



Digital Photography Tips

Get closer

Less-experienced photographers often make the mistake of trying to get too much in a photograph.

Get close! If you're photographing your sister next to a tree, look for different angles instead of backing up and trying to get the entire tree. Maybe lie on the

ground and photograph up.

Shoot in early morning or late afternoon

The "golden time" for dramatic lighting is early morning and early evening. We have long days here in summer, so the golden hours are usually 6-9 p.m. Often, the best sky color (and water reflections) is right after sunset. Consider shooting with a tripod if you're shooting that late in the day.

Keep your lens cap off

Photographer and trainer Scott Kelby calls it "the never-ready cap." Only use the cap when your camera is in the bag. If you're worried about scratching the lens, get a lens hood.

Fill flash

Most digital cameras have an on-board flash. Unless you have one that you can manually use as a fill-flash, turn it off. If you have an external flash, that can come in handy when there are deep shadows and bright spots. If you have a pop-up flash on a DSLR (digital single-lens reflex), consider purchasing a diffuser (about \$10).

Exposures

If you're photographing wildlife (including young kids and dogs), consider setting your camera on "*shutter preferred*" which allows the camera to choose the appropriate aperture setting for 1/250 or 1/125 of a second shutter speed. This is also a good setting to use if you want to change the way running water looks. A fast (1/250) shutter will stop action. A slow (1/30) shutter will make the water look more fluid.

If you're photographing a nature scene, set your camera to "*aperture preferred*." Then you can choose an aperture to give you more depth-of-field (foreground, middle ground, background all in focus).

Check all four corners

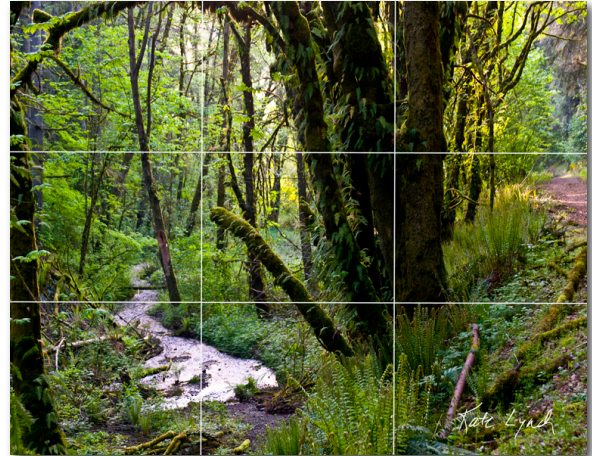
Unless you're photographing wildlife, compose your image by looking in all four corners to make sure there aren't any distracting elements. And consider applying "the rule of thirds" to add interest to your image.

The Rule of Thirds

The “rule of thirds” dates back to Renaissance painters and is a guideline for composing visual images, such as paintings and photographs. It’s also used for designing landscapes.

Look at an image as divided into 9 equal parts. Then place important elements in the composition along these lines or their intersections. The result adds more energy, tension, and interest to a composition rather than centering a subject.

In the image on the right, the glowing creek is in the lower left third of the frame and a golden glow is in the upper right third of the frame.



The Exposure Triangle

These three elements determine how a photographic image is made:

Shutter Speed: This is how much time the shutter is open.

Aperture: The size of the lens opening when a picture is taken.

ISO: ISO measures sensitivity to light. For digital, ISO measures sensitivity of the camera’s image sensor. For film cameras, ISO is the film speed. ISO stands for the International Organization for Standardization.

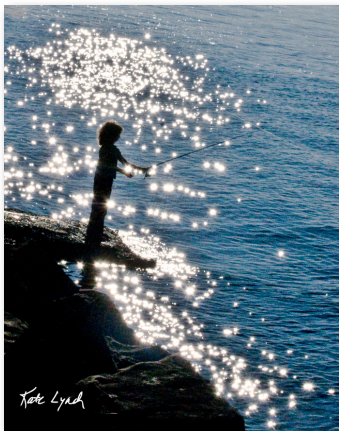


Photo Resources

There are lots of resources in print and online. Here are a few favorites.

- *Bryan Peterson's Understanding Photography Field Guide: How to Shoot Great Photographs with Any Camera* - 2009
- *The Digital Photography Book* (Volumes 1-4) by Scott Kelby
- *Real World Digital Photography* (3rd Edition) by Katrin Eismann, Sean Duggan, Tim Grey – 2010

- Photo.net – forums, equipment, critiques
- Pacific Northwest Nature Photographers Network – pacificnw.naturephotographers.net

Photo Editing Picks

- Adobe products – free downloads for 30-day use – www.adobe.com
 - Adobe Lightroom (available with Photography Cloud \$10-month)
 - Adobe Photoshop Elements (about \$70 at Costco and Wal-Mart)
 - Adobe Photoshop (available with Photography Cloud)
- Adobe Photoshop Express – for iPhone (free from iTunes)
- Free programs: Google Photos, Windows Live, updates of the former Picasa (search online)