

PHOTO- GRAPHY

101

(or, how to
take better
photos)

Why do we take pictures?

think about
it for a
minute.

Basically, we take pictures:

- to capture memories
- to tell stories
- to communicate with others
- to prove
- to relate
- to reveal
- to celebrate
- to protect
- to document
- to sell or advertise

**Or, to simply
improve as a
photographer.**

What is it about
the **still image**
that captures
our **attention**?

What
makes a
good
photo?



**What one thing
ruins more
pictures than
anything else?**

Blur

**from an out of
focus image.**

Hold your
camera
correctly.
Use **two hands**
to help prevent
that blur.

image credit: <http://bit.ly/1gfVmHM>



How to hold your camera

Keep your elbows propped lightly against your torso for support. Place one foot half a pace ahead of the other to keep your upper body stable. Hold the camera as steady as possible. Lightly press the shutter button.

Make sure the safety strap is around your wrist when using the camera, in case the camera slips out of your hands.



Composition

Is the pleasing arrangement of elements within a scene:

- the main subject
- the foreground and background
- the supporting subjects



When taking pictures, ask yourself:

Do you have a clearly defined subject?
What feeling are you trying to invoke?
What story are you trying to tell within the frame?

Of course, rules can be broken, but you have to know what they are before you do.

Types of Shot

Keep in mind that you can do a long shot, medium shot, close up and an extreme close up when taking pictures.

Focus

Adjust the distance setting on a lens to define the subject sharply. Basically, always try produce a sharp image.



Centre of Interest

Each picture should have only one principal idea, topic, or center of interest to which the viewer's eyes are attracted.

Centre of Interest

A picture without a dominant center of interest or one with more than one dominant center of interest is puzzling to a viewer.

The viewer becomes confused and wonders what the picture is all about.

When the picture has one, and only one, dominant "point of interest," the viewer quickly understands the picture.

Centre of Interest

A photographer usually has many factors or elements that can be used and arranged within the picture area to draw or direct attention.

Some of these elements are lines, shapes, human figures, tone, and texture.

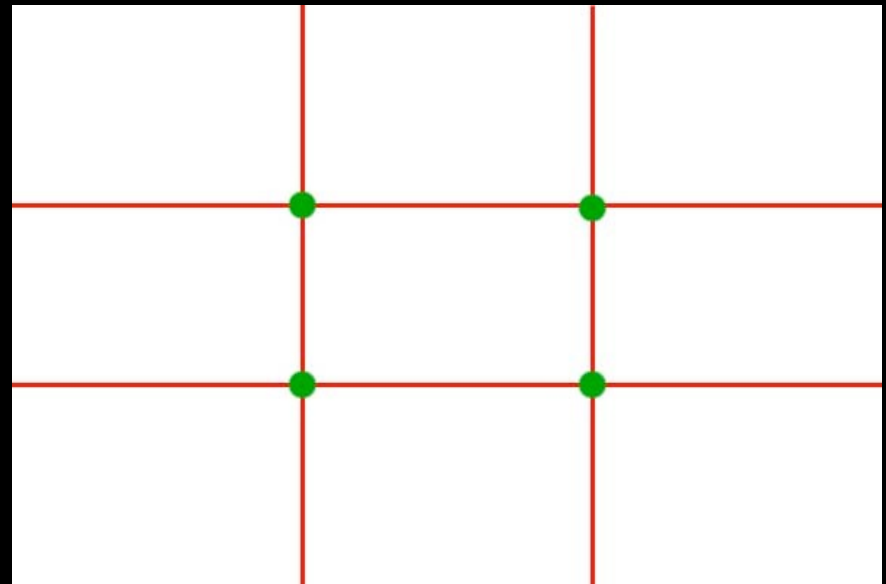
Try to **avoid** placing
your subject in the
middle of the frame. It
makes the picture
uninteresting to look at.

Rule of Thirds

This is an easy way to create emphasis, balance and interest in your work.

