



SILENTPEAKPHOTO



**5** RIDICULOUSLY  
SIMPLE WAYS TO  
IMPROVE YOUR  
PHOTOGRAPHY

# 5 Ridiculously Simple Ways to Improve your Photography

Photography does not have to be hard. Nor does a great photo demand a great camera.

In this guide, I present you with 5 key tips that will vastly improve your photography regardless of the camera you use. Best of all, none of these techniques will cost you a dime to implement. So, let's get started!

## 5 Steps to better photos

1. Identify your subject
2. Composing your photo using the rule of thirds
3. How to give your photos 3D-like depth
4. Using perspective
5. Light



**Tip**  
Shooting low.  
Add some  
creative angles  
to your  
photography.

---

# 1 Identify your Subject

Whether or not you are conscious of it, something within the scene you're about to photograph caught your eye.

It might be an imposing mountain, the sun setting behind the horizon, or a friend or family member. Perhaps your subject is more discrete. Maybe it's not the mountain but the way light shines off its summit. Or not the person as a whole but their smile.



**Tip**  
Your photo  
is all about  
your  
subject.  
The stage is  
theirs.

---

Consciously identifying your point of interest, or **subject**, is critical to photography since your subject is your photo's main event.

Therefore, your subject has priority and should never share the spotlight with other elements that distract or diminish its presence.

Without a subject, even a nice photo is a nice photo of nothing. So, give your viewer's eye a subject for it to fall upon and make that subject shine.

## 2

# Composition

Having identified your subject – your objective is to make it shine. This begins with deciding where to place your subject within the frame.

If your subject is a person, you might prefer to shoot up close – allowing your subject to fill the frame thus leaving little room in your photo for distracting background clutter.

Alternatively, you may be less interested in the person as-a-whole than their smile. In which case, the body effectively becomes ‘noise’ to be filtered out by framing your subject from the neck up.



**Tip**  
Floors and walls can make for distraction-free backgrounds

---

Composition is hugely important since our eyes are drawn to geometric patterns. By exploiting geometry, you can use these patterns to guide your viewer’s eye to your subject. Composition goes wrong if your subject appears too small, is poorly placed within the frame, or is flanked by distracting background clutter such as litter bins, passers-by, or bright colours.

## Composition with the Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is a great way to get started with composition. Not just because it's simple and effective, but because many cameras and smartphones can be set to display the rule-of-thirds grid on-screen.

---



Composing  
a photo  
using the  
rule of  
thirds

---

Basically, place your subject near the lines or where the lines intersect and go from there. It's difficult to be specific since every photo is different. Take care not to be too precise. Placing your subject at an exact third or dead center can look a little too perfect and contrived.



Scan QR code to  
learn more about the  
rule of thirds or visit  
this [link](#)

## 3 Finding Depth

Have you ever noticed that some photos appear to ‘pop’? Although your photo is two-dimensional, your photography doesn’t have to be.

### Leading Lines

Leading lines are very effective since they walk the viewers eye towards the subject. Not only is this great for your photo’s subject, but it provides the illusion of a third dimension.



**Tip**  
Use Leading lines to ‘walk’ the viewers eye towards the subject

Leading lines can be roads, walls, rivers, clouds, or any anything that stretches towards your subject. Lines that cut across your photo are usually less effective and often unattractive.

### Shallow Depth of Field

Better known as background blur or bokeh, shallow depth of field is a great way to give your photo a 3D-like aesthetic. Moreover, shallow depth of field is ideal for making your subject stand out since you can use it to blur away unwanted background clutter



**Tip**  
Use a Shallow  
Depth-of-  
field to  
create a 3D-  
effect with  
background  
blur

---

Access to shallow depth-of-field is dependent on the combination of three factors – distance to subject, lens aperture, and focal length.

In other words, you really need a traditional camera that can accommodate more specialised lenses. If you are shooting with a smartphone, many now offer a so-so digital simulation of background blur.



To learn more about  
Depth of Field, visit  
Silent Peak Photo via  
this [link](#) or scan the QR  
code

## 4

# Find a New Perspective

Most of us are used to observing the world from a height between 5 and 6ft. Therefore, an easy way to capture a fresh take on a familiar subject is to shoot outside of this range.

---



**Tip**  
Use the sky as a background. Shoot up from a crouched position

---

So, try taking your photo with your camera held overhead or inches above the ground to give the viewer an image they don't see every day.

---



**Tip**  
Try shooting downwards from an elevated position.

---

# 5

## Light

Lighting is a complex topic that demands its own book. That being said, here are a few fundamentals.

### Natures Soft box

Overcast days are best for portraiture since the soft light is brilliant for accurate exposure and soft, even skin tones. In contrast, a sunny day creates all kinds of exposure problems whilst causing your subject to squint and blink.



**Tip**  
Overcast days in Autumn are wonderful for portraits.

If you find yourself taking photos of friends and family on a sunny day, its best to seek shade. If shade is not an option, turn your subject until they appear most evenly lit.

Professionals overcome harsh light with additional gear such as screens, reflectors and off-camera flashes, none of which you're likely to find in your bag. However, as the day rolls on and the sun falls to a lower position, things can improve. If you're really lucky, nature will provide some nice, soft, golden light for A-grade portraiture.

## Lighting for Landscapes

The best time to shoot landscapes is early and late in the day for several reasons. First, you get the benefit of sunset/sunrise colours and second, the low position of the sun adds texture to the landscape giving it a more vivid appearance.

---



**Tip**  
Look for reflections in puddles, lakes, and sands

---

The other reason to get up early, or go to bed late, is that you will often get the scene to yourself. And because so few get up so early, you have the opportunity to photograph landscapes lit in ways few ever see.

---



**Tip**  
If you have a nice scene but no subject, use a person

---

# What next

Go out, enjoy life and take some pictures along the way. If you wish to learn more, Silent Peak is loaded with tips, techniques, and jargon busting beginner's guides.

## About this Book

I hope you found it useful, or at least, interesting. The photos were taken with various cameras including smartphone cameras.

## About the author

I am originally from Northern England but have since moved to the mean streets of coastal New Zealand where I live quietly with my wife and two young children. When not taking photos, I like to hike, surf, and play the guitar (badly).

All the best

Richard.



Visit  
[Silent Peak](#)