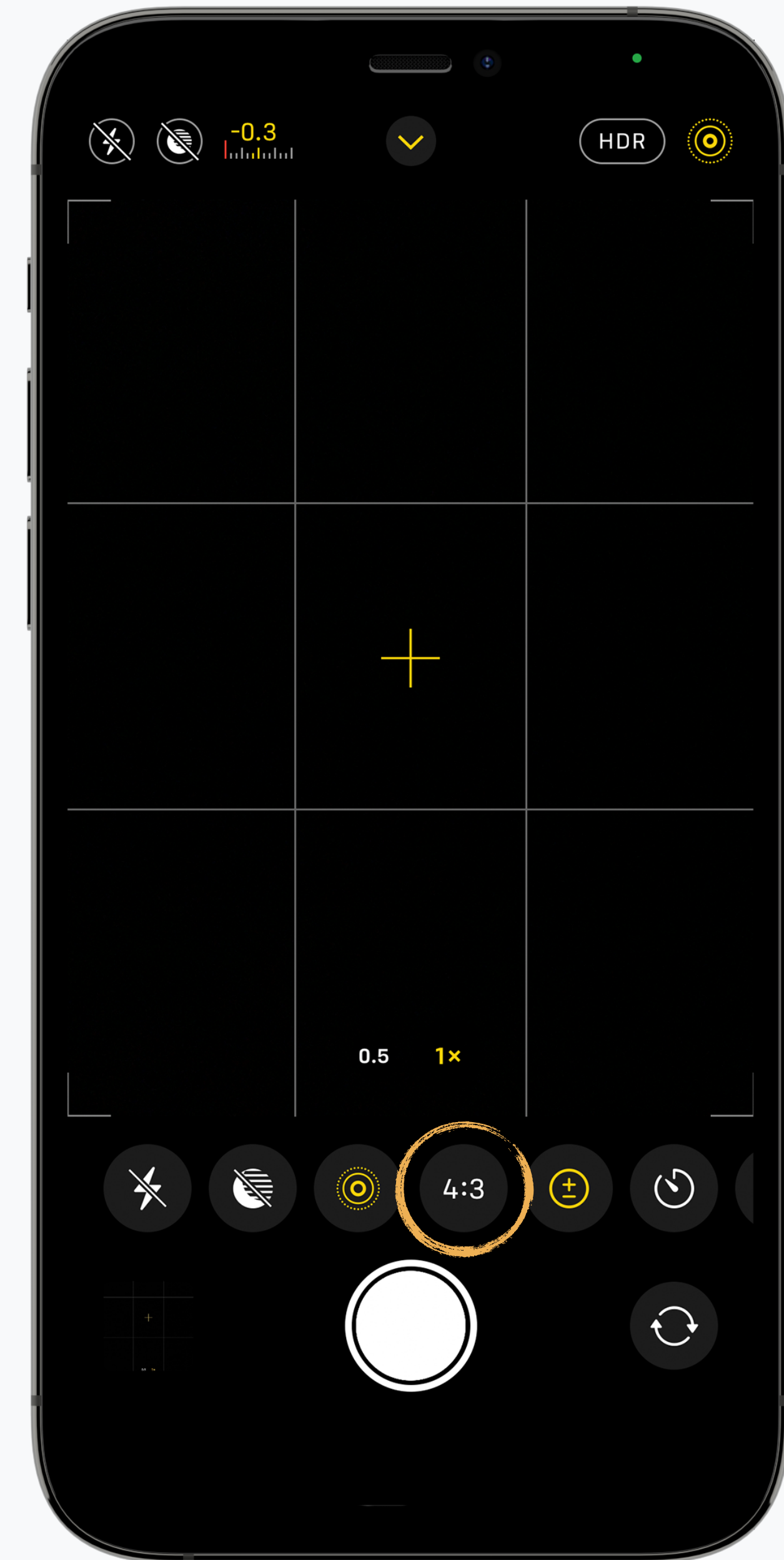
Live Photo

- When live photo is enabled, the iPhone captures a recording slightly before pressing the shutter button and a couple seconds afterward.
- This feature allows you to select a still image from that recording later on. This is especially useful if someone blinks or you *just* missed a special moment.
- You can also turn live photos into animated GIFs or long exposure photos.



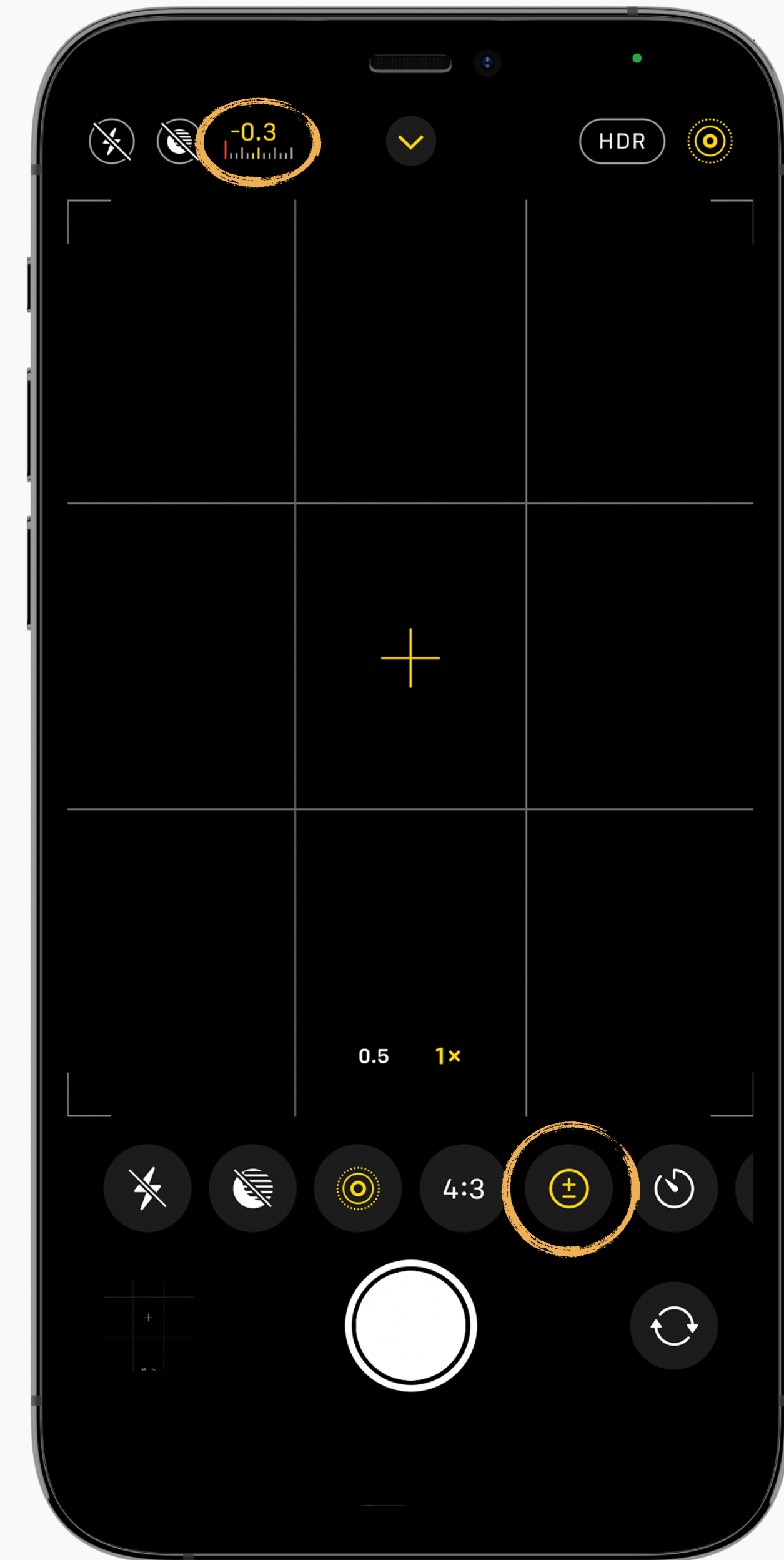
Aspect Ratio

- This feature allows you to change the aspect ratio of your camera and resulting image.
- You can cycle between: 4:3, Square and 9:16



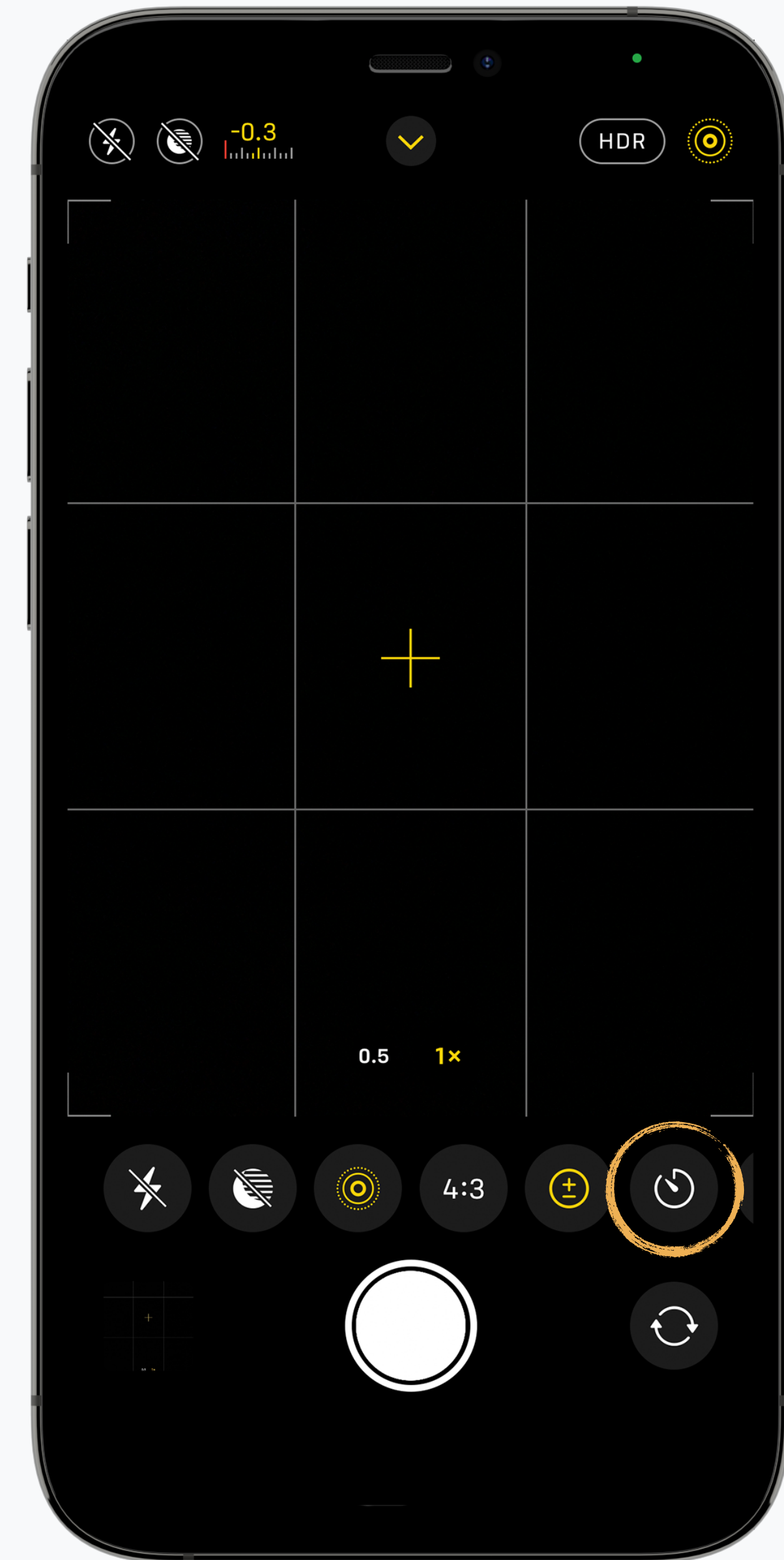
Exposure Compensation

- This feature can be used to control your exposure.
- Drag left or right to increase or decrease your exposure. Once set, the exposure setting is locked.
- You can also alter the exposure compensation by tapping on the screen.
 - A box will appear and the camera will now auto-expose for the area that you tapped. Furthermore, you can drag the sun icon that appears next to this box to increase or decrease the exposure of the image.
 - If you would like to lock this exposure, you can hold the focus area until you see **AE/AF lock**. Tap the screen to unlock.



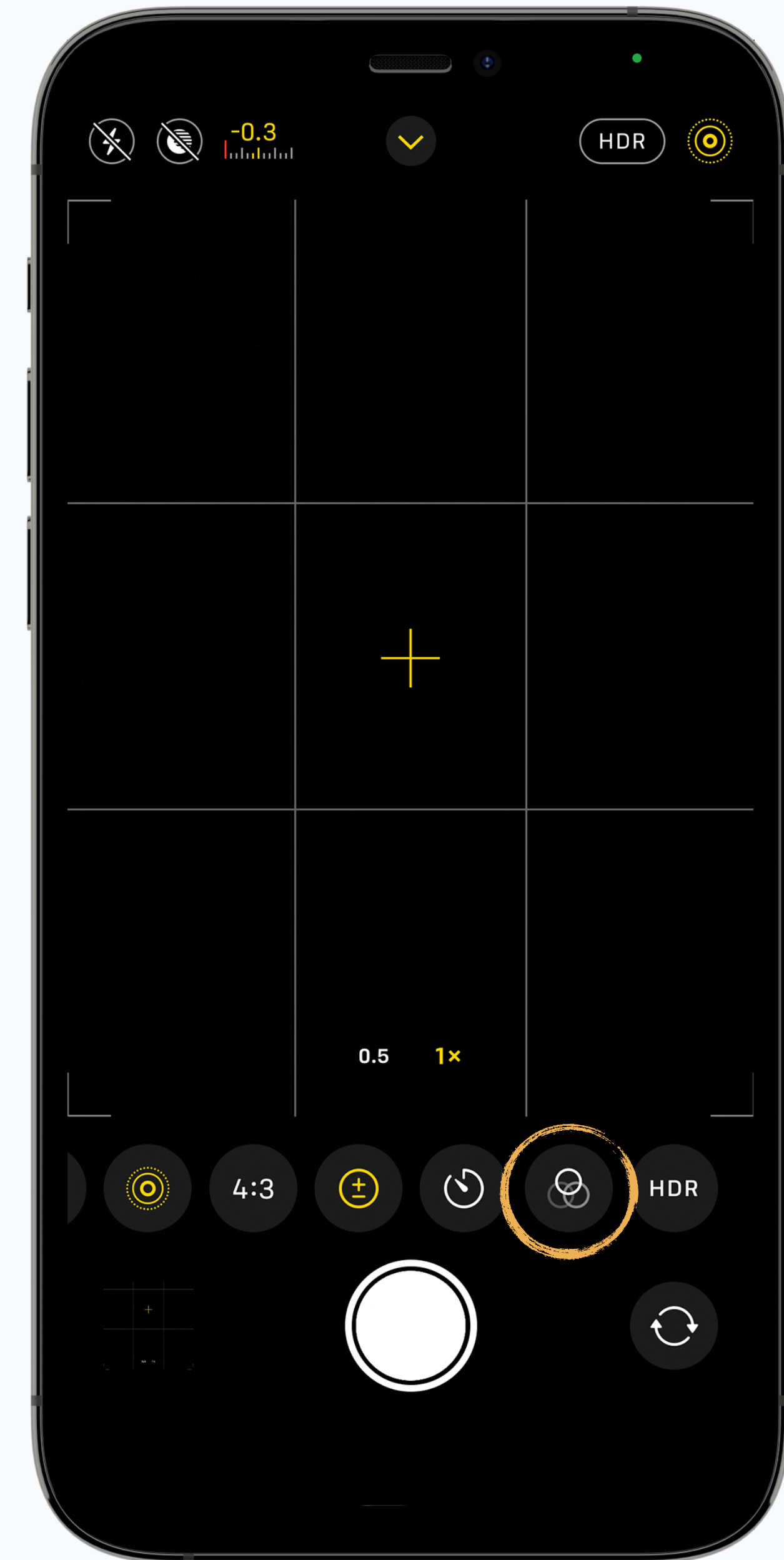
Timer

- This feature allows you to set a timer for the camera to take a picture seconds after you press the shutter.
 - You have the option of a 3 or 10 second timer.
- This feature is great for self-portraits or group photos.



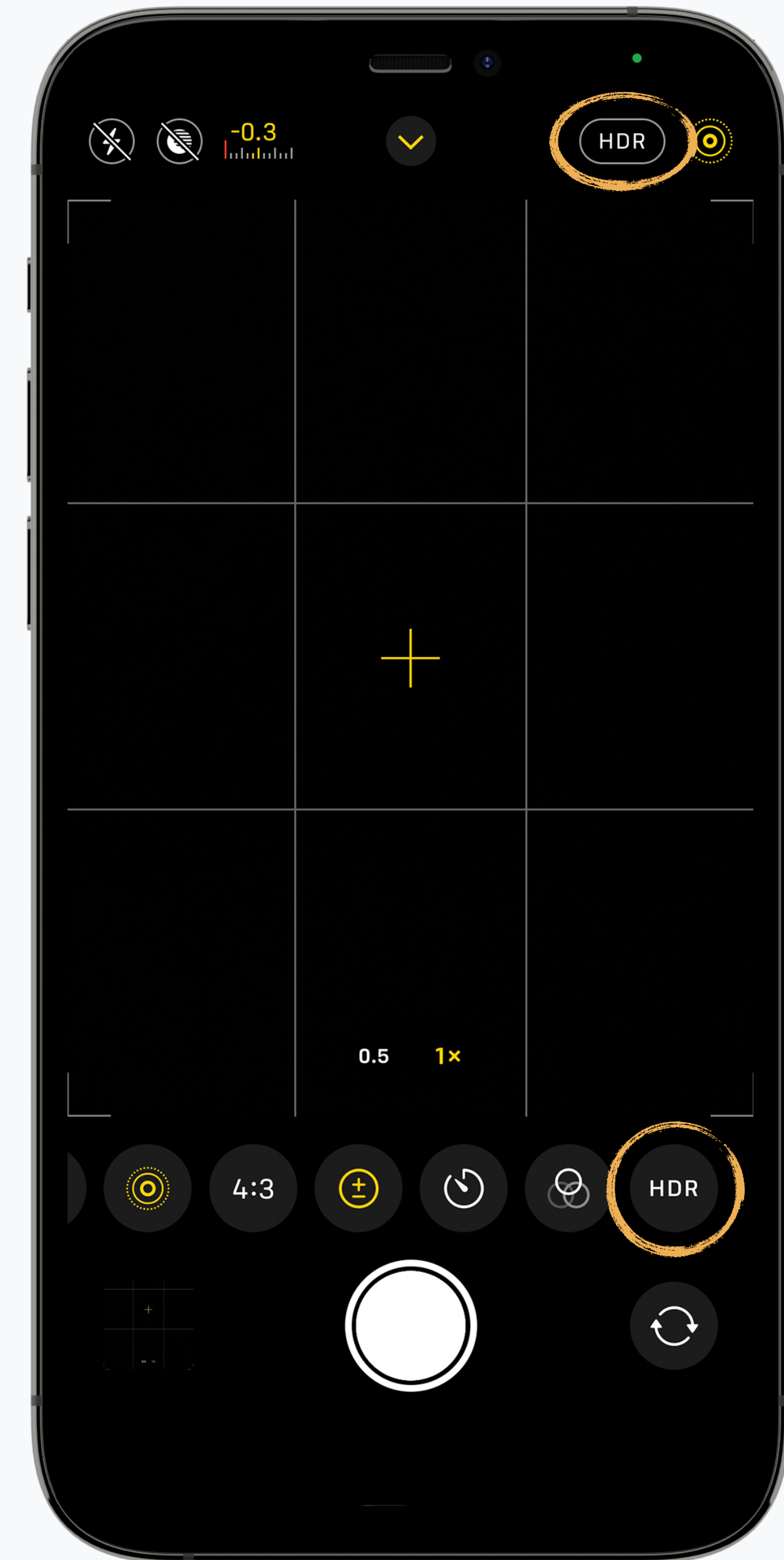
Filters

- Further scrolling left, you will reveal two more features.
- The first is the filter icon. This will allow you to set a filter to your camera view and resulting image.
- Any filter applied here can be changed later in the Photos app.



