

## What Makes a Great Photo

- 1 Image needs a strong underlying structure/order so that it grabs the eye from a distance (obvious elements of light and dark, colors and shapes)
- 2 Needs to have details to keep the eyes interested
- 3 Int's not about the subject; the actual structure doesn't matter - it's always about the underlying compositional structure (example: rectangle vs. a door)
- 4 When composing - ignore details
- 5 Exclude everything not directly contributing to the image. Anything that isn't directly helping the composition takes away from it
- 6 Only after you get the basics right does anything else below matter
- 7 Keep details out of the corners, and be sure that important elements are not cut by the frame edges
- 8 The best images have a punchline. A punchline is what you see after you look around the image (example: row of soldiers and one is doing something different)
- 9 A double punchline is when you have something in the photo reacting to something else in the photo.
- 10 Gesture - usually faces and hands, but can apply to inanimate objects that mimic these
- 11 Colors - red, orange, yellow move towards us and our eyes are attracted to them first; cool colors like blue, green, violets recede; to make a 3D image mix these colors; look for them
- 12 Close one eye to see 1D, that is what the camera sees. Pass on images that look good in stereo but are boring in 1D
- 13 Screw convention, don't copy others, follow your own passion and excitement
- 14 When conditions are right shoot - nothing stays the same, lighting changes, people move, subjects change
- 15 SEX: Simplify and EXclude

**Note:** Source: Ken Rockwell

## Rules of Photography (more like guidelines)

- 1 Don't Try Too Hard - Have fun and learn as you go. The hard stuff will start to come naturally; you'll just get frustrated if you try forcing it.
- 2 Break The Rules - Maybe not always, but don't be afraid to do it. Know the rules of photography well enough to know how to properly break them.
- 3 Rediscover Yourself - Don't forget about your past photos. Go back through them, look at them in new ways, and make something of them.
- 4 Try New Things - Don't hesitate to alter compositions while shooting, use your equipment in a non-traditional way, explore the camera settings while shooting, and try new post processing techniques.
- 5 Mimic Those Who Inspire You - If you like an artist or a photo, figure out why. Apply that to your own work and mix it with other styles you've picked up.
- 6 Don't Forget Your Roots - What got you into photography? If you're ever lacking inspiration, go back to your roots.
- 7 Do It For Yourself - Don't take pictures that you think other people will like. If you like them, that's all that counts.
- 8 Get Your Priorities Straight - Your camera gear is expensive. Your pictures are worth more than money. But your knowledge of photography is invaluable.
- 9 Know Your Equipment - Know how to use your equipment, know what all the settings and options do, and know how they affect your photography. Be comfortable with your camera.
- 10 Never Stop Learning - I try to apply this philosophy to life in general. You'll never cease to be amazed at the things you can learn. And my favorite saying "The more you learn, the less you know" is so dang true.
- 11 Sunny f/16 Rule - The most basic and time tested rule of photography. On a bright sunny day, your exposure will be f/16, at the shutter speed closest to your ISO. For example, at noon on a clear day with an ISO of 200, your exposure will be f/16 @ a 200th. For those of us using old manual cameras, a 250th is probably as close as you'll get.  
Read more: [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_are\\_the\\_10\\_rules\\_of\\_photography#ixzz1azJQEfg1](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_10_rules_of_photography#ixzz1azJQEfg1)
- 12 Rule Of Thirds - The cardinal law of composition. Also the most overused law of composition. An image can be divided into nine equal parts by two equally-spaced horizontal lines and two equally-spaced vertical lines. Aligning elements of the photograph along these lines can create a more dynamic composition.
- 13 Depth of Field - The single best way to isolate a subject is with depth of field. Again, this is also one of the most overused compositional elements. By keeping the subject in focus the background soft, the viewer has no choice but to look at the subject as the center of attention.

- 14 Don't Split The Horizon - Never place the horizon in the center of the image. It creates a barrier between the two halves and the viewer will get stuck on it. Cutting the image in half with the horizon is the quickest way to ruin any photograph.

