

MAKE GREAT PHOTOS

*This is not a list of camera or image editing techniques:
but a checklist offering a simple method of
MAKING GREAT PHOTOS*

1. BEFORE YOU START

Look at images/scenes for those that draw you to look twice. Could you use these ideas?

But don't be tempted to copy someone else's image: have your own style.

Go to places/events and take images your own way. Try to convey how it interests you visually.

Look for inspiration. Most photographers go through a time of no inspiration – look at more images, books, adverts, exhibitions.

Listen to *why* other photographers made an image.

Think before you go out: where, what, subjects, light, time of day, weather, high tide etc. etc.

Is using my camera/phone second nature to me?

Know how to use your camera/phone to control exposure, shutter speed and aperture.

2. TAKE OUT YOUR CAMERA / PHONE

Do I really want to record this? Is it worth it?

Isolate the interesting scene from unnecessary background. Angle? Zoom?

Break the rules if visually appropriate!

If you have a passion for something, let it come across in your photos.

Has the scene moved / annoyed / upset / amused / interested you? Does the place / scene / idea visually excite you? Is the light interesting?

3. PRESS THE SHUTTER

Use composition to help SEE the image - thirds– lead-in lines - horizons etc

Look in 4 corners of the viewfinder before pressing the shutter button.

Have I got the best angle/viewpoint/weather/lighting/moment?

Could I choose a better moment in time?

Could I use a different shutter speed/aperture?

Could I use a different lens or zoom in or out?

If you want an image to look different or wrong, make it *very* wrong (a bit wrong looks like a mistake).

4. CHECK THE RESULT IN YOUR CAMERA/PHONE

Is it what I wanted? Is it what I experienced? Is it technically up to standard?

Can I improve it now while I have the chance?

Resist the temptation to take huge numbers of snaps. Quantity does not = quality.

5. EDIT/SELECT ON YOUR COMPUTER/TABLET etc

Perhaps twice: soon after your outing, and then a week or so later when you've forgotten some of the sensory experiences.

Delete any that aren't technically up to standard. Is it sharp? Is the exposure OK?

Am I still moved/annoyed/upset/amused/interested etc? Am I proud of it?

Create your own portfolio: perhaps a set of projects or themes? Make a book?

Which one stands out?

Be like Marmite if you want. Better to have people not like your images than to ignore them. We don't all like Picasso, Rembrandt or da Vinci – but they are all considered pretty good artists.

Which one will hold the interest of a viewer/audience?

Draw viewers into the image - ensure the key subject is obvious – difficult to get interest if the viewers have to seek out the main point of the picture or their eyes wander about looking for the message.

Don't try to "please" the audience – visually please yourself.

Which one makes it obvious why I made the photograph?

6. PROCESS IN SOFTWARE

Be subtle. If not subtle be totally outrageous, don't use gimmicks.

Allow plenty of time. Just simple actions: light levels, cropping, levelling, sharpening. Then possibly any other enhancements: filters, effects, colour, etc.

Have I used the best tonal arrangement? Brightness/contrast?

Save the final image with a new filename.