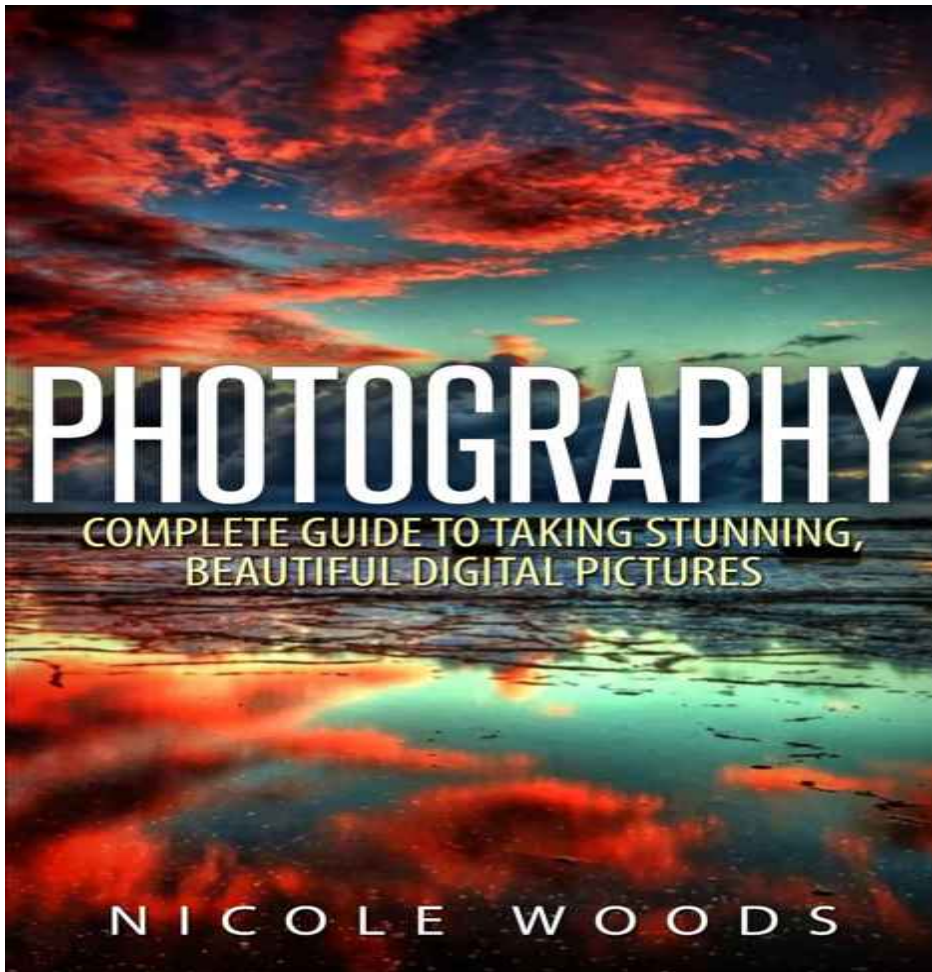


PHOTOGRAPHY

COMPLETE GUIDE TO TAKING STUNNING,
BEAUTIFUL DIGITAL PICTURES

N I C O L E W O O D S



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COMPLETE GUIDE TO TAKING STUNNING,
BEAUTIFUL DIGITAL PICTURES

NICOLE WOODS

Photography: Complete Guide to Taking



Image: Creative Commons

Stunning, Beautiful Digital Pictures

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Introduction

This book has been written because so many people buy digital cameras and never get further than using automatic settings. It's a real shame and although cameras are calibrated to take acceptable images using this feature, the scope of real photography goes a long way further than that.

The guide would make the perfect companion to that digital camera purchase so that those who receive the camera get the most out of it. Similarly, those who have simply just started to get interested in digital cameras can gain from this book because it's not written in a complex way that people can't understand. It's written by someone who was sitting exactly where you are now, but who learned to appreciate the intricacies of digital cameras and now shoots wonderful photographs because of letting the camera work to its maximum.

It's merely a question of getting your head around all the strange settings and it really isn't as frightening as it seems. This guide will help those who are hopelessly lost in understanding digital photography to produce stunningly beautiful digital images without too much effort at all. Every chapter is filled to brimming with information that will help the budding photographer become a very good photographer indeed, learning what the different settings on the camera mean and how to use them to advantage.

Follow through the explanations and you really will be able to produce pictures that astound your friends, but that most of all enthrall you in the art of photography. It is a very individual thing and what looks great to one photographer counts because it is the eye of the photographer and the ability to compose a picture gets coupled with an understanding of what the camera can do.

Your camera could earn you money. There are websites which offer photographers a real opportunity to get their names known online. There are also hobby websites for those who are more modest about their successes.

However, once you understand the intricacies of using your digital camera, you will be proud to share your achievements.

Chapter 1 – Finding Your Way Around the Camera

One of the first things that uninitiated photographers will be looking for when buying a camera is the number of pixels that the camera uses on an image. These are little dots that make up an image and theoretically the more you have available, the better the quality of the image. However, this isn't where it all starts or ends. Let's try and explain the way around your camera, so that you gain a better understanding.



Before doing that, you need to decide the kind of photographs that you are likely to take, as this will determine the kind of camera that you buy. For example, will you be taking distance shots of nature or sports? If so, you will need a camera with a telephoto lens. Will you want to use a macro or close up lens? Is there one available for the camera you are looking at. It isn't just about pixels. It's about the features that a camera has in relation to your use of that camera.

The key in owning your camera is in understanding its parts and how they work in relation to the kind of photos that you want to produce. In this section, you will learn about the most important parts of the digital camera and what roles they play in capturing beautiful moments.

Don't worry, this discussion will not get too technical, but will include just a few bits and pieces that will help you understand how your camera works and find your way around the different features.

1. *The Body* - The body encases the entirety of your camera. While it does not affect the quality of your photo, it plays a huge role in comfort and confidence while you are taking pictures. When buying a camera, look to see if the body looks solidly made because some are very cheap packages that are intended more for the child market. The body should be of a sturdy build and it's worthwhile holding it in your hands to see where the buttons are in relation to your fingers. Some are a little awkward to use, so choose a camera which fits your hand and which has a solid body and a great manufacturer's guarantee.

2. *The Lens* - The lens is perhaps one of the most important parts of your camera when you are concerned about the quality of photos. The photographic process begins here once the light enters the camera. Some cameras have a fixed lens, meaning you cannot change it. Others have interchangeable lens-- and this feature allows you to switch from one lens to another depending on your need. These are particularly useful for professional work or for specialty work such as nature pictures, sports images etc. You also have through the lens or TTL cameras, SLR or single lens reflex and of course, optical zoom lenses, meaning that the lens is built in but that it extends to form a longer lens for close-up work.

Since the discussion about focal points can be too technical, we will just discuss the different kinds of lens and how they affect the photos you will capture.

a. Ultra-wide angle - As the name suggests this lens can be used even when you are near the target of your photo, but even though you are very close to the subject, the whole frame will still be covered by it. This is useful for taking pictures of large crowds so is ideal for the wedding photographer or those who wish to produce images that incorporate a lot of detail over a wide space.

b. Wide-angle - Is almost the same with the Ultra-wide angle, but obviously not quite as wide. This is used for group photographs or

scenery where you want to get more into the picture than the simple photograph lens would achieve.

c. Fish-eye - Fish-eye lens is most commonly used for added effect, since it will produce photos with curved appearance. This is often used for scenery to distort the image intentionally to give you a really cool effect.

d. Standard - Is also called the normal lens, this is the lens used by photographer when they want their photos to look exactly the way the human eyes can see it. So, there are no effects, and there is no emphasis. However, not all standard lenses are alike. This depends upon the make and the quality of the lens. You can be pretty sure that your standard lens will be adequate if you stick to buying from manufacturers who have a good guarantee and who are well known in the field of photography.

e. Short telephoto - This is the lens used when you want to take a portrait photo. This lens allows you to capture subjects close up without needing to cover distance. Thus, for studio work or a study of a face or facial features, this lens will do the job very adequately. The short telephoto lens comes with a quality camera where you have interchangeable lenses, although in a cheaper camera, this would be covered by the zoom feature which is a general purpose lens for close up work.

f. Long telephoto - This lens is the opposite of the short one, and it is used to capture events that you cannot get close to, such as a sports moment or a long distance sunset.