Source: Answers.com

## Panorama

- 1 Use tripod and make sure it is level for panning
- 2 Set white balance to "cloudy" to prevent white balance changes as I rotate the camera
- 3 Shoot in portrait mode
- 4 Press shutter halfway to get f-stop and shutter speed
- 5 Put in manual mode and reproduce f-stop and shutter speed
- 6 Focus on first shot and then turn off auto-focus
- 7 Overlap shots by 20-25%
- 8 Shoot quickly especially if clouds are moving quickly (there were yesterday!)
- 9 Use a shutter release (I used a wireless release)
- 10 For still water plan on an early morning shot when winds are down; get tripod close to the ground for water if you want the foreground as well
- 11 When shooting multiple panorama scenes, separate them by shooting a frame with your hand over the lens. When reviewing your photos later this makes it much easier to see where one panorama ends and another starts.
- 12 Think about a **Vertical Panorama** vs. Horizontal to capture Sky, Background, Foreground (easiest way is to just crop a normal portrait photo, else stitch)
- 13 Don't use a circular polarizing filter if more than 3 shots being stitched together, they have maximum impact at 90 to sun so as you rotate the impact will vary and blue skies will change intensity

## Weddings/Group Photos

- 1 Use RAW and leave whitebalance on auto; if shooting jpeg set white balance to conditions!
- 2 Indoors, use at least ISO 800, upto 1600 for hand holding in a church
- 3 Shoot your fastest lens (f/1.4 thru f/3.5)
- 4 Use Flash diffuser to reduce harsh, hard shadows
- 5 If you have an assistant, have them hold a reflector on left or right side and aim flash at it
- 6 Outdoors, use fill flash to eliminate harsh shadows
- 7 Aim flash rotated left or right and head at 45 degrees (if within 8-10 feet)
- 8 Alternate: set flash exposure compensation to -1
- 9 Shoot bride & groom portraits first; shoot largest groups second, small groups third, and final bride & groom
- 10 Large groups use f/11 to get all in focus; if more than two rows focus on first row
- 11 Blinking trip: all close eyes, count down from 3-2-1 open eyes, wait 1 sec take photo
- 12 Follow the bride - she's the star of the show
- 13 Camera Height, Full Length - set at waist, lens straight
- 14 Camera Height, 7/8 Shot - set at chest, lens straight
- 15 Camera Height, Head & Shoulders - set at bride's eyes or slightly above
- 16 Don't cut off joints
- 17 Look for simplicity of backgrounds, several of them
- 18 Shoot the details (shoes, dress on hanger, tiara, wedding invitation, sheet music, guestbook when signed, champagne glasses, name cards at reception, bride's bouquet, fine detail in dress, wedding rings on invitation with rose petals nearby, airline ticket)
- 19 Change vantage point from on high (second floor, ladder, etc.)
- 20 If possible use natural light for portraits like a north window (diffuse vs. direct sunlight)
- 21 Pose couples with heads leaning towards each other
- 22 Use wide angle lens for 1) rice throwing 2) interior of church 3) bouquet or garter toss
- 23 Can't fail shot: Quick Pan - pan 180 degrees in one fast motion. Get some tight ones and some wide ones.
- 24 Can't fail shot: First Person POV - try asking each of them to dance separately with you and your camera. Don't dance so well your camera shakes.
- 25 Can't fail shot: Duct Angles - purposefully place the horizontal axis off-kilter. Almost never seen in wedding videos, but use wisely such as to convey the towering scale of a large cake.
- 26 Can't fail shot: Rack Focus - start on an interesting texture (like lace, flowers, or bows), this shift your focus to the action in the room. Effective for often overlooked intimate details as well as the bigger picture all in one shot.

- 27 Can't fail shot: Time Lapse - useful between sequences to convey the passage of time. Opportunities include the staff preparing a banquet hall, guests taking their seats or the setting sun outside the venue.

