Tips on How to Take Great Photos with a Smart Phone

Take horizontal photos

Because of the new website design and layout, the best photos to use are horizontal. Horizontal photos are able to fill and be adjusted for different screen widths without becoming distorted. If you happen to take a great vertical photo, don't worry! These can still be used on one of our social media sites or website photo gallery page.

Check Your Settings

If your phone gives you the option to take photos at different resolutions, check your camera's settings menu to make sure it's set to the largest image size or highest resolution, which will help deliver sharp photos with lots of detail.

Avoid zooming in

If you're taking a photo from a distance, avoiding zooming in too close. It will highly degrade the photo. Instead, either get closer to the subject or take the photo from the default distance away. This won't compromise quality and allows us more room to edit and crop the image if needed.

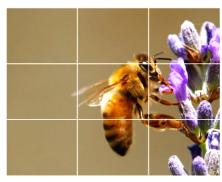### Ditch the flash and look for natural light

Smartphone flashes cause images to appear both blurry and terribly-lit, and create a redeye effect. So, what do you do if you're in a dark room or corner? Try to seek out another light source such as a window. Or, if it's dark outside, position yourself near a lamp or use someone else's phone flashlight as a light source.

Use gridlines to improve composition

A simple way to improve photos is by turning on the gridlines on your mobile device to

make sure you take photos with clear horizontal and vertical lines. This helps with composition.

If your phone has a grid, turn it on and align your horizon and vertical lines with it. Keep it straight.

To switch the grid on:

iPhone: Go to "Settings," choose "Photos & Camera," and switch "Grid" on.
Samsung Galaxy S5: Launch the camera app, go to "Settings," scroll down and tap "Gridlines on."

☀ Avoid Sun Flare

Utilizing lens flare can actually look very stylish, but it might also ruin your shot. To control the flare in your shot, move the sun (or whatever bright light source is causing the refraction-based mayhem) around in the frame. As you get closer to the edge, you'll often see the flare spread out and become more prominent. You can also cup your hand around the lens in order to make a DIY lens hood, which will cut down on the amount of flare if the light source happens to be out to the side of the frame.

👥 Don't forget about candid photos

While posed photos are great and will of course be included on the site, candid shots of people doing things, or people with people, are often far more interesting and tell a broader story. They are better at capturing emotions and the essence of a moment. These are the type of photos we will be looking to use for main images.

Be aware of the background

If you have the time and ability, take a look at what will be in the background of your photo. We've had to unfortunately pass on a number of great photos because there has been someone in the background picking their nose or making funny faces.

Ask permission

If you supply the Communications Team with photos, it will be assumed that everyone in the photo has given approval to have their photo displayed on the website. Make sure to ask before sending all photos!

If photos come from a third party, make sure they are aware that their photos will not be credited or display a watermark, and could possibly be edited or cropped.

JUST SHOOT!

We love photos! These tips aren't meant to discourage or frighten you from taking amazing photos. Instead, we hope they give you the skills and the confidence to take photos that we'll be able to proudly showcase on our site. And remember, practice makes perfect. You might not always get 'the shot' on your first try, but that doesn't mean it won't be the next.

This list is also not exhaustive. If you feel comfortable manipulating the white balance, exposure, color levels, etc. then please do! Otherwise, we'll be happy to do post-editing for you.