

Top tips for taking good photos

Candid photos

Some of the best photos can be candid as they look more natural – so keep your finger on the button. To get the best you need to take a lot.

Catch a look, a gesture, and moments of connection between people.



Posed photos

When pictures need to be posed, arrange people in something other than a line or a huddle. Eg sitting on steps or in a group in a few rows of pews.

Take control; direct people to get the picture you want. Keep talking to them as you're photographing.

Some photos that you might be uncomfortable taking candidly (eg someone praying), can be set up.

Look your subject in the eye

When taking a picture of someone, hold the camera at their eye level (for children, that means stooping to their level). Your subject need not always stare at the camera. It will create a personal and inviting feeling that pulls you into the picture.



Move in close

Take a step or two closer to your subject. (If it's a person you'll be able to see their facial expressions).

Is the background clear?

Check for any distractions in the background. Does any furniture need moving, curtains drawing?

Try unusual angles

Eg use a step ladder to look down on a crowd to make photographing a large group of faces easier - or lie down on the floor and shoot upwards. Shoot through items, use doors and windows as frames.

Props and visual aids help

Is there something you can use that helps gives the photo meaning?

Take lots of pictures

Even after you've got a great picture, try to get a better one.

Identify people

Get names of everyone, spelt correctly, and identified left to right. Always get permission for the use of children's photos.



TECHNICAL and COMPOSITION

Watch this short video – [‘9 photo composition tips’](#)

Use a camera – photos from a phone are unlikely to be good enough quality for reproduction in print.

Move it from the middle – the rule of thirds

Bring your picture to life by moving your subject away from the middle of the picture. Imagine a noughts and crosses grid in your viewfinder, and place your subject at one of the intersections of lines. (You'll need to lock the focus if you have an auto-focus camera because most of them focus on whatever's in the centre of the viewfinder.)

Use a flash outside – even during the day

If it's a very bright day and the sun is creating harsh shadows on your subject, switch on your flash. By forcing extra light onto your subject, you will be able to fill in those ugly shadows and create an even exposure.

Make the most of external sources of light

If you're taking portraits, take them outside in natural light. But if they have to be taken inside, use the natural light coming in through the windows.

Make use of extra electric lighting – avoid using the flash inside as it can make things look stark with harsh shadows.

Wide angle lenses work best

News photographers use a wide angle lens in – it keeps everything in focus while allowing close up views of people and small items. “Wide” means at least the equivalent of 28mm on a 35mm camera. Journalists often use 20mm and wider lenses. Some compact cameras accept wide angle converters.