## Landscapes (Scenery is main subject)

- 1 Shoot 15-30 minutes before dawn and then 30-60 minutes after sunrise
- 2 Shoot 15-30 minutes before sunset, and up to 30 minutes afterwards
- 3 Use tripod; use wireless remote for tack sharp exposures
- 4 Change your point of view
- 5 Low ISO 100/200
- 6 Shoot in Aperture priority mode to allow creativity on what is in focus
- 7 Use low aperture like f/2.8 to f/5.6 for focus on specific elements
- 8 Use high aperture like f/8 to f/11 for surroundings
- 9 Use highest aperture like f/22 etc. for all to be in focus
- 10 **Identify Foreground, Middle ground, and Background**
- 11 For still water plan on an early morning shot when winds are down; get tripod close to the ground for water if you want the foreground as well
- 12 If water is too reflective use a polarizing filter and put it at bottom to reduce water reflection
- 13 Use lines (path or road)
- 14 Capture movement (water, wind blowing, etc. decide if will be blurred or frozen)
- 15 Work with the weather: non-perfect weather can add interest

## Waterfalls

- 1 Use tripod & shutter release; if dark bracket the shots
- 2 Use Shutter Priority mode; set aperture to f22 to make iris smaller; make ISO low
- 3 Leave shutter open for 1-2 seconds (1/16 sec or slower)
- 4 Shoot at before sunrise or after snunset (less light for long shutter speed), or use stop down filter
- 5 Alternate if in shady area: put on aperture mode and set to largest number (smallest opening)

**Note:** Can use polarizing filter if not stop down filter; also play with 4, 6, 8 seconds

## Forest

- 1 Don't include the ground
- 2 Use overcast days without bright harsh light
- 3 If fog or mist - excellent!

## Fireworks

- 1 Find a location away from competing, artificial lights.
- 2 Always use a tripod.
- 3 Use a wide-angle lens.
- 4 Over a background use a wide angle (like over Disneyland)
- 5 Use zoom lens, 200 mm or more to capture just the fireworks
- 6 Shoot in full Manual Priority Mode
- 7 Use a slower speed film, such as ISO 64, 100, 200 or 400
- 8 Find an unusual location or shoot from a unique position.
- 9 Put something interesting in the foreground-water, a statue, people, a bridge, or skyline.
- 10 Turn off your flash
- 11 Set the focus on infinity
- 12 Use a smaller aperture such as f/8 or f/11
- 13 Set shutter speed to 4 seconds, but experiment from 1 to 15 seconds
- 14 Take trial shot, if overexposed reset to 3 seconds
- 15 If camera has bulb mode use it, hold shutter open from burst to starts to fade
- 16 Use cable release so you can follow fireworks outside of the view finder
- 17 Accumulate bursts on a frame: lock the shutter open and cover the lens with a black cover. Uncover the lens periodically to catch bursts until the entire frame is filled with bursts
- 18 Open the telephoto lens during the burst to get a focus blur for special effects (both open and closed)
- 19 Open the lens before a burst to capture the upward streak as well as the burst

## Smiles (real)

- 1 The zygomatic major muscle which raises the corners of the mouth and the orbicularis oculi muscle which raises the cheeks and creates crow's feet around the eyes.
- 2 A real smile invokes both of these muscles while a fake smile only invokes the former. Essentially, the difference between a real smile and a fake one is the eyes.
- 3 Challenge that faces you as the photographer is in getting your subject to give a real smile.
- 4 The solution is to create positive emotions in your subject and the smile will just come naturally. You have to make your subject happy!
- 5 Instead of saying, "Smile!" give them a compliment.
- 6 A great way to make people happy is to let them do something that makes them happy. This works great for weddings and parties.

## Sunset

- 1 Use neutral density filter with darker portion for sky (allows the ground to stay brighter)
- 2 Use silhouetting: keep objects simple and put object directly in front of sun which is covered, expose for sky
- 3 Beach shot: for rule of thirds decide if beach is dominant or sky for horizon line; use maximum wide angle lens
- 4 To get more color dial down the exposure
- 5 Consider using the preset for the camera for sunsets