3. ***Viewfinder***

This is the part of the camera that you have to look into to be able to see what your photo will look like. Some digital cameras now are using LCD screens as the viewfinder. It's extremely important that you stand at the shop window and try the screen style viewfinders in natural light. The problem is that many are not built to give you a very good image outside and the reflection of the sun can actually impede seeing what it is that you are about

to take a photograph of. Look for those which are non reflective and which give the same quality of image on the LCD screen no matter what the light conditions. These may have a light shield, which means that the LCD is protected from light, thus enabling you to be able to see perfectly clearly. On some cameras, the LCD screen pivots and this is helpful for awkward shots.

The viewfinder on a TTL camera means that what you see is what you get, though on cheaper cameras, what you see is through the viewfinder, while the actual lens that takes the image is further down and to the right or left. Thus, this accounts for why people end up with images which appear to cut off part of the picture, as adjustment was not made at the time of taking the photograph and this is important with cheaper cameras that do not have the through the lens feature.

4. *Memory card* -

Most people take this part for granted as it is very small, but remember that this is the part where you will store the photos. The amount of storage capacity and quality of the flash drive are also important. Don't just buy any memory card you can get your hands on. Ask for the best because your images deserve to be kept on a card which gives you the best storage coupled with the best quality.

If you don't have a computer slot for your card, you can buy an adapter which will allow you to view your images on your computer screen and this is helpful to look at your images in detail. On the back of the camera, they never look as detailed as they do when displayed on the computer screen because the size gives you more clarity.

5. *Aperture* -

Can be considered as the camera's eyelids, or even the iris. It controls the amount of light that will be absorbed by the lens. Some cameras have fixed apertures, while some have adjustable apertures. The narrowest is f/16 while the widest is the f/1.4. A wide aperture can capture a shallower field (just the subject) with sharpness, good for when your target is close up, while a narrower aperture can capture the subject and the background with

sharpness and clarity, good for when your target is far away. This aspect is called the “depth of field.”

Most photographers take a liking to using the narrow aperture because it brings everything into focus. The only dilemma there is the fact that use of narrow aperture can result in less natural light. It's also not the best setting to use if you wish to blur the background and make the central figure or feature of your image sharp against that blurred background.

6. *Shutter release* -

This is the button that you press to be able to take the photos. It is also important to understand about the shutter speed. Shutter speed is the amount of time during which light can enter the camera, or simply the amount of time the lens is exposed to light. Slow shutter speed is often used for night photography, since it gathers as much light as possible. However, if you want to capture “fast” moments, you might want to have a fast shutter speed. There is a lot of variation with cameras, and many have settings that show you what they are going to do. For example, some allow for portrait work while other speeds are used for close up nature work. Look at the back of your camera as you change the shutter speed and there is usually a good descriptive that comes up in the menu.

Many people don't use all of the features that are on their cameras and that's a shame because manufacturers have built in all kinds of aids for photographers, such as being able to take two images simultaneously – one with flash and one without – so that the photographer can achieve great results and choose the best between the two.

7. *LCD screen* – This is important as stated above. You need to be able to see this clearly in all light, so do test the camera near to a natural light source, to find an LCD screen which shows very clearly what is being displayed. Since the LCD screen houses all of the menus of your camera, you need to be able to see it clearly.

This is where you can change settings to suit yourself. Many users of digital photography rely too much upon the external buttons and do very little adjustment using the menus on this screen. However, if you want to make

the most of your photographic experience, it pays to read the literature which comes with your camera and to play around with the menus to work out the settings that give you the best images in different circumstances.

8. **Flash** - The most professional of photographers out there seldom uses flash as they want to capture the natural lighting, but flash can be great help for beginners. It can also help in low light situations where studio lights are not used. Flash simply gives instant light to a scene that you are trying to photograph and can be the cause of red eye. If you have ever seen images where the eyes are red, this is caused by directly looking at the camera or the flash. If subjects turn away a little, this avoids red eye.

9. **Lens Cover** – You may see this as being unimportant, though it's vital to keep the lens covered at all times when not in use. If you have a more expensive camera, it would be worthwhile buying yourself a daylight filter which is screwed onto the end of the lens and which will always protect the glass the lens is made from. That way, if you forget to replace your cover, your lens will not get damaged. Filters are much cheaper than lenses and thus this makes sense.

Other adjustments and buttons will be available on cameras which allow you to play back your images on the LCD screen, so that you can see pretty well straight away whether you need to take another shot. That's one of the great things about digital photography. Unlike traditional photography which had a film with a set number of frames, digital photography allows you so much flexibility that taking an extra shot really won't use up much space on your card and will help you make sure that you get the photo you are after, even if it takes several shots to do so.

Extra features which are useful

Tripod slot – On the bottom of a good quality camera, you will find that there is a screw fixing to put a tripod. If taking very detailed photographs and wanting to avoid any movement at all, a tripod holds the camera firmly while you take your shots. It's also very useful for video shots and will not give the same wobble that a camera will. Some cameras have built in stability and this helps a great deal though the tripod is the best way to

ensure that your shot is completely stable. Choose an appropriate tripod size for the make of camera, so as not to damage the camera by using one with too long a fixing.

Settings buttons – At the top of the camera you will find the area where you can adjust the camera to take different styles of pictures or videos. You also have the option to use manual settings or automated settings. Most people use automated settings until they are more familiar with the camera and what it can do, although there are amazing effects available today allowing people to take not only wide pictures, but also panoramic pictures and the setting for the different uses of the camera lens are changed by this setting. Read your manual as there may be more settings than you think.

Special tones – Sepia toned pictures are very attractive. Inside the camera, there are features which can be accessed via the menu which displays onto the LCD screen. Many cameras these days incorporate the ability to change the quality of the images to get more images onto a card. They also allow for changing the tone of the image to sepia or black and white. It's worthwhile trying different settings and finding out what they do.



Image: Creative Commons attribution: Hauntingvisions.

Look how the sepia tone gives a very old fashioned look to an image. It can be ideal for making greetings cards or for those special family images that you want to keep in an album.

Chapter 2 - Making Your Photographs into Compositions

There are two words that will dominate this section. The first is composition, and the second is rules. If you read through the instructions shown below, you will find that neither is that complex and that you can employ these rules to really get the most out of your photographic composition.

When a photographer asked you to be *composed* so that the picture will look good, what he is asking of you is to be organized in front of the camera and ready for the shot. Why? It's simple-- our eyes tend to reject chaotic things, and we lean into liking things that look properly organized and put together. This principle also applies to taking photographs, the pictures, too, have to be composed. As stated previously, photography is in effect artwork and therefore the composure of the photograph will determine how people perceive it to look.

The good news: there are certain rules you can abide by so that your photos will be composed.