Rule of Thirds

Divide the picture area into thirds, both vertically and horizontally. Locate the center of interest at one of the intersections of the lines (marked in green). You can then create a feeling of balance to the composition



Rule of Thirds

Can you spot how the rule of thirds were used in the following examples?

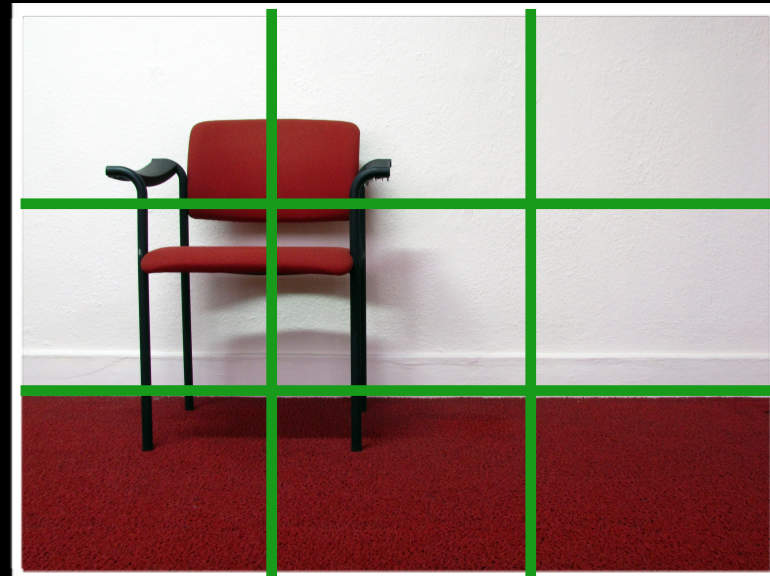
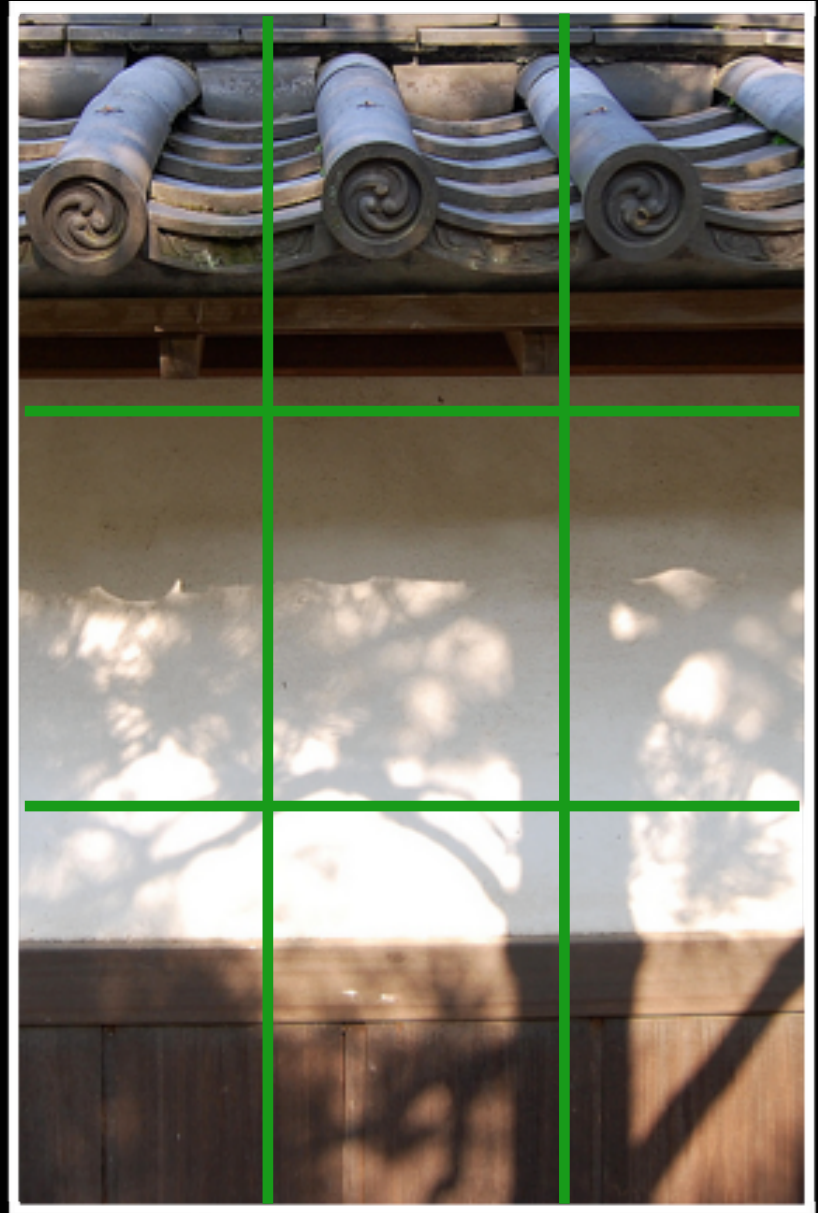
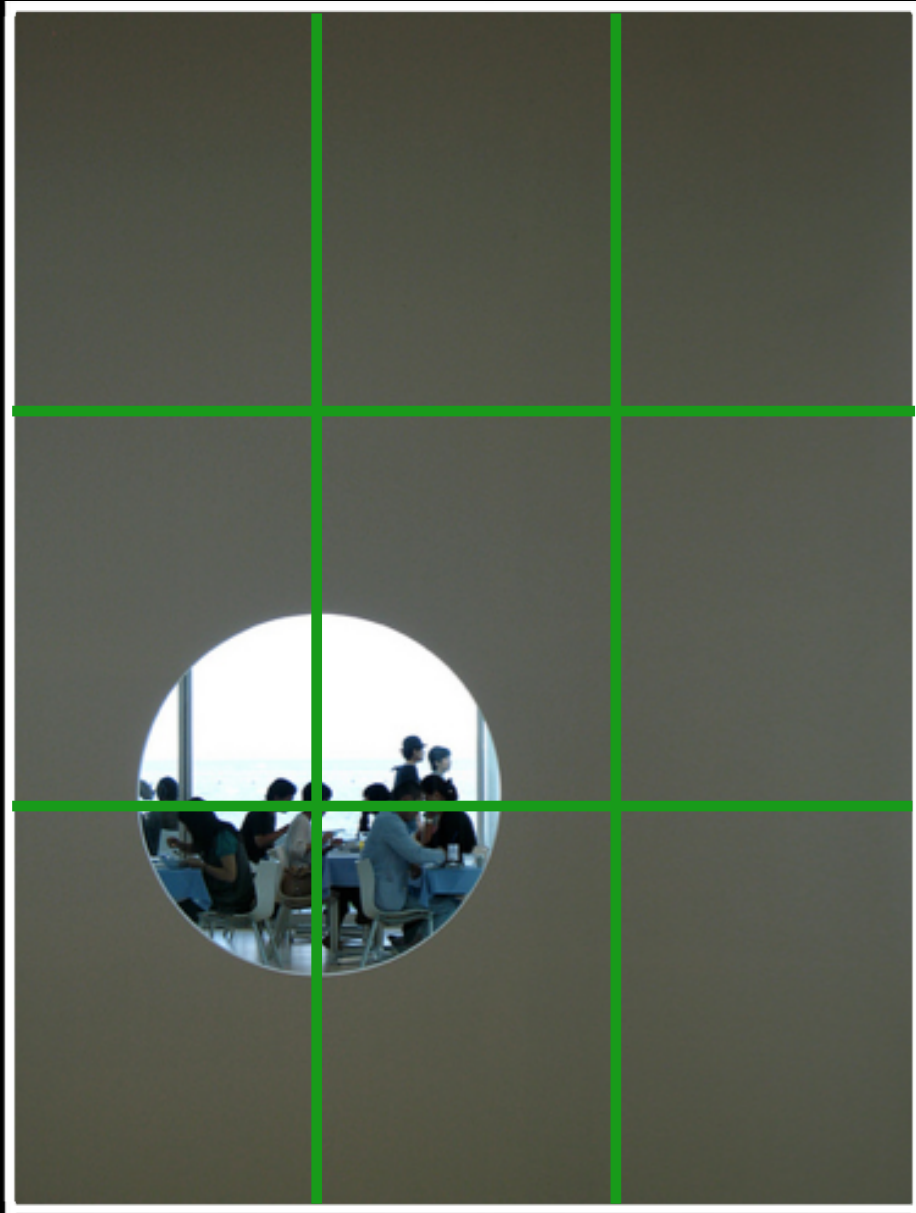