## Stunning Sunset

- 1 Underexpose. Slightly underexposing the sunset will make the colors look more rich and defined. The entire scene will become more dramatic. Use manual mode and selecting a fast shutter speed, or shoot in aperture priority and use exposure compensation.
- 2 Find the foreground first. The best recipe for a good sunset is some object of interest in the foreground. It could be a pond, a pier, or whatever else. Put in the foreground to add depth to the scene.
- 3 Don't put the horizon line in the middle of the photo. A good general rule is to put the horizon on the bottom third of the photo if the sunset is pretty, and on the top third of the photo if the sunset is lackluster.
- 4 TURN AROUND! Sometimes the scene behind you can be gorgeous and all the photographers miss it because they are too busy looking at the sun.
- 5 Shoot in aperture priority with exposure compensation while the sun is still in the sky, and then switch to manual once the sun dips below the horizon. This will allow you to have the convenience of shooting in aperture priority as the light levels change quickly before sunset, and then you can switch to manual mode to get a more precise exposure after the sun goes down. In low light settings, the exposure meter on your camera will often be inaccurate, so manual mode after sunset is the best option.
- 6 Stay longer. The sky will usually light up with color again about 25 minutes after the sun dips below the horizon. Most photographers miss this second sunset, and it's more beautiful than the first most of the time!
- 7 Create silhouettes in the foreground. Just speed up your shutter speed and you'll have a silhouette. The key to taking a good silhouette shot is to find a subject with fine details that will let the sun shine through it and that has a recognizable shape. If you have something too huge as the silhouette, it takes away from the picture since it is just a large area of blackness.
- 8 Ditch auto white balance, change white balance to "shade" and you'll get beautiful golden tones out of an otherwise lackluster sunset.
- 9 Before the sun dips below the horizon, consider shooting in HDR to capture most of the dynamic range.
- 10 Wait for the right clouds. The ideal conditions are a partly cloudy day with spotty clouds. When the clouds are just a flat gray sheet of cloud it will not light up as much. Wait for patchy wispy clouds.
- 11 Consider shooting panoramas or vertoramas to contrast the sunset colors with the other colors of the sky.
- 12 Before the sun actually sets, stop down your lens's aperture to a high value such as f/22. This will make the rays of the sun more clear. It will give the sun a starburst effect. Very cool.
- 13 Ditch the filters. Yes, that includes the polarizer. Polarizers will NOT help saturate the colors in a sunset. This is a topic I wrote about a few weeks ago. Go check out that post for more info. Also, UV filters are discouraged all of the time, but they should be outright forbidden when shooting sunsets. The extra flat piece of glass—which is often not coated—will cut the saturation (richness of colors) and contrast of your sunset photos.
- 14 Take off your sunglasses.

Don't get so carried away at looking at the pretty clouds that you get buck fever and focus on the clouds.

15 Remember that, for most landscape photos, the proper focus point should be one third the way up from the bottom of the photo. This is a rough approximation of the hyperfocal distance.

16 Shoot RAW. I know you've heard it before, but sunsets are a time where this is especially important. There is a wealth of delicate light information in a sunset that is simply thrown in the trash if you shoot JPG.

17 Look for objects which are reflecting the sunset colors. Perhaps it is a building behind you, or a car windshield, or a still body of water, etc. With the reflection, you can incorporate it into the larger landscape or just make it a photo of its own.

18 The best sunsets seem to happen on the evening of a rainy day. If the clouds start to break up at all around sunset, grab your camera and head out. Just trust me on this one.

19 Make sure to use a little flash if you're shooting a portrait of someone standing in front of a sunset. Otherwise their face will look dark and muddy.

20 If you want the sun to look large in the sunset, use a telephoto lens. If you want the sun to look small in the scene, use a wide-angle lens.

21 Don't forget to change your picture style. This can be changed afterward if you shoot in RAW, but if you shoot JPEG, you'll definitely want to use the landscape picture style (Canon) or picture control (Nikon).

22 Watch out for birds! Including a few flying birds in the sky can really add interest to a landscape.

23 When the sun is still up, the bright light in front of you may make your LCD appear darker than it really is. The same is true for the "second sunset" which happens 20 minutes after the sun actually sets. When it is darker at this time, you might think your images are brighter than they really are. Because of the varying light conditions that occur when shooting sunsets, it is best to trust the histogram rather than the LCD. Don't delete until you can view the images on your computer.

24 Don't get tricked into using the sunset icon on your mode dial. That is an automatic mode and will take away your ability to choose a creative aperture, shutter speed, etc.

25 Download a good sunrise/sunset app for your phone. Just search in your smartphone's app store and get a free app that will give you a calendar of sunrise and sunset times. Never miss a sunset again!

26 No mistake you make in shooting a sunset will be as obvious as an uneven horizon line. Use the bubble level on your ballhead or the electronic level on some newer DSLRs to make sure the horizon is straight.

If you're shooting a portrait of someone standing in front of a sunset, be careful where you place the horizon line.