1. ***Rule of thirds*** - This rule is simple; most cameras have features that will show you a grid. The grid is composed of four intersecting lines that will form 9 equal squares. You shouldn't always place your subject in the middle portion, in fact, it will look better if the subject (especially a person) is placed in the left or right. If your camera does not have the grid feature, just estimate using your eyes. Try different placements, as this will show you what this does to the composition. For example, something that is in the foreground can be put to the left of the grid, making room for background to add a lot of character to the image. However, if using the camera for portraiture, centralizing the image is a good idea.
2. ***The rule of Odds*** - Another simple rule is to make your subjects in odd numbers. For example, if you want to capture drops of water, it is

best if there are three drops instead of two. The principle behind is based on the concept that the human eyes are drawn into the middle of the odd number.

This can be useful for nature photographs where the emphasis is not on a particular feature but the image as a whole. Three rain droplets on the flowers, spread out over the picture will invite the viewer to see the whole picture, rather than focusing on one particular drop or looking between two drops. This may sound a little strange, but try to imagine what you create when you use two of something in an image. People tend to look between them, rather than seeing the whole picture. Thus, the rule of odds makes sense.



Image: Creative commons

The above image shows the rule of odds. One central drop but it has been cleverly aided by the spread of the water, so that the eye is drawn to the whole picture, rather than the single drop.

3. **Rule of Space** - The rule of space (or the rule of leaving space) sounds so simple-- you just have to leave a certain space devoid of subject, much better if it is blank and there is nothing significant to be seen there. The rule of space will give the illusion of movement, and it will also give the viewer a breathing space, especially if the photo is intense.
4. **Fill it up** - Contradicting the previous rule, filling it up means that you have to maximize the space, leaving nothing that is “senseless.” You have to be careful though, filling the space is different from crowding

the frame. Often times, filling the space is done by cropping out the distracting background-- the end result is a frame full of your intended subject.

5. ***Determine the color*** - Honestly, there is no strict rule when it comes to color, but the fact still remains that ruining this aspect, a photo can be also be ruined. The rules regarding colors will depend on a lot of things like the emotion you would like to promote and what you want to focus on. For example, if you want to deliver calm and tranquil feeling, blue and other cool colors are good, red light invoke alertness, and sudden bright glares can emphasize your focal point all the more. Never believe that white is white as there are so many shades determined by the lighting used when taking the image. This applies to the intensity of all colors as well.
6. ***Balance*** - Balance is making sure that chaos and boredom is prevented, the frame should not be too crowded, nor should it be too empty. One good technique in accomplishing balance is by finding the perfect angle. So, don't be contented with the usual straight shots, you can tilt the camera to find something better. This works particularly well, for example, by coming down to a child's height when taking an image of a child. It gives a whole different viewpoint from if you had taken the picture from a standing up position. Move around, get the best angle.
7. ***Make it simple*** - Simplification is based on the premise that we have already touched before-- the human eyes appreciate less distracting things. Simplifying can be done in two ways, the first one is to fill the frame, and the second is after the photo has been taken, by cropping out unneeded things. You may not be accustomed to using software to manipulate images, but it's extremely simple to do. However, getting the composition right in the first place will give you better quality images, so take your time taking photographs.

Compose them, take them and then you won't have to crop your photographs and lose any of the clarity. While taking pictures, it is important to ask yourself one important question, will this particular

element contribute to the beauty of my photo? If you answer no, might as well leave it out rather than having to crop the image later and lose some of the definition. The problem with cropping is that you take an image and effectively stretch it by taking out the background and making the new image fit to the original size. Thus if your quality was already patchy, cropping also diminishes the quality of the image produced. Thus, compose your picture, rather than depending upon software to put the image right.

8. *The use of leading lines -*

There are known for more than just their usefulness in emphasizing the foreground. Leading lines also serve the purpose of directing the viewer to the field you want him or her to look at. Leading lines can take any form: straight, curved, diagonal-- as long as the landing line offers direction, any line (or pattern) can be used.



Image: Creative

Commons

Look at the leading lines in this image, pulling the viewer toward the focal point of the picture. Had the lines been used to one side, it would not have been so effective in giving the viewer a focal point.

9. *Capturing texture -*

The problem with photos sometimes is this. They seem to be simply images caught for the sake of it, rather than photographs to be proud of. Most of us want them to come alive, to have depth or even to have a three dimensional look about them but fail because the lack of texture makes the image look flat. One good way of giving pictures some dimension is by capturing the texture of the subject. Doing so will make your viewer ‘experience’ what it feels like if they touch it.

In the last image, for example, look at the unique textures which were combined to make a whole – the wood of the pier, the blue and white fluffiness of the sky and the ripples of the water made a whole image. Imagine this image showing a blue sky with no clouds, a distant shot of the pier where you couldn't really see the wood texture and the sea represented by a greeny blue uniform color. Amateurs take

pictures such as this without thinking of incorporating the texture. This is where focus is so vital to creating really good images.

The best technique in capturing the texture, of course, is by doing a close up shot that allows the detail to be shown.

10. *Symmetry* -

Before you note it, symmetry is not the same as balance. (Please see No. 6). Symmetry happens when the things that can be found on the left side, can also be found on the right. Most photographers use this rule to break free from the rule of thirds, which is good, especially if the symmetry is located on areas where it does not usually occur. Symmetry with leading lines also looks appealing to the eyes.

An image which uses symmetry can indeed give perfect balance to the subject being photographed. To a certain extent the picture of the pier has perfect symmetry because it has an equal amount of sea at each side of the pier.

11. *Background* -

As they say, one of the most common mistakes in photography is missing out on the background. You might become too enthralled with your subject and find that you overlook the beauty of those objects directly behind it. Photographers also make the mistake of getting backgrounds which detract from the main subject. Perhaps in a touristic location, the picture of friends is spoiled by tourists walking by at the wrong moment.

Of course, that's not to say that you should always include a specific type of background, but the point being made here is to see if the background is worth including in the photograph. You may have noticed with wedding photographs, for example, that the photographer moves the bride and groom to different areas for more atmospheric photographs. He uses the arch of the church door for a typical group photograph, while the bride and groom photographs may be softer and more sentimental when taken against a background of nature.

The whole point is that the background can often add to the atmosphere and make a photograph look rather special. If, for example, you want to photograph the facial expressions of a child. If you were to photograph this with a busy background, much of the impact of the photo is lost. Using a background which is more neutral and which may even be faded out by clever use of your lens, you would then draw the emphasis to the features that you felt important enough to photograph.



Image: PublicDomain

In the image shown above, look what the eye leads you to. This is a very clever photograph because it uses white to obliterate the background and give it softness. By doing this, the photographer was able to place the emphasis on the face of the baby. A small touch which was added which gives away that it's a boy is the blue symbol on the front of his outfit which is not strong enough in color to take away any of the emphasis intended. It's a magnificent example of how background makes such a difference to the overall picture.

Point of view

Is almost the same with angle (finding the perfect shot), only now it will seem like you are directing a film. For example, taking a photo of someone while you're in higher place will make it look like he/she is small; the viewer will feel big looking at the photo. Taking the photo of anything while bending down low can make the subject look bigger, and the viewer feel smaller. The point of view is important to photography. If, for example, you want to take a photograph of a cat, many people make the mistake of taking it from a standing position and wonder why the photo is disappointing. Let us show you two examples which will demonstrate the difference between a snapshot, taken without thought, and an image which used point of view. You may have seen many of the first style of photograph when your friends have sent

you images of their cat. It shows a cat in motion but it lacks the ability to convince the viewer that the cat is doing anything other than simply walking.



Image:

Creative Commons Attribution: Soniastock

Now look at how this kind of image was tackled by someone who realized the significance of point of view. Point of view just means the point from which you viewed the image.



Image:

Creative Commons

Notice the detail on the second image. Your eye is drawn toward the cat's facial features and a clever touch was added of including the single flower on the left hand side of the picture which is also focused upon. Black and white imagery added texture to the image but it is the point of view that made the photograph so good. The photographer had the camera at a level that could catch the cat's face perfectly.