HDR

- The HDR icon will allow you to toggle HDR mode between Auto, ON and OFF.
- HDR stands for High-Dynamic-Range. This mode uses computation to capture multiple images at varying exposures and blend them into a single image. This increases the amount of shadow and highlight detail that you can achieve in a single image.
- I commonly shoot with HDR turned off. Only when I come across a situation that could benefit from HDR, will I use it.
 - Every now and then the iPhone's HDR gives strange results so I prefer to not take that chance!

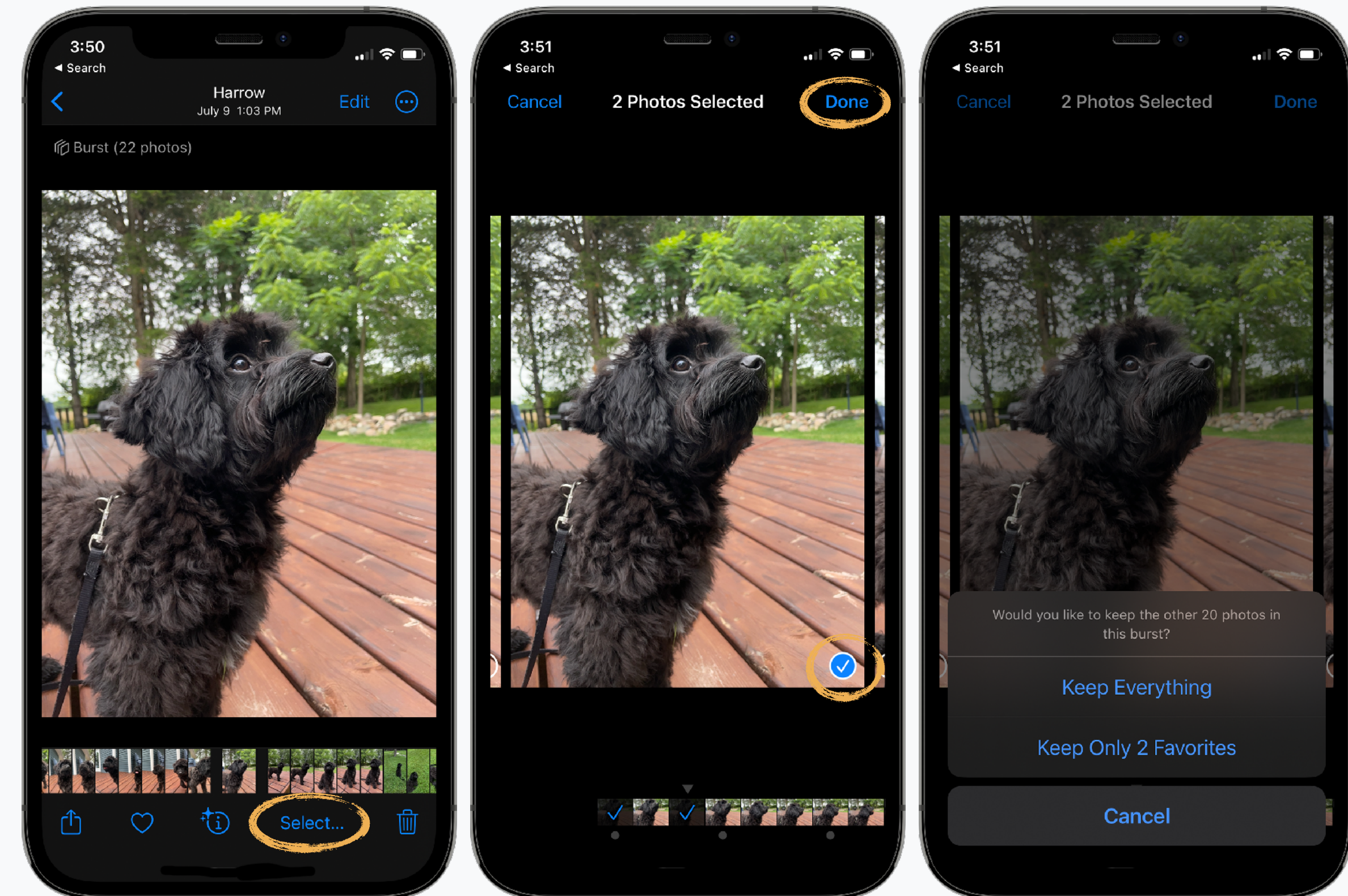


Burst Mode & Quick Video

- The iPhone camera's shutter button has two hidden features.
- **Burst Mode**
 - Allows you to capture a sequence of images in a single press.
 - Quickly hold and drag to the left to initiate. De-press to end the sequence.
- **Quick Video**
 - Allows you to take a video from the photo section of the camera app.
 - Hold the shutter button until it turns red. De-press to end recording or slide to the right to lock the camera in recording mode.

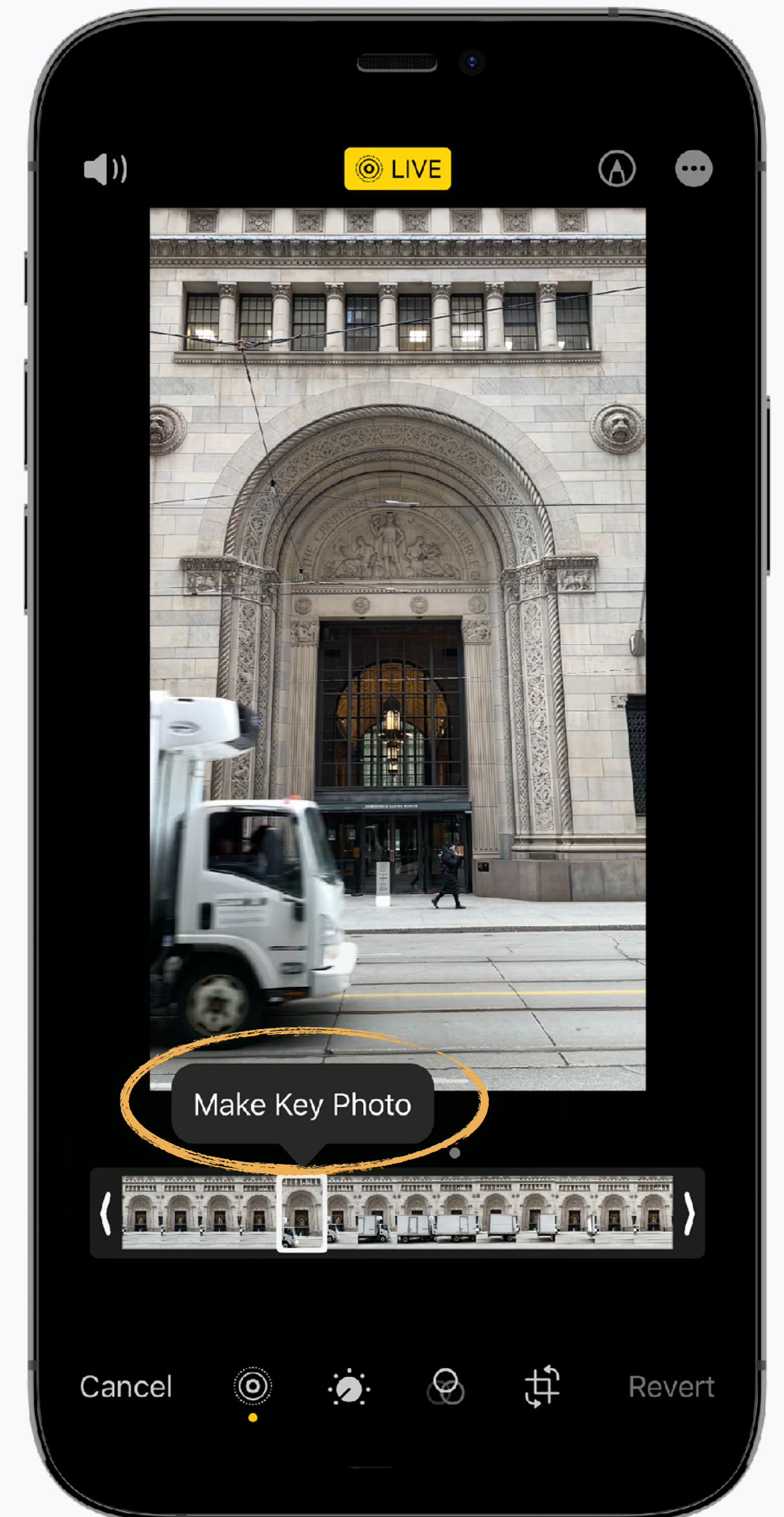
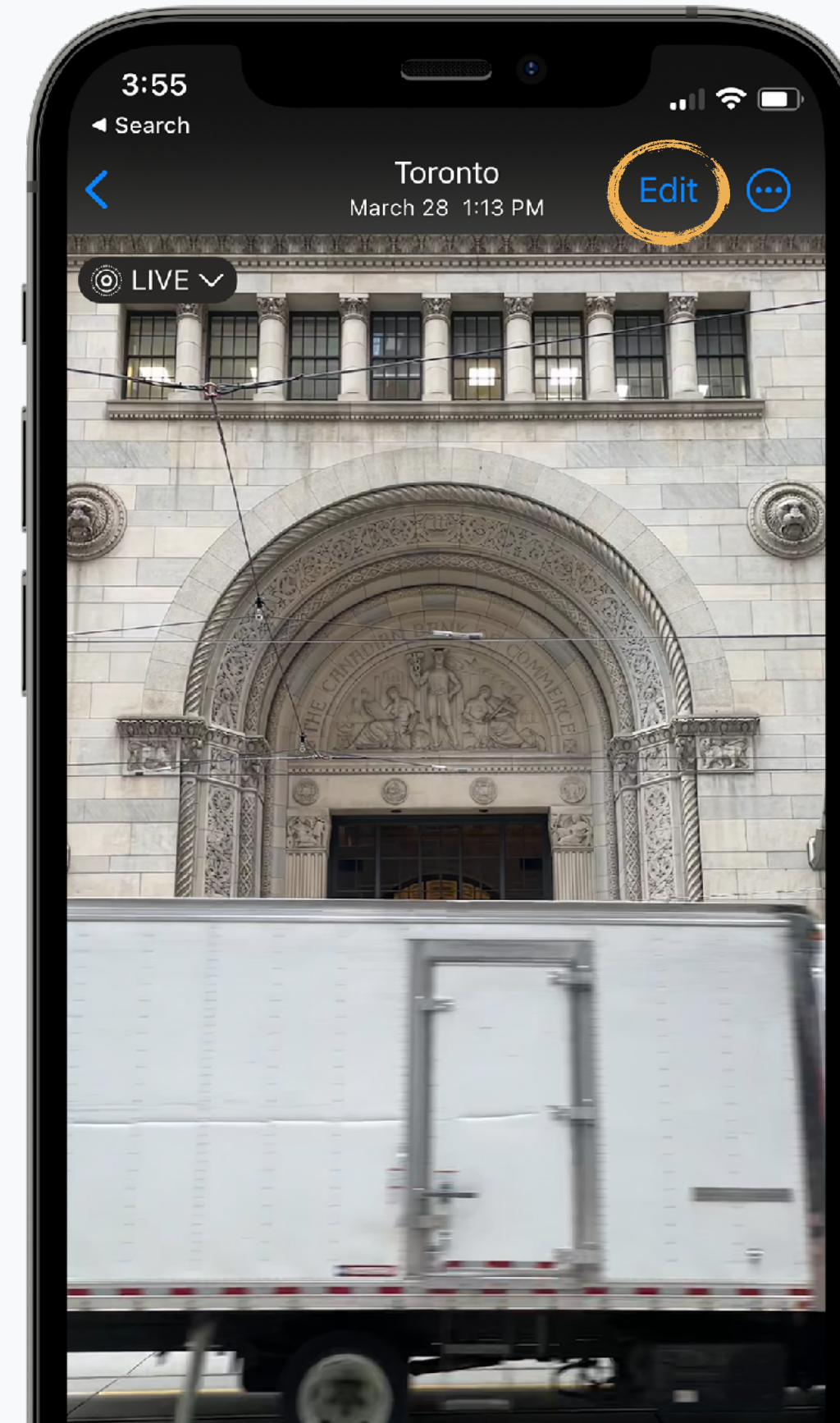
Reviewing Images

- Images taken with the camera can be viewed, edited and shared in the Photos app.
- Images that were taken with the burst mode can be accessed through the following steps:
 - Select the Burst in the Photos app.
 - Tap the “Select...” icon on the bottom toolbar.
 - Swipe through the images taken in the Burst, select your favourites and tap Done in the top right corner.
 - Each of these images will be saved individually in the Photos app.



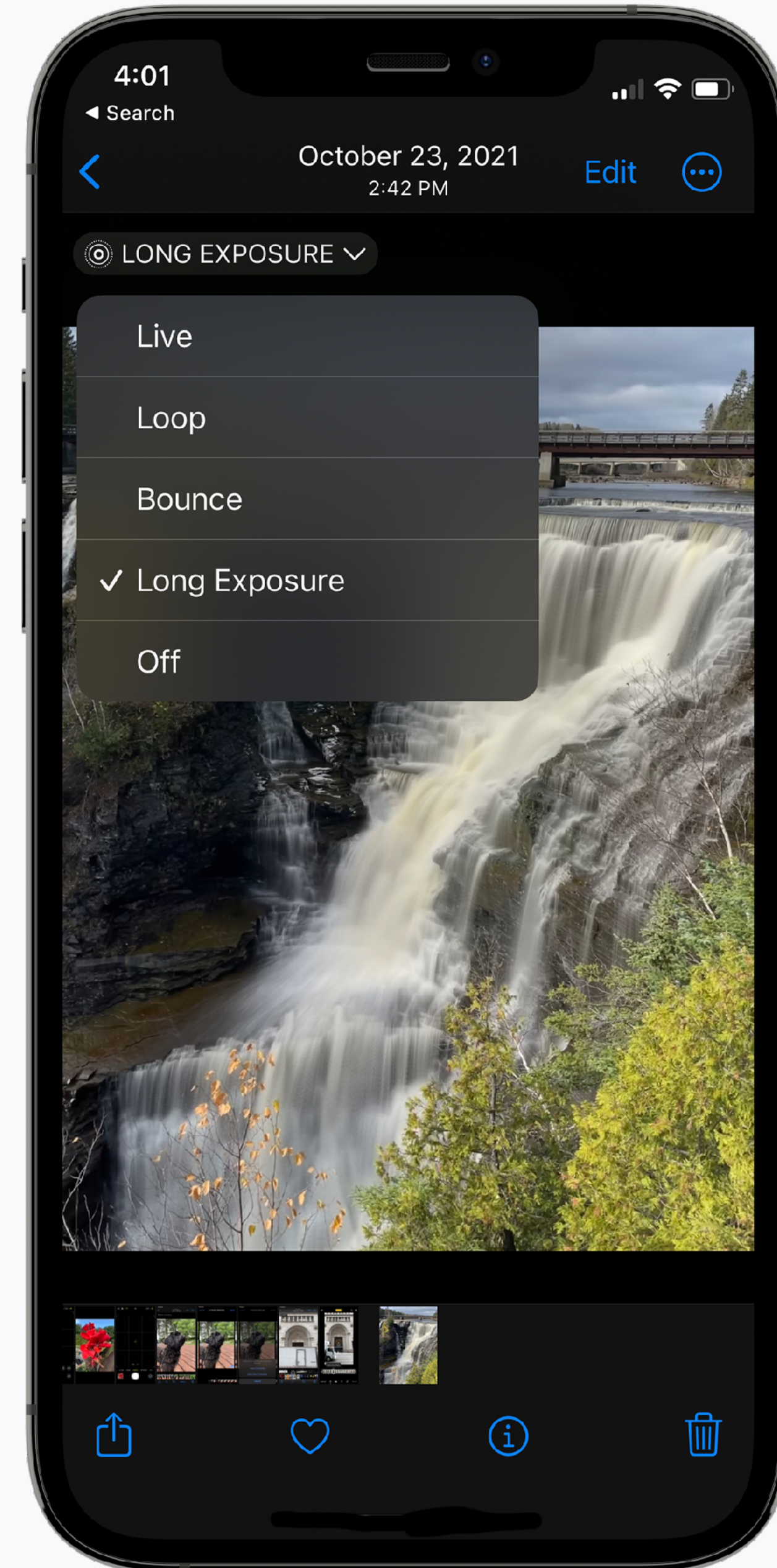
Reviewing Images

- Selecting an image from a Live Photo:
 - Select a Live Photo in the Photos app.
 - Tap Edit in the top right corner.
 - Tap the Live Photo icon in the bottom left corner (next to Cancel).
 - Slide your finger to select the perfect moment. Tap “Make Key Photo” to save this frame as the primary image.



