

PHONE-TOGRAPHY

TAKE BETTER PICTURES WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE



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photography

The best camera you've got is the one you have in your pocket. With so many advances in technology in our phones and the development of new apps – achieving the perfect mobile photo isn't impossible. More people are using smart phones to take pictures than any other camera in the world in today's society. One of the many advantages of taking photos with your phone is that allows you to capture the special moments in your life, the activities you enjoy, and the places you go because it is always with you.

In this mini-lesson, you are going to learn how to take better photos with your iPhone or Android phone. By learning more about your smartphone camera and the basics of photography, you will improve the quality of your images and become a more creative photographer. You're also going to learn some tips on how to edit your photos directly on your iPhone.

GETTING STARTED

Before you start taking pictures with your phone, it's best to make sure the lens is clean. If it's dirty, you can use a micro fiber cloth to gently clean it. You can also use a can of compressed air to blow away any dust or debris. It's best to avoid using cleaning fluids and paper towels since they can damage your lens.



Next, it's important to learn how to hold your phone steady when you're taking pictures. By holding your camera still, you will be able to get sharper looking images. If your hands shake while you're taking a photo, it can cause your images to be blurry. This is called "camera shake". When taking pictures, try holding your phone with two hands to help stabilize it.

ACCESSORIES

There are accessories you can purchase to make your photos even better with your phone. Many of these products are relatively inexpensive, yet they can dramatically improve the quality of your images. When buying photo accessories for your phone, make sure they fit your specific model and type of phone. A great resource is Amazon (I always read the reviews before purchasing). Accessories I love: mounts, ring lights, lenses, external flashes, remote triggers, tripods, and selfie sticks.

LENSES

There are many third-party lenses available for your phone. Buying additional lenses gives you the ability to capture your images in a variety of focal lengths. The three most common types of phone lenses are telephoto, wide angle, and macro. A telephoto lens allows you to get closer to your subject while shooting from a distance. These types of lenses are useful for portraiture, sports, and wildlife photography. Wide-angle lenses allow you to include more scenery in a photo. These lenses are mainly used in landscape photography. Macro lenses are lenses that can capture close-up images of miniature objects such as jewelry or insects.

FIND THE LIGHT



One of the most important elements of great looking photos is good lighting. The technology for on camera flash is getting better but most of the time, the camera flash is not a great source of light. Why? It's usually too bright, creates some awful looking shadows and just doesn't look good. So how do you take photos in the dark? You can't – although some camera phones work okay in low lighting (but the quality will be compromised), it is better if you can find a different light source.

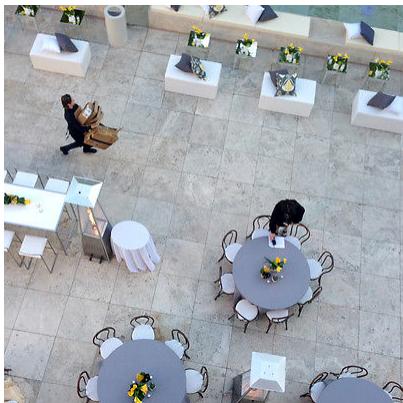
Natural light is the best light because it's free and mostly always available. Take photos in the early mornings, evenings

before sunset, or find nice shaded areas with even light that won't give you harsh shadows, unless that's what you're going for of course. Also placing your subject near a window if you are indoors is an effective way of creating dynamic images. And don't underestimate the use of other lighting sources... you can purchase an external flash that's made for your specific phone or I've used video LED lights, the light from another phone or iPad and even a lamp or candle to create light on my subject.



EXPOSURE

When taking pictures with your phone, it is important to have the correct exposure. Exposure is a photography term for how bright an image is. If your image is too bright, then it's "overexposed". If it's too dark, it's "underexposed". To adjust the exposure on the iPhone camera app, press the screen until a yellow square appears. This square indicates the focus point. To the right, you will see a "shining sun" icon. Touch this icon and swipe it up or down. Swipe up to make your image brighter, or swipe down to make it darker. Your phone's camera apps don't allow you to change the exposure settings separately. If you want to have more manual control, you will need to use a third-party photography app such as Camera+ (I love this app for when I want more control over my exposure). This app allows you to control the ISO and shutter speed. Unfortunately, the aperture is fixed on your smartphone and can't be changed.