Of course, your photo will not always have leading lines, in that case, you will just have to make the subject more prominent using some other ways, like turning it into a focal point, or filling up the frame with it. It's a very clever detail to be able to use point of view and then to add the other rules such as the rule of thirds. The last image shows how effective this is, since the background is almost obscured and the cat is sitting to the right of the image, but still remains the main feature.

What many photographers, or would-be photographers achieve when they take pictures of animals is mediocre pictures. If a photograph isn't something that's good enough to hang on the wall as art, chances are that it will sit in a box of photos somewhere and only surface again by chance. If the photograph incorporates artistic merit and photographic skill, it's much more likely to become a favorite photograph and find a starring place either as wall art or as a photograph that gets its own frame.

Chapter 3 – Improving your Nature and Landscape Photos

If you are a beginner, you will have a penchant to taking photos of nature and landscapes, sometimes with human subjects, but sometimes without. In this section, we will discuss the most effective tips when it comes to taking pictures of nature and landscape. You need to remember that a missed opportunity may be something you will regret. Thus, carry your camera with you, so that when nature gives you that perfect shot, you are ready to grab it. Nature does that. It shocks, it amazes, but most of all it gives a photographer a chance to show the world that moment as it happened, pulling all the elements of nature into the image, together with the color, ambiance and beauty.

Make use of a tripod - Using a tripod is very beneficial, especially if your shutter speed is slower. Some photos become blurry because your hands suddenly jerk in the middle of taking the photo. The best way to ensure that your camera is still is to use a tripod. This is also useful for taking speed shots because if the tripod allows a pivot of the camera you can follow the movement of animals and still keep the camera posed perfectly to take the shot without wobble. A tripod also helps you to capture something predictable. Thus, if you line up your camera, you may be waiting for that opportune moment to take the best photo, but when it happens, your camera is at the ready. This is particularly relevant for sunsets, as the sky can change from moment to moment, but you will have already decided which point of view your photograph will be taken from. It's just a case of waiting until nature obliges you with the perfect shot.

There should be a focal point - In interior design, a focal point is something that your eyes cannot let go of. Yes, your view may stray from time to time, but they will return to the focal point. If you were to walk into a room, the first object that catches your attention is indeed the focal point. This could be a fireplace, a painting on a wall or something that the homeowner has used as their chosen focal point to draw the eye of the beholder toward it.

It's the same with photography. Choosing and capturing a focal point in your nature and landscape photo will prevent boredom from a viewing point. A focal point can be anything-- just make sure that you choose something that captures the hearts of those who look at the images once they are produced. For example, the cat photograph in the last chapter, in black and white, has a focal point. The cat's face, his features and expression were all caught perfectly. In the baby photograph, the focal point was the face of the baby.

To give you a better idea on how to make your focal points clearer, follow these guidelines:

Contrasting shape and color - If the shape and color of your focal point stands out, it's much better and much more likely to be recognized as a focal point. Look at this picture of a mallard. You will see that the colors of the mallard are particularly noticeable. The reason for this is that the photographer has used a background that didn't detract from the stunning nature of the color of the duck.

By choosing a background which was fairly bland, he drew attention to the plumage of the duck which is indeed the focal point of the image.



Image: Creative Commons

You can clearly see what a stunning effect the plumage has on the image, since this features as the overall focal point.

The bigger the better - While it is impossible to find a big focal point, huge ones help emphasize them more. But then again, remember that the way you are placing the focal point also plays a role. Positioning will be discussed in the later chapter about rules in photography, though you can see how the size of the duck plays a part in how amazing it looks. Similarly a close up image of the baby's face made it a real focal point in the baby photo in the last chapter.

Blurring the background - Very effective if your focal point is not moving, but the background is mobile. What you will need to do is set your shutter speed to a slower setting. In the case of the picture of the mallard, the water behind the mallard was

moving, though the photographer obviously didn't want this to detract from the focal point of the image and thus blurred it.

Let foregrounds strike - Foreground is the part of the scenery that is closest to the viewer, in other words, closest to you while you are taking the photo, and closest to your audience when they see the picture. In the image of a cat, look how being in the foreground of the picture made it startlingly attractive. You will need to learn to get up close and personal with subjects and in the case of nature, this may mean using longer lenses which still retain the quality of the image being taken.

To better help you in including the foreground in your landscape photography, follow these simple tips which have been written from experience and which are used on an ongoing basis by photographers all over the world to improve the way that their pictures appear to the viewing public:

Look for patterns - If the foreground has a pattern, especially lines that are very prominent, make use of them. The lines and the patterns usually draw the attention and give the viewer some sort of direction. This was used in the image of the pier

Lower the camera position by bending down - What most photographers do to put emphasis on their foreground is to stoop down low. This means that the ground itself is being brought into the visual field. If you are using a tripod, you might as well lower down the height. This was demonstrated in the cat image, because by getting down to the level of the cat, the picture became a lot more focused on the cat at his own level. You can use this for scenery because it helps you to gain extra perspective.



Look at the foreground of the image above. To get a photo like this, the photographer would have had to sit lower to capture the reflection of the mountain in the water. Had he decided to take the image straight, without having composed the image, he would have lost the opportunity to get all of the detail that has been captured in the image. Thus foreground helps considerably in composition.

Check and recheck the quality of the image before pressing the shutter. Sometimes people guess when taking photographs. They don't use the LCD because light is stopping them from seeing clearly the composition of the photograph. If you cannot see the image through the LCD screen, try to shade it so that you can get a better idea of what the image encompasses.

Distracting from the quality of the image.

Often people take photographs without stepping from one side to the other to find the best pose. You see tourists often snapping away without giving great thought to composition. If you look on Google Images or similar websites, what you see is a whole host of photographs taken by people of the same thing, but the quality of some will be much greater than others. Some will have distracting objects in the background, some will even have the composition so badly organized that the photograph is really not up to par. Yet others will take scenery shots too close and lose the potential of showing the

glory of the area which has been photographed. For example, taking a photograph of waterfalls, some photographers are so enthused about the waterfall that they forget about all the aspects around the waterfall which may add to the quality of the picture. By the time they have finished, the waterfall could be anywhere, but by composing the picture, they actually show somewhere very memorable.



The photographer in this case remembered to include foreground but the monotony of the color scheme makes the photograph look more mediocre than it could have been. Look at a superb example of a photograph of a waterfall and see how color and texture were used to make the photograph more interesting.



Image: Creative commons attribution: Forestland

Instead of the colors showing monotonous, this extremely clever picture shows a richness of detail second to none. Look at the water. It looks almost like melted silver. Look at the tones of the rocks and the use of the rule of thirds, splitting the image into three sections which combine to make a whole.

Don't rush it -

Most people, once they see what seems to be a perfect scene, start rushing clicking with abandon. The thing is, you can never rush art. What you must do is take time-- practice until seeing the perfect point of view becomes second nature to you. Remember, if it's not good enough to hang on your walls as wall art, it isn't the best that you can do. Even with cheap cameras, great pictures are indeed possible.

Professional photographers take lots of frames. That way they get to pick the best of the bunch. Rather than depending upon editing the image using software, they take various angles and use different points of view so that they eventually have a photograph which is the best that it can be. There are some startling examples of professional photography in magazines such as National Geographic. It's unlikely that these were first time takes. Thus, take several images from several angles and you open yourself up to more choice when it comes to deciding upon which images you wish to share with your friends and family or even use in photographic competitions.

Horizons – What you use for your horizon on your photograph is really your own choice. The standard horizons that most people choose are skylines where the earth meets

the sky or where the sea meets the sky but these don't have to be the only possibilities as far as horizons are concerned. The top of a roof can make a good horizon if photographing something of architectural value.