Reviewing Images

- Live Photos can also be turned into an animated GIF or Long Exposure photo:
 - Select a Live Photo in the Photos app.
 - Tap the “Live” button in the top left of the screen just under the top toolbar.
 - Select one of the following options:
 - Loop: loops the video start to end, start to end.
 - Bounce: loops the video start to end, end to start.
 - Long Exposure: blurs moving elements to create streaking effects or the appearance of motion.



Practical Tips

Clean Your Lens

- Your iPhone is constantly in and out of your pocket and touching different surfaces. As a result, the lens of your camera, which is naturally exposed to all of these elements, can get very dirty!
- The first step before you start taking pictures with your iPhone is to clean your lens.
- Ideally, you would always use a microfibre cloth.
 - If you don't have one, it's okay, these lenses are coated with Sapphire and made to be pretty rugged so a soft shirt will do the trick without harming the lens.
 - You can also use a 70% isopropyl alcohol wipe for a deeper clean.



DIRTY LENS



CLEAN LENS

Increase Screen Brightness

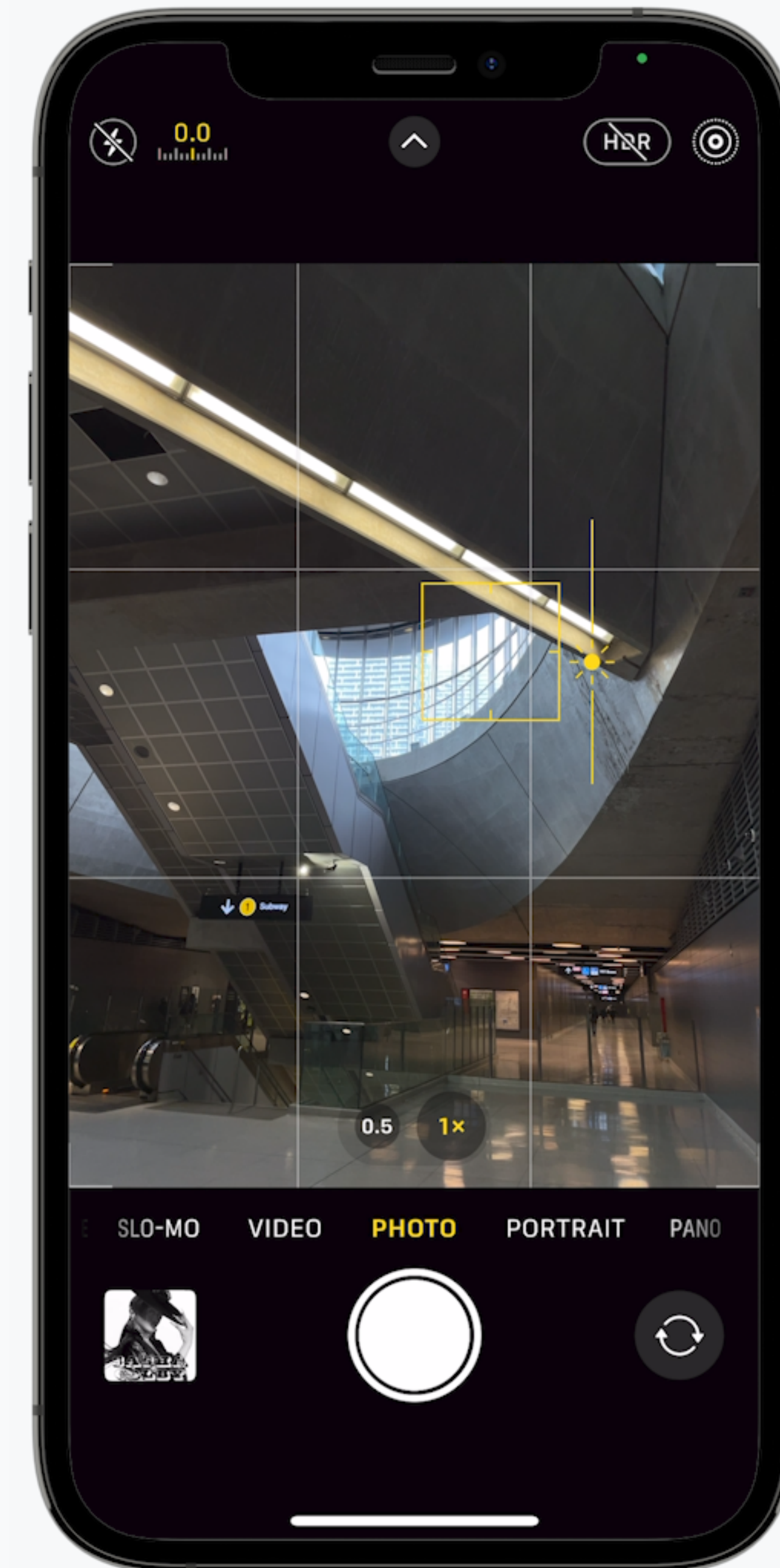
- Increasing your screen brightness will allow you to better see the elements that you're taking a picture of. This will allow you to better place your subjects in your composition and better gauge your exposure.
- This becomes especially important to do on bright sunny days where the sun overpowers your screen's display.

How to Hold Your iPhone

- Hold your iPhone like you would hold a camera. That is firmly, securely and concentrated. This simple tip will allow you to treat the iPhone more like you might a camera and consider the photo-taking process a little more carefully.
- Be considerate of the **tilt** of your iPhone. iPhone's are such lightweight and compact devices that it can become easy to tilt off-axis and make things appear crooked. Keep this in mind when you're shooting and use the grid lines to straighten your horizon and verticals.
- Elbows in!

Exposure

- Photographer's will typically want to expose for the highlights (brighter parts) of an image.
 - You can successfully lift most shadows (darker parts) in an image that may have gone too dark. It is much harder to retain detail in over-exposed highlights (brighter parts).
- iPhone's natively expose for the shadows so it's very important to correct this before taking an image.
- This can be done through:
Exposure Compensation.



Exposure

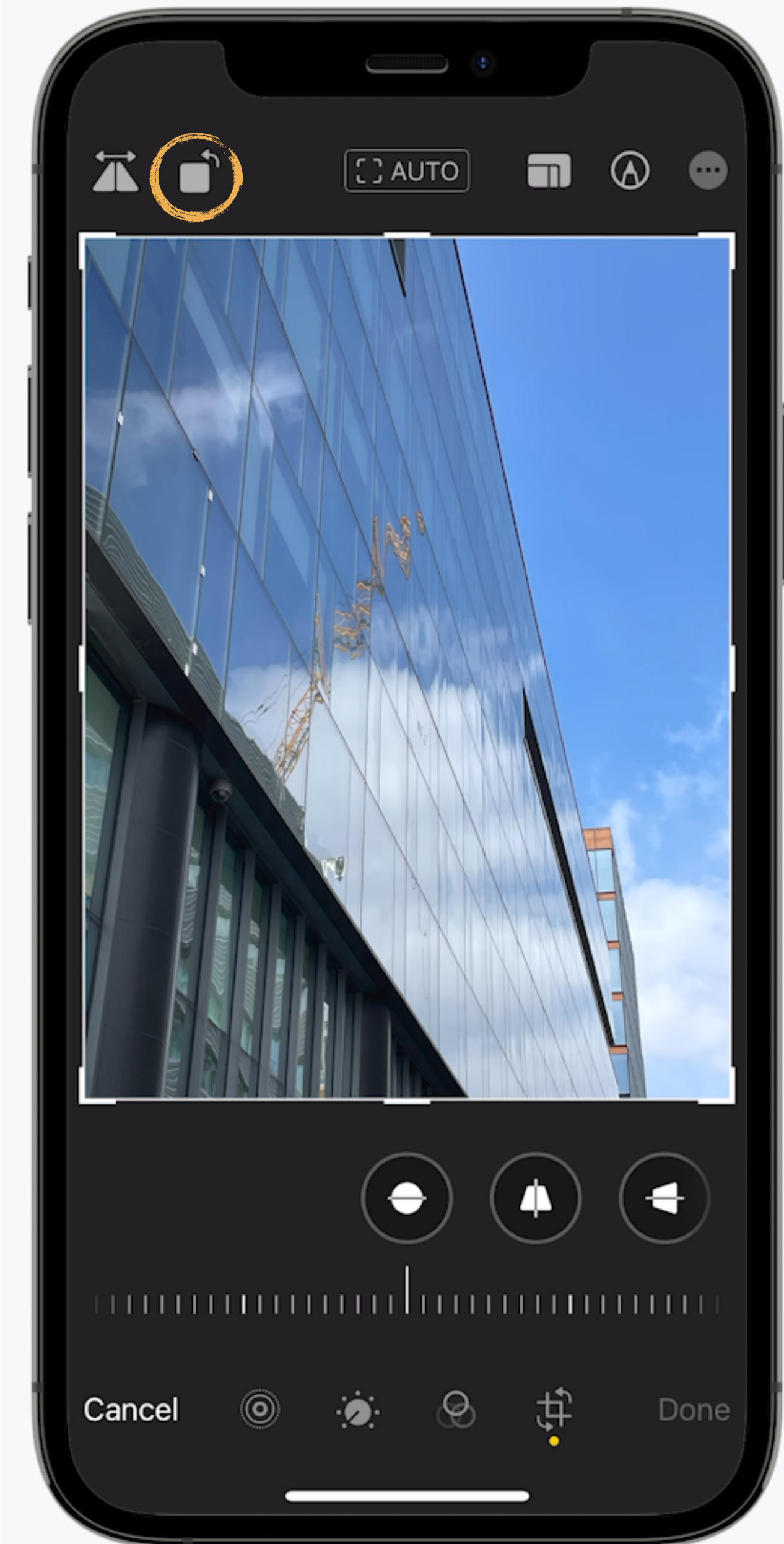
- Get your exposure right **in-camera**.
 - Getting exposure correct in camera becomes crucial with images taken in HEIF or JPEG format. There is little room to alter exposure afterward without degrading the image.
 - If you're shooting in Apple ProRAW you will have much more leeway for altering exposure in an editing software. It is still good practice to shoot a proper exposure in-camera.

Shoot in Portrait and Landscape Orientation

- It's easy to forget to turn our iPhones into Landscape orientation when we're taking photos because we're so used to operating our phones in Portrait orientation.
- This depends on what you're photographing, what you want to focus on and the composition that you're trying to achieve.
- Sometimes putting your iPhone into landscape orientation can open up the scene and allow you to see it in a new perspective. Don't be afraid to experiment!

How to Correct Rotation

- Sometimes when shooting in landscape orientation or going back and forth between portrait and landscape, the iPhone records an image failing to rotate it into the proper view.
- This can easily be corrected through the Photos app:
 - Select the image in the Photos app.
 - Tap Edit.
 - Tap the Crop/Rotate icon in the bottom right corner (next to Done).
 - Tap the Rotate icon in the top toolbar until the photo is the correct orientation.
 - Tap Done to save.

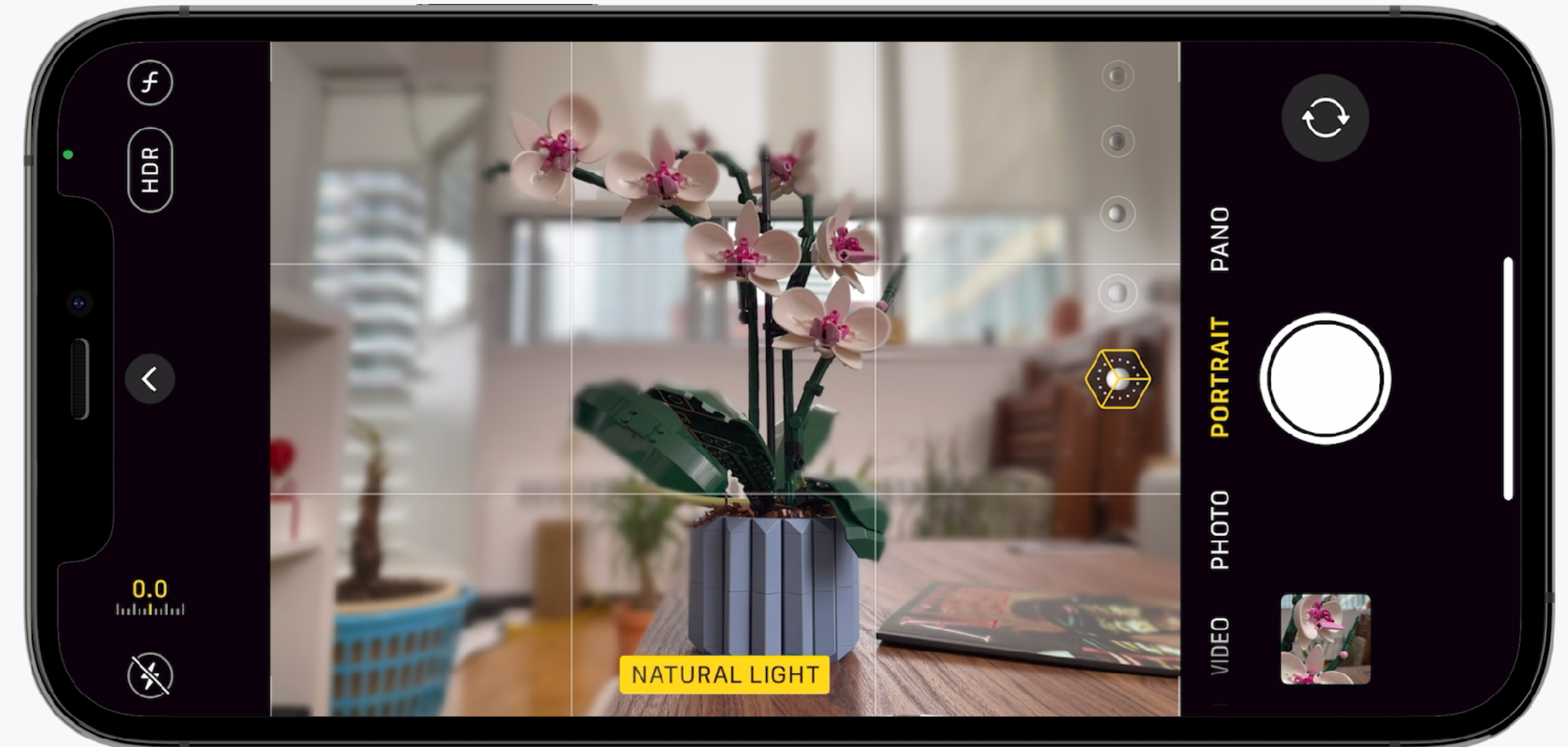


When to Use Different Aspect Ratios

- Aspect ratios can be used as a way to experiment with different compositions, show more or less of a scene, or better fit a certain use-case.
- The 4:3 aspect ratio is the standard ratio and the one that I use 90% of the time.
- Both the Square and 9:16 aspect ratios are cropped versions of the 4:3 image.
 - So while using these aspect ratios help with composing your image, they can also be achieved by taking an image with the 4:3 ratio and cropping later on.
- For someone learning composition, I would recommend using those different aspect ratios in camera to experiment and learn how to compose for that ratio.
- Consider your use-case.
 - Instagram Post: Square
 - Social Media Story: 9:16

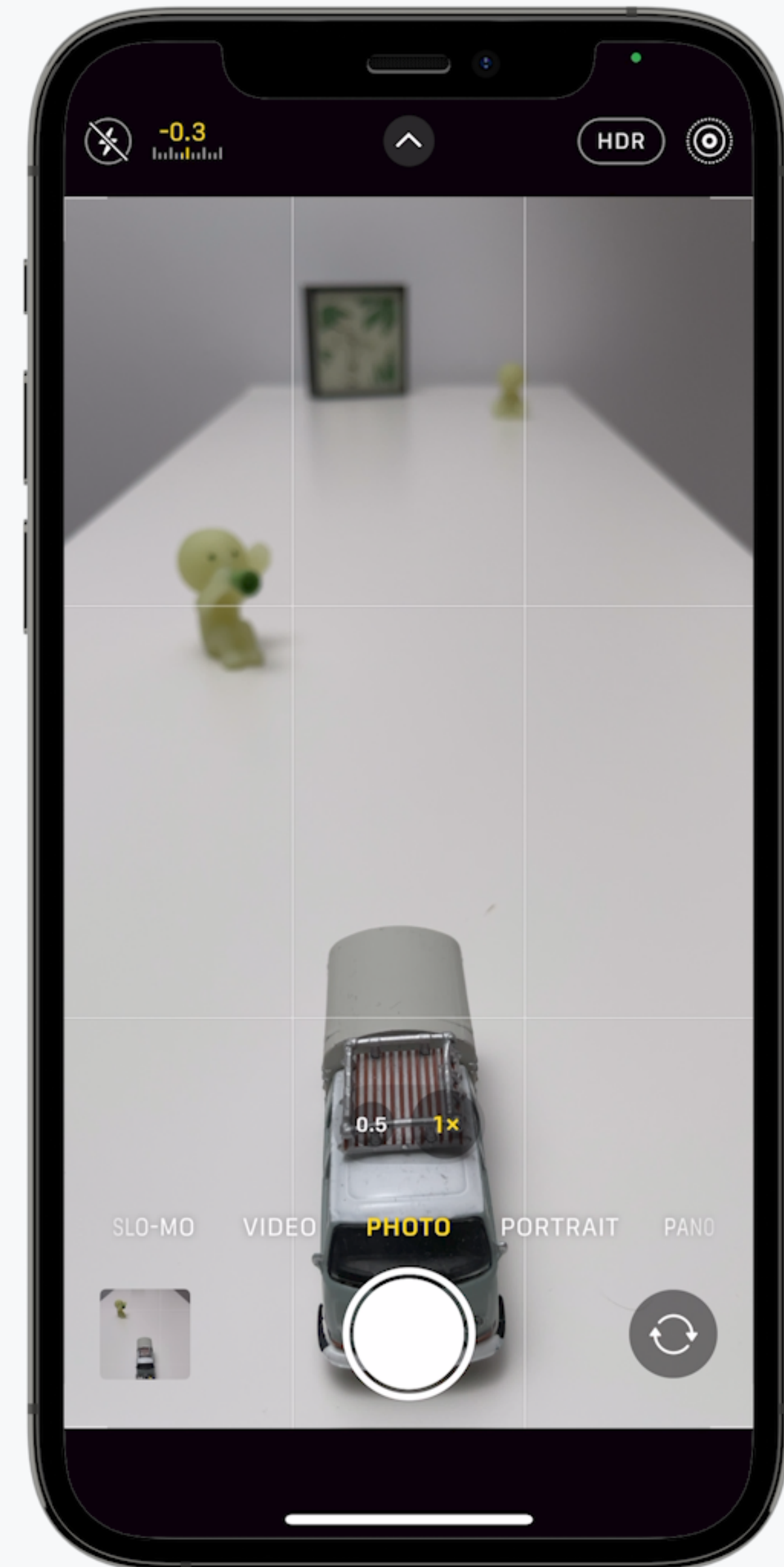
Avoid Portrait Mode

- Portrait mode uses artificial intelligence and processing to achieve certain effects. The most common effects are a blurry background or more focused light.
- The A.I. sometimes has trouble distinguishing the subject from the background and will instead blur parts of the subject or have unwanted parts of the background still in focus.
- Personally, if it's not perfect, I don't want it! I would much rather work within the confines of the camera itself and avoid any additional processing.



