

**Smart phones are great, but they still have limitations ... it may look good on your screen, but the full size version may not. Here are some tips for good smart phone photography/videography.**

### **1. Zoom with Your Feet**

This is something beaten into the heads of photojournalists for decades and it's HUGE. Don't use the zoom slider at the bottom of the screen, get closer ... then get even closer.

### **2. Hold the Phone Steady**

Use both hands when taking a picture and better yet, lean up against something or use something to help steady your arms/hands. Many pictures may look decent on your phone, but once you see it full size, there's motion blur from the phone moving while the picture was taken and is unusable.

### **3. Don't Use Filters**

Those hipster filters can sometimes look decent. Avoid using them as a matter of course ... BUT if you have time, explore photo editing apps like PS Express, Camera+, Snapseed, etc. These are great for processing your pics before posting online.

### **4. Light Is What It's All About**

That's what cameras do, capture light. Look for interesting light (sunset, sunrise, cloudy days, light projections), photograph reflections, light direction and find soft light for portraits.

### **5. Focus and Exposure**

Once you've composed your picture, tap the screen where your subject is located and the iPhone will set the focus and exposure where you tapped. If you hold your finger on the screen, it will LOCK the exposure/focus in that area so you can compose the same subject multiple ways.

### **6. Simple Composition**

Think about every picture as a postcard. If you only had one picture to tell the whole story, how would you take it? I don't have the answer for every story, but look for something simple. Instead of shooting the whole group of protesters, look for a single protester to photograph alone that may tell the story better. Instead of taking a pic of a field of flowers, take a macro (up very close) picture of just one flower with the field in the background. Look for faces, signs, faces, action, wide shots, faces, patterns, faces, macro shots ... did I mention faces? Backs of heads do nothing for anyone.

*Eyes are the window to the soul and they are stuck on the front of our head.*

## **7. High Dynamic Range (HDR)**

Every camera has a problem with high contrast. Contrast is when you have a very bright object in the same shot as a dark object (ie, shooting a subject with the sunrise in the background). In high contrast situations (and in almost any landscape, exterior, non-people pics) HDR is the way to go. Open your camera and look at the top of the screen. There's a selection that should say HDR Off, HDR On, or HDR Auto. When in HDR On, the phone actually takes three pictures. One is underexposed, one properly exposed and another overexposed. The phone takes only the best exposed parts from each of those three pictures and puts them together as one picture. It's pretty amazing and high contrast pictures will look more like what your eye sees. With HDR Auto, the camera decides when to take the pic in HDR.

## **8. Be Creative. Learn the Rules then Break Them**

There are thousands of books on photography, so for me to even try to express everything would be pointless. Look for things that catch your eye. When you see a picture you like, think about why you like it and try to emulate it in your own photography.

One of the most important "rules" to learn is The Rule of Thirds. Take a look at this as they give a good explanation. <http://digital-photography-school.com/rule-of-thirds/> Get Various Angles- Another "rule" beaten into phojos' heads. Climb up high, get down low, put something in the foreground, shoot from a perspective the average person doesn't see everyday. Framing (a picture within a picture)- Instead of shooting the meeting from the audience's perspective, shoot through the open double doors, showing the door frame and meeting taking place within.

Put your subject (person, car, building) in the "V" of where a branch meets the tree. Patterns & Symmetry- Human eyes are attracted to patterns and symmetry. Start paying attention when your eyes notice it and photograph it.

## **9. Take Lots of Pics- EXPERIMENT**

Since we're not using film anymore, take a bunch of shots various ways and then choose the best. It's free, so who cares.

## **10. Have Fun**

You can bring whimsy and even sarcasm to your pictures. The old saying goes that the best camera to take that picture is the one you have with you. We all have our phones with us, and they're getting better and better with each iteration. If the picture alone doesn't tell the story, a brief caption (using Canva, FotoJet, etc) can say a LOT.