

Composition Guides in Art and Photography

Composition is the plan, placement or arrangement of the elements of art in a work, usually according to the principles of design



The Rule of Thirds

The theory of the rules of thirds is that if you place points of interest in the intersections or along the lines, that your photo becomes more balanced and will enable a viewer of the image to interact with it more naturally.

Studies have shown that when viewing images that people's eyes usually go to one of the intersection points most naturally rather than the center of the shot – using the rule of thirds works with this natural way of viewing an image rather than working against it.

Tip: To enable the grid display on your tablet or phone
Iphone or Ipad: Settings – Camera – Enable the Grid Function Toggle
Android Devices: Camera App – Settings – Grid Lines Toggle



Rule of Odds

This may sound a bit odd (sorry, excuse the pun), but our brain looks for evenness and symmetry. So this principle asserts that having an odd number of objects in an image will be more interesting and, therefore, more pleasing. By having one or three elements is better than two.

Lines

Keep the horizontal lines level and the vertical lines straight. This is particularly important if you shoot landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes. Leading lines are also very effective for drawing the viewer to where the focal point is.



Color and textures

Color and textures are a great way to demonstrate good composition. You can create pattern, rhythm and emotion with color.

Negative space

This is the space around your subject, otherwise known as 'white space' that draws your eye to it. Basically like 'sky' or a blurred background that provides the main emphasis on the subject. Think of it in terms of letting your main subject or object breathe by giving it room.

As photography is about creativity, rules are not meant to be strictly adhered to. In the bikini photo, although two of them were used, and they are symmetrical, I used color to contrast the elements. Not placing them in the center gives the photo a more pleasing compositional effect. So, get creative! Learn the rules. Understand why they work. Then play around with breaking them for a better photo.



Tip: Change Your Viewpoint!

Take pictures from different angles – stand up on a chair, lay down on the ground, zoom in close... Experiment! These different viewpoints will give you a more interesting photo.

Photography Scavenger Hunt



- Find something with straight lines
- Find something with zigzag lines
- Find something with wavy lines
- Find something with a cool shadow
- Find something with a warm color
- Find something with a cool color
- Find something with an organic shape
- Find something with a geometric shape
- Find something with a pattern
- Find something with a bumpy texture
- Find something with a smooth texture
- Find something with a soft texture
- Find something thin
- Find something thick
- Find something that has shades or tints
- Find something with a hole in it
- Find something that is translucent (that lets the light shine through a bit)
- Find something hairy
- Find something that looks angular
- Find an interesting leaf
- Find something that makes you happy