A hedge or a break in the scenery can also be used as an horizon. Try different positions and imagine the paintings that grace the art galleries, since these are scenery pictures which use different elements to bring the whole image together. Since photography is art, the photographer needs to begin to see that their photographs are only as good as their artistic ideas when taking the image. The horizon of an infinity pool can be extremely stunning in a photograph because one doesn't expect it. It adds startling detail and gives the impression that the earth drops away to nothing, thus making this horizon a very artistic one against the right background.

The time of the day - The time of the day plays a very big role when it comes to the issue of natural lighting. Daylight hours when the sun shines the brightest give a good opportunity to the photographer to create a picture which is clear, although different times of day can be used for their atmospheric value. Dusk or dawn give great opportunities to be artistic and to use the colors of nature at their best.

The opportunities of getting accustomed to using natural light early in the morning gives the photographer a chance to experience their skill of judgment in what setting they put their camera into for such images. If you are a little afraid of your camera, then the “automatic” settings will give you an idea of what can be achieved, but also try to be more adventurous and use manual settings as well because this extra experience will help your overall photographic ability.

Don't be afraid with the weather - Real photos do not come from convenience. It is true that it is easier to capture moments when the ground is dry and the clouds are few, but sometimes, gloomy weather can give you the photos that you desire. You may not have a choice in a moment when you need photographs, so get accustomed to using the weather to your advantage. For example, snow may mean that unless you adjust your camera settings, you may find that your images are over-exposed because of the brightness of the snow. Similarly, you may have to adjust the camera to take account of things such as mist in the morning or rain showers and rainbows.

No matter what the weather is, the opportunity for good quality photos should not be diminished by what weather is prevailing. Look at this image taken on a misty morning and you will see that the amazing quality which was produced does credit to the photographer who must have exercised great patience to have achieved such a great shot.



Image: Public Domain

Look at the atmosphere which is created in the image. The mist allows different layers to be created among the trees. This won't have been taken on a warm day, or in good weather. In fact, you can feel the coolness of the atmosphere from the image.

What they have created is a wonderful picture either at sunset or sunrise which shows a level of hope in the sun hiding behind silver lines cloud formations, above the mists which cloak the earth. That's very poetic but it's also proof that an image can be taken even in adverse conditions and can still pull of the “stunning” photograph image that people want to achieve.

Chapter 4 – Improving Your Portrait Photography

Portrait photography is popular with most amateur photographers and since the popularity of “selfless” it's no wonder that this form of photography is used so frequently by people wanting to show off their talents at self-expression. However, for the photographer who simply wants to produce quality images, it's important to start thinking of yourself as a photographer, rather than as a friend taking a picture. The sooner you do, the sooner you will realize the significance of all of the elements which go into taking great portraits of people. There are some very famous portrait photographers and what these photographers have accomplished is the ability to combine the natural looks of their subjects, coupled with great photography props and techniques.

If you want to capture the face of a child, for example, look at school photographs. Although these are not the best examples of capturing character, they do have a professional edge to them, in that they concentrate on the head and shoulders of the child, thus making them the standard for portraiture. However, you are unlikely to get a child to sit still long enough to capture the formality caught by school photographers and you probably wouldn't want to. Instead, the moments that you want to capture of children are those magical moments of discovery or growth that goes by almost unnoticed but that mean such a great deal to parents. These, captured in an image, are extremely valuable portraits.

Look at the wonder in the eyes of this child. Caught at a stage where the child still has her milk teeth, the portrait captures the personality of the child and is a great example of portrait photography.



Image: Public domain

The photograph taken in natural lighting captures even the sparkle in the child's eye. This was taken close up at a moment's notice and is a spontaneous example of what a photographer can achieve with a little thought, the right lens and a cooperative child. The focus on the subject is perfect. Taken with a Nikon camera at an aperture of f5.3, the photographer used a shutter speed of 1/320s and the detail caught by the camera is stunning.



Image: Public Domain

As a total contrast to the last picture, this is an indoor shot which uses white as a natural background. Just as in the baby photograph in an earlier chapter, what this does is bring out focus on the face of the child and the mischievous eyes.

This method can be used with a close up lens but better results will be obtained using a tripod and lighting which helps to blank out the background. The kind of lighting used in studios is typically lights on a stand with a metal umbrella to reflect the light rather than point it directly at the image itself.

This picture was also taken with a Nikon camera and although you may not own one, you can try pictures such as this using different settings to see which give you the best results.



Image: Public domain

Portraiture which is not in traditional style where the model sits is very popular in this day and age and look how the movement was captured in this image without any detractor from the quality, the focus and the overall detail. The texture of the water is clearly shown, as is the movement. Taken with a Nikon camera, the shutter speed used was $1/250$ s and the focal length was 62.00 mm with an aperture of $f/13.0$ and an ISO of 300.

If you want to get photographs such as this which involve movement, you will need to adjust your camera for a speed shot and hold it very firmly in your hands. In a beach setting it's unlikely that a tripod was used, but what you can do to give the camera more stability is to have it attached to a strap for extra security and set it up in advance. Then, when the picture presents itself, you don't have to worry about dropping the camera, you will have already focused in on the distance and only need very fine tuning and can snap the picture easily. Even if you miss an opportunity such as caught in the image, the chances are that another will present itself very soon.

Traditional portraits of older people

Traditional portraits of family members are usually pretty starchy in nature, but they don't have to be. With the right lens, the correct lens adjustment and the right light, even the harshest of realities can be softened so that the portrait is complimentary and the image not too harsh. Remember everyone gets older, but not everybody wants to see their image showing the reality of old age. You have the technology to soften the blow and if you use it, chances are that even more family members and friends will be pleased that you helped to take portraits that matter to them.



Image: Public Domain

Although this image is not of an elderly person who has anything to worry about as far as wrinkles are concerned, it does help me to explain to you how different angles help in portrait photography and how different areas of the face can be shown in a great light. Most people have a favorite side. This is because it gives a much more favorable viewpoint. As a photographer, you need to find out which side of a face looks the best. This professional photograph shows how light can be used to bounce off the face, giving it a lighter look. The head held high helps to give the subject a particularly elegant look. The makeup is perfect, though stunning results can be obtained even if this is not the case.

Sometimes the natural pose of a woman rather than a forced one gives a great opportunity for a portrait. Don't be nervous about trying different poses. You will get a very nice one if you do try from either side, try with the head tilted, try with the face looking directly at the camera but be aware that if flash is used, you will get red eyes. To avoid this, the subject will need to look slightly away from the flash. It is the reflection of the flash in the eyes that causes redness and although this can be fixed, it's far better to get used to using a photographic technique which avoids it in the first place.

For portraits of young people, putting the image to one side against a plain background gives great impact to the image. Head and shoulder images no longer have to be boring and if you experiment with them, you will find that people will love your photos more than the snapshots which are taken without thought.

Chapter 5 – Why Software Edits of Photos May be a Mistake

One of the problems with modern software is that it allows a photographer to get terribly lazy. With all the manipulations that people can make to digital photographs, some photographers are less concerned about composition, exposure and the quality of their images because they put their trust in their software to correct anything that went wrong.

So what's wrong with this?

The easiest way to explain it is in terms of pixels. You remember all those details the camera salesman gave you about the importance of pixels when buying your camera? Well, he did that for a good reason. The more pixels make up an image, the greater the resolution and that means that you can blow your images up to larger sizes without impacting the quality of the image too much.

When you crop a photograph, what you are doing is chopping off a lot of the pixels from around the edges of the photograph where the cropping occurs. That leaves you with a picture which is more grainy because you want it to fit the same size of frame but you are making it fill the page with less pixels. Thus, the quality of the image will diminish.

