

Quick Tips for Better Photography

People Picture Tips

Get as close to your subject as you can. Try to eliminate distracting objects in background.

Keep your subject away from the background indoors and out. Indoors, this will prevent ugly background shadows (when using a flash), and outdoors (as well as in), the background generally will be blurred, leading the eye to the main subject.

Portraits of men appear stronger under more dramatic high contrast light. Women prefer softer, diffused lighting.

It is a good practice to use a flash whenever taking photographs of people, even outdoors, especially when they are wearing a hat.

When taking photographs of groups try to get everyone as close together as possible.

Take photographs of yourself. We all enjoy looking at photographs of other people and this may help you feel more comfortable in front of the camera.

Photographing children and pets is always challenging. Try carrying a whistle or other attention getting device to stop (or slow) the action.

Improving Your Picture-taking

Join a local camera club.

Take photographs at dawn and dusk – when the interesting lighting and subject may provide the best opportunities especially for the nature photographer.

Take your time. A hurried photograph is less likely to render the desired results. (unless this is the effect you are trying to achieve.)

Look UP and look DOWN – some of the most interesting subjects are NOT at eye-level.

Practice “pre-visualising”, even when you don’t have your camera.

Try to replicate images you have seen elsewhere to help you learn.

Never hesitate to take a photograph, the worst that can happen is a failed photograph but it also could prove to be very interesting too!

Look at your own photographs as often as you can to see the patterns in them and you will also realize the types of subjects that really interest you. Always be looking for ways to improve.

Use colour to create an impression. For example: Reds and yellows for drama and increased energy. Blues, greens, greys for subdued effect.

Whenever possible, keep the light source behind you and falling on the FACE of your subject. Use sidelighting to emphasize depth, dimension or texture or backlighting to emphasize shape, form or drama.

HIGH contrast lighting will emphasize intensity while LOW contrast will soften the impression made in the photograph.

Wide angle lenses allow a bigger view but you can also use them to create the impression of greater distance and greater depth of field.

Telephoto lenses help to isolate your subject and bring a distant subject closer but you can also use them to flatten distance or for a shallower depth of field.

Change your angle of view and get closer. Get high or low and fill the frame. Especially when photographing children, great shots can be achieved with tight framing and different angles.

Don't place your photographic subject dead-centre in the frame with a lot of surrounding space. Move in close, shift to one side, up or down to make for a much more interesting composition.

Use the Rule of Thirds to help improve your compositions. The rule states that you draw imaginary lines $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way in from all sides of your frame, then place your point of interest (your subject[s]) on one of the intersecting points.

Make sure your horizon is horizontal! There's nothing worse than looking at a breathtaking shot with a horizon tilting to one side. Tripods with built-in levels are very handy for crucial shots.

Use a close foreground object or a person to create the illusion of depth in your photograph. This can also give scale to your photograph.

Use motion to emphasize energy in subject. For example, pan with a moving subject to blur background.

Get very close to details in your subject. For example architectural or structural detail. This subject isolation can sometimes be more informative than the whole, complete subject.

Whenever possible, bracket exposure in contrasty lighting situations, camera meters have been known to read light with too much emphasis on the light (or dark) area.

Please display your favourite works and share your photographic experiences.

Tell a story with your photographs.

Camera Handling Tips

Always secure the camera by the strap or on a solid surface while in use. Always make sure it is stored safely.

Use a tripod or other support to support your camera but this will also slow you down to allow you to concentrate on your subject and see it differently.

Read your manual, maybe read it again and keep it handy. Get comfortable with your camera before that “special moment” arrives. Today’s cameras are too complex to “know it all”. Practice – practice – practice.

Protect your camera from sand, water or other substance. NEVER oil or lubricate a camera.

Never force a sticky or jammed part.

Remove batteries when equipment will not be in use for an extended period.

Never touch a mirror or imaging surface. This will result in permanent (expensive to repair) damage.

Clean lenses by first blowing away dust or grit and then apply a soft cleaning cloth with a light pressure.

Allow rechargeable batteries to run down before recharging. Recharge every 30-60 days, if in use or not. Carry a spare battery.

Load film cameras in subdued light, IF in full sun, use your own shadow. Return film to film can when exposed.

Handle negatives by the edges only and never cut a negative strip. Keep negatives in protective sleeves.

Improving Your Travel Pictures

Research your destination. Less likelihood of missing them if you learn about photographic opportunities before you arrive.

Respect the rules where you travel. Many cultures have issues about allowing photographs to be taken. Ask permission when you are not sure. Never challenge a subject, remember, this is THEIR home.

Carry the minimum equipment required when travelling, in case it weighs you down, or worse, is stolen.

Give yourself a photographic assignment. Whether it is about local food, music or dress, see if you can make an interesting story.

Check your equipment well before departure. Make sure it is complete and working properly. Make sure you have a spare memory card or extra film.

Tips for Digital Imaging

Never tamper with an original image, if you must tamper, use a copy.

Make a backup copy of your images onto a separate drive or storage media from time to time. Especially backup images that are on your camera. A local photography shop can provide a "backup to CD" service when you are traveling or you can email important images to yourself.

Avoid erasing images on the camera. Unless you KNOW the image is a dud, the small screen does not provide adequate detail to assess the image.

And finally: Photography is, literally, "writing with light".

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