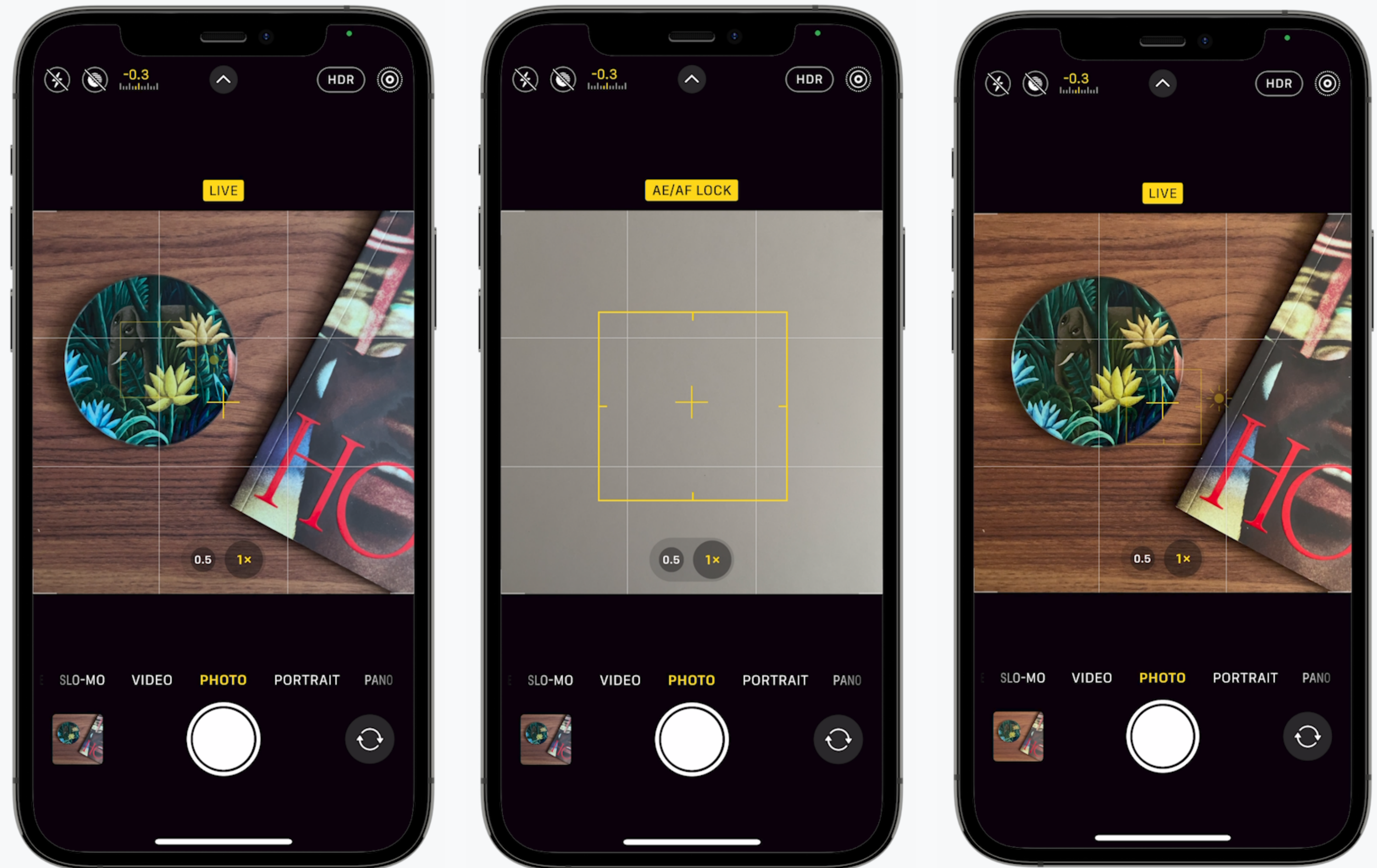
Avoid Portrait Mode

- If you're looking for an out-of-focus background, you can still achieve this on an iPhone by:
 - Getting closer to your subject
 - Increasing the distance between subject and background
- Lighting can instead be manipulated or modified until the desired effect is achieved.



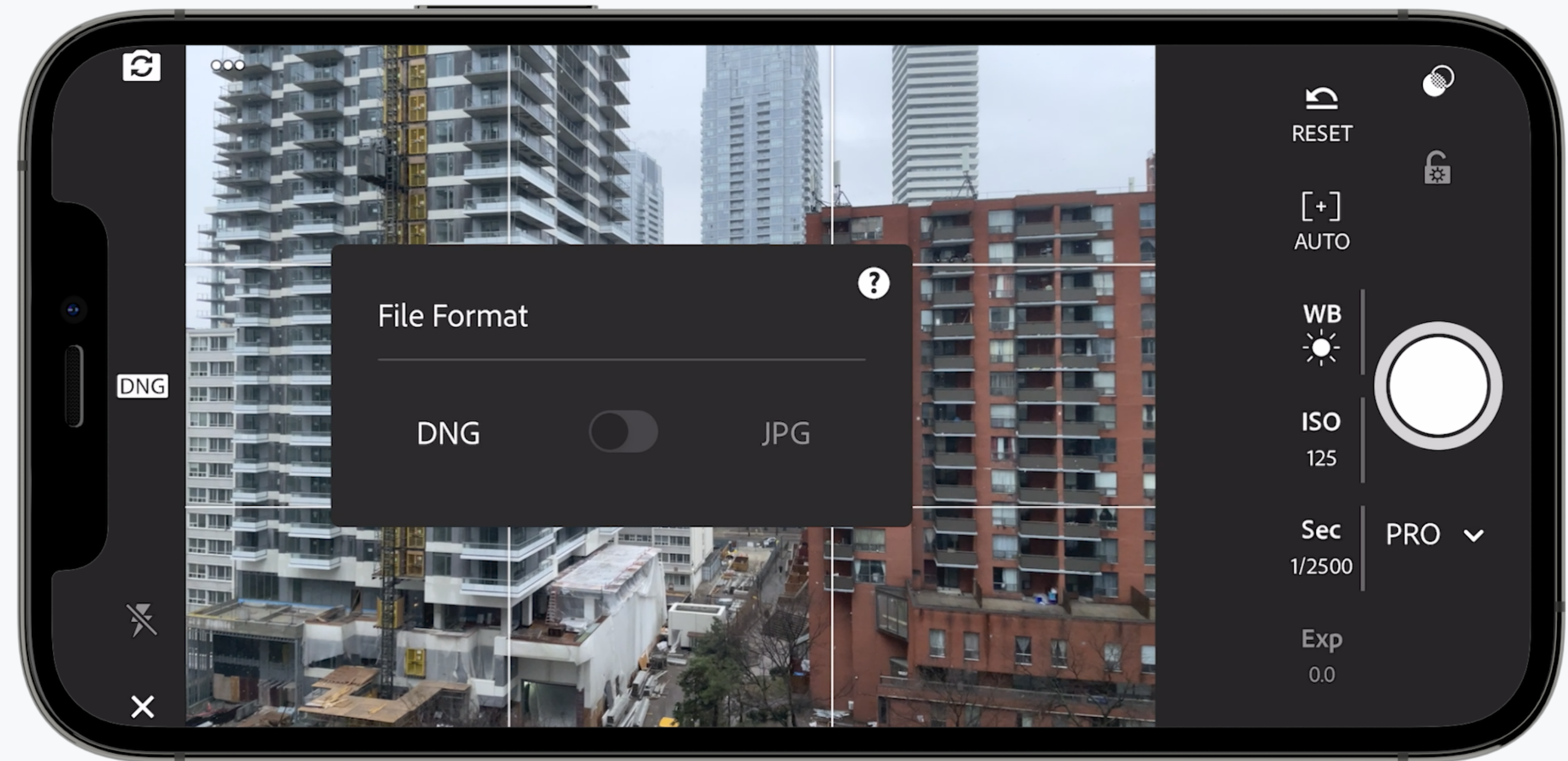
Fixing White Balance Issues

- Sometimes the iPhone can have trouble selecting the right white balance automatically.
- If you run into this issue where the white balance looks off you can troubleshoot this by:
 - Bringing a white object into frame (i.e. blank paper)
 - Tapping and holding to AE/AF lock. The accurate white balance is now locked with your exposure.
 - Remove the white object and take your image.



Taking Full Control*

- If you're looking to take full control of the exposure triangle, I would recommend using the Lightroom Photo Editor app.
 - Within the app you can access a camera that allows you to control each element of your camera manually.
 - No subscription needed!



Creative Tips

Observe your Surroundings

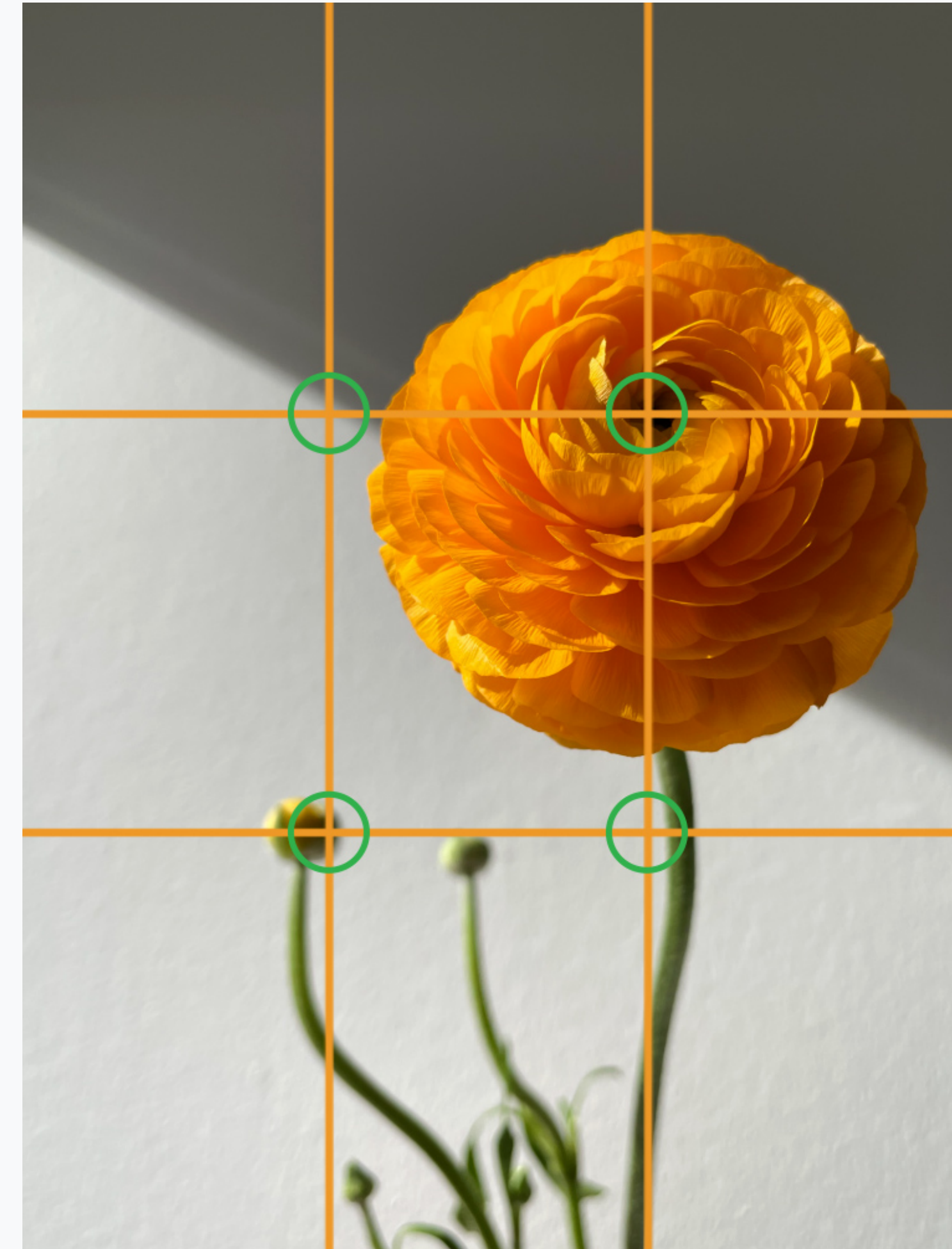
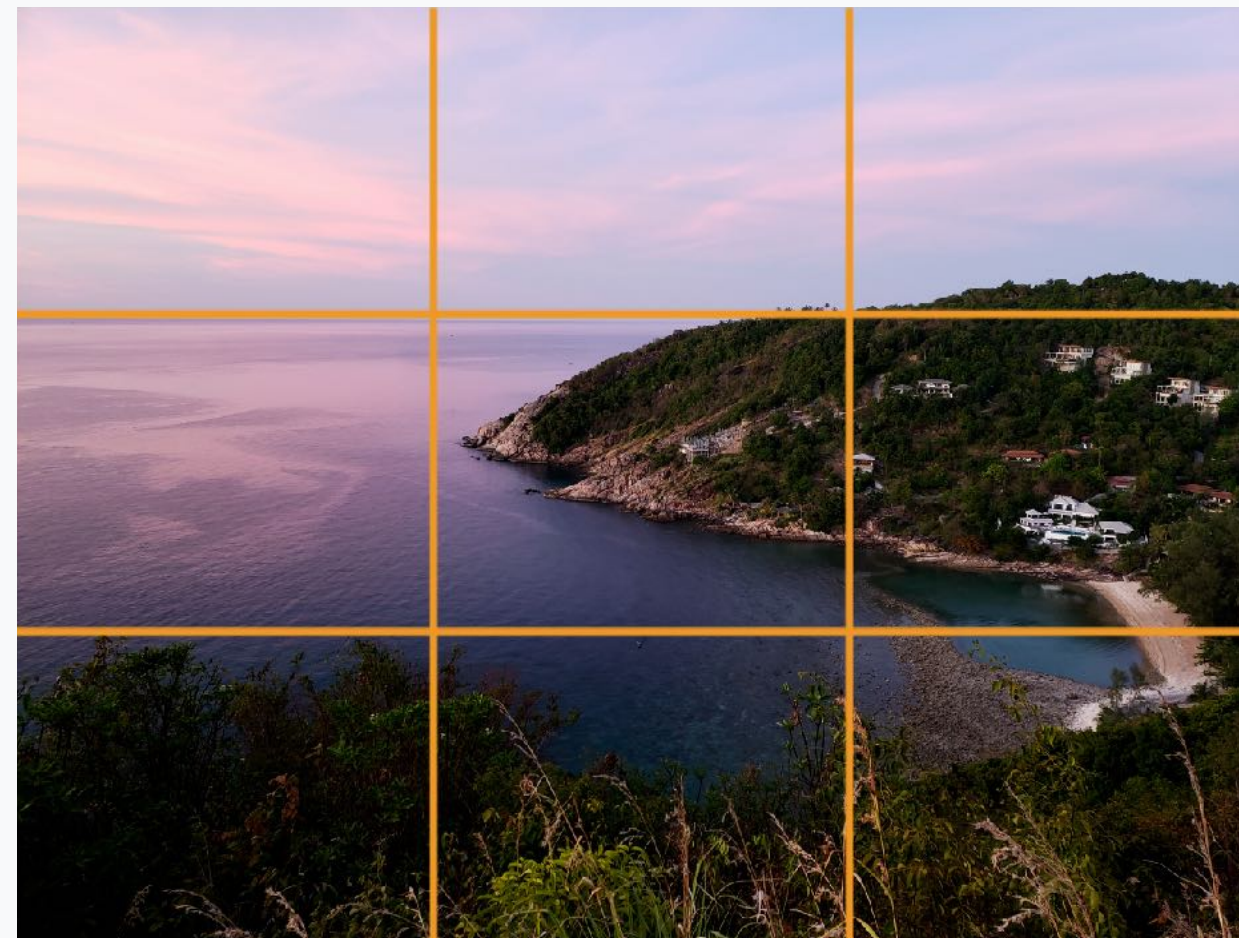
- Be present and notice intensely.
- Resist the urge to only look through your screen.
- I find that I'm able to experience a location or moment much better without a screen. I can easily look around at my surroundings and start to notice the details that I may have passed by otherwise.

Composition

- Rule of Thirds (Grid Overlay)
- Layering (Depth)
- Leading Lines
- Framing
- Fill the Frame
- Negative Space
- Balance

Rule of Thirds

- Breaks an image into thirds (both horizontally and vertically).
- The guideline suggests that elements placed along the gridlines and particularly where the gridlines intersect, will produce a better composition.
- This rule encourages dynamism in your images and allows the viewer to have a more engaging experience with the photograph, scanning more areas of the frame.



Layering (Depth)

- This technique breaks an image down into three separate layers: foreground, middle ground and background.
 - Foreground: the elements closest to the camera.
 - Background: the elements furthest from the camera.
 - Middle Ground: the elements in the middle of the image, between foreground and background.
- By placing elements in more than one layer, you can add depth and dimension.
 - Elements can be placed distinctly in separate layers which will emphasize shape and form.
 - Or they can be placed to cross through the layers which will draw the viewer's eye through the image.



Leading Lines

- A technique where lines in an image are used to lead or draw the viewer's eye through an image. This is best used when the lines lead to a subject.



Framing

- Using elements of a scene to create a sub-frame in your image. This should ideally lead to the subject of your image.
- Can be used to focus the attention of your viewer.



