Learning how to take effective photographs

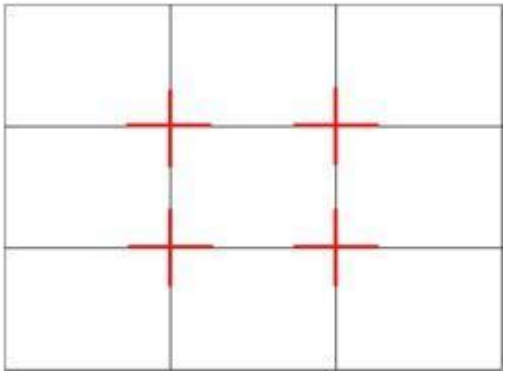
The Rule of Thirds is perhaps the most well-known ‘rule’ of photographic composition.

What is the Rule of Thirds?

The basic principle behind the rule of thirds is to imagine breaking an image down into thirds (both horizontally and vertically) so that you have 9 parts. As follows.

The rule of thirds 1

As you’re taking an image you would have done this in your mind through your viewfinder or in the LCD display that you use to frame your shot.

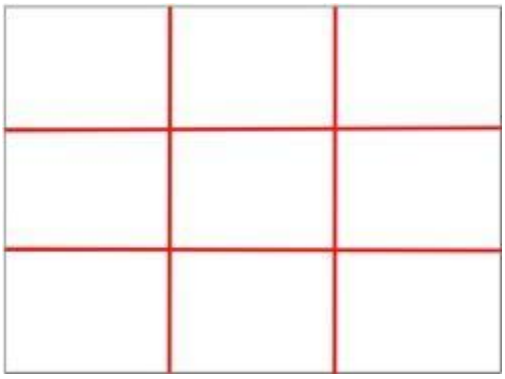


With this grid in mind the ‘rule of thirds’ now identifies four important parts of the image that you should consider placing points of interest in as you frame your image.

Not only this – but it also gives you four ‘lines’ that are also useful positions for elements in your photo.

The rule of thirds 2

The theory 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.

Extreme Long Shot (aka Extreme Wide Shot) Used to show the subject from a distance, or the area in which the scene is

taking place. This type of shot is particularly useful for establishing a scene (see Establishing Shot later in the article) in terms of time and place, as well as a character's physical or emotional relationship to the environment and elements within it. The character doesn't necessarily have to be viewable in this shot.

Long Shot (aka Wide Shot) Shows the subject from top to bottom; for a person, this would be head to toes, though not necessarily filling the frame. The character becomes more of a focus than an Extreme Long Shot, but the shot tends to still be dominated by the scenery. This shot often sets the scene and our character's place in it. This can also serve as an Establishing Shot, in lieu of an Extreme Long Shot.

Full Shot Frames character from head to toes, with the subject roughly filling the frame. The

emphasis tends to be more on action and movement rather than a character's emotional state.

Medium Shot Shows part of the subject in more detail. For a person, a medium shot typically frames them from about waist up. This is one of the most common shots seen in films, as it focuses on a character (or characters) in a scene while still showing some environment.

Cowboy Shot (aka American Shot) A variation of a Medium Shot, this gets its name from Western films from the 1930s and 1940s, which would frame the subject from mid-thighs up to fit the character's gun holsters into the shot.

Medium Close-Up Falls between a Medium Shot and a Close-Up, generally framing the subject from chest or shoulder up.

Close-Up Fills the screen with part of the subject, such as a person's head/face. Framed this tightly, the emotions and reaction of a character dominate the scene.

Extreme Close Up Emphasizes a small area or detail of the subject, such as the eye(s) or mouth. An Extreme Close Up of just the eyes is sometimes called an Italian Shot, getting its name from Sergio Leone's Italian-Western films that popularized it.

Dutch Angle/Tilt Shot in which the camera is set at an angle on its roll axis so that the horizon line is not level. It is often used to show a disoriented or uneasy psychological state.

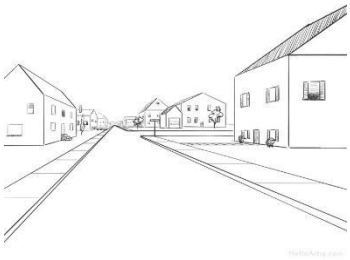
Over-the-Shoulder Shot A popular shot where a subject is shot from behind the shoulder of another, framing the subject anywhere from a Medium to Close-Up. The shoulder, neck, and/or back of the head of the subject facing

away from the camera remains viewable, making the shot useful for showing reactions during conversations. It tends to place more of an emphasis on the connection between two speakers rather than the detachment or isolation that results from single shots.

Bird's-Eye View (aka Top Shot) A high-angle shot that's taken from directly overhead and from a distance. The shot gives the audience a wider view and is useful for showing direction and that the subject is moving, to highlight special relations, or reveal to the audience elements outside the boundaries of the character's awareness. The shot is often taken from on a crane or helicopter.

Worm's eye view: Looking up from a low angle. It is also known as a bug's eye view and sometimes as an up shot.

One-point perspective shot:



Used to portray long distances and give photographs a feeling of depth, the one-point perspective shot has lines going off into the distance that appear to converge at a single point on the horizon line.

Reflection shot: As the name indicates, a reflection shot makes use of water, puddles, shadows or even mirrors or a reflection in a window. It creates a sense of symmetry by portraying an object and its reflection.

Reaction shot: This consists of two shots; a picture of something and a shot of someone's reaction to the first picture. For example; a new

bicycle with a bow on it under a Christmas tree and another shot of a child in pajamas jumping up and down.

Two shot: A ‘two shot’ is a photograph of two people. It focuses on the interaction between them.