image credit: <http://bit.ly/HtXJbz>









Emphasis

Connected to the centre of interest and composition, is emphasis. Emphasis is the focal point in a composition.

It is where one area stands out or draws the viewer's eye.

The photographer decides to do this through various techniques.

Emphasis

This can be done through framing, composition and by contrast.

A photographer can show emphasis through framing choice, whether he uses a vertical or horizontal format.

Or he might show emphasis by the placement of the subject, governed by the rule of thirds.



Angle/Viewpoint

Various positions of the camera (high, medium, or low; and left, right, or straight on) can give a different viewpoint, perspective or visual effect.

The proper viewpoint or camera angle is an important factor in good composition.

Repositioning your subject within the viewfinder frame and changing the camera viewpoint or camera angle are two simple ways of controlling composition.



Light & Shadows

Lighting is an important creative element of composition. By controlling the light and directing it where you want it, you can subdue objects or distracting elements in the scene to give more emphasis to the main point of interest.



Light & Shadows

Light and shadows can be used in composition to create mood, to draw attention to an area, to modify or distort shape, or to bring out form and texture in the subject.

Shadows are a key to apparent form in photographs. Without shadows, the subject records without form, curvature, or texture, appearing flat and lifeless.



image credit: <http://bit.ly/lcBDsyE>

Framing

Framing is a technique photographers use to direct the viewer's attention to the main subject of a picture.

Positioned around the subject, a tree, an archway, or even people, for example, can create a frame within the picture area.

Subjects enclosed by a frame become separated from the rest of the picture and are emphasized.



image credit: <http://bit.ly/1arGXpF>



Framing

Looking across a broad expanse of land or water at some object can make a rather dull uninteresting view. Moving back a few feet and framing the object between trees improves the composition.



image credit: <http://bit.ly/1ctp9Mu>

Line

Lines can give structure to your photographs. They can unify composition by directing the viewer's eyes and attention to the main point of the picture or lead the eyes from one part of the picture to another. They can lead the eyes to infinity, divide the picture, and create patterns.



Line

Through linear perspective, lines can lend a sense of depth to a photograph. Parallel lines appear to converge, creating the illusion of depth.



Line

Vertical, diagonal, horizontal, and curved lines create different moods. Vertical lines communicate a sense of strength, rigidity, power, and solidarity to the viewer.

On the other hand, horizontal lines represent peace, tranquillity, and quietness.