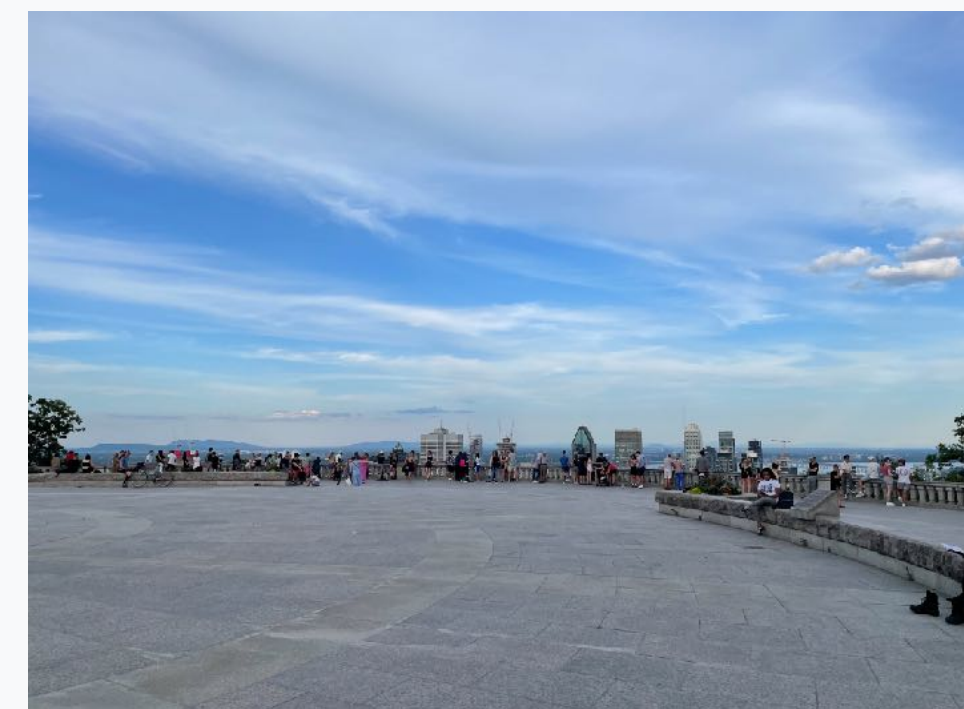
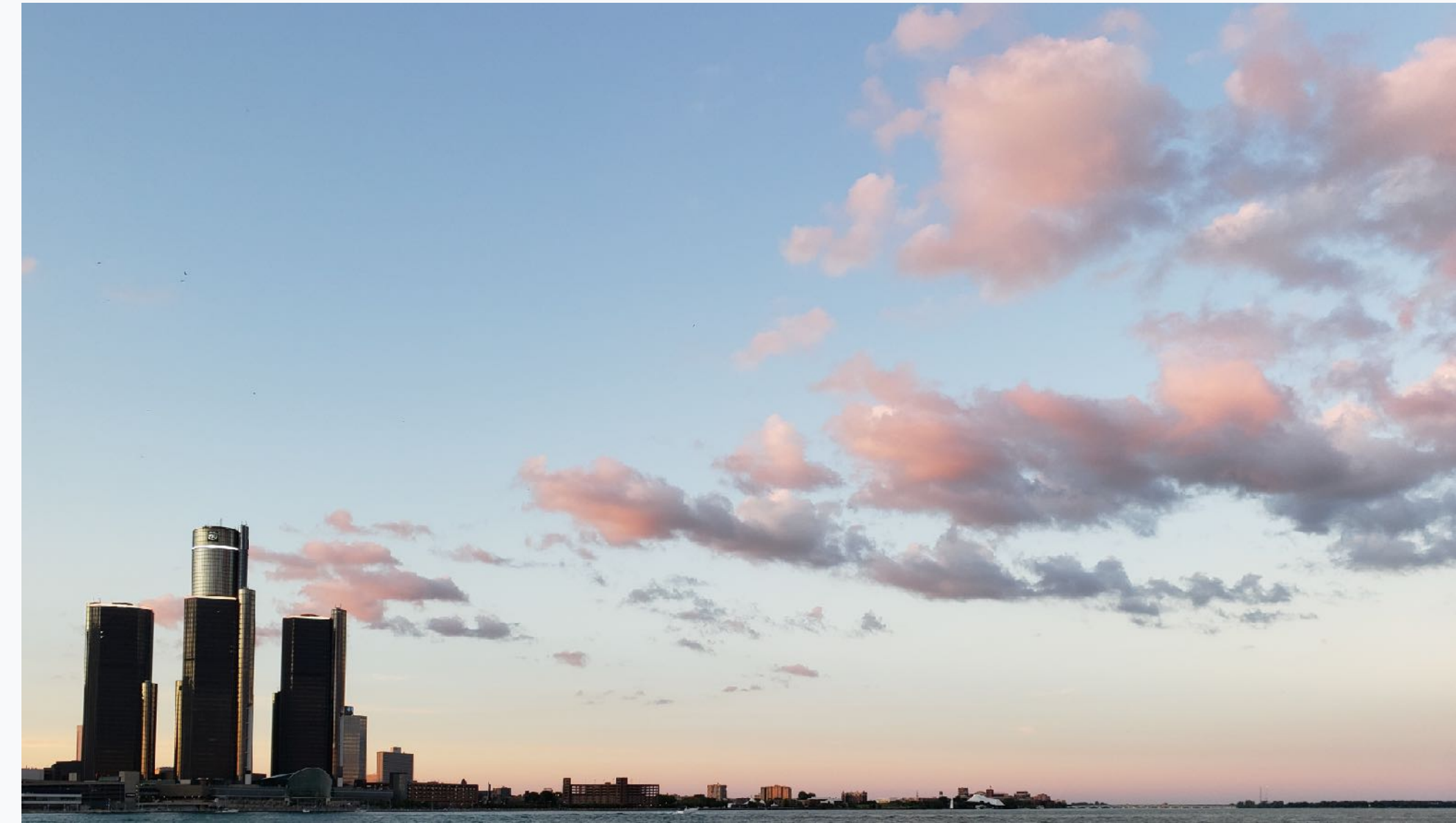
Fill the Frame

- A technique where the *positive* elements of a photograph take up most or all of the frame. This means making your subject a large portion of your image.
- This helps to focus the viewer's attention on the important subject.
- It can help emphasize detail, pattern, shape/form or texture.



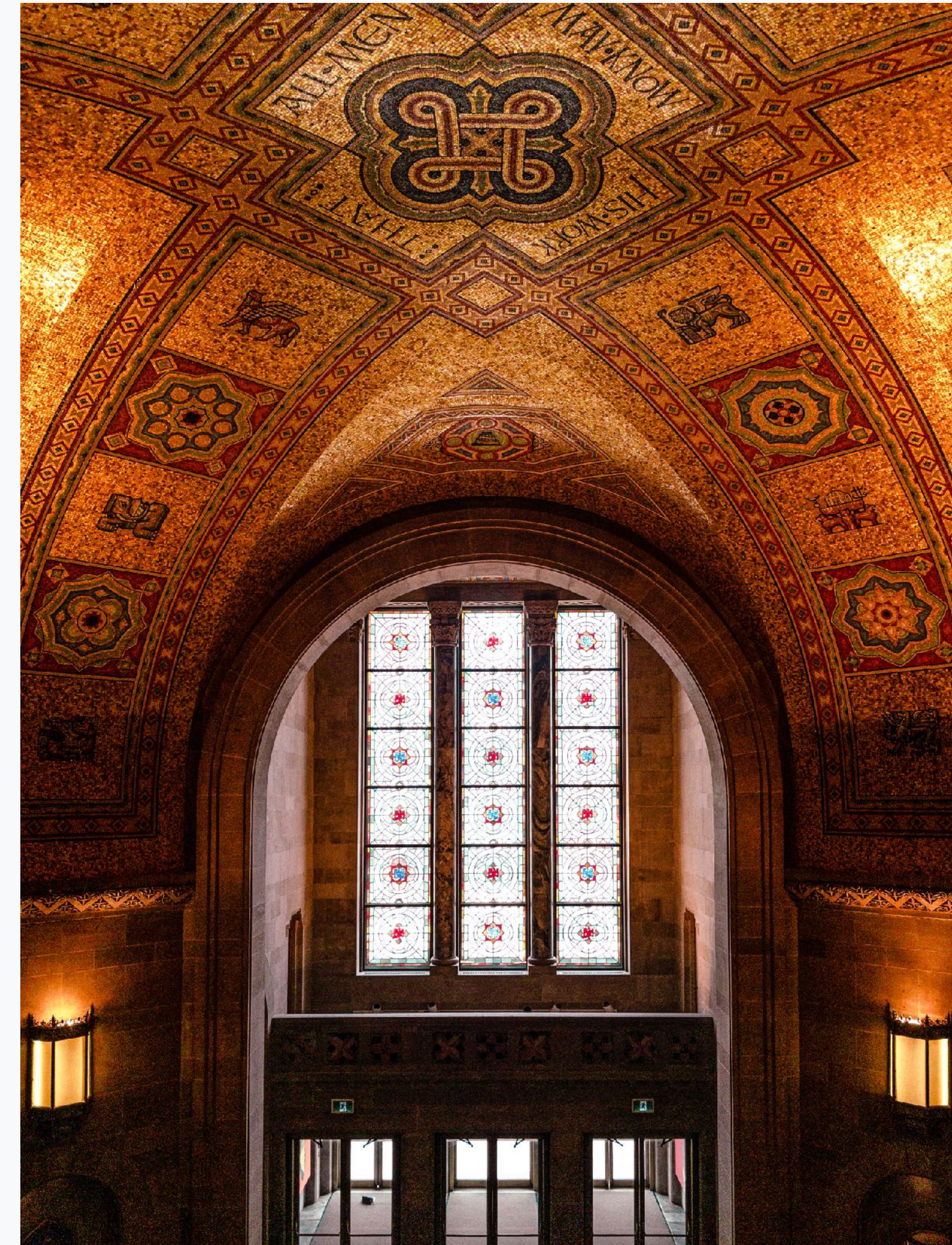
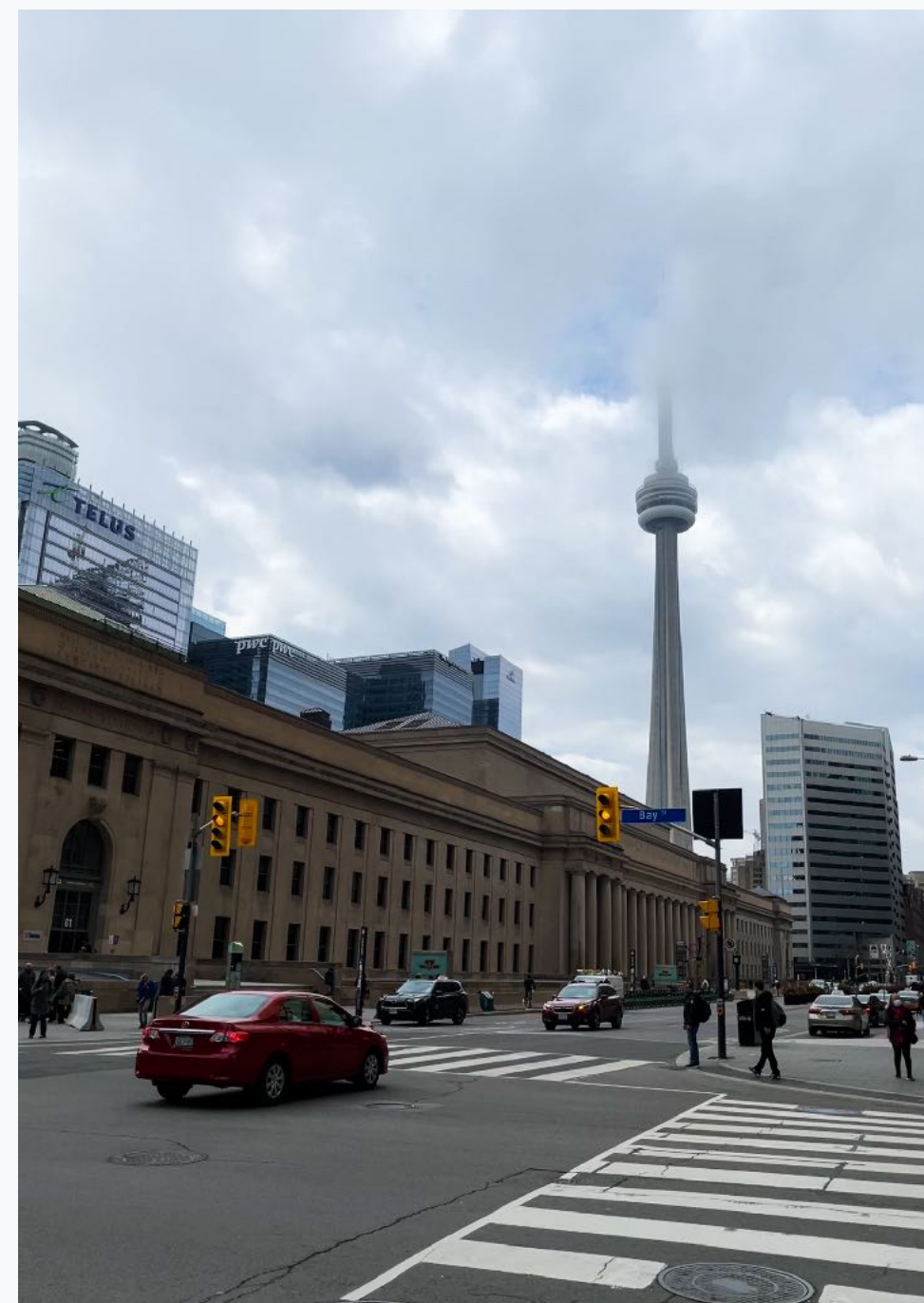
Negative Space

- This technique puts more emphasis on the *negative* elements of a photograph or the empty space surrounding *positive* elements.
- This can be used to isolate and focus on a certain subject.
- To use this technique effectively, negative space should take up the majority of your image.



Balance

- This technique seeks to place image elements in a manner that provides equal visual weight to each element.
- An image has balance when the areas of importance equally command a viewer's attention.
- This can be done symmetrically or asymmetrically.



Viewpoint: Change Your Perspective

- Viewpoint: the position a photograph is taken from.
- When taking a photo, you can change your elevation, angle, left-right position, and distance from subject. These little choices are some of the most important a photographer can make.
 - Through these choices and the resulting composition, the photographer is directing the viewer to look at the subject in a certain way and can infuse a narrative or commentary simply through positioning.

Viewpoint: Change Your Perspective

- The photographer's viewpoints are commonly classified as:
 - Eye Level: taken from same height as the subject or photographer's eyes.
 - High Angle: taken from high, looking down.
 - Low Angle: taken from low, looking up.
 - Bird's Eye View: taken from very high, looking down or directly down.
 - Worm's Eye View: taken from very low, looking up or directly up.

Eye Level

- Eye Level: taken from same height as the subject or photographer's eyes.



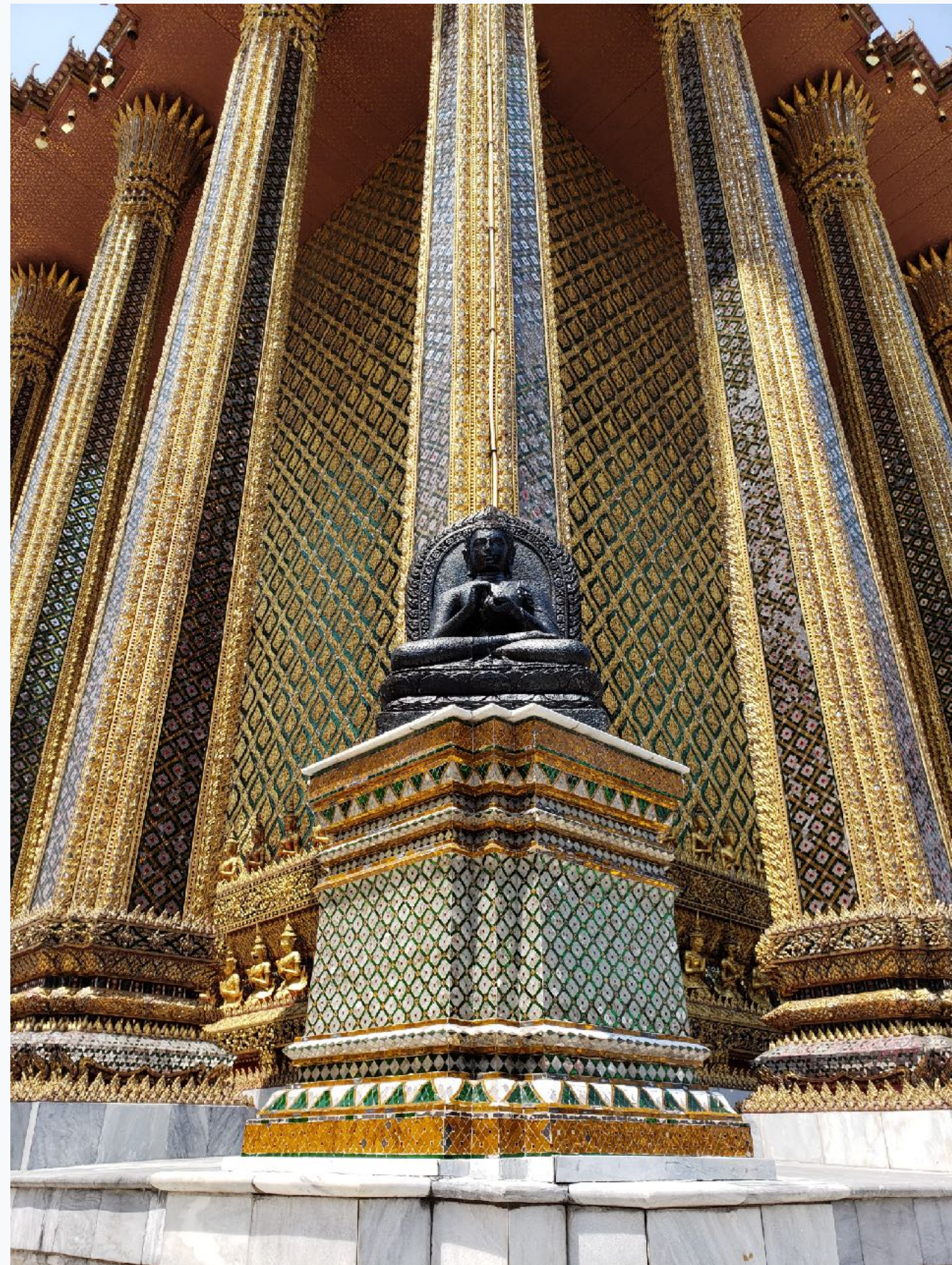
High Angle

- High Angle: taken from high, looking down.