SHOOT LIKE A PRO

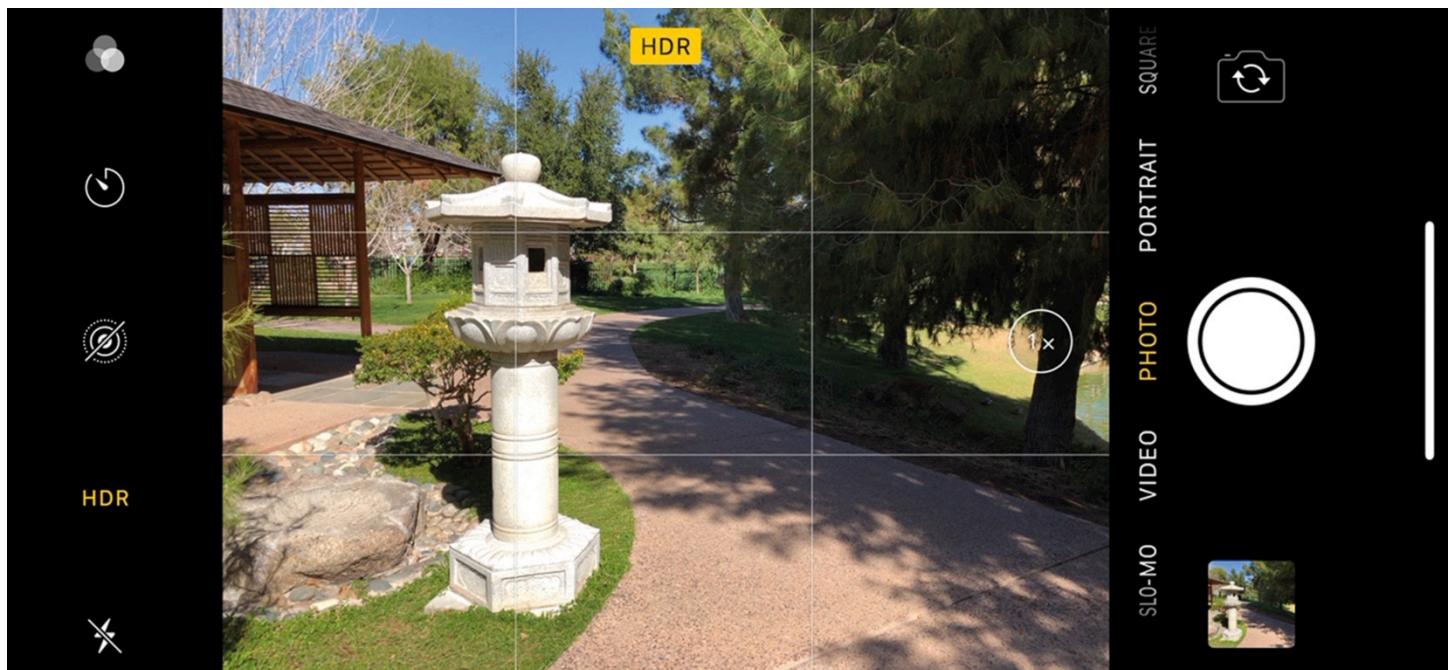
Look for different viewpoints and angles to add interest. Don't be afraid to get low or climb something to get higher! Find a perspective that is unique.

GET CLOSE

Don't be afraid to get in close. Just like changing your perspective getting in closer can provide a more interesting shot. But keep in mind a focal length limitation can cause your image to be blurry if you get TOO close. That is when a macro lens can help you get closer.

