

Important Photographing Skills and Strategies

Learning to see with your camera: Compositional Strategies



Composition is the placement of elements within the restriction of the frame of the photo.

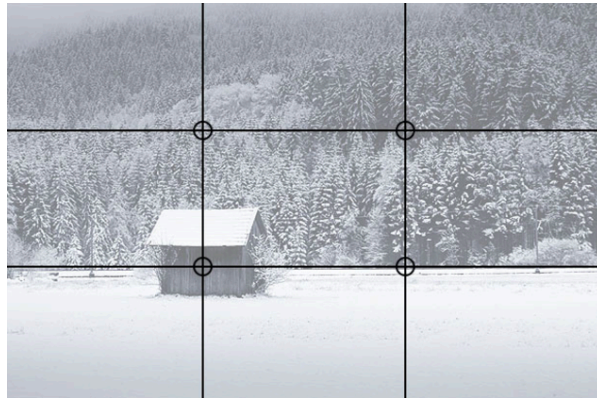
As the photographer, you are a designer; you make decisions about what to include in your photographs.

A photo has two main parts:

- First is the subject, what we decide to photograph.
- Second is the treatment or how that subject is arranged within the frame.

STRATEGY 1 - Rule of Thirds - An important guide for composition.

- The lines of intersection are ideal placement points for the dominant element in our photo; the part of the photo that attracts our attention. We call that the center of interest or subject. Each photo should have such a point....**if there is nothing that attracts your attention then the photo does not communicate as well.**
- Subject placement can also be placed along one of the thirds to be effective. **The horizon line should be placed on the thirds line and never in the center if it is visible.**



STRATEGY 2 - Leading Lines - Pay attention to lines in your photo:

- Lines can be actual lines from a road or fence, or from an arrangement of objects.
- Lines that are horizontal or curved tend to be peaceful, calming and reduce the energy of a photo.
- Diagonal lines make a photo exhibit action, excitement, feel dynamic or add tension.



STRATEGY 3 - Framing - is the technique of drawing attention to the subject of your image by blocking other parts of the image with something in the scene.

Look around for natural and man-made frames that help lead the viewer's eye into the photograph.



STRATEGY 4 - Different points of view - Unusual Perspectives

With this strategy you are photographing subjects from unexpected and interesting views:



STRATEGY 5 - Motion - is where the composition meets the technical - **The Shutter controls motion in the photo.**

- The simplest way to control this is to use the “running person” on the camera settings for capturing things that are moving, and the “flower” setting if you want to blur the background.

Each has its own effect on the final photo. The important part is that the photographer has decided in advance how the photo will look.



Motion frozen



Motion Blurred

STRATEGY 6 - Background Included/Simplified - Depth of Field - Aperture

Another technical concern in composition is in the **BACKGROUND**. Is there an object that is right behind our subject that might look like it is MERGING or growing out of our subject? Is the background needed or not? As the photographer, you can choose to **include it or simplify it**.

The simplest way is to use the mountain icon for background included or deep DOF and the person icon for background simplified or shallow DOF.



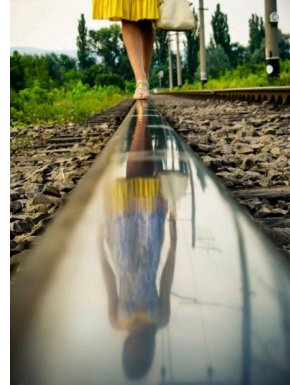
Background included



Background simplified

STRATEGY 7 - Reflections - Reflection photography is a challenging and special sort of photography that requires a good grasp of angles and perspective and a creative eye.

- Reflections can be seen in shiny surfaces (metal, glass, water), both in nature and man-made environments.



STRATEGY 8 - Sense of Depth - Placing an object or person in the foreground helps give a sense of scale and emphasizes how far away the distance is.