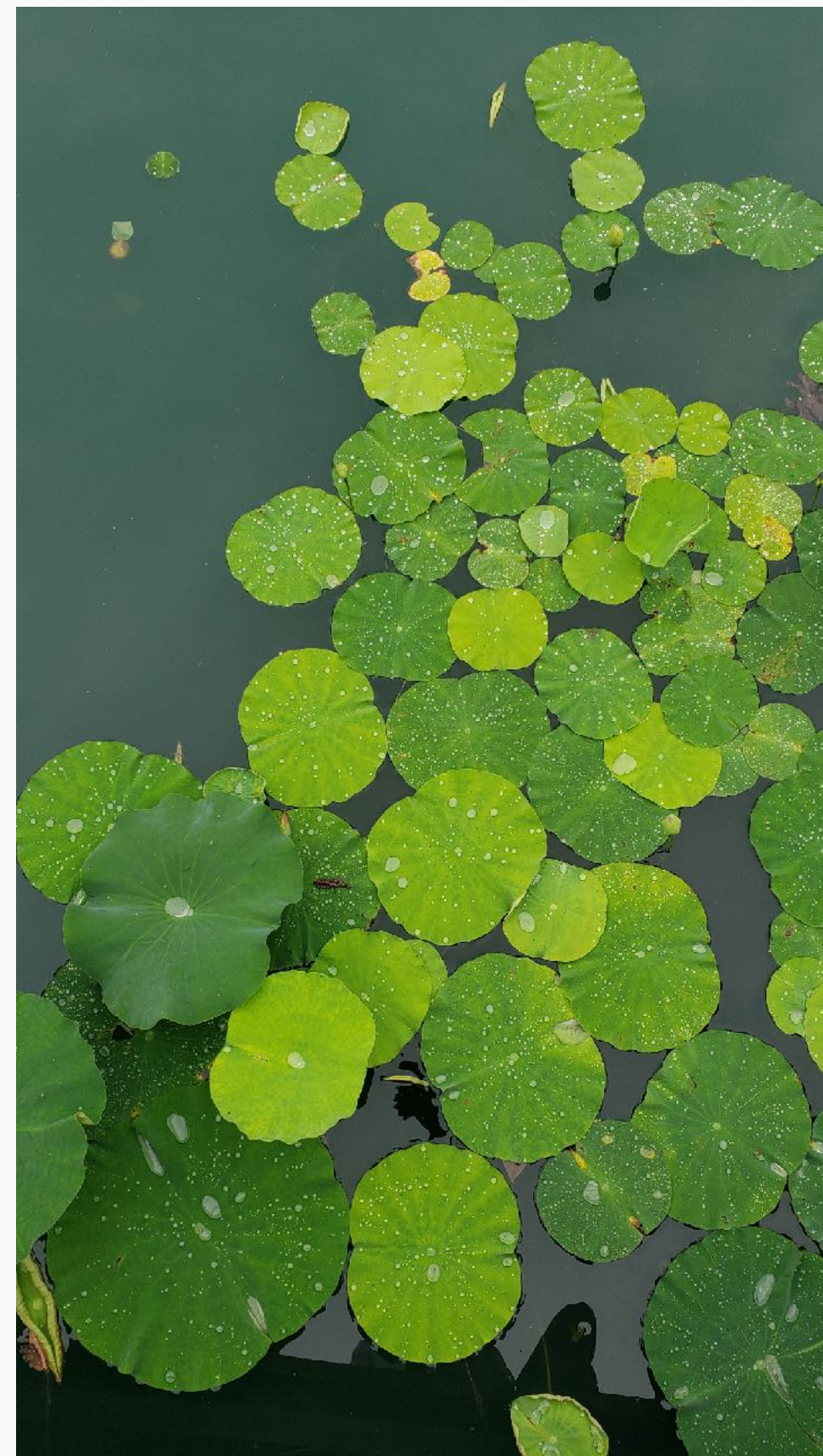
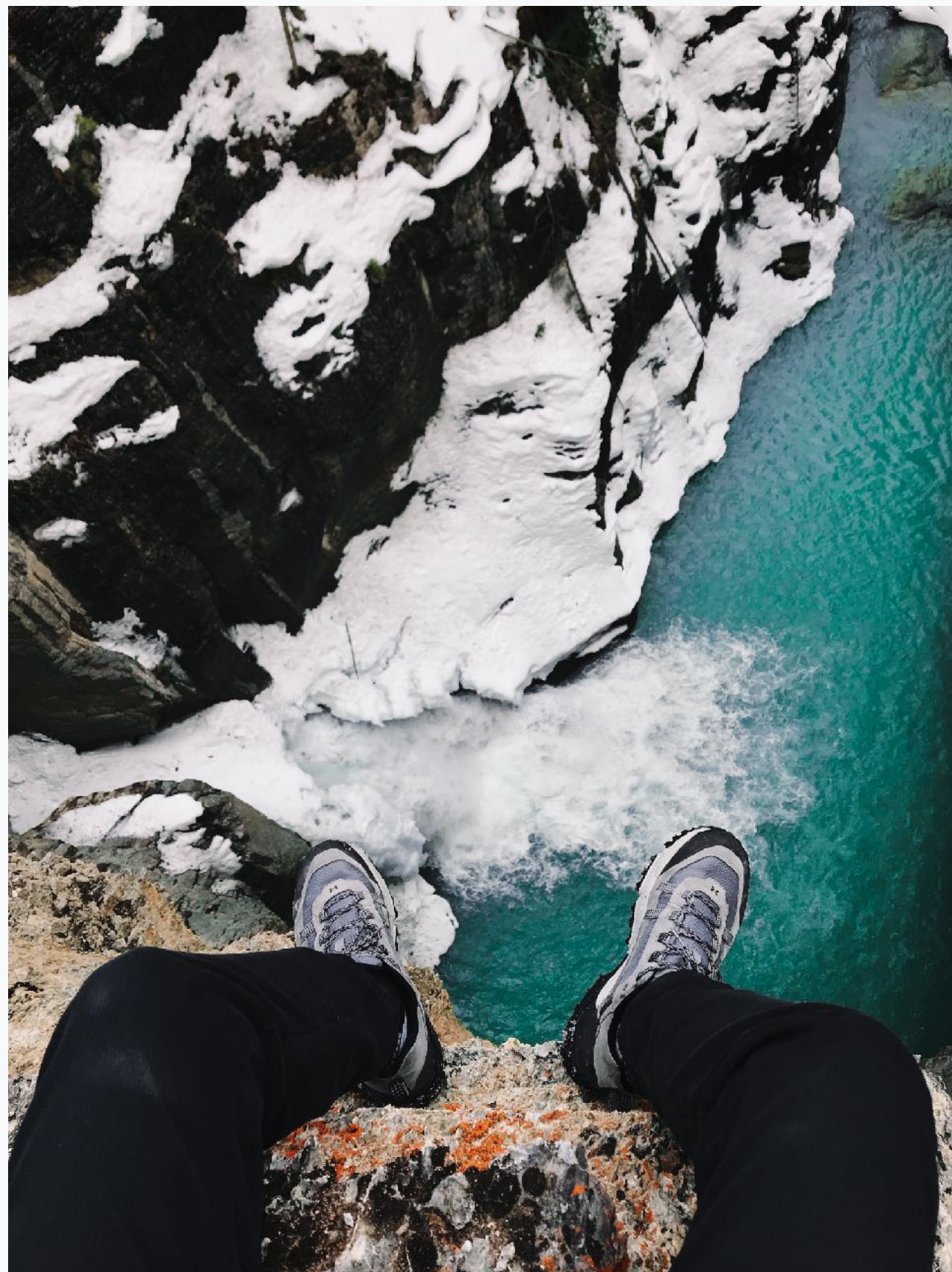
Low Angle

- Low Angle: taken from low, looking up.



Bird's Eye View

- Bird's Eye View: taken from very high, looking down or directly down.



Worm's Eye View

- Worm's Eye View: taken from very low, looking up or directly up.



Viewpoint: Change Your Perspective

- The position you're in when you discover a scene is rarely the *best* one to be in!
- Move your feet!
- Exercise: When you come across a subject or scene that you want to capture, explore all of your options. Force yourself to do a 360 around your subject, see if you can get a lower or higher vantage point, get closer than you would think and back up really far. When you find a good position, take a picture and continue exploring. Later on, review your photos and take note of which ones worked and consider why those ones worked so well.
- Through practice, you'll start to understand how these certain positions can alter the way subjects or scenes are captured. You'll grow to know instinctively how to best position yourself for your desired outcome.

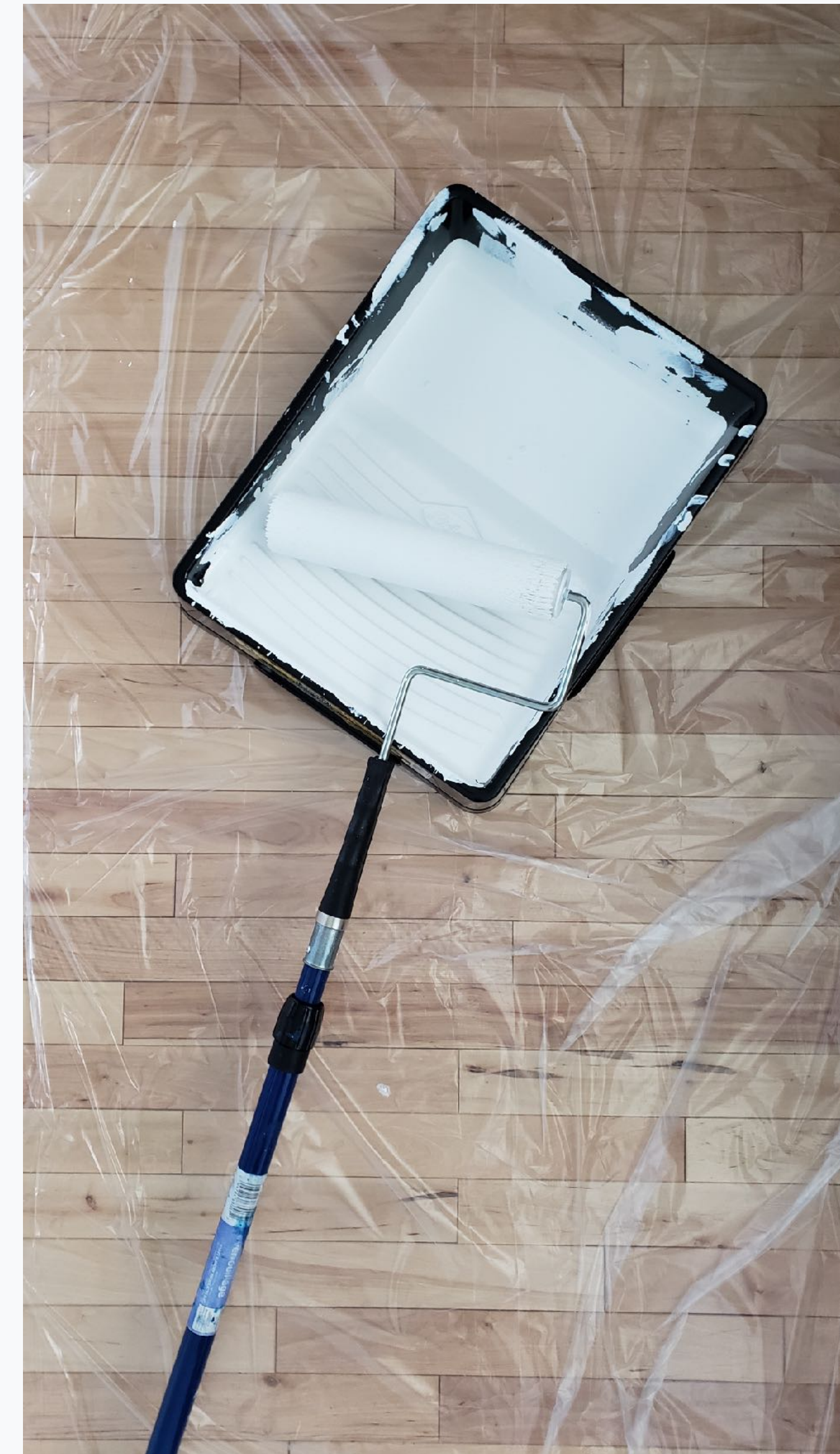
Use the Camera Size to Your Advantage

- What nooks and crannies can you fit your iPhone that you couldn't fit a standard camera?
 - What new perspectives can you explore?



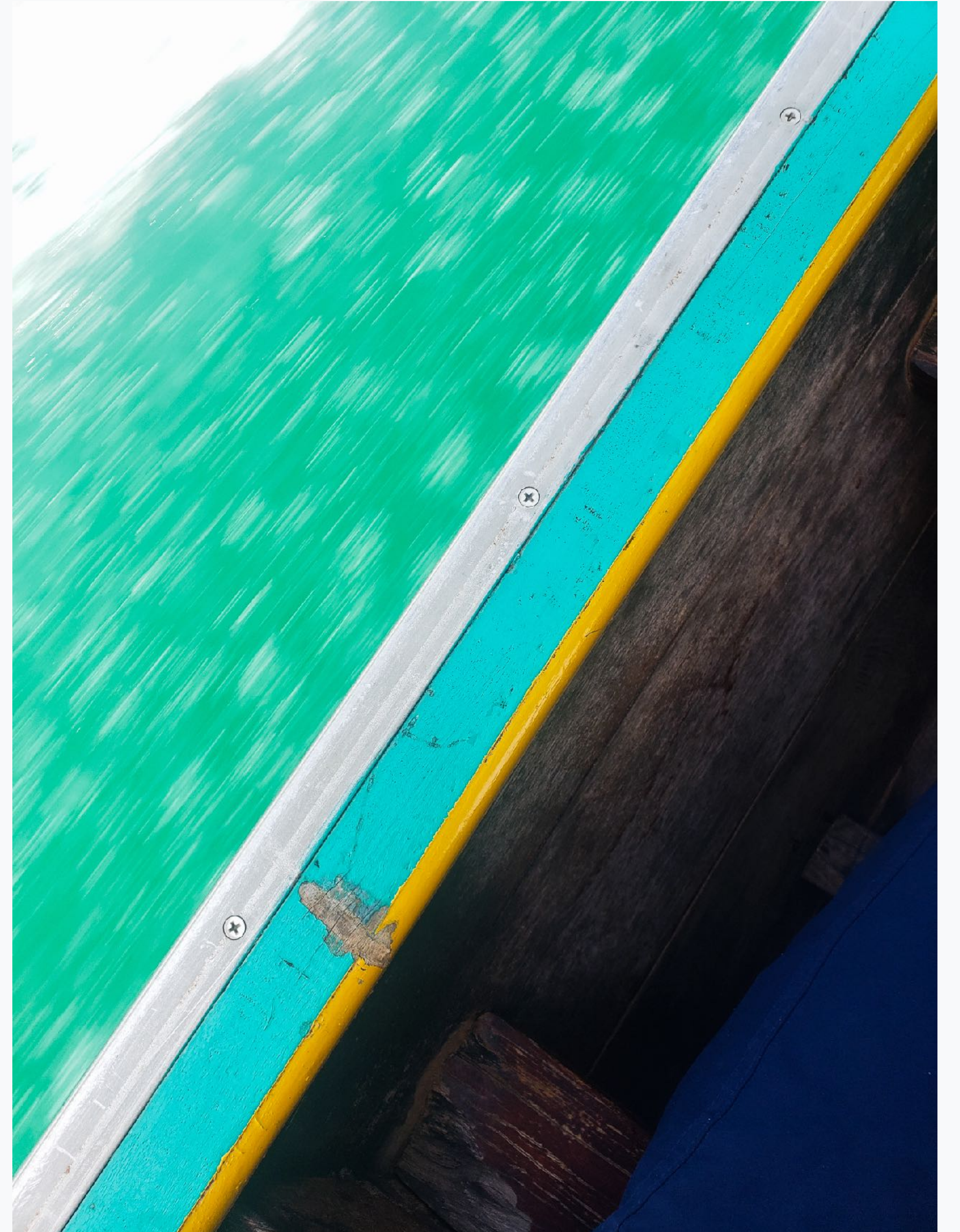
Simplification

- Include only what's necessary in your images. Reduce the elements to their bare minimum.
- What you exclude from your image is just as important as what you include.
- Get rid of any distracting elements in your images. Scan the frame!
- Using this technique can help focus the viewer's attention on a certain element.



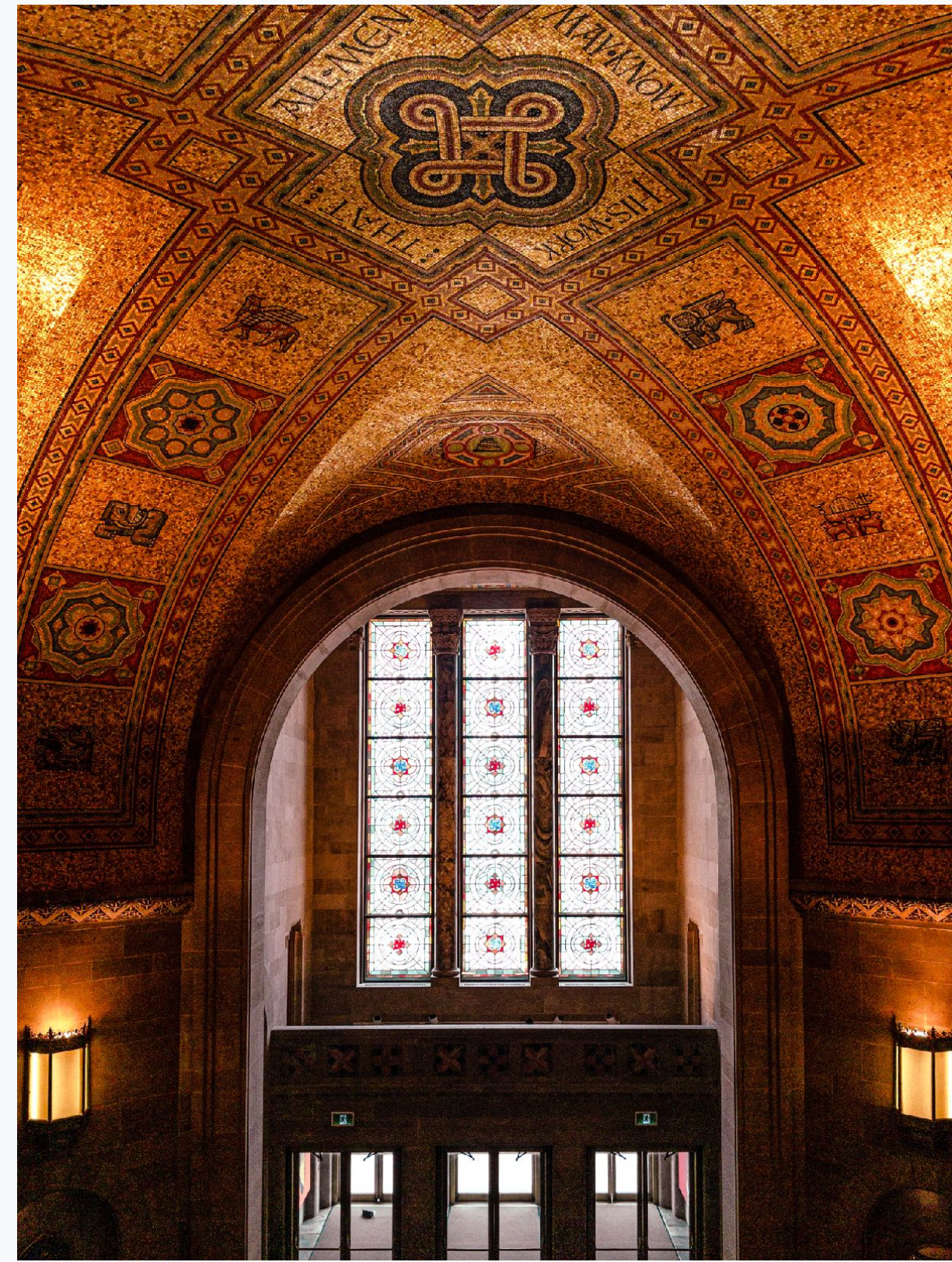
Think Abstractly

- Experiment with reducing your subjects to simple shape and form.
- Focus on a certain detail or texture of an object.
- Capture the way that light illuminates a subject or the shadows that are falling on your subject.
- Look for ways that colours and shapes interact.