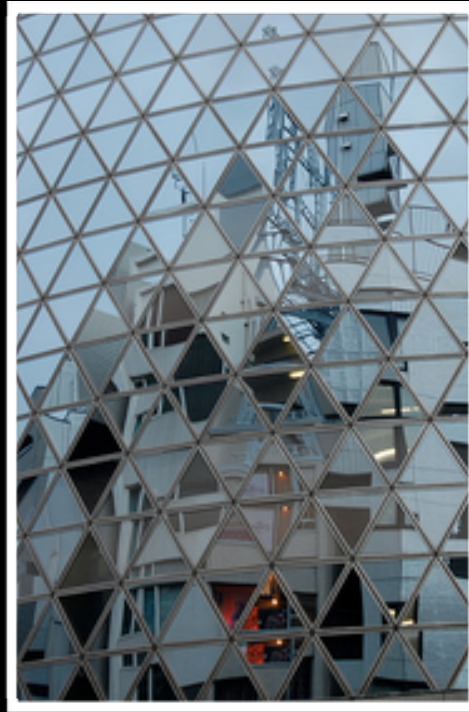
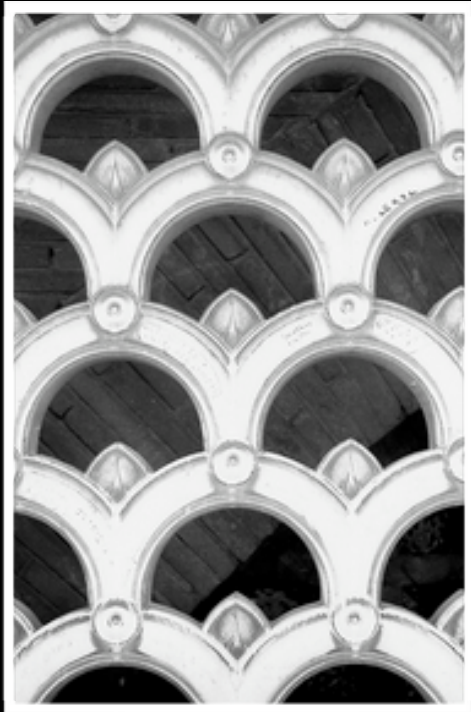
Diagonal lines represent movement, action, and speed. A picture with diagonal lines conveys a feeling of dynamic action even when the subject is static.



Pattern

Patterns, both natural and man-made, bring a sense of visual rhythm and harmony to photographs.

Patterns appear whenever strong graphic elements (lines, colors, shapes, or forms) repeat themselves.



Pattern

Creating your pictures around repeating elements or patterns provides picture unity and structure. Pattern repetition creates rhythm that the eyes enjoy following.

When lines, shapes, and colors within a picture occur in an orderly way (as in wallpaper), they create patterns that often enhance the attractiveness of photographs.



Texture

Texture is about how things feel to the touch. There are several different types of textures:

- rough
- smooth
- jagged
- soft
- shiny
- etc



Texture

Textures can bring a tactile dimension to your photographs.

Framing is important, too, especially when you want to give texture a leading role.

Texture helps to emphasize the features and details in a photograph.



Contrast

Contrast is using elements that conflict with one another. Contrast can create interest in a work, or direct the viewer's attention to a particular point of interest within the piece.

Some examples could be:

- Using complementary colours (opposite colours on a colour wheel)
- Value (light vs. dark)
- Size (large vs. small)
- Texture (smooth vs. rough)
- Age (old vs. new)
- Space (positive vs. negative)
- Line (thick vs. thin / long vs. short)
- Shape (organic vs. geometric)
- Subject matter (pleasure vs. pain)





Contrast

Contrast is an effective means of directing the viewer's attention to the center of interest. Positioning of subject elements to create contrast gives them added emphasis and directs the viewer's attention.

Balance

The arrangements of elements so that no one area overpowers.
Balance includes how all the elements are arranged to create stability in a piece of work.



Balance

The subject placement within the picture area is the factor that must be carefully considered. Composition is kept in balance by two different methods: symmetrical and asymmetrical.



Symmetry

Symmetry conveys balance and proportion in photography. It is a form of pattern that illustrates spatial awareness, often through reflection and rotation.

Using symmetry or asymmetry as an artistic tool allows one to fully explore different compositions. Reflections can be an example of this.