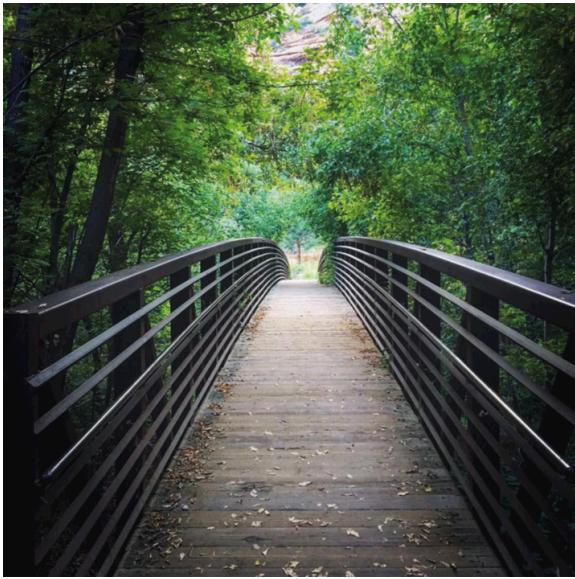
FOCUS

Make sure you keep your camera still and then compose your shot, click on your subject to get the camera on your phone to focus on what you want. Hold down when clicking on your subject and the focus will "lock" so that it doesn't accidentally try and focus on something in the foreground or background. If your subject is moving, try the burst mode so you don't miss the shot and use a 3rd party app to select a higher shutter speed so you don't get motion blur or camera shake from holding the phone and moving it.



COMPOSITION

Composition is king. The way you arrange elements in your photo is called composition. By learning a few simple techniques, you will be able to take more creative and interesting photos. ***The Rule of Thirds*** is one of the most popular composition techniques in photography. It was first discovered by ancient Greek mathematicians who studied nature in art. They realized that by placing objects at certain points along a "tic-tac-toe" type grid, it created a more compelling composition. Don't forget about the rule of thirds, use positive and negative space, find converging lines and don't forget to look at what is behind your subject when composing and taking your images.



To make it easier for you to utilize the Rule of Thirds, your phone has a grid built into the camera app. To turn it on, go to “Settings” and click “Camera”. Then locate the “Grid” and turn it on. The grid will now appear on the screen inside your camera app. When taking a photo, place the subject at one of the intersecting points on the grid.

Another popular composition technique is called **Leading Lines**. Photographers use leading lines to draw the viewer’s eyes to the subject. These lines usually start near the bottom of the image and lead upward, but not always. They can also start from the sides or the top. The most common places to find leading lines are roads, fences, and bridges.

EDIT DON'T FILTER

Another way to edit your photos is by choosing one of the filters. On your phone there are several filters that can make your images look more artistic. On the iPhone, you can even apply these filters before you take a photo. Click the filters icon on the top right-hand side of your screen. Then you will see the filters underneath the image. If you decide later that you would prefer not to have the filter, you can remove it. Click “Edit” and “Revert”. It will give you the option to revert to the original image by removing the filter.

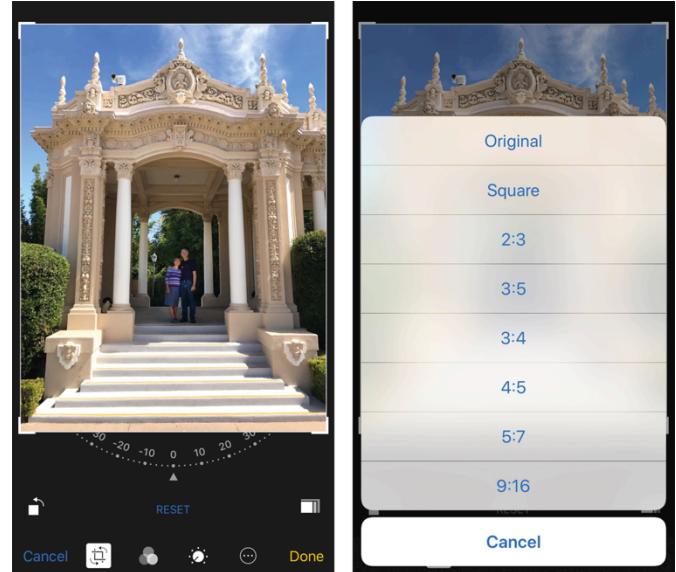


HOWEVER... I don't recommend using filters on most images. Make your images stand out with your unique style – applying filters doesn't work for every photo (it really is a lazy way to edit and looks amateurish). Each photo has different lighting, subject and story... so use editing apps that provide capabilities to adjust things like exposure, brightness, contrast, temperature, sharpness, etc. I like using Photoshop and Lightroom apps. I will admit that the iPhone's camera app has actually come a long way in the editing department with recent releases (see more specific info on the apple website or take my iphone-specific photography course).