Composition Wrap-Up

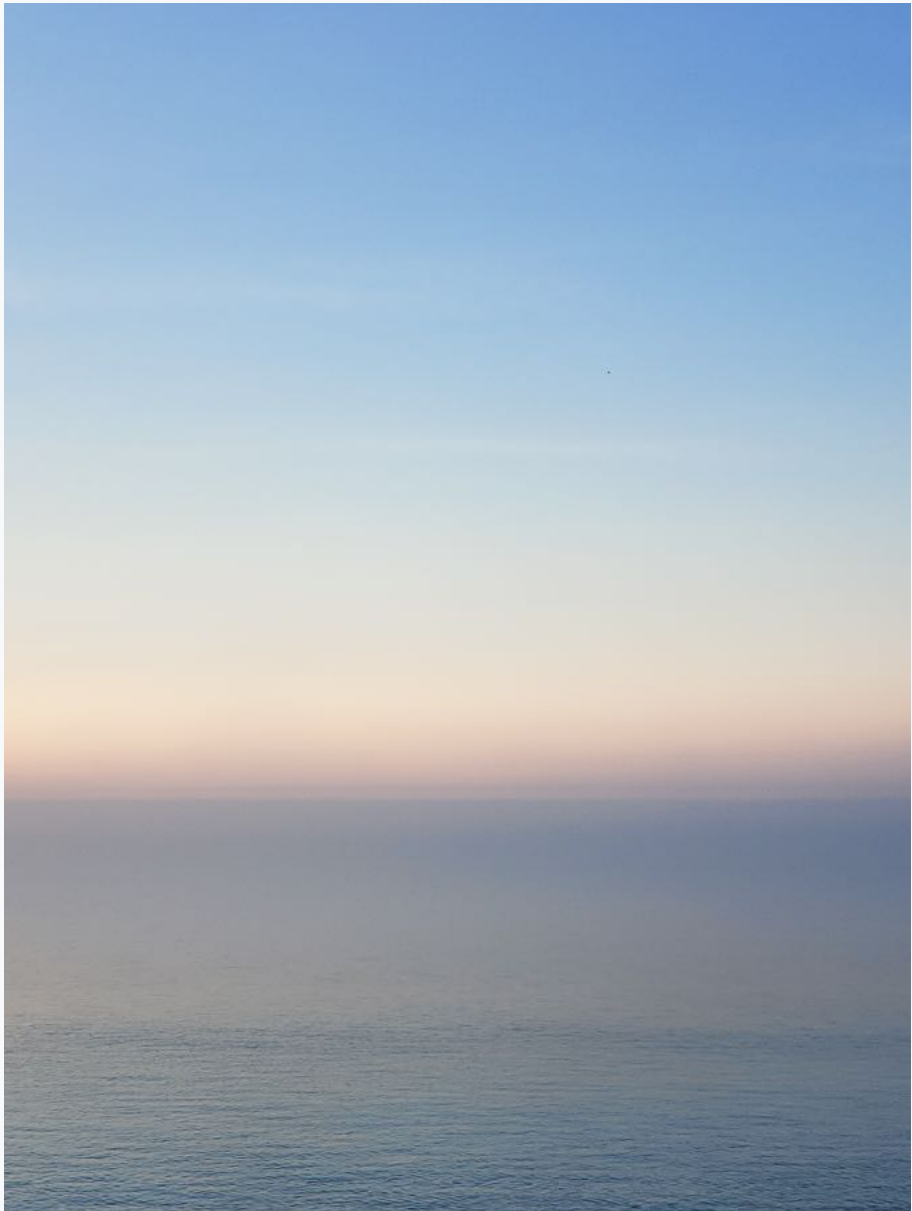
- Considering your composition, or in other words, the way in which elements are arranged in your image is vital to taking better photos!



Capturing Light

- Capturing good light is the most effective way to start seeing improvement in your images.
- What is “good” light?
 - Light that illuminates your subject adequately
 - Light that creates depth/shape and dimension/contrast.
 - Light that creates interest
- iPhone excels in BRIGHT, high contrast light. Due to the iPhone’s sensor, the brighter the image, the higher quality the image is going to be.
- Use HDR when you’re capturing a wide spectrum of highlight and shadow.

GOOD LIGHT



Capturing Light

- Look for interesting light and shadow.
- Chase light not subjects.
- Move subjects *into* good light.



Tonal Contrast

- Contrast refers to the difference or variation between bright and dark areas of an image.
- Any image can be broken down into the brightest and darkest part with a spectrum of tones in between. The tonal range between the brightest and darkest part of an image will be:
 - **LARGE** in a High Contrast image.
 - **SMALL** in a Low Contrast image.



Tonal Contrast

- Contrast can be used as a way to create more visual interest in your image or make certain elements stand out among the rest. When viewing a photograph, our eyes will naturally go to the brightest part first.
- In order to capture more tones across this spectrum, cameras with a higher dynamic range are used. The iPhone's HDR feature uses computation to achieve this by capturing multiple frames at varying exposures and blending them into a single image.

Colour Contrast

- Colour is one of the more complex elements to utilize in photography.
- Colours can be used to draw attention to a certain element or subject. This can be done by utilizing **colour contrast**. To start out, contrast warm colours with cool colours.
 - Warm colours: red, orange, yellow.
 - Cool colours: blue, green, purple.



Colour Contrast

- Without getting too in depth, be mindful of the colours that you're capturing in a single image. Each new colour is a new element to process as a viewer.
- Think back to Simplification... try to reduce the amount of colours in your image.



Light (Characteristics)

- The main ways that we can characterize light are:
 - Colour Temperature: the specific colour of a light, measured on the Kelvin scale (warm or cool).
 - Intensity: how bright the light is.
 - Direction: the angle at which light hits your subject or scene.
 - Quality: how hard/direct or soft/diffused a light is.

Characteristics of Light: Direction

- The direction of light essentially controls what is illuminated and where the shadows fall.
- The direction of light can impact the amount of depth, dimension and shape of our subjects.
- We can categorize the direction of our light generally by: Front Light, Side Light, Back Light, Top Light and Bottom Light.

Characteristics of Light: Direction

- Front Light: light source is directly in front of subject.
 - Evenly illuminates subject and flattens features.
- Side Light: light source is to the side of subject.
 - Adds shadow and contrast to your subject and brings out more dimension.
- Back Light: light source is behind your subject
 - Separates your subject from the background.
Emphasizes shape and creates dramatic results.
- Top Light: light source is directly above your subject
 - Creates shadows that travel down. Can add depth and dimension and emphasize shape.
- Bottom Light: light source is directly below your subject
 - Does not occur in nature except for reflections. Stylistic effect.

Characteristics of Light: Direction



Front Light



Side Light (Left)



Side Light (Right)



Back Light



Top Light



Bottom Light

- Photographers will commonly use multiple light sources or reflections that illuminate their subjects from multiple directions in one image.

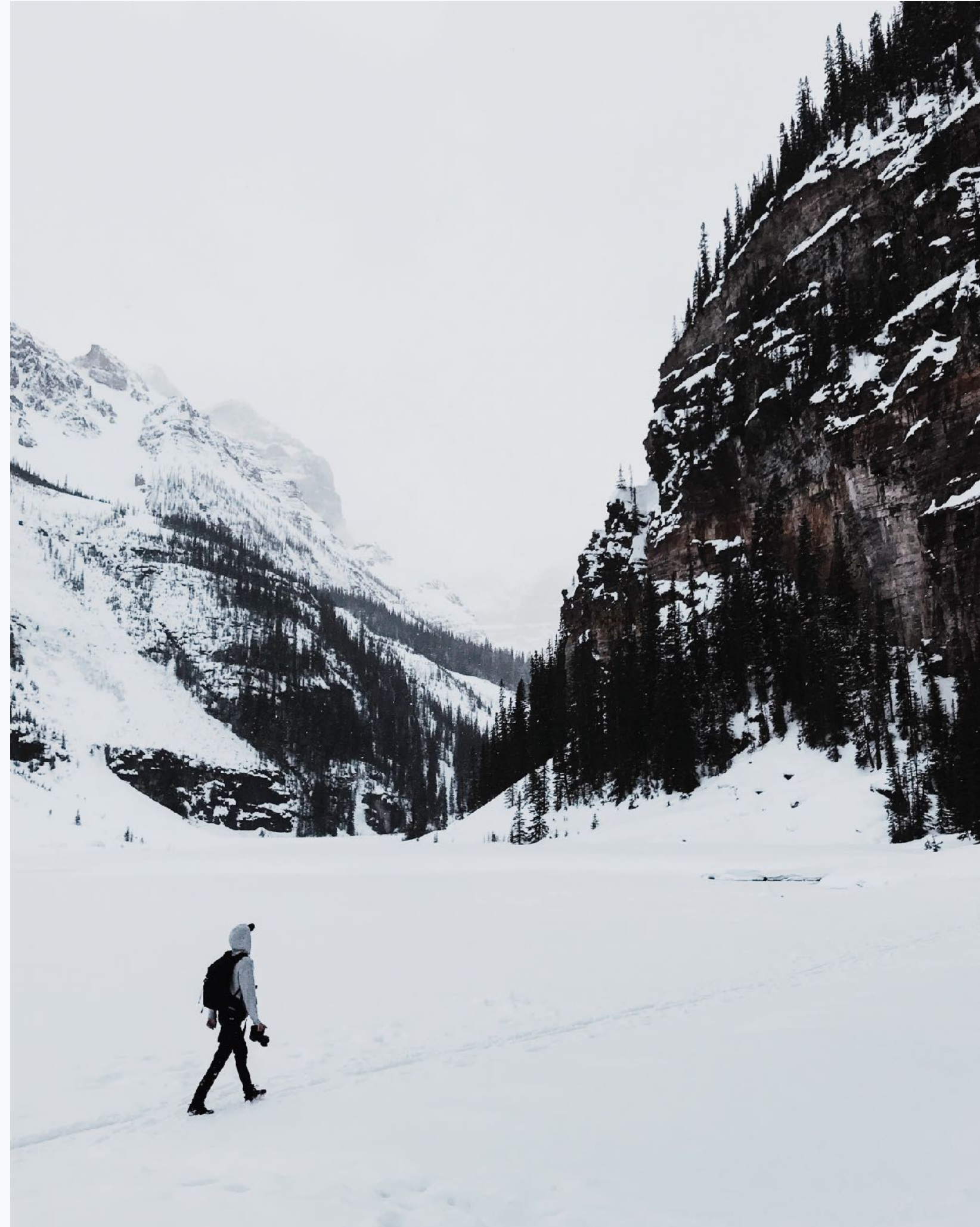
Characteristics of Light: Quality - Hard

- Hard:
 - Transition between light and shadow is very harsh and defined. High contrast light.
 - Casts distinct shadows
 - More dramatic
 - Textures are more noticeable



Characteristics of Light: Quality - Soft

- Soft:
 - Transition between light and shadow is smooth and more of a gradient. Lower contrast, more even light.
 - Casts minimal, diffused shadows.
 - Less dramatic
 - Texture is less noticeable



Natural Light

- Natural light is easily the most accessible type of light to shoot with.
- Your geo-location, the time of day, season and weather will all have a significant impact on the characteristics of the light that you capture.

Golden Hour

- Golden Hour (hour before sunset or hour after sunrise):
 - Low sun, soft, warm, glow-y, long shadows.
 - Allows for back lighting, side lighting and front lighting.
 - Flattering for just about any photography, but especially so for portraits and landscapes.



Canon 6D 100mm f/4.0



Canon 6D 105mm f/5.0

Midday Sun

- Midday sun on a clear day:
 - Overhead, bright, harsh, top down, saturated colours, short shadows.