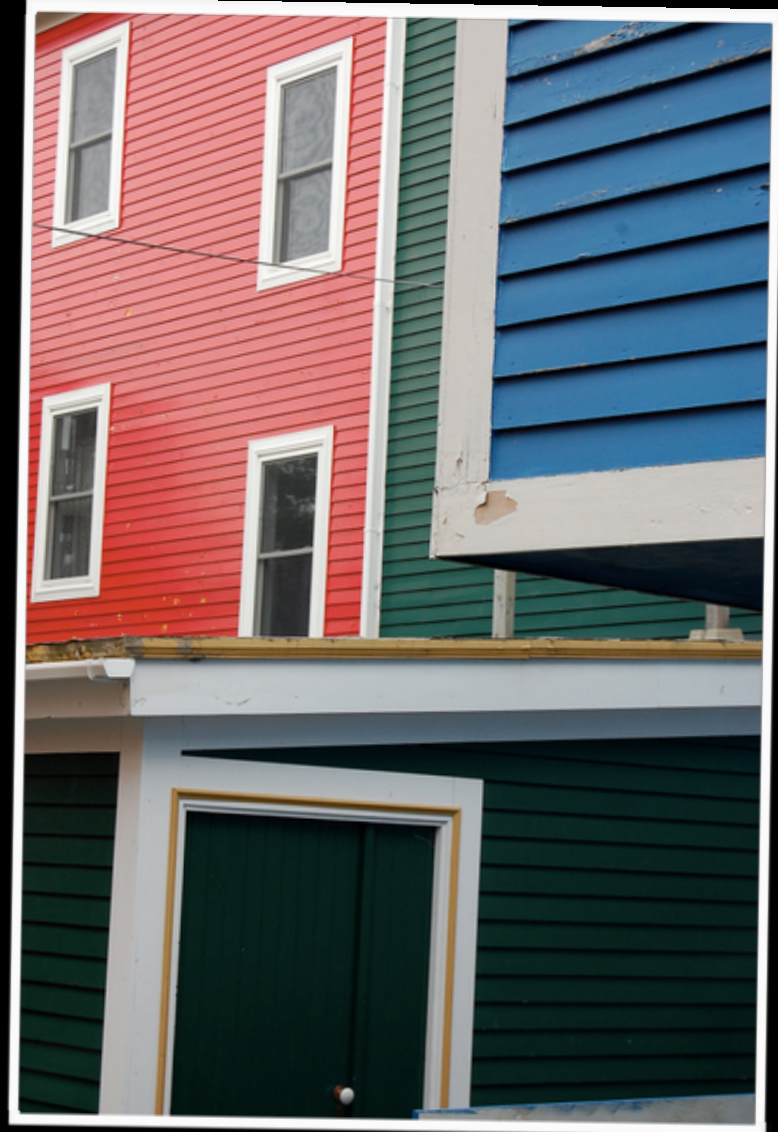
image credit: <http://bit.ly/lb3GHsI>

Colour

Colour can help tell stories and it can be used to communicate on an emotional level.

Colour can make a photo feel exciting, lively, or sad.

Colour may also simply be used as an element to focus on when taking photographs.



Rhythm/Movement

Having a repetition of elements in your photo, can produce the look and feel of movement. Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and color within the work of art.

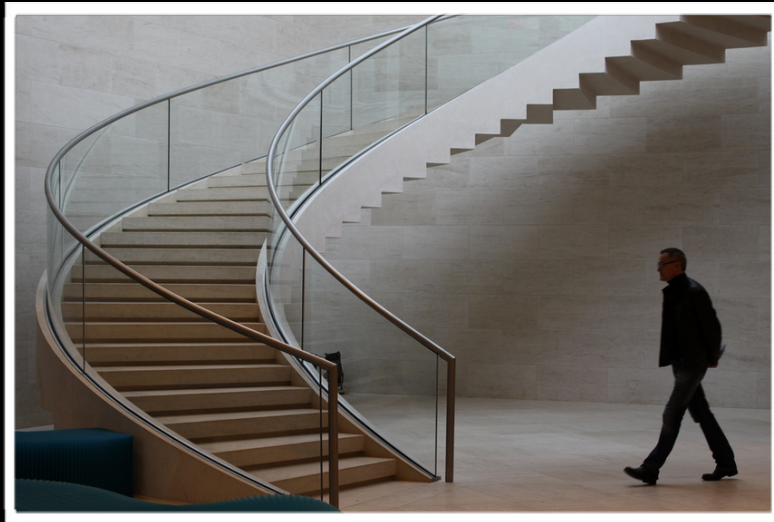


image credit: <http://bit.ly/lcBC3lm>



image credit: <http://bit.ly/HH22Qj>

Negative Space

Using negative space (or empty space), can give your photograph an entirely different feel. Negative space can add a stronger emphasis on the subject and evoke emotions or moods.