Look at the image below because this gives you good detail of what grain is. This happens when you try to make a picture bigger or have taken it with the wrong exposure. The grain which is showing on the image below would spoil the quality of the prints produced. Thus, you do yourself no service cutting a larger photograph down to make it look more like the original idea that you had when you took the picture.



Image: Creative commons

The other disadvantage of relying too heavily on your software is that you do not learn how to use the different settings on your camera, compensating for poor results with editing. This is obviously disadvantageous since it stops the learning curve in its path. For example, under or over exposure can be compensated for with software, but what a picture that is under or over exposed says is that your settings on the camera were incorrect. It is far better to take time in understanding all those settings and thus coming up with great images without the need to change what you did wrong.

Red Eye

People who look directly at the flash during the taking of a photograph will show up with red eyes on the eventual photograph when really all that is needed is a slight adjustment in their posture to fix the problem. Many people are disappointed by the “red eye” phenomenon but can fix this without having to use software. Software makes a photographer lazy about the pose and that's a bad thing. A photographer who is aware of the possibility of red eye can ask the people in the photo to pose slightly differently so that the flash does not hit them in the eye. He can also use an extended flash much like that used by the press to avoid this happening.

Quality of images

People often try to compensate for bad quality images using software because they have not set up their camera correctly. Using a large storage memory card, you can adjust your camera to take either mediocre quality images or you can up the specification and take quality images.

Because quality images take up more space on the card, people tend to opt for somewhere in the middle and this is a huge mistake. It would be better to have a couple of free cards and set the camera for optimal performance, rather than using software to compensate for bad quality images, simply because the setting is set in such a way to maximize the number of shots which can be taken, rather than depending upon the quality of the images. That's a huge mistake.

Use the camera to get the very best shots that you can and always opt for quality. If you decide to take the easy road to having masses of mediocre photographs the quality will be less and your images will show it. On a screen they may look great, but as soon as you go over to the print process, it will be noticeable compared with images using the higher setting which adds more pixels to the image and thus fills in any potential grain caused by lack of pixels on lesser quality images.

Chapter 6 - Capturing the Beauty of Moments in Life

Photos, to be fully appreciated, should not look like they are scripted. These could include images of events in your life and the unfolding of your personal story. Church gatherings, barbecues in the garden, school sports events etc., all come under this heading, as they are moments in life that matter to you and your family or other participants in the event. The event may even be the first steps of a child caught on camera. They may be the new born baby in the hospital. Whatever they are, they shouldn't look as if they have been posed for the camera, if you actually want to capture the essence of the moment.

When a photo reveals the story that it is telling, you call these candid photos. Knowledge about candid photos gives you the edge if you want your photography to have more significance. It is perfect for keeping moments that you wish to cherish. Bear in mind that some of these will be photographs of still items, while others will involve the movement of people and this is vital when it comes to choosing your lens and settings on the camera. For more candid shots where the people who will be in the picture are unaware that you are taking their photograph, a telephoto lens or a zoom lens will be ideal. These allow you to get in close without making the subject of the photograph conscious that you are snapping them.

Supposing, for example, that you want to catch Johnny in his first school race. This involves movement and you can still capture wonderful pictures of movement as shown in the chapter with the image of a young girl in the water. The way that you do this is to focus the camera on a fixed spot which is at the approximate distance that the photo will be snapped. Thus, in the case of taking a picture of Johnny in the race, focus the camera on an area of the race track where you have a great view.

As Johnny starts his race, hold the camera with the same setting and focus as you had and follow him until he reaches the point where he is completely

in focus. Then snap. Your picture will show the motion but the child will be totally in focus.

There are different types of candid photography but the most prominent of them are *street photography* and *reaction photography*.

Street photography is just as the name implies. You go out for a walk and take the opportunity to take photographs of things that you believe will make a great picture. This could be anything from the orange color of the leaves in autumn to the flowers in the park. They are spontaneous pictures that you want to have in your collection of photographs. Reaction photography happens when you want to frame a response to a certain stimulus. If your friend secretly planned a wedding proposal, you surely want to see and capture the reaction of the bride to be. This could cover many events where surprise reactions are shown and you have your camera ready to capture the moment.

1. *Your camera and you* - The first tip that you should follow is this--always take your camera with you, no matter where you go. The fact of the matter is this, life is full of surprises and you do not know when the next big thing can happen. And if nothing huge or worth photographing happens, you haven't lost anything. The plus of always being ready means that unexpected events may just catch your artistic eye that you would have lost had you not had the camera with you. So, go ahead, take your camera with you, always. The kind of things that can happen are skies which amaze you, elements of nature that you may not have noticed before, architecturally interesting houses. In fact, when walking, you could see things that you hadn't noticed before even if walking in an environment you are familiar with. There are always surprises waiting in store for the observant.

2. *No flash rule* - Again this reiterates the rule about using natural lighting. Besides, if you want to capture your friends doing something hilarious, the magic of the moment will be gone once they take note of the glaring flash. If you can get away with taking photographs in natural light, this is far better from a quality point of view. If you do need to use flash during hours of darkness try to use an extended flash rather than depending upon the built in flash in your camera as this will cause quality issues.

3. Take as many photographs as you can - If you want to capture events in a simultaneous manner, you might as well activate your camera's multiple shot option. The settings usually have that feature-- the shutter release has to be pressed once and multiple photos will be taken. This is particularly good for action shots. Supposing a lorry ran amuck into the shopping mall. You have an ideal opportunity to grab as many shots as you can and these may be useful to the police or to the newspapers who report on the event. They don't have to be negative events. Sports events are also times when this feature comes in extremely handy. Thus, if you miss the perfect shot with one photograph, you may find that the photos that follow get the perfect image.

4. Activate the long zoom setting - If your subject is far away from you, and you have no capability to get close to it, activate your long zoom option. This feature is also useful when you want to be sneaky; the subjects will not know that they are already in the photo shoot so their reactions become more natural. This is particularly good for spontaneous moments with children. If they know you are taking photographs, children will pose and the pose may spoil the spontaneity of the photograph. When children are unaware that they are being observed, there really can be some magical moments captured on camera using the long zoom setting. On standard point and click cameras, there is usually a rocker switch at the back of the camera. Familiarize yourself with its position so that you are able to switch from one mode to the next effortlessly and without having to stop to look where the settings are. That one moment taken to look for the settings may be enough to miss the moment.

5. Caught in the act - Is perhaps the best technique there is when taking candid photographs. While your children are so enthused with their activity that they act in a natural way, while your friends are dancing, while family members are telling are smiling about something that has just happened-- those are some of the best activities you will want to capture. You may catch a family member cheating at Scrabble or even find that the concentration between father and son while playing a game of chess can be put to good use by taking a photograph at a low level to gain better perspective.

Another key factor to make candid photos is to be invisible-- okay, you cannot really become invisible, but there are known tips that you can perform to be “out of sight” even just for a little time, enough for you to be able to take natural photos. These tips can also be useful for taking wildlife pictures, where you may lose the opportunity if the creature you are trying to photograph becomes aware of your presence.

Be sneaky! Follow these guidelines to become invisible:

1. Use your hips - This is a very practical tip. A photographer often has a certain pose: camera near the face, and slightly crouched down. If your camera will lay on your hip, they will think that you just have the camera, but you have no intention of taking the photo. Well, they might just be wrong. What you can do in an instance such as this is make sure that the automatic button is pressed and focus on about the distance that you need. Another way you can achieve this is if you have a swivel LCD display and can look down into it. These are quite sneaky for taking candid pictures when people are not expecting it.