27 It always looks awkward when the horizon line is placed at the level of the neck of the subject. You're usually safer putting the horizon line around the person's tummy or chest area.

28 Make sure to clean your lens and sensor! Dust spots will be obvious when viewed against the bright sky when you're stopped down to high aperture values.

29 Use a graduated neutral density filter to darken the sky and allow the camera to get enough light to expose the landscape. The darkening of the sky will also add color to the scene.

Source: Improve Photography

## Sports

- 1 Set white balance for indoors (flourescent or Tungsten/Incandescent)
- 2 Don't use color filters (light is already lower)
- 3 Shoot at 1/640 second or faster to freeze motion (1/500 is iffy)
- 4 Need 12-24 mm wide angle for crowds
- 5 Need 300 or 400 mm lens, or 200-400 telephoto lens
- 6 Pre-Focus to where action is going to be (use auto-focus to get close, turn off, manual focus and wait for action)
- 7 Raise ISO to 400 to 800 if f/5.6 or slower lens
- 8 Don't always focus on the winner
- 9 Shoot in burst mode
- 10 Shoot vertical for more impact
- 11 Pan to show motion (1/30 or 1/60 sec using Shutter priority mode); pan along with your subject, use burst mode here as well; don't stop panning for a couple of seconds afterwards for smooth release
- 12 Shoot wide open as possible (blurs the background and allows faster shutter speed)
- 13 Go for the face
- 14 Consider JPG for bursts since RAW may fill your buffer
- 15 Leave space for athlete to go

## Portraits

- 1 Use short zoom lens like 85-100 mm "portrait" lens
- 2 Work about 10-12 feet from subject
- 3 Use f/11 Aperture Mode (great sharpness and depth on face)
- 4 Use seamless, plain backgrounds (black for dramatic, white for everything else, gray is OK too)
- 5 Outdoors: keep as simple as possible
- 6 Outdoors: make sure background is not brighter than subject
- 7 Outdoors: move subject to shade to avoid sharp shadows (subject should not be squinting)
- 8 Outdoors: use reflectors (gold for warmer lighter, silver for cooler)
- 9 Focus on eyes to be tack sharp
- 10 Level tripod at eye level. With kids get down on their level
- 11 For close-ups position eyes about 1/3 down from the top
- 12 Zoom in to fill the frame (OK if top of head extends outside of frame)
- 13 Indoor Lighting: use natural light from window, use sheers or shower curtain to diffuse
- 14 Babies: have parents wear black turtleneck shirts (Target), shoot tight in
- 15 Alternate: bring out personality and emotion, capture people as they really are vs. formal
- 16 Make people feel at ease; possibly have them hold something to make them comfortable
- 17 Try different angles
- 18 Outdoors: may keep sun to your back
- 19 Full body make sure hands and feet are in the frame (don't cut off hands and feet)
- 20 Young people: get on their level
- 21 Young people: get children to tell you a story
- 22 Street Photos: If they are clearly not looking at you and will not notice you, just start taking photos. You're a photographer, dammit. Just do it.
- 23 Street Photos: If they ARE likely to notice you, be confident and deliberate, softly asking permission with your eyes. This is a very subtle and hard thing to explain. I usually raise my eyebrows while I raise my camera, clearly indicating, "I'm about to take a photo. Everything is okay." If they don't want you to, they will make it clear. Usually, they say it's just fine. People like to be thought of as interesting.
- 24 Street Photos: If they are very close, I ask permission out loud. Often times, I don't want them to pose... so I say something (smiling!) like, "You look very interesting — can I take a photo?" Once they say yes (98% of the time they do), I usually ask them not to pose and carry on about their business. Then I start taking a bunch of photos and enjoy the pressure of capturing the moment.

