



## **In This Together - Distance Learning Pack**

**Pack Title: How to Take Pictures With Your  
Mobile Device**

**Topic: Photography**

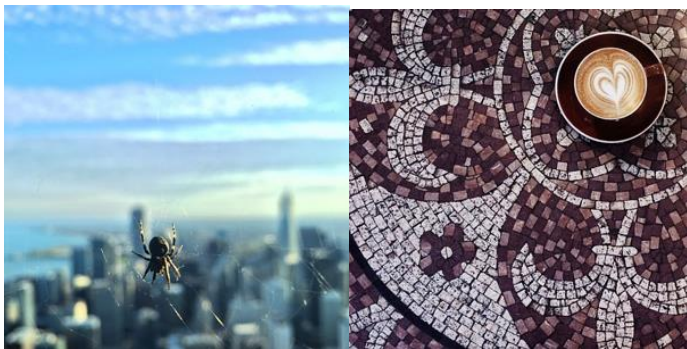
**Member Name:**

## How to Take Good Pictures with Your Mobile Device.

### How to Take Good Photos with Your Phone

#### 1. Capture small details.

You may have heard the phrase, "It's the little things." Sometimes, that also applies to photos. Close-up images that capture small, intricate, and delicate details can make for really compelling visual content. Keep an eye out for textures and patterns like peeling paint, a gravel road, or a tile table top.



#### 2. Use natural light.

It's hard to find a great smartphone photo that was taken with a flash. Most of the time, they make a photo look overexposed, negatively altering colours and making human subjects look washed out.

Take advantage of the sources of natural light you can find, even after dark. This gives you a chance to play with shadows, like in the second image below, or create a silhouette with other ambient sources of light, like traffic and surrounding buildings.



### **3. If you use flash, only do so during the day.**

Sometimes, using your camera's flash can improve a photo -- but rarely does it do so at night. Because dark shots reveal a much sharper contrast against your phone's flash, it can make any flash look invasive and uneven.

In already well-lit spaces, however, a flash can help to soften some dark shadows behind or beneath your main subject.

When framing your next shot, look on the ground or against vertical surfaces for any dark shadows you might want to remove. If you see any, flip on the flash manually in your camera app. Setting your phone's camera flash to "auto" won't guarantee that your phone will notice the shadows you want to get rid of. Just remember to turn the flash off again when you're done.

Check out the difference in the two mobile photos of a metal figurine, below. You can see the desk shadow is considerably softer in the flash-based photo on the right. The flash even brings out more details in the body of the subject.



### **4. Set your camera app's exposure manually.**

Another mobile camera feature you'll want to set manually is your exposure. Tapping your screen when your phone's camera is on doesn't just refocus the lens on a new subject -- it also automatically adjusts how much light the camera lets in. This, too, won't always look just right. It's best to adjust it by hand. To change your mobile camera's exposure by hand, open your camera app and tap the screen. When you see the lens refocus, you'll see a very small sun icon and a vertical scale. Slowly swipe your finger up and down this scale to adjust the light level.

## 5. Create abstracts.

Abstract photos are meant to capture the essence of an object, or a series of them, without revealing the entire landscape as a whole. In other words, they serve the purpose of creating unique, surprising images from ordinary subjects.

This look can be accomplished by cropping an abstract portion of an otherwise normal photo, or by taking close-up shots of objects that leave the viewer wondering -- in admiration, of course -- what the subject might be. And subjects with patterns or repetition are great candidates for abstract photography, like in the photo of sliced figs below.



## 6. Take candid.

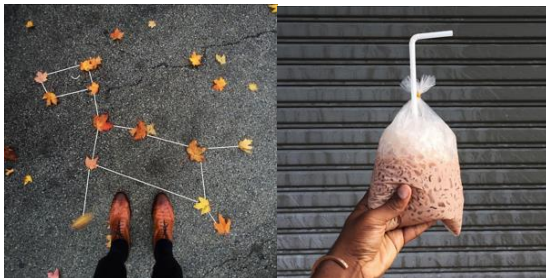
Posed photos can be great for the sake of memories -- happy moments with friends, family, or the occasional run-in with a celebrity. But sometimes, candid shots of people doing things, or people with people, can be far more interesting.