2. Tone down on your equipment - If you want the sneakiest of photos, you must avoid bulky devices, which will be too obvious. If you have a digital compact camera, you can use that instead! There are also point and shoot devices which can be quite useful, although the quality of the photo can be compromised. One gadget they may not be expecting you to use is your iPad or phone. These are quickly manipulated into place and you can take an image. It may seem surprising though old folks really are unfamiliar with these new gadgets. I recently took an image of a very old lady on the iPad without her being aware that I had taken the image. When she looked at the photograph, she said that she was sure she knew this lady, but that she didn't know where from! It was a great moment, but it was also a pleasurable moment that we shared and still laugh about.

3. Time it - Shoot only when you subjects are distracted! As much as possible prevent yourself from urging them to become distracted, as they will know right away that you want to take photos. Just be patient, after all, they will NOT wait for you to take photos, so be patient and wait for the

ideal opportunity rather than drawing attention to the fact that you have your camera and are ready to take their photographs.

4. ***Start taking photos of landscapes*** - This is a good tip that will go well with tip number 3. First, start taking photos of still life, food, the landscape, trees, or anything else that does not involve people. You may have it in your mind to shoot a picture of someone nearby. However, the fact that you are busy shooting pictures of other things will put them off the scent. Then move your camera down and snap the shot.
5. **For nature pictures** – These take a lot of patience. You have to wait for nature to pose on its own without letting nature know that you are watching. Animals are very protective of their territories and you are unlikely to get a good shot if you are too close to them. You can use a telephoto lens, but you can also get really close by using a hide. This is a screen that is placed between you and them and which is covered with natural leaves or branches so that the animals are not aware that you are there. In nature reserves, there may already be hides that you can use to get close to nature, since it is a common thing that photographers want to take pictures of animals in their natural habitats.



Image: Creative

Commons. See how a moment in time is captured using a telephoto lens.

The above image is a very imaginative one and something that is rare for the public to see. For a photographer to get an image such as this, he needs to take time, to know where birds are nesting and to observe their activities.

Usually animals have set feeding times. For example, squirrels may use the same route to get to their feeding grounds every day. If you study the animals that you wish to photograph this gives you the edge. You will be able to set the camera up in advance and simply wait for the opportunity to arise.

The problem with amateur photographers is that they don't usually understand the amount of waiting time professional photographers need in order to produce the quality pictures that they see every day in magazines. These are produced with quality cameras and the amateur could be excused for thinking that his/ her camera does not have the same capability. However, patience plays a huge part in how well you will be able to take candid photographs of wildlife.

Taking the time to understand the species and its activities will mean that you are much more likely to succeed. There are some marvelous pictures of dragonflies which were taken by a river on a summer afternoon. The photographer had to take hundreds of images before a perfect one was achieved, though by knowing the habitat of the dragonflies, and also knowing that with time, they become accustomed to human presence and even sit on your hand, they were able to get close up images of the dragonflies and even set up images against a dark background which reflected the beauty of the blue/green wings against it beautifully.

Patience is the biggest asset a photographer can have and when it is exercised the results of the images produced are much better and much more surprising.

Considering all the tips above, you should also be reminded of some rules. Remember that photos today are not just for memories; they also serve the purpose of sharing moments with the people close to you, and even with people who feature in those images. You may even be fortunate enough to compete in competitions with the images that you produce or to use these for online projects.

These reminders will help your photos stand out for all the right reasons.

1. *Permission matters* - Okay, so let us clarify this reminder. In the previous chapter, you were asked to become sneaky, but please still use your judgment. Be sneaky only around people whom you are close with. If you are taking photographs of strangers and want to use them, you need to ask them if this is acceptable.

If you are using the pictures for commercial purposes, the agreement should be put into writing. In fact, a form of consent is something that you should get accustomed to having on you in case you see something that you really do want to take a photograph of which is essentially private. For example, one photographer wanted to take pictures of someone's garden and got so enthusiastic about it that he actually trespassed to do so. The police were called and they were under the impression that he was casing the house for a burglary, when in fact all he wanted was photographs of the roses in the garden which were of a particularly rare species. To save the embarrassment, all he had to do was to ask the owner if he/ she minded if he took photographs. Most people are so proud of their gardens that they would probably be only too glad to share their joy with others. Politeness should always be in mind when photographing the property of others.

When taking photographs of children, bear in mind that parents may be fearful of where these photographs will be used. With so much danger these days with online photographs, don't assume you can post a photograph of a stranger's child onto your Facebook and get away with it without asking the parents first. You may be endangering that child. While you may have found

the child particularly appealing from a photographic stance, pedophiles may find the child equally endearing. Always ask and always inform parents of where you intend to use the photographs.

Joke time - When you are in an actual photo shoot and you want the emotions to be light and happy, you have to do your part by making an effort to make people laugh. Punch a joke from time to time and press the shutter release when their laughs are at their most candid! You may not have noticed this, but look into the window of any professional photography shop and you will see spontaneous pictures of bride and groom or any of the bridesmaids at the event who have been photographed looking wonderfully calm and happy. Professional photographers do know how to make people feel at ease. If you want to take photographs that are equally as professional, remember to hone your communication

Image: Public Domain



skills so that you can take photographs at the opportune moment and get the best pictures possible. The image of the child shown in the photo below is a stock item used on a photo website where the photographer would have had to give permission for the use of the image. The reason it is so relevant is that little

smile on her face. If you think that this happened by accident, think again. While the child may have looked perfectly delightful caught in a sunbeam, look how much her smile adds to the image. A small prompt from a photographer can do this, and the results can be stunning.

Learn, learn, and learn - The first mistake a person makes when wanting to be involved with photography is investing so much on equipment and neglecting the learning process. Research on the Internet if you have questions. Be inquisitive and subscribe to photo newsletters, if there is an available photography community in your local area, join it! The best place that you can get advice on the use of your camera is in the leaflet that comes with it explaining all of the features. Unfortunately, in many cases, people get so involved with using their camera that this gets thrown away right at the start of their photographic experience. However, that isn't the end of the story. Most quality camera manufacturers have websites from which the handbook can be downloaded.

They also have backup with technical staff and if you are concerned about any aspects of your use of the camera, you can always ask them. Kodak were particularly good with giving advice about the use of their digital cameras and many others will be able to help you to gain the most from their products.

These companies want your custom and a good customer experience usually means that when you upgrade your camera, you are likely to stick with a company that you have learned to trust.

Avoid chimping - Be honest, while taking pictures, what you do is take one photo and look at the photo. That's what you call chimping. The problem with chimping is that you lose time inspecting the photos that you have already taken instead of looking for more prospective moments. People who do this are usually timid about their use of their camera and it's a better idea to read up on the features and try them out in your own time so that you get more familiar with the features and don't have to keep stopping the photographic experience through your own insecurity.

By stopping, you may be missing moments that are better than the moments you just captured on the camera. It doesn't matter if you have occasionally

taken shots which are not good.

It's not a failure. It's a normal occurrence. If you were to talk to a professional photographer, you would learn that even they make mistakes. Stop holding back your own experience by being so unsure. Take extra shots instead and when it comes to dumping the bad shots, you will no doubt have good ones to replace them. When you see an album of photographs after a wedding, you are not seeing every image that was taken. You are seeing what the photographer saw as the best of all the photographs they had to choose from. He will, of course, have scrapped some photographs. No one wants to see the best man yawning. No one wants to see the moment when the bridesmaids made a mistake. These get deleted. Thus, no one really minds that you take some shots which are not that good. It's part of the photographic experience.

Framing - Framing is when you use natural frames to emphasize the subject. For example, the scene is framed by a window, look at the window and see if it will also be a good element to include in the picture. Tunnels, doors and even lighting can also be used as natural frames. If you are walking down a road and notice an archway to a garden, this makes a delightful frame to a picture.

