

COMPOSITION TIPS AND HINTS

RULE OF THIRDS

This is probably the first compositional rule that any photographer comes across, and that's for a very good reason – it's simple and it works.

The basic premise is that you divide your camera's frame up into thirds and plant key objects in these lines, and the composition will work better.



BALANCE

Balance is a compositional technique in photography that juxtaposes images within a frame so that the objects are of equal visual weight. When different parts of a photo command your attention equally, perfect balance is achieved.

In photography, there are two main techniques of balance you should be aware of: formal and informal.



LEADING LINES

A leading line paves an easy path for the eye to follow through different elements of a photo. Usually they start at the bottom of the frame and guide the eye upwards and inwards, from the foreground of the image to the background, typically leading toward the main subject.



SYMMETRY

Sometimes the most stunning shot is the one when you put the main point of interest slap bang in the middle of your shot and where there's real symmetry in the image.

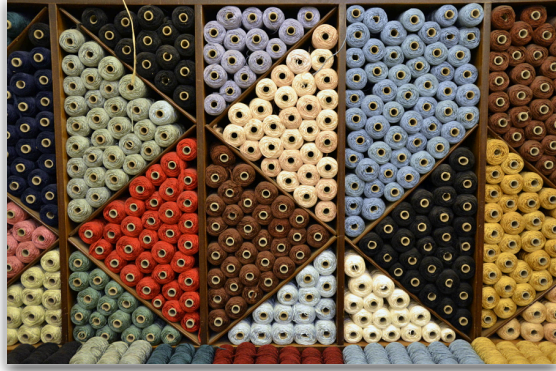


PATTERN

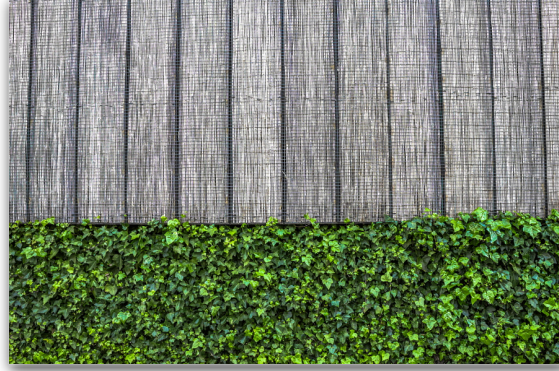
When it comes to capturing repetition in photography a couple of techniques come to mind – you can either emphasize it or break it.

To emphasize pattern try filling your frame with a repetitive pattern to give the impression of size and large numbers. To break pattern try including a contrasting object (color, shape, texture) or removing one of the repeating objects.

EMPHASIZE



BROKEN



FRAMING

Framing is the technique of drawing attention to the subject of your image by blocking other parts of the image with something in the scene.

Frames for photographs come in all shapes and sizes and can include shooting through overhanging branches, shooting through windows, using tunnels, arches or doorways – you can even use people (for example shooting over shoulders or between heads) etc.



FILLING THE FRAME

While empty spaces can be used effectively in photos to create stunning results you're much more likely to get a 'wow' from those looking at your photos if your shots are filled with interest.

This technique is particularly important when taking pictures of people whose facial features tend to disappear when you move more than a few meters away from them.



TRIANGLES

The triangular shape can be very important to good composition in photography. This does not refer to having the actual shape in an image but a relationship between three objects that create a triangle within the scene.

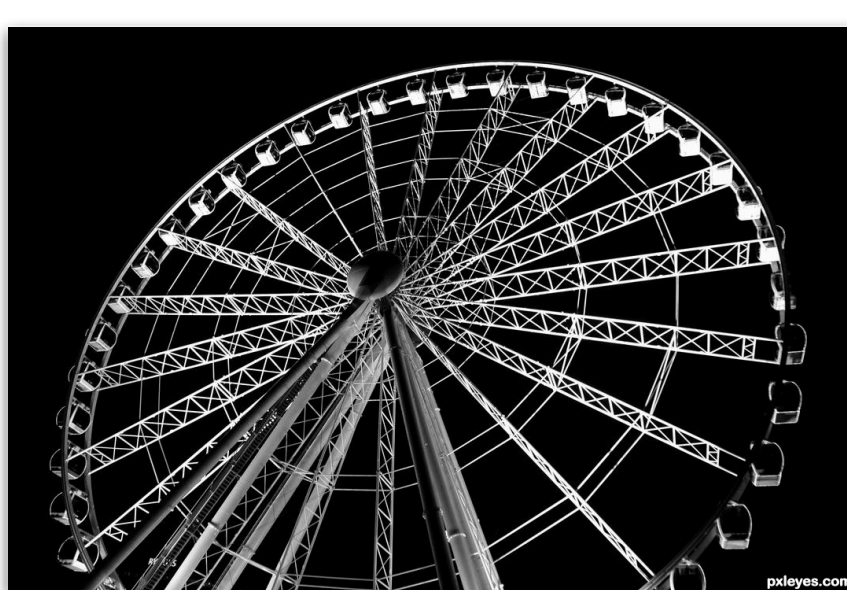
As long as the three objects are able to balance each other out, this is pleasing to the eyes because it creates a constant path through the scene.