IPHONE SPECIFIC TIPS:

CROP & STRAIGHTEN

If you want to crop, straighten, or rotate your photo, tap on the crop icon at the bottom of the edit screen. To crop an image, tap a corner of the image and drag it inward. To rotate the image by 45 degrees counterclockwise, tap the “rotate” icon on the lower left side of the screen. To rotate the image even more precisely, use the rotation dial underneath the image. To crop the image to one of the more common print sizes, for example 3:5 or 5:7, tap on the “ratios” icon on the lower right side of the screen. Select a ratio and click “Done”.



CAMERA MODES

The iPhone has various options for both video and photo, although some are only available on newer models. These modes are located near the bottom of the iPhone camera app.

Time-lapse is a video mode which creates a fast-motion effect. It does this by capturing a series of photos over time, and then grouping them together into a video. When you play back the video, everything moves at a faster-than-normal speed.

Slo-Mo is a video mode that has the opposite effect of time-lapse mode. When you shoot in slo-mo, the iPhone records at very fast 120 or 240 frames-per-second. This creates a slow-motion effect when you play back the video.

Video mode lets you capture video in high definition. The iPhone 6 and newer models also have the option to shoot in 4K. You can find this option in “Settings”. Plus, it has an image stabilization feature to help avoid camera shake.

Photo is the iPhone’s basic photography mode. It captures 12 megapixel images.

Portrait mode is a photography mode that digitally adds a blurry effect to the background of your images. This effect (bokeh) is usually achieved through higher priced, wide aperture lenses.

Square mode is similar to photo mode, except that your photos are square. This mode is popular mode with Instagram users. Another way to get square photos is by shooting them in Photo mode, and then cropping them into a square format.

Pano mode makes it easy for you to create panoramic images. You can create both vertical and horizontal panorama shots.

QUICK TIPS FOR PHONE-TOGRAPHY:

- Take your photos with your phone's camera. Don't use the Instagram/Facebook/etc camera. The resolution isn't the best. So take the photo with your phone's camera and import it into IG/FB/Twitter/etc.
- Use the focus feature by tapping on what you want to be in focus. By doing this you can also adjust the light in the photo.
- Find the light. If you're taking a photo of something that can be moved, move it toward some light.
- Hold your phone still. Much like with a real camera, you'll get better photos if you're not moving your phone when trying to take a photo.
- Make sure your smartphone camera lens is clean.
- Try your best NOT to use the front-facing camera lens on your phone (the lens where if you're looking at your phone you can see

yourself). The front-facing lens has a lower resolution than the back-facing camera lens, thus producing lower-quality, less crisp photos.

- Don't zoom before you take a photo. The photo will come out pixely and blurry. Either get closer, or take the photo and then zoom and crop as needed. OR try a zoom lens attachment.
- Use the grid. Remember the Rule of Thirds - position the most important objects in your photo along the lines, or where the lines intersect. This rule is made for being broken, but is a good guideline for taking more dynamic photos.
- If you plan to post your photo to Instagram, use the square photo feature. That way you can make sure everything will fit into the frame once you open it in Instagram.
- Invest in some photo editing apps. Trust me, if they cost a couple dollars it's well worth it.

MY FAVORITE APPS:

- Camera+
- Instagram
- Photoshop Express
- Photoshop Fix
- Photoshop Mix
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- Lightroom CC
- Instagram
- Print Studio
- Pic Collage
- Photo-timer+

Thank you for your time. For more info and or classes, contact me directly.



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