Don't forget to ask permission if this belongs to a private individual, but the image you wanted of the river across the road from that arch, may actually be wonderful framed by the garden arch. Taken from inside that garden, the shot could be perfect. Similarly, in architecturally interesting places, arches may frame the picture of the medieval buildings beyond it.

Consider the frame as creating a vignette. The old art of vignettes was often used in photography and an archway may cause a dark area around the edges of an image, but what startles the eye is the bright garden or shrubbery that greets it at the end of the darkness of the archway or tunnel. There are some amazing pictures of nature which use trees at the edges which in effect frame the image within the center of the photograph. Just as you compose photographs as explained in previous chapters, framing is a technique which helps you to get great shots and very unusual photographs indeed which show your originality as an artist and photographer.

Get involved with your subjects - Getting involved in taking photos means that you will not fail to see the beauty of what you are trying to capture. The problem with most photographers is this. They want to take the best pictures and give precedence to quantity rather than quality. It's necessary to have a good eye for detail. The cobweb lurking in the garden may give you the ideal photo shoot. The dandelion that you see in the middle of the lawn may also give you a photo opportunity. Don't ignore the possibilities and take time to appreciate what's in front of you, before, during, and after capturing the picture. You may be able to use different angles and different lens settings that all help with your experience of the camera and sometimes the results that you get are so good that they enthuse you even further to be more observant.

Mark it - And lastly, to make sure that no one will take credit of your photos, mark them with your name if you are going to use these online. Be aware that websites such as Flickr and photograph storage websites may have user agreements that you may not have read properly allowing people to use your images without you even knowing it. If you watermark your images and make sure that your settings on such websites are set to private, you may be able to avoid this.

Be more aware of photographs – The object here is not that you copy other people's ideas but that you learn what works as a photograph. If you look at photographic magazines, you usually get a good cross section of images and can see what others did that perhaps you have never tried.

Although your image will be individual, you may find that techniques used for taking photographs are something you never thought of before. This widens your potential as a photographer because these images will help you to see the importance of composition, or lighting or even the way that the photographer used the elements in the photograph to present it at its very best. Look and learn because all of this exposure to images helps you to gain perspective and to use it when your camera is posed ready to take the next shot. It's always good to keep up to date with the kind of effects that can be achieved because you might just win a competition with your attempts at new techniques.

Chapter 7 - What to Remember When Printing

After the photos have been taken, the most common practice is for people to upload them and share them with friends using their social media accounts or by sending them via email. It is true that this method is very convenient, what with not needing to print the photos before you can show them to the world. It's also practical, because there is no need to invest in photo papers and ink.

The only dilemma with not printing the photos is the hassle of retrieving them from your computer each time that you want to see them. Often times they will hit your news feed like storm but only for a day, after that, your photos are good as buried. You may have them in files on your computer, but what happens the day that your computer packs up and is no longer usable?

When they are printed, you will be able to pull out your photo album each time you want to enjoy your photographs just like you did in old fashioned times. These are more permanent and you have easy access to them. It's much handier than having to turn on the computer at a moment's notice when you want to show someone a particular image. If your pictures are only stored online, there will be no need to look for an Internet connection--the memories are there in front of you, tangible and solid.

You have to be honest-- photos are best appreciated when printed. But of course, there need to be some reminders to help you make the most of your printing and to avoid unnecessary waste. In this section, you will learn the techniques to make your photos more amazing when they are printed.

1. **Choose the best photographs** - Although you will probably get a lot of amazing pictures, not all of them are worth printing. Choose the best photos you would like to display in your living room or in your office, framed or inside an album. You will have loads that are simply not good enough because you were encouraged to take a lot of shots just so that you have more chance of success. Consequently, some of these will be inferior.

2. Correct, but don't overdo it - One common mistake people make when editing photos is that they do so much correcting that the real beauty is taken away. Just remove things that will be distracting (by cropping out), but as much as possible, you have to keep the photo original. This is necessary because of the pixels as previously explained. You actually detract from the quality of the imaging by cropping and that's not a good practice.

One good tip on this one is making a copy of the photo before editing it. This is a good safety measure in case you wound up with a result which is disappointing.

3. The correct size - Make sure that you are printing your photos at the appropriate sizes. Pictures that are too big may become pixelated, and too small may mean that the photo will lose impact. There are also services available on the Internet where in you can change the format of your photos into vector format. This format is very appealing because you can resize the photo all you want and it won't get pixelated. You can even turn them into instant wallpapers and the quality will still be intact!

4. Paper and ink - As much as possible, invest on these two and make sure that the printer you choose is one which allows you to use small format paper as well as the regular size. Your photos should be made to last so the quality of ink and paper are very important. The technique here is to see which paper matches your ink, or vice versa. Try different surfaces. You can buy papers which are glossy or you can print on semi mat which is very attractive and stops the glare if you are thinking of framing the images.

These techniques, of course, are just basic. Once you have involved yourself in photography, you will learn a whole lot more-- most of the processes are complicated, involving technical details concerning your printer, the calibration of the print colors, etc., but, for now, it is enough to know that your photos can be manipulated so they will turn out even more amazing.

Naturally, well taken photos combined with minimal editing will make all your efforts worth it once you see the results. Look at the image below. It

shows the kind of contrasts which are really suited to printing. The blacks are true, as are the lighter colors and thus the print will be superb.



Image: Public Domain

Conclusion

Congratulations on finishing this book! Before we end this lucrative journey of indulging in the art of photography, let us first have a recap of what we have experienced together while you were reading this book:

By now, you are more confident in holding your camera, you know its parts, and you know its functions. But don't forget to get back to your manual from time to time. If you have lost this, you can download another copy from the manufacturer's website and it's worth doing because many of the features that you haven't yet used will be fully explained so that you can practice using them and gain more experience as a photographer.

You know what composition is, why it is important, and what the twelve rules of composition are that can make your photo composition more appealing. Use these rules and also be aware of photographs that you see which appeal because you can learn from expert photographers the kind of settings that work well.

You will be able to take photos of landscapes and nature with conviction, using the natural light and the elements of the picture composed in such a way as to maximize the quality of your images.

You have also learned how to take pictures which will be used as family portraits and the way that you can improve your portraiture. The composition and the chosen moment can make the world of difference as was shown in the images in this section of the book. These can be formal or can be spontaneous moments captured on film, but will enthuse you into using close up lenses and also telephoto lenses to capture the portrait in the most natural way.

The art of candid photography was presented to you, and you even know some of the simplest rules that can make you seem invisible to the subject! We also explained why it is important to seek permissions as these are vital when photographing other people's property or their family members.

Other tips and reminders to help you take photos easily are given throughout the book so that you can maximize your photographic experience. This is just the start, so start taking your camera everywhere with you and hone your skills! Be patient, and be creative-- you will surely have the photos that will impress your friends and also impress you, because you took the time to learn a craft which combines art and the use of your camera in such a way as to present superb images.

You are encouraged to go through the book again at your leisure and to try the techniques which have been suggested. No one learns everything in one read, and it takes time because some of the techniques described may only be necessary for the odd photograph while others will be used on a regular basis. Photography is a wonderful hobby and one that can help you to capture moments in time and remember them as clearly as the day upon which these events unfolded. Your album will tell a story all of its own, but the biggest story will be your learning process, as the pictures get better and better.

Professional photographers take time to hone those skills. Don't expect that they will happen overnight. If you read your camera instructions and start to use all of the features available to you, together with the details in this book, you will be amazed at how quickly you are able to adapt your use of the camera to your style of artistry and produce images which are very pleasing indeed.



Bonus Video: How to Take Better Pictures with your iPhone

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1-Bjr-rOw4>