## Candlelight

- 1 Use ISO 400, 800, 1600
- 2 Let candles reflect in other objects
- 3 Photograph refractive objects (liquids)
- 4 Turn off flash
- 5 Use aperture priority
- 6 Let candles light other objects & people
- 7 Use tripod

## Macro

- 1 Use Depth of Field (DOF); use Macro setting if available on camera
- 2 Keep background in mind, simple is better
- 3 Identify focal point (tip of flower for example)
- 4 Get on level or below object for perspective
- 5 Get flowers with water drops on them (or add yourself)
- 6 Try to shoot at ISO 100 for fine grain
- 7 Take lots of shots to increase chance of a good shot
- 8 For collage let macro add interest to landscape photos

## Travel

- 1 Use small notebook and pen to prepare in advance what shots you want
- 2 Use mixture of Macro, Textures, Lines, Symmetry, Wide Angle, Close-Up, Panorama
- 3 Outside ISO 100/200; Inside 800/1600
- 4 Shutter speeds: 1/500 for freeze motion, 1/15 to blur motion

- 5 Basis shot list might include: views of the city (high vantage?), time of the year, icons, architecture (old & new), economy (how do people make money?), transportation, education, sports, arts & culture, history, religion, food, people (young, old, rich,
- 6 Research on-line before visiting (what icons? Etc. per 5 above)
- 7 Create a shot list for the city in notebook

## Silhouettes & Shadows

- 1 Looks for shadows that create interesting compositions
- 2 Take photos of People's shadows (may be less nervous and much more expressive)
- 3 Catch light early or late in the day
- 4 Chose a strong subject and make it the focal points
- 5 Turn off flash
- 6 Sils: make sure the light is behind your subject
- 7 Choose a plain background
- 8 Composition should be distinct & uncluttered
- 9 Auto Mode: trick camera by pointing it to the brightest part of the picture and press shutter half way to focus and meter; without letting go move to reframe your shot and finish the photo.
- 10 Manual Mode: Take photo in auto mode and see aperture & shutter speed; *Subject is too light* then make shutter speed longer; *Subject out of focus?* Stop your f/stop up for deeper depth of field
- 11 Sils: use sunset or sunrise to backlight the silhouette

## Wildlife & Animals

- 1 Consider a trip to the zoo, lots of animals (work to minimize the zoo factor)
- 2 Distance: fill the frame with the animal's face
- 3 Don't crop wildlife in motion to close, leave room to go
- 4 To get in really close use a teleconverter for 1.4X to 2X closer
- 5 For moving subjects keep both eyes open when composing (to see what is coming into the frame)
- 6 Focus on eyes, make tack sharp
- 7 Find what interests you about the animal and focus on that
- 8 Look for their expressions & funny things
- 9 For animals behind glass look for the angle with least reflection
- 10 Be aware of feeding times
- 11 Vary camera angles
- 12 Look for possible shadows and silhouettes
- 13 Use Macro for small animals
- 14 Get artistic with patterns, water shots
- 15 Use Telephoto and Macro lenses
- 16 Use Shutter mode for moving shots (1/1600 outdoors, 1/100 if indoors) - take test shot and adjust

## Seascapes

- 1 Find a point of interest (don't just want sky and water)
- 2 Use low ISO
- 3 Identify foreground, midground, background
- 4 Capture wave movement with color and texture
- 5 Don't forget closeups of water and ripples at end of wave
- 6 Find interesting foregrounds (like rocks, driftwood, plant life)
- 7 Use small aperture in Aperture Mode to keep everything in focus (large f/stop like f11+)
- 8 Don't be stuck with horizontal shots, use vertical also
- 9 Look for more color, not just blues and greens
- 10 Look for interesting waves or seas
- 11 Don't forget rule of thirds (usually water is lower 2/3rds or sky is 2/3rds)
- 12 Look for reflections from tide waters
- 13 Look for details (most likely macro and closeup shots)
- 14 Slow down speed to blur water breaking in foreground to create a foreground
- 15 Use camera bag or vest to keep sand out of equipment

## Minimalist

- 1 Less is More, uncluttered, striking, thought provoking
- 2 Remove eye distractions, generally fill the frame
- 3 Make it striking (by color, by light)
- 4 Make it thought provoking (eg. Flower out of snow, plant out of rock face)
- 5 Look for patterns (brick wall, tire tread, bridge beams, etc.)
- 6 Consider the space around the subject (shallow DOF can remove background)

