

How-To Take More Creative Photos on Your Smart Phone

by Kathy Hargrove

1. **Hold camera steady.** Elbows down by side, steady stance. Tripods are available for smart phones but take time to set up.
2. **Set up the composition.** To compose your photo so it most pleasing to the viewer's eye follow the rules of 3rds. This is when the picture area is divided into thirds, horizontally and vertically. Place the most important part of your picture at one of the four places where the lines cross. For more information google rule of 3rd composition. The smart phone has the rule of thirds guide on your camera and it's called the grid. You can locate the grid on your camera via the settings - camera - grid, the light will turn green. This guide will automatically appear on your camera to help you with composition. It will stay there until it is removed.
3. **Consider focus.** By default your camera is in automatic focus but you can adjust the focus in manual mode. Tap on the screen where you want your focus to be. A yellow box comes up and AE/AF lock appears, locking the focus. A picture of the sun and arrows appear to the right of the box. Slide the arrows up or down to control your exposure, making it lighter or darker. To get out of this mode, tap on the side of the box and you will go back into automatic.
4. **Notice the light.** Light is constantly changing, and is an important part of a good photo. Noon light creates harsh shadows. Observe front light coming from the front, side light which comes from the side and back light comes from the back. The Golden Hour or Magic Hour is considered the best time to take pictures. This is the first hour after sunrise and the last hour before sunset when the sun is low in the sky. Bright overcast lighting is good for closeups. When you take pictures notice if your light is even on your subject.
5. **Pay attention to the background.** I love taking pictures of flowers, especially the ones I grow. Always observe the background when taking photos. The example of the rose I took had a black velvet piece of material I purchased at a fabric store for the background. A special thing to do for your friends is to buy some plain stationery with envelopes and paste a picture of a photo you took and send them a note. Its special when we get a note in the mail. Many stores and online sources provide services to turn your photos from your camera into prints.
6. **Family photos.** The smart phone lens is good enough to take a family photo. We need to plan, to set a time and location. What time of day, what about the light, is the background going to be in nature, the home, is it going to be formal or spontaneous? Do you want your family to wear a certain color? If you are going to take the photo in the home you might want to look into led lighting as the smart phone lighting might not be enough to illuminate a large group. Maybe a neighbor can stop in at the holidays and take the picture.

Keep taking pictures and have fun with your camera!