

# Some helpful tips on photography

## 1. Look for triangles in your pictures.

A rule of thumb from Jay Maisel: if you can find areas of your pictures in which **triangular shapes appear**, it means you aren't putting meaningful information into all image areas. Look for large triangular areas in your images through the viewfinder when you shoot and edit them out.

## 2. Try a new angle.

The **most common and pedestrian shooting angle** is with the camera held in front of your subject at eye level. Every picture should be shot from a variety of angles: high, low and extremes in between. Look at images from different perspectives to provide greater interest in the subject matter. It really makes a difference. Find objects to climb up on to shoot from high angles; lay down on the ground to get a different perspective. Just using this rule will change your pictures dramatically. Shoot through objects (frame).

## 3. Overall shots need to run large.

An **overall shot sets the scene** for a story: it provides information that can only be processed when seen large. When shooting overalls, think large. Shoot with lenses that enable the scene to be seen in a large way.

## 4. If you shoot the way someone else sees the same scene, it's pedestrian.

You've got to work your angles so people see your pictures with fresh eyes and perspectives. When someone views your pictures from an event which they attended, they should be wowed by how differently you saw from the way they saw.

## 5. Use color to separate.

Look for **color breaks** in scenes and use those breaks to separate foregrounds or details from backgrounds. Opposite temperatures on the color scale provide the highest degree of separation. Contrast warm tones (reds/golds) with cool tones (blues/greens) for best contrast. Look for colors that have lived together, that belong together. They become married to each other.

## 6. Use wide angles for close-ups.

It's a different way of looking at the same subject. Be careful with extreme wide angles because they will distort. Scale adds interest.

## 7. Shoot wide open; shoot completely closed down.

Just like you experiment with the angles, you experiment with the depth of field. Shoot at both extremes to really look at your subject and see what the background adds or subtracts from the image.

## 8. Light is the pivotal force in photography.

**Interesting light** can make or break a photograph. Eric Meola believes there's no bad time of the day to shoot, that you have to make an image with whatever light you're given to work with. Other

### Advice from:

**Seth Resnick,  
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Canon's Explorers of Light program  
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photographers prefer shooting in morning and late day light when it is less harsh and shadows are less of a factor.

**9. Shoot through things.**

Shooting through things adds **perspective, texture and interest**. Find objects to frame subjects that add to the meaning of the image.

**10. Study great photographers to learn their techniques.**

What attracts you to a photograph can help you learn to improve as a photographer. **Find a photographer whose work you admire** and be conscious of how the photographer shot: where they were when they shot, what lens they used, how they composed, etc. Borrow their techniques.

**11. Figure/ground relationship is very important.**

If you can't separate the subject from the background your picture doesn't work. Remember, you're translating three dimensions to two. **Use color to separate**. Put meaningful content in all three grounds (foreground, middle ground, background). Study the work of master photographer Sebastiao Selgado, who does this better than anyone.

**12. Always carry your camera.**

You can't **get the picture** if you don't have the camera. Be filled up with the idea of the image. Don't shoot with preconceived notions of what you want to find or expect to find. You won't be as spontaneous.

**13. Gesture is important in pictures. It gives stories a narrative, story-telling quality.**

Wait for the **gesture** to happen that will make the picture more interesting. It takes patience and willingness to wait.

**14. Don't put lettering or signage in a picture unless you want it to be read.**

The minute you put **words in a picture**, the reader will read them.

**15. Shape is the enemy of color.**

Look at a good silhouette. You'll be **caught up in the shape** regardless of the color. Decide what factor is more important in your image.

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