## Weather

- 1 Check your White Balance
- 2 Use Low ISO
- 3 Find color in objects (in all white snow for example)
- 3 Snow: Look at shadows
- 4 Ice: Look at colors and shadows
- 5 Cold: Carry extra batteries, keep on body for warmth
- 6 Cold: Keep camera warm under coat
- 7 Snow or Rain: Put camera in plastic bag
- 8 Use slow shutter to capture falling snowflakes
- 9 Cold: Warm up camera slowly
- 10 Rain: play with shutter speed
- 11 Rain: look at clouds for color
- 12 Rain: tet rainbows
- 13 Rain: look for droplets and macro shots
- 14 Rain: look for reflections

## Lightning

- 1 Wait for night to allow for long exposures.
- 2 Find a suitable location: safe, far away from the city to avoid light pollution, with a great foreground element for composition.
- 3 Lock down on a decent tripod.
- 4 Prepare for rain with a good rain cover.
- 5 Camera settings: ISO 100 or 200, f/11, bulb shutter speed
- 6 Better camera settings: mirror lock up, long exposure noise reduction, and 10 second time (better yet cable or radio release).
- 7 Start the exposure in bulb and hold to capture lightning bolts. Let go when enough are recorded.

## Friends & Family

- 1 Seek interaction: best shots wil come when family & friends are talking, laughing, and interacting.
- 2 Wait for Action: whether dancing in the street or jumping in bed, friends look best when busy.
- 3 Capture their Passions: reveal the character of your loved ones by picturing them as they enjoy themselves
- 4 Shoot when they least expect it (when they don't know you are taking their photos).
- 5 Shoot unposed; capture facial expressions that reveal mood and personality.
- 6 Anticipate (parties, social events - people expect photographers at weddings, concerts so are more relaxed)
- 7 Blend into the action is the best thing for candid.
- 8 Wait until people relax before shooting.
- 9 Home is where you are the most relaxed.
- 10 Use fast primes which excel in low light and are smaller and less intimidating (can shoot without tripod, possibly flash). 50 mm f/1.8 can work.
- 11 Use tilt screens to help with low or high shots.
- 12 Shoot wide open to focus on the person in the shot.
- 13 Show the space around the subject to reveal something about their character and what the value.
- 14 Show people a good shot in the LCD, gain their confidence.

## Food

- 1 Set food on surfaces such as a white plate or metallic cooling rack (let the surface be part of the photo)
- 2 Use breadbasket with towel or cloth napkin. Use small colored plate (not too busy)
- 3 Use platters and bowls (look for interesting ones, perhaps with handles)
- 4 Hot to plate the food: look for patterns or stacks (check catalogs and magazines for ideas)

- 5 For bread you can slice it and lay down a slice, or for cut into the item to show the top and inside
- 6 Use Props for color or patterns: use colored or patterned placements and runners, use colored cloth napkins underneath vs. just to one side; use wooden placement or woven
- 7 For bread use interesting butter knife, put butter on the break; for baked good put a glass of milk in the background
- 8 Show a piece of the ingredients in front of the food to show what it is made of
- 9 Use utensils to show how it is served
- 10 Include the dish you cooked the food in in the back
- 11 Show multiple servings for a pattern; food the distance can be out of focus to put focus on forward dish
- 12 Use natural lighting if possible, such as natural lighting near a window
- 13 At night use lights: one on the side and one for backlighting (no flash)
- 14 Use backgrounds such as a posterboard to simplify the backdrop; use flowers behind the food
- 15 Photograph at eye level
- 16 Fill the Frame
- 17 Shoot in Aperture value mode: go for shallow depth of field
- 18 In post: can you brighten the photo (lots of control in RAW)
- 19 In post: tilt the photo for interest
- 20 Use all purpose 18-55 mm lens; use Macro lens; Shoot 800 ISO; shoot in AV mode f/5 to f/8

## Stars

- 1 Find a location without much ambient light (light pollution)
- 2 Use tripod; turn off autofocus
- 3 Set the focus to infinity
- 4 Set ISO to highest level
- 5 Set Aperture to Wide Open
- 6 Turn Noise Reduction OFF
- 7 Set exposure to 30 seconds (or bulb)
- 8 Use timer to 2 seconds to prevent camera shake
- 9 Straighten horizon if crooked
- 10 Adjust for foreground and sky splits
- 11 Watch out for passing clouds
- 12 Find Milky Way ([www.stellarium.org](http://www.stellarium.org))
- 13 Now with trial shots: use RAW to give more room to adjust later
- 14 Use ISO 2000-4000
- 15 Rule of 600:  $600/\text{focal length} = \text{max exposure in seconds}$  (to prevent star tracks)
- 16 Rule of 600: to get more light use shorter focal length like 11 mm to give more like 60 seconds

