

# How to take a better photo

**Hints and tips by Fran Pimblett**



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## Use angles

**Y**ou can add a lot of interest to an image by changing the angle that you would usually take for the shot. People expect certain things out of photos. They expect that the subject matter will be central to the image with lots of space around it.

and using only part of the subject to draw the eye. Finding a different angle is also more fun for the photographer and involves more thought than simply pointing and clicking. Try laying on the ground, crouching down, pointing the camera up at the sky or a tree or using a tripod to change the angles.



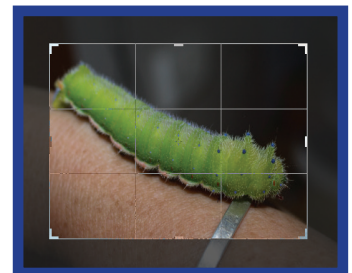
That's what makes using different angles a good tool because people are just not expecting to see the subject from that angle and it piques people's interest.

Think about taking a photo from over the top or underneath the subject. Try getting closer to the subject or standing side on



## fill the frame

**P**eople look at photos because they want to see something that the photographer has captured and using close up shots of the subject that fill the frame easily focusses the viewer's attention on the subject matter. It's not hard to get the point of the image if the subject is flooding the shot. The subject can be clearly made out and the viewer doesn't have to work so hard to work out what they are looking at. There are a few ways that you can fill the frame with that you can try that you don't need a DSLR camera to achieve. You can...



**1** Move closer to the subject matter in order to get the best vantage point or angle for the best shot.

**3** Use your zoom/optical zoom to allow you to get closer to your subject matter than you might physically be able to do.

**2** Use Photoshop to crop your image to fill the shot using the crop tool on the left hand side of the Photoshop workspace.

I do this all of the time. It's a very useful option to take a more natural shot without the subject being aware of your presence.



## Focal Points

There are two kinds of images, those that are posed and those that are just shot on the fly. Posed images allow us to choose our subject matter and manipulate our images to a degree to stage where we want our viewer to look by using focal points.



People naturally want to see something of interest when they look at a photo. That's what photos are for, capturing a moment of interest to preserve it for sharing. There are many ways to draw your viewer's eye to your subject and to keep them interested in your photo. Here are just a few of them.



One way is to Use colour to draw the viewer's eye. It can be contrasting colour, using a bright coloured object against a duller background.

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elevating the coloured object into another plane from the rest of the similar coloured objects that you are photographing or any other number of colour variants.



You can use repeating patterns, shapes or textures to draw attention to your subject. When you have a regular pattern the viewer's eye gets used to that repetition and expects to see it continued and when something else is added to or close to this pattern or similar arrangement of objects it immediately draws the viewer's eye to this anomaly and causes them to focus on the object.



This is a great way to get someone to focus on a subject/object that they might otherwise not notice in its own right.



3 Bringing your subject into the foreground and making larger draws the viewer's eye to the subject matter immediately



4 Using photographic rules like the rule of thirds and placing your subject matter on the intersecting lines takes advantage of the viewer's natural area of vision. Staging images and using light, lines, natural aspect to direct their eyes towards a subject are other ways that the photographer can make their chosen subject a focal point in their image



5 You can use depth of field to create interest by bringing the subject into clear relief while distorting and blurring the background.



6 Using different shutter speeds gives the photographer a lot more scope to manipulate images and there are various techniques that can be used including motion blur, where the subject appears to be static when everything around it is moving etc.



## Framing

A clever technique to make the viewer focus on the subject matter of your photo



is to use frames in the form of something in the foreground that is blocking off the subject matter behind it, i.e. looking through a window at the



shot with subject matter in one of the outer grid sections and blurring everything else. This adds a very surreal look to your image and a lot of interest for the viewer. What about telling a story with your image?



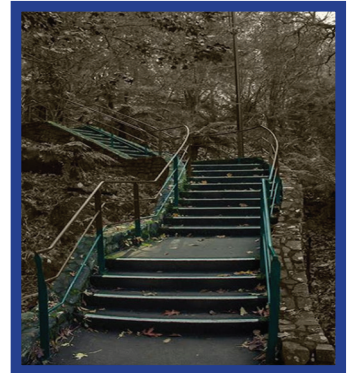
Take some unfocused photos and try using interesting after effects in Photoshop to create new and vibrant images.



frames, angles, lighting conditions and combinations of lines to draw your viewer's eye in the opposite way that they would be expecting.



Art is often the result of broken rules and we need to be reminded that testing the boundaries is a good way to at least learn what the rules are.



Use Photoshop and other editing programs to take simple images to the next level. What it all amounts to is that at the end of the day, we photographers are chasing the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow when it comes to our images.

scene beyond, using natural things like trees, rocks, leaves or branches etc. to frame an image and can result in some very striking photos.

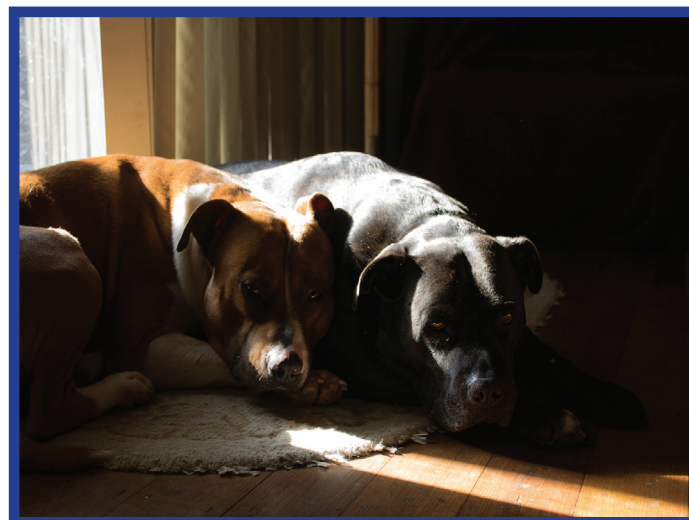
Using frames can unite an image, can create and lead the viewers eye to the focal point/subject in the shot, can gain and then keep your viewers interest while they try to work out exactly what is going on in the image and can give the photo a sense of place in relation to it's surroundings.

You don't need four sides to the frame, just enough contrast to draw attention to the image behind the frame.

You can choose to adjust the focus of your photo to blur the frame (using a large aperture) in order to add more weight to the subject if there is any concern about the frame drawing attention away from the subject matter

### Break the rules

**R**ules are meant to be tested if not actively broken and once you master the rules of photography you can go on to start manipulating these rules in order to get interesting effects in your images that you might otherwise not think of. Try breaking the rule of thirds and composing a





**A** well composed image is a pleasure to look at and draws the viewer into the story that the photographer is trying to recreate. Photos are memories and when we look at someone else's photos those memories become ours.





**W**hether it's a black and white image of a cityscape or a well composed image of a country vista, images have the ability to transport us another place and time and as photographers, we create that magic.



**N**ext issue we will be taking you on a journey into the funky world of high definition range photography (HDR) where you can take your photo's to the next level



**W**e also have a great article about urban photography including how to take great images of urban architecture and a special article about how to photograph graffiti.