Depth of Field

Depth of Field is the amount of distance between the nearest and farthest objects that appear in acceptably sharp focus in a photograph.

Depth of field depends on the lens opening, the focal length of the lens, and the distance from the lens to the subject.



image credit: <http://bit.ly/lcBEbjm>

Portrait Tips

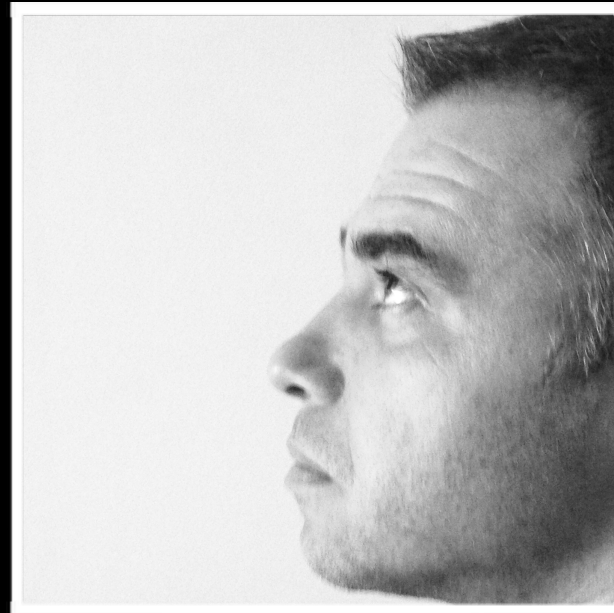
When taking a portrait, don't forget to try different **angles. Also have your subject look down, or to the side for a few shots.**

When taking a portrait, try to get your subject to move their **eyeballs** around. It will loosen them up and the photo result may be surprisingly good.

Try to capture **candid**
moments and emotion.
Your photos will look more
genuine.

Everyone has special **details**
about them: features,
interests, likes & dislikes etc.
Why not try to capture them
in photos?

Try **profile pictures**. They can often feel more dramatic. If so, get your subject in front of a simple background.



Get **close** for portrait photography, especially when taking photographs of children.



When taking a portrait of a **baby**, try a pic hanging them upside down. (Really, and yeah...provide them a gentle landing.)

Avoid busy backgrounds
when photographing a
person or object.

Try different **crops**. Try super close-ups to highlight someone's eyes or smile. Try full body shots with a lot of **negative space** to highlight a pose or the environment.

Further Tips

Try shooting your subject
from a **variety** of viewpoints:

- from above
- at the same level
- looking up
- from various different angles

If you are photographing a subject that has **movement**, don't worry so much about composition. Instead, keep snapping away or you might miss a special moment. Technical corrections can be made later.

Avoid using flash.
It yields unnatural results
most of the time.

Be aware of your **light source,
where the light is coming
from and how strong it is.**

It is usually best to shoot photos in **morning** and **early evening** sunlight, instead of harsh afternoon sun.

Overcast and partly sunny days also make for good lighting.

Take **vertical** as well as **horizontal** photographs of the same subject to see which best captures your subject.

Compose photos in which your focal point is not always in the dead center of the composition.

Experiment with putting your subject matter in a corner of the composition or slightly off center.

Capture as much **light as you can, especially if you are using a cheaper camera. Move or ask your subject to move to the best light source as possible.**