That's because candid photos are better able to effectively capture the emotion and essence of a moment. One of the best ways to capture this kind of shot is to just take as many photos as possible. You'll have more to choose from, and the best photos often happen when the "stars align," so to speak, in a single moment -- everyone's eyes are open, one person is tilting their head just so, and you finally got a shot of your chronically closed-lip friend smiling with his teeth.

## 7. Be non-conventional.

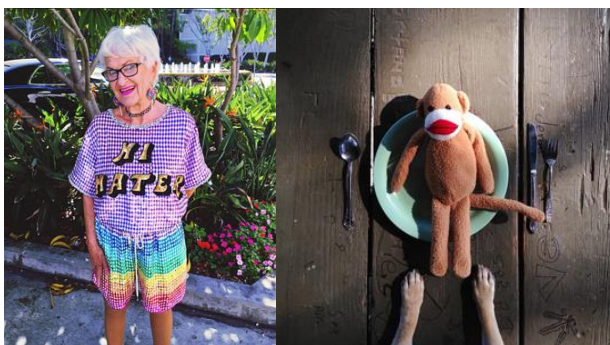
Composition is a huge part of what makes a photo great, but so is the photo's subject. Some of the most delightful and remarkable photos come out of cool, unique ideas. **Images are more effective than text at evoking emotion** from your viewers -- that often means getting your photos to *say* something.

Try thinking outside of the box when it comes to what you're capturing -- your viewers could be pleasantly surprised by a cool or unexpected subject.



## 8. Make people laugh.

Speaking of evoking emotion, sometimes the most memorable photos are the ones that make us giggle. The image below of an older woman wearing a brightly-coloured shirt stating "Hi hater" is funny because it's unexpected -- and there's a part of us that admires her, too. The second image of the dog toy on a dinner plate pokes fun at classic Instagram food shots, but it's from a dog's perspective. If you can make your audience laugh, they're likely to enjoy your photo.



## 9. Clean your phone's lens.

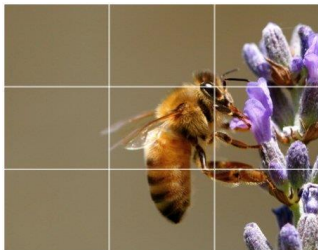
A smartphone camera might be more convenient to carry around than a full-fledged photojournalist's camera, but it comes at the cost of protection.

Your phone is usually in your pocket or your bag when you're out of the house. All the while, the device's camera lens is collecting all kinds of dust and lint. Be sure to clean this lens with a soft handkerchief before taking a photo. You might not be able to tell just how dirty the lens was until you start editing your picture, and making sure the lens is crystal clear before taking a shot can keep you from starting from scratch.

## 10. Use gridlines to balance your shot.

One of the easiest and best ways to improve your mobile photos is to turn on the camera's gridlines. That superimposes a series of lines on the screen of your smartphone's camera that are based on the "**rule of thirds**" -- a photographic composition principle that says an image should be broken down into thirds, both horizontally and vertically, so you have nine parts in total.

According to this theory, if you place points of interest in these intersections or along the lines, your photo will be more balanced, level, and allow viewers to interact with it more naturally.



To switch the grid on:

- **iPhone:** Go to "Settings," choose "Photos & Camera," and switch "Grid" on.
- **Samsung Galaxy:** Launch the camera app, go to "Settings," scroll down and switch the "grid lines" option to "on."



## 11. Set your camera's focus.

Today's phone cameras automatically focus on the foreground of your frame, but not every picture you take on your phone has an obvious subject. To adjust where you want your camera lens to focus, open your camera app and tap the screen where you want to sharpen the view.

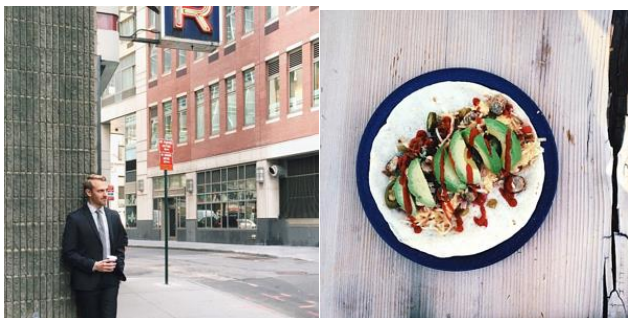
If you're taking a photo of something in motion, for example, it can be difficult for your camera to follow this subject and refocus as needed. Tap the screen to correct your phone camera's focus just before snapping the picture to ensure the moving subject has as much focus as possible. A square or circular icon should then appear on your camera screen, shifting the focus of your shot to all of the content inside that icon.