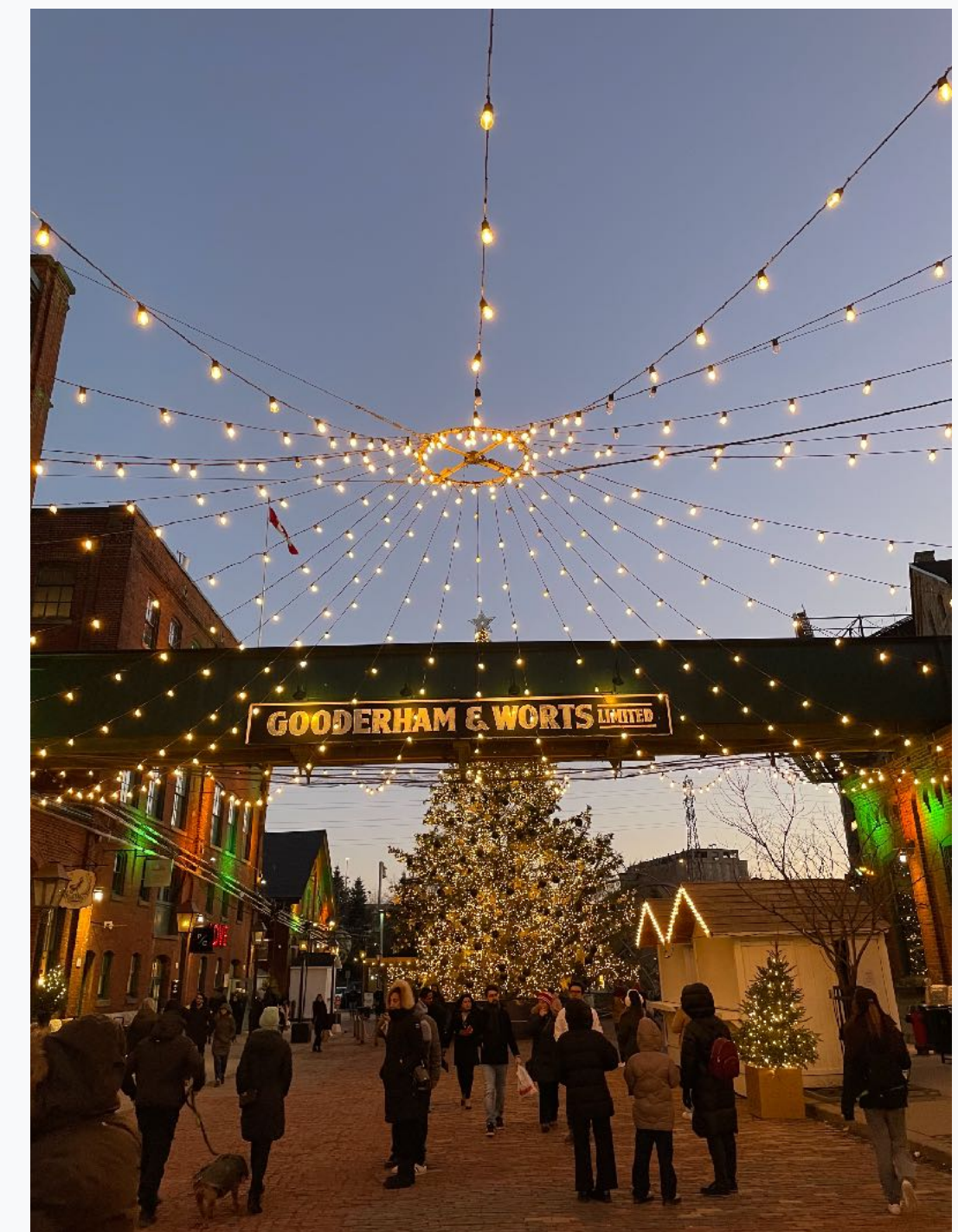
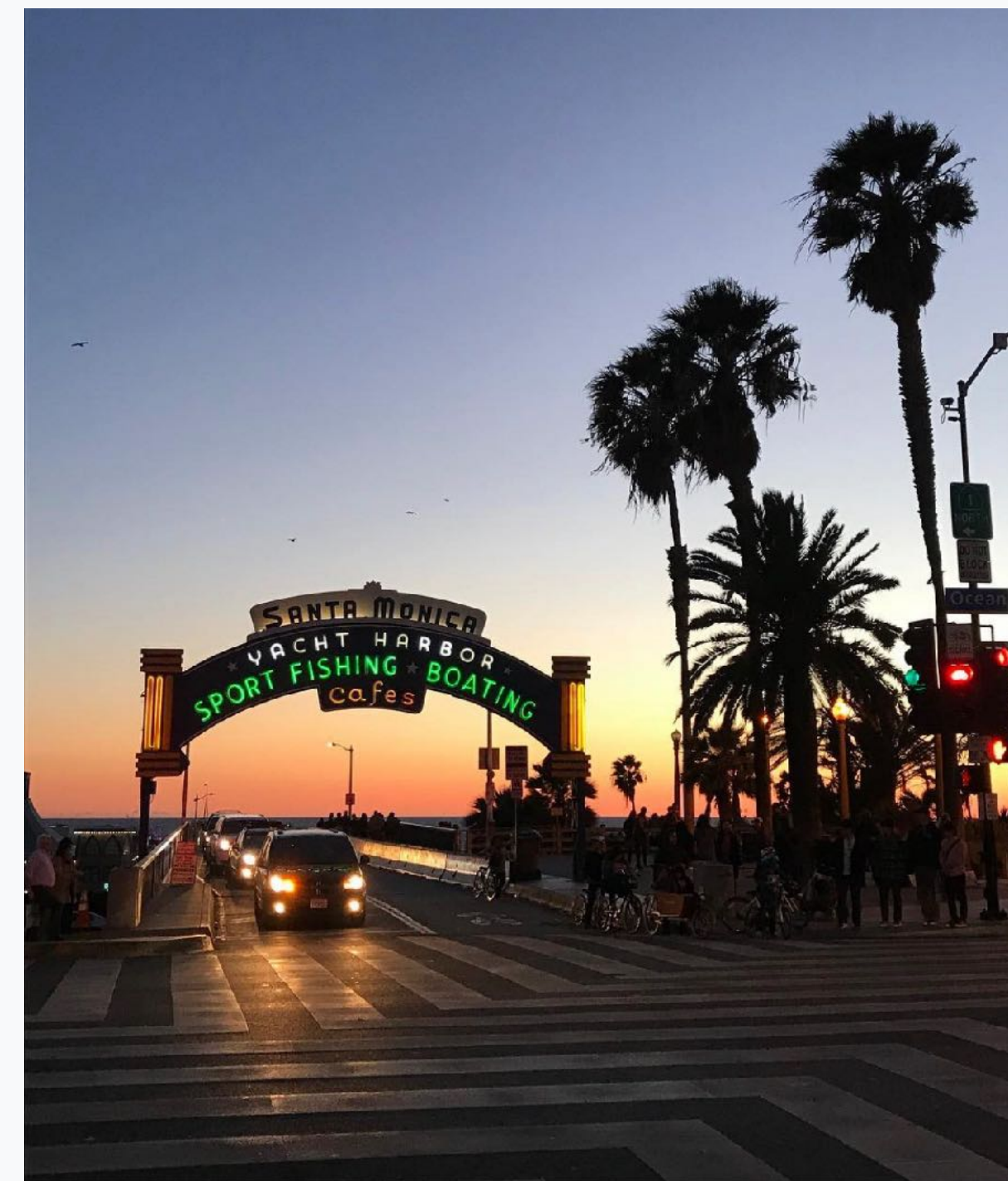
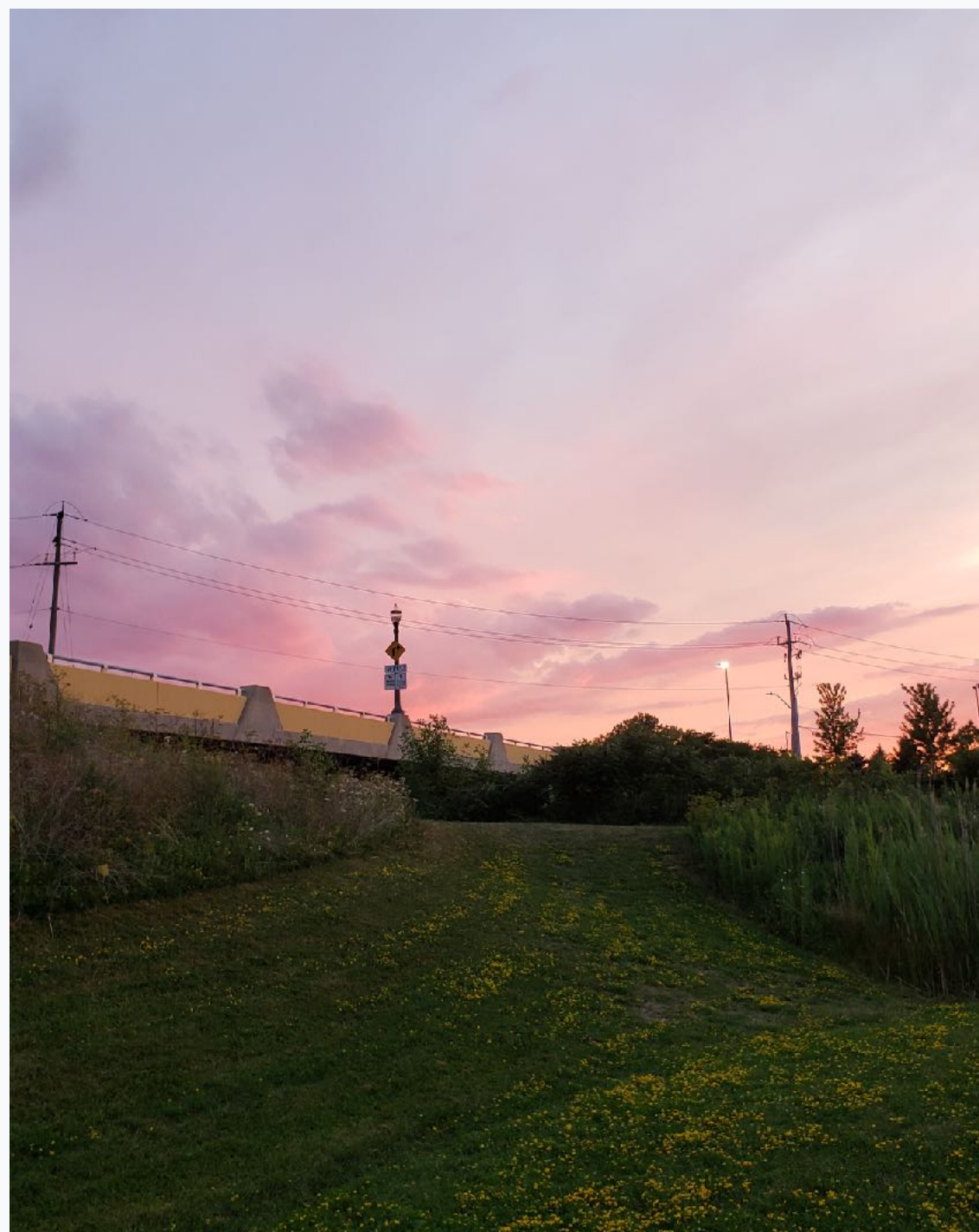
Overcast Sky

- Overcast sky:
 - Even, soft, de-saturated colours, minimal shadows.
- Though the light is usually pretty even, still consider the direction of the sun when positioning yourself or your subject. Even on a cloudy day, the sun's direction can often create slightly brighter spots and may cast soft shadows.



Magic/Blue Hour

- Magic/Blue Hour (hour after sunset or hour before sunrise):
 - Dark, soft, cool (often blue) tones, saturated colours.
 - The degree of blue tones and length of blue hour is dependent on your geo-location and season.
 - Allows you to capture light in the sky and city lights in the same exposure.



Window Light

- Window Light is a type of natural light that can be used indoors.
- The characteristics of window light largely depend on the time of day and if the window is facing the direction of the light or not.
- Generally speaking, it's important to know that the larger the window, the softer the light is going to be. This is because a larger window lets more light in and allows for a wider angle of light to fall on your subject.
- I highly recommend experimenting with this type of light when shooting indoors.
- Consider the window to be your source of light and position your subjects accordingly.



Artificial Light

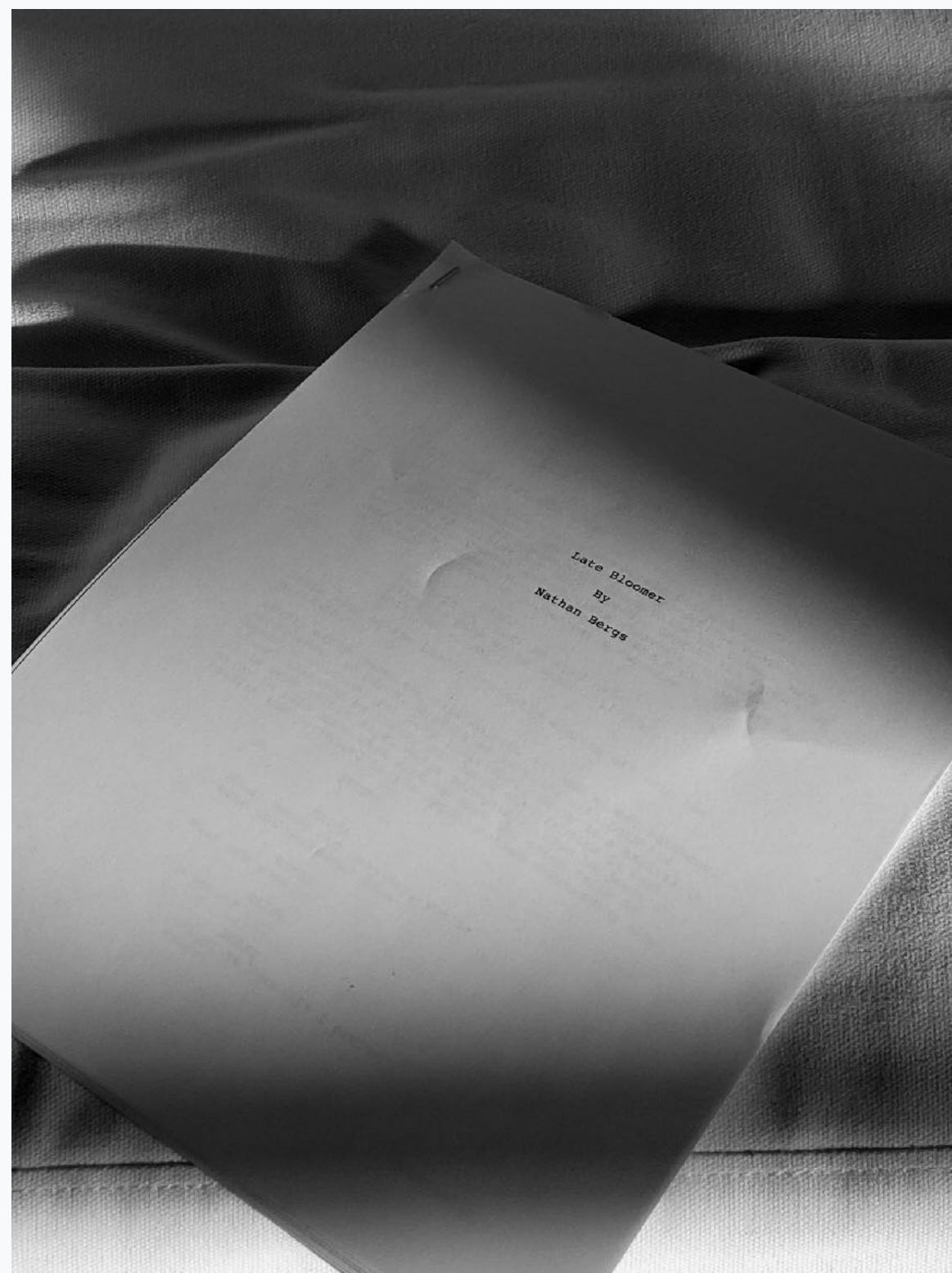
- Artificial Light is much less powerful than the sun.
- You can try to move your subjects closer to the light to get a brighter exposure but in most cases this may not be possible or will still result in a noisy image.
- The iPhone camera's night mode feature comes in extra handy here. By using this feature, we can take a long exposure image which will reduce noise and improve the quality of our image.
 - When using this feature, you'll want to steady your camera either through the use of a tripod or a very steady hand.
- Artificial lights today come in many different colour temperatures, intensities and qualities.
 - Generally speaking, when using multiple bulbs it's best to match their intensity and colour temperature.
- A bare light bulb will give off a hard light.
Lamp shades, frosted glass, or similar will soften light.

Flash Photography

- The iPhone camera has a built-in flash that varies from model to model.
- Some models feature True Tone flash which has one white and one amber flash that work in unison to automatically output a light that matches the scene's existing colour temperature.
- The iPhone 14 Pro introduced Adaptive True Tone flash which allows the flash to effectively shape the light the better suit different focal lengths.
- Most often, I would recommend not using the flash as a source of light. Look for other ways to give more light to your subject.. moving light or subjects into light.
- Because on-camera flashes output light at the same angle as the camera that's taking the picture, the resulting light flattens features and fills in shadows that were originally giving depth and dimension to your subject.

Light Wrap-Up

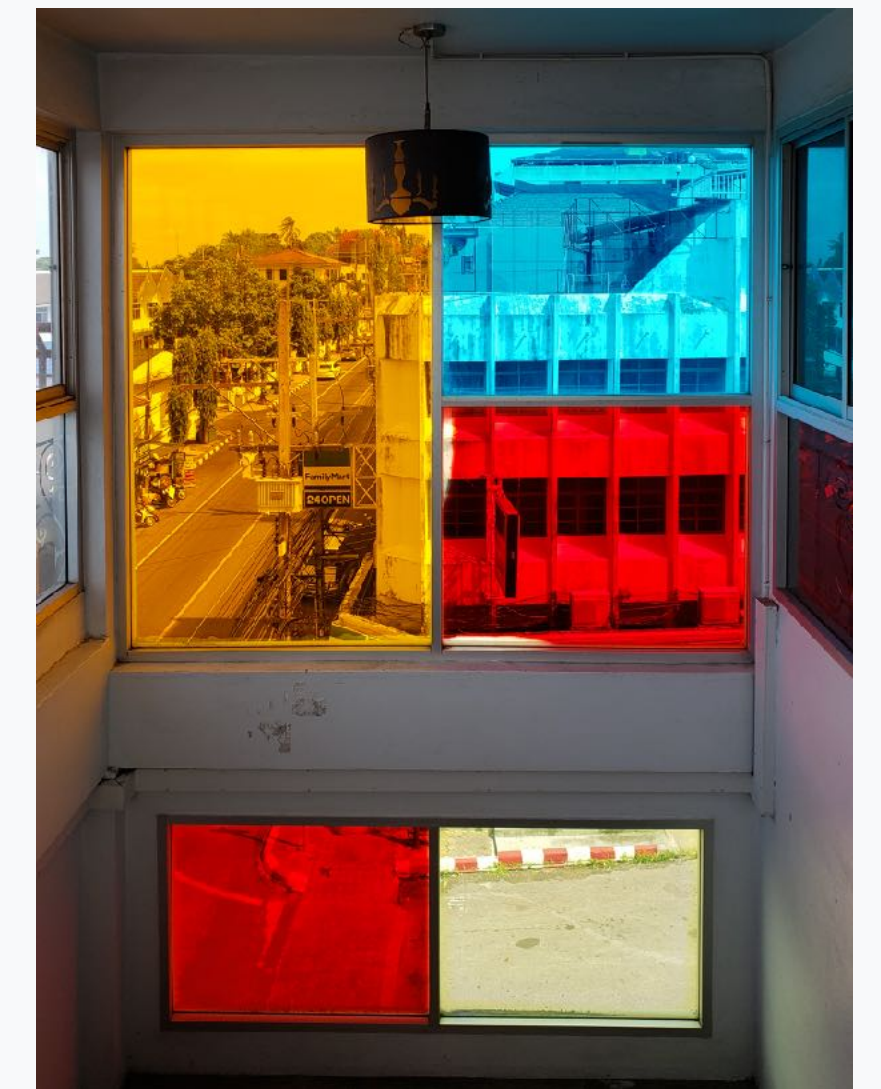
- Exercising your eye to notice ‘good’ light in your everyday life will help you to elevate the photos you get out of your iPhone. Remember that you can move your subject into good light or wait for a subject to appear in good light.



Canon 6D 70mm f/4.5

Interesting Subjects

- Finding interesting subjects to take pictures of is one of the more difficult parts of photography and one that relies on external factors as much as it relies on your ability to notice interesting subjects.
- Rely on taking pictures of what you find interesting!
 - The more interested that **you** are in your subject, the better that you'll be able to convey that subject in an interesting photograph. You're going to care more to show it in its best light.
 - Make a habit of noticing subjects around you and soon enough you'll find it hard to shut it off!



Storytelling

- Storytelling can be fabricated in something like conceptual photography or it can be captured organically by an observing eye.
- Before you can tell a story, you need to **know the story**. This may require prior research or simply a deeper awareness of the present moment. This will guide you to knowing which elements are necessary in your image to tell the story to the viewer of your image.
- Typically, I find that it's a matter of positioning and timing.
 - It can be as simple as capturing someone's reaction along with the thing that they're reacting to in the same frame.



Storytelling

- Always be present and ready! The photographer should always be observing and anticipating.
- Have your iPhone ready and accessible at all times. When a moment strikes you should be able to quickly access your iPhone's Camera.
- Use Live Photos and burst to your advantage.
- Don't be afraid to engage with your subjects in order to provoke a certain response too.

The Decisive Moment

- Iconic street photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson, coined the term “The Decisive Moment” in his book by the same title (1952).
- In this book, he describes The Decisive Moment as:
 - “Photography implies the recognition of a rhythm in the world of real things. What the eye does is to find and focus on the particular subject within the mass of reality... In a photograph, composition is the result of a simultaneous coalition, the organic coordination of elements seen by the eye...

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.”

The Decisive Moment

- 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 anticipate an event, observe the world around you and have good timing.
- This is the intersection of composition and storytelling.



Canon 6D 50mm f/6.3

Experiment

- Push yourself to try something new or unexpected the next time you're shooting.
- It may not turn into a good photo but out of the next ten experiments, I'm sure something good will happen!
- Have fun with your photography and don't take it too seriously.

Combine Principles

- Amazing photos happen when many of these principles come together in one image.
- Images that have a good, balanced, composition, beautiful light and an interesting subject or story is what we are striving for.
- The more that we use and understand these principles, the more they become second nature and we are able to integrate them into our photos without even thinking about it. As we add more principles to our repertoire, our images become more complex without even trying.

Slow Down!

- Be more mindful about the image that you're capturing, your role as the photographer and the tools that you have at your disposal.
- The focused photographer is always observing and anticipating.
- It's often only a few simple steps to a great photo. You are well on your way to making a great photo if you can remember to ask yourself and address:
 - Is the light hitting my subject right?
 - Is the focus/attention on my subject?
 - Is the photo cluttered with unnecessary elements?
 - Is this the best viewpoint?
- It takes time! Where you can, give yourself time to explore and experiment with different compositions, camera settings, or positioning of your subjects.

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

- A good photo makes good use of light, composition and subject.
- Move your feet! Explore different viewpoints when taking your photos. Shoot from high and low angles. Get closer and further away from your subject.
- Make sure that your light is adequately illuminating your subject. Generally speaking, turn your subjects toward light and make sure that your light is giving your subject some depth and dimension.
- Photographing at the right time of day can make all the difference!
- Take pictures of the things that matter most to you.
- Slow down and take the time to experiment.
- “Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst” — Henri Cartier-Bresson