

Bill's Top Twelve Ways to Improve Your Photography

- #1. **Don't take a "snapshot"**. This is probably the biggest reasons people end up with blurry pictures, whether they are using a cell phone or a standard camera. Poking the shutter button shakes the camera and the end result is often a shaky image. Just a light touch is all most devices need to release the shutter.
- #2. **Stabilize yourself and the camera**. Whenever possible, rest the camera against a doorway or on top of a table to give stability. At the very least, make your body into a tripod so your camera or phone is rock solid before taking a photo.
- #3. **Clean your lens**. Where do you keep your iPhone? I keep mine in my pocket and I am constantly getting fingerprints on the lens and lint in the charging sockets. Use canned air to clean the ports and gently use a soft cloth to remove grime from the lens.
- #4. **Lighting is EVERYTHING!** Most people make the mistake of taking their people pictures in the sun. This creates harsh, uncomplimentary shadows on faces. Open shade is a much better option.
- #5. **Level the horizon**. When the horizon is not straight, everything seems askew. If your camera/phone has a grid feature for the viewfinder/screen, turn that on. It doesn't show up in the final picture but it really helps you to level and center the photo.
- #6. **Move in closer**. 90% of the photos I see on library web pages could be improved by moving in closer to the subject. Fill up the frame! If using a phone, be sure to "zoom" by moving closer with your body rather than cropping in the camera.
- #7. **Evaluate your background**. Watch for poles coming out of people's heads and other distractions. Sometimes just moving over a foot or so can make all the difference.
- #8. **Remember your phone or camera turns**. That seems obvious but you would not believe the number of people who either take all of their photos horizontally or they take them all vertically. Evaluate your composition before pressing the button.
- #9. **Consider the 'Rule of Thirds'**. Not everything has to be centered in the middle of your viewfinder. Try placing your subject in one of the four corners of your composition for an artsy look.
- #10. **Think about angles**. North-south, east-west has been engrained in our subconscious so much that most people try to "square up" all their photos, arranging groups square against a wall. Pro's know that you give the photo more depth by angling your group.
- #11. **Use your camera/phone filters**. Most digital cameras default to a slightly flat image, so use your "magic wand" to increase contrast slightly. Saturating the colors is another way to get your photos to pop.
- #12. **PLEASE...take more than one shot!** "Film" is cheap. Shoot lots, then edit down to the best. Many cameras have a burst mode that enables you to take a bunch of shots in a row by holding down the shutter button.

And remember...camera or phone brands are not so important. The best camera to use is the one you have with you!

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