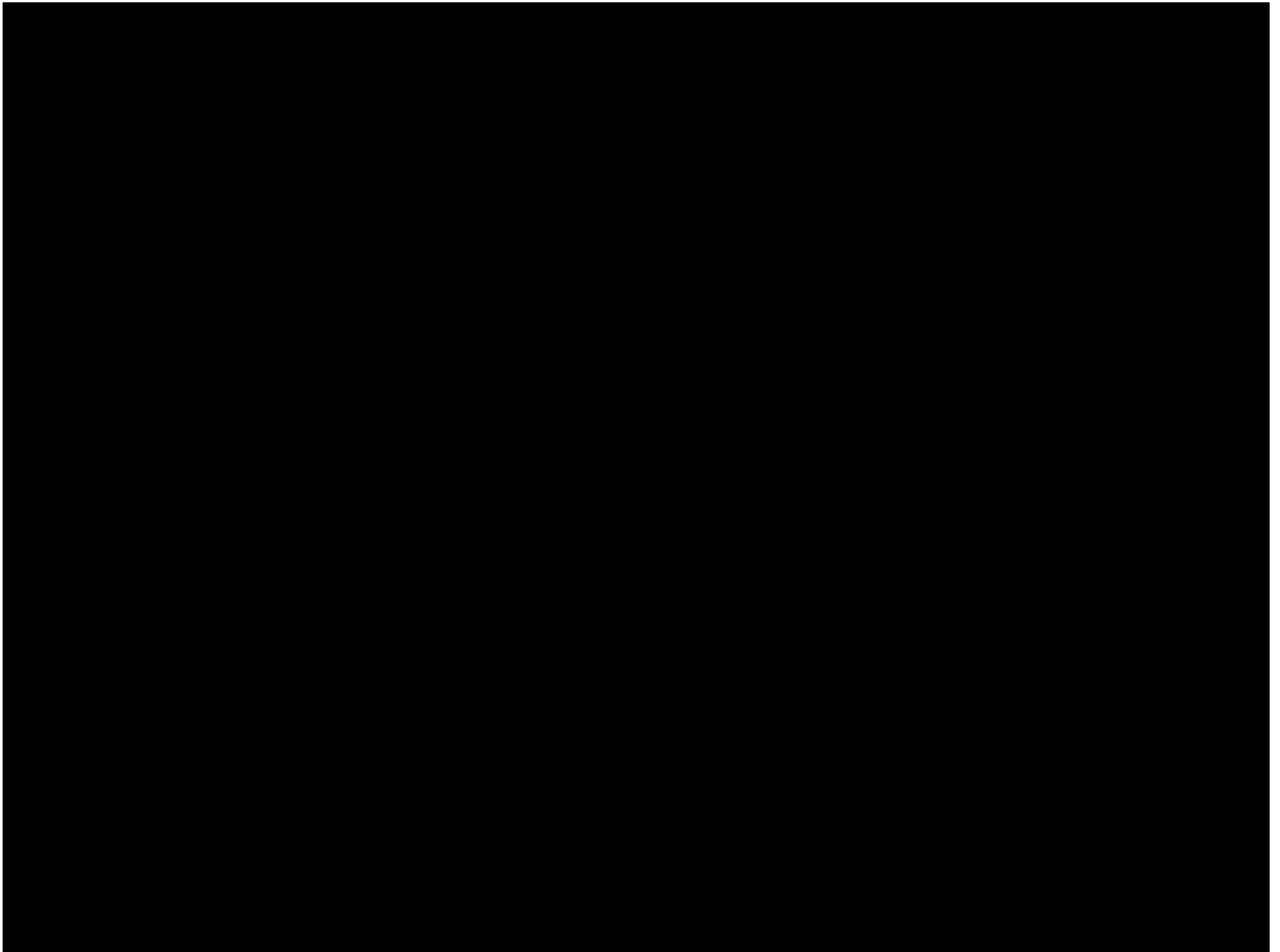
If using a **cell phone** camera,
get close! Use your cropping
skills to fill the frame and find
the perfect angle.

**Try experimenting with some
camera apps and effects.**

Remember, make it a habit to take photos daily. The camera you use doesn't matter, but the act of taking the photo does.

There is no better way to improve at photography than to simply do it and do it often.

Good
Luck!



Resources:

“Photo Craft” by Susan Tuttle & Christy Hydeck

“The Unforgettable Photograph” by George Lange with Scott Mowbray

“Creative Photography Lab” by Steve Sonheim

“A Beautiful Mess Photo Idea Book” by Elsie Larson & Emma Chapman

Basic Photographic Techniques <http://photoinf.com/info.html>

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