## Using Reflector as a Fill Light

- 1 Avoid having model look too directly at reflector if causes model to
- 2 Take frequent breaks if it hot
- 3 Use reflector flat at waist level to reflect light up from below
- 4 Use a reflector as a main hard light vertically hard onto the face to light it up
- 5 Also can block direct light from behind and reflector from from to really light up face

## Time-Lapse

- 1 Set camera to JPG Fine (1936x1296); RAW is unnecessary
- 2 Set manual white balance to avoid a flicker
- 3 Manual exposure using settings from trial shot (autofocus is off)
- 4 Drag your shutter as much as possible to avoid blips that pop in and out (1/2 sec vs. 1/100 sec = blips)
- 5 Use fresh batteries and large enough memory card
- 6 Take an image every second
- 7 Use tripod
- 8 Make trial shot to confirm settings
- 9 Film for at least 30 minutes to an hour
- 10 **Processing**
- 11 Can use Lightroom to process the first photo and then synchronise the changes to all other photos

- 12 Use Quicktime Pro: Open File, Open File Sequence (sequential images will open)  
Alternate: can use Picasa 3.0 for time lapse as well
- 13 Select the frame rate at 15 fps
- 14 Export to a video format

## Camping with Photography Equipment

- 1 Bring no more than two lenses. Bring a 10-24mm lens for landscapes and a 70-200mm lens for close range wildlife photography and some landscapes.
- 2 Do NOT forget the polarizer! When shooting outdoors, especially if you will be near a lake or some other type of water.
- 3 Bring a cooler if you live in a hot location and need a safe place to store your gear for a day or two while you are camping.  
  
Invest in a quality camera backpack. Your gear will likely get squished in the trunk with your other stuff, rained on, be exposed to dirt, and knocked around pretty good while camping. Purchasing a good quality camera bag is an absolute necessity. I personally use the Clik Elite Pro Camera Backpack because it is large enough to fit my gear, it has a rain cover, and is built like a tank. If you want something smaller or don't have much gear, then I would recommend the Lowepro Fastpack 250.
- 4
- 5 Choose a reasonable tripod or even a monopod.  
  
Understand sunrises and sunsets are different in the mountains. Landscape photographers need to change their techniques for shooting in the mountains. If the sunset is at 8PM and there is a large mountain in west, then the sunrise may be as early as 6PM. Also, remember that sunrises and sunsets are often colorless in the mountains because of the mountains blocking the rising sun. Understanding that light works differently in the mountains is the first step that landscape photographers need to understand when shooting in mountainous regions.
- 6
- 7 Include outdoorsmanship in your photos. Capturing a photo of a tent perched on a mountainside, or a group of people around a campfire, or the stars at night, or people in your party walking down the trail.
- 8 Be careful with lens changes. If possible, wait until you're in a grassy field or in your tent to make a lens swap.
- 9 To increase your chances of seeing wildlife walk into the wind so that animals cannot smell you and do not be in a rush. SLOW DOWN so the animals do not perceive you as a threat.
- 10 Invest \$30 in a can of bear spray if you are in bear country.

Source: ImprovePhotography.com

## Other Tips

- 1 When shooting Urban leave on Program Priority Mode for quick reponse.
- 2 Shoot Old People and Kids, not crowds
- 3 Look for bold, vivid colors
- 4 Visiting travel location? Use [www.photosecrets.com](http://www.photosecrets.com) for city by city locations for best shots
- 5 Shoot the signs (you'll thanks yourself later)
- 6 Showing Movement in the City: slow the shutter speed down to 1/16, 1/18, 1/4 sec or longer on tripod; use 30 seconds for night shot with light streaks
- 7 In city use f/11
- 8 Find new view points and use a monopod
- 9 To enhance blue coloring use white balance set to fluorescent
- 10 For extra sharpness consider using a mirror lock-up
- 11 For long exposures turn on long exposure noise reduction if you camera has it
- 12
- 13

## Megapixels Schmegapixels

- 1 3 megapixels = 5x7" print
- 2 4 megapixels = 8x10" print