ANGLES AND PERSPECTIVE

The height from which you shoot can be a significant factor in how your images appear. If you want to emphasize height and power in a scene, get low to the ground and tilt the camera slightly up. People will look more important and prominent, and objects like trees or mountains will look even larger.

Shooting from a high camera angle on the other hand makes everything feel smaller and diminished in power. If the shooting height becomes extreme enough the image can even tend to take on an abstract and graphic feeling.



HORIZONS

When a frame is being divided by a single, dominant line, it's more often than not, a horizon, as they're fairly common in outdoor photography, particularly landscapes.

If the photo is of nothing particularly interesting, then usually this line becomes the dominant part of the photo for the way in which it separates the frame. Exactly where you place the horizon in a frame can have a huge affect on the image; it's all about which part of the photo is the most interesting, and how you want to make your viewer feel with the divide.



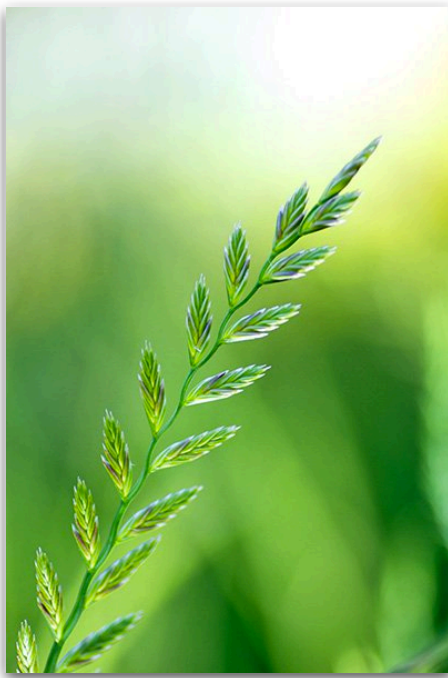
DEPTH

By using a shallow depth of field and having only part of the scene in focus, you will make sure that there is no doubt about what the subject is and where you want your viewers to look.

A deep depth of field is also important in some images. In landscape photography, you will want a deep depth of field, a shallow depth of field in a landscape image might be confusing.

Use your depth of field to determine where you want your viewers to look.

SHALLOW



WIDE



CROPPING

Cropping, or removing certain portions of a photograph, has been around since the beginning of photography.

Before you discard that photograph you think of as boring or uninteresting, try cropping the image to see if you can pull something out that wasn't there before.



COLOUR

The colors in an image and how they are arranged can make or break a shot.

Bright colors can add vibrancy, energy and interest – however in the wrong position they can also distract viewers of an image away from focal points.

Colors also greatly impact 'mood'. Blues and Greens can have a calming soothing impact, Reds and Yellows can convey vibrancy and energy etc.



MINIMALIST VERSUS MAXIMALIST

Minimalist refers to keeping a photograph very simple, such as an image with a single subject and a pleasing and calm background. This can create a very powerful and graphic design.

Maximalist on the other hand refers to a chaotic image, with a lot of elements competing with, and playing off of each other. However, within the chaos there is balance.

MINIMALIST



MAXIMALIST



BACKGROUNDS

The background in your image immediately stands out to a trained eye. Most times, the difference between a snapshot and a strong, compelling image can be as simple as one small step, slightly changing your perspective, or blurring out a background.

If the photograph is about an exciting subject, then try to eliminate the background, making it about your subject. If you wish to photograph your subject in their environment check to make sure that: the background is equally as impressive as your subject, is part of the story, and adds value to the image.