## 12. Focus on one subject.

Many of the best photos include just one, interesting subject. So when taking a picture of one, spend some extra time setting up the shot. Some professional photographers say that the subject **shouldn't fill the entire frame, and that two-thirds of the photo should be negative space** -- that helps the subject stand out even more.

But be sure you tap the screen of your smartphone to focus the camera on your subject -- that'll help to ensure that it's focused and the lighting is optimized.

Once you've taken your photo, you can use filters and apps to make the subject even more vivid, or to crop it to frame the subject correctly. The brightness, contrast, and saturation of the photo can also be adjusted accordingly -- all from your phone.



### 13. Embrace negative space.

"Negative space" simply refers to the areas around and between the subjects of an image --and it can take a photo from "good" to "great."

When you include a lot of empty space in a photo, your subject will stand out more and evoke a stronger reaction from your viewer. And what does negative space look like? It's often a large expanse of open sky, water, an empty field, or a large wall, as in the examples below.



### 14. Find different perspectives.

Taking photos from a unique, unexpected angle can make them more memorable -- it tends to create an illusion of depth or height with the subjects. It also makes the image stand out, since most mobile photos are taken either straight -on or from a bird's eye view.

Try taking a photo directly upward and playing with the sky as negative space, like in the first photo below. Or, you can try taking it at a slight downward angle.





## 15. Play with reflections.

There's something so idyllic about seeing the sky reflected in a body of water. There's a reason why we love seeing that -- our eyes are drawn to reflections. So look for opportunities to play with them in photos.

There are plenty of out-of-the-box places to find reflections -- puddles, larger bodies of water, mirrors, sunglasses, drinking glasses, and metallic surfaces are just a few.



## 16. Use leading lines.

In some photos, there's a line that draws the viewer's eye toward a certain part of the frame. Those are called leading lines. They can be straight or curvilinear -- think staircases, building facades, train tracks, roads, or even a path through the woods.

Leading lines are great for creating a sense of depth in an image, and can make your photo look purposefully designed -- even if you just happened to come upon a really cool shape by accident.



### 17. Look for symmetry.

Symmetry can be **defined** as "a vague sense of harmonious and beautiful proportion and balance."

And pictures that contain symmetry can be incredibly pleasing to the eye - it's also one of the simplest and most compelling ways to compose a photo.

In photography, **symmetry usually means** creating an image that can be divided into two equal parts that are mirror images of each other. That's a bit different than reflections - symmetry can be found "in the wild," as per the staircase picture, or you can set up your photo accordingly, like photographer Eric Christian did in the first photo below.

And remember -- use those gridlines from tip #1 to line everything up perfectly.



### 18. Keep an eye out for repetitive patterns.

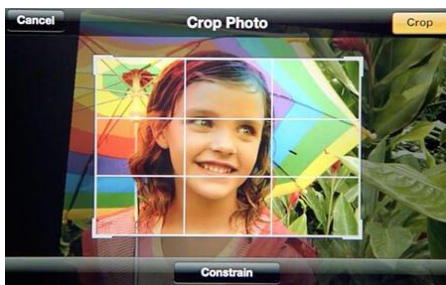
Repetitive patterns are very pleasing to the eye -- they appear whenever strong graphic elements are repeated over and over again, like lines, geometric shapes, forms, and colours. These patterns can make a strong visual impact, and photographing something like a beautiful, tiled floor can be enough to create a striking image. Other times, it's more fun to keep an eye out for where they appear naturally or unintentionally, like with the congruent fire escapes on the left.



### 19. Avoid zooming in.

When you take a photo from a distance, it's tempting to zoom in on something specific you're trying to capture. But it's actually better *not* to zoom in -- doing so can make the photo appear grainy, blurry, or pixelated.

Instead, try to get closer to your subject -- unless it's a wild animal, in which case we would advise keeping your distance -- or take the photo from a default distance, and crop it later on. That way, you won't compromise quality, and it's easier to play around or optimise a larger image.



**If you need any further information please  
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Reference: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/good-pictures-phone-tips>

