



Natures Image Photography
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Five Easy Low-Tech Tips For Better Nature Photos

Digital cameras have so many features and functions, they can make photography seem too confusing for the beginner. Many new photographers, intimidated by an overly complex manual, switch their digital cameras to auto, and never learn how to use them properly.

If this sounds like you, keep reading, because I have good news. There are some great ways to take better photos without having to learn the complexities of your camera. That's right – leave your camera on auto and still learn to take great photos.

Of course I encourage anybody to learn and understand aperture and shutter speed, the settings you will need to understand to really improve as a photographer. However, the best encouragement is to start getting results quickly, so here are five easy tips to help you improve your photography...the low-tech way!

**Note that my profession is nature photography, but these tips can help you with all kinds of subjects.

Better Photography Tip#1. Take your photo in the best possible light.

You may have heard that the best light for most photography is very early or very late in the day, when the sun is low, and the light is soft and colourful. This is a good rule to follow most of the time. Not only is the light more attractive, you can also avoid the contrast and heavy shadows that usually spoil your photos in the middle of the day.

Some subjects actually work better on cloudy days. For animals and people, cloudy weather softens the light and overcomes the problem of your subject squinting into the light. In the forest, overcast skies prevent the heavy contrast that is a problem on sunny days.

Better Photography Tip#2. Landscape photos: create a more interesting composition.

Many photos can be made more interesting not by zooming right in on the subject, but by zooming out, or standing further back to capture more of the surroundings. The important thing is to make sure you use the surroundings to add impact to the picture.

For example, let's say you are photographing an old rustic farmhouse. You could add even more character by using a line of fenceposts, or a gravel driveway, to lead

the eye into the picture. Or when photographing a waterfall, you could try going a little further downstream, to shoot the creek with the waterfall in the background for a more interesting angle.

Better Photography Tip#3. Sunset and Sunrise.

Everyone loves taking sunset (and sunrise) photos. A brilliant sunset sky can make a great photo, but you can make it even better by looking for a good subject in the foreground. The key is to find something that stands out against the sky, with a shape that people can identify; a tree, a windmill, even a row of power-lines. The subject does not have to dominate the photo; in fact it is probably best if it only takes up about ten percent of the composition so that the sky remains the starring attraction. But if you can create a striking silhouette, you will immediately add character to your sunset photograph.

Better Photography Tip#4. Animals (And People).

Portrait style photos, where the animal or human subject dominates a large part of the picture, are usually spoiled by a distracting background. When you take a photo of a friend, a pet, or an animal in the wild, you don't want the picture to be full of the people and objects around them.

So here's the trick. Don't stand close to your subject and take the photo with a regular or wide-angle lens. Stand further back and zoom in with your largest lens magnification. This will have two results. First, it will reduce the area behind and around the subject that is visible in the photo. Second, it will minimize the depth of field, which means only your subject should be in focus. Anything in front or behind will be out of focus, and will not cause a distraction in the photo.

Better Photography Tip#5. Concentrate.

Sometimes all it takes to make a photo a success is to move a little to the left or right, or zoom in or out just a little more. If you just point the camera in the right general direction and click, you are bound to fail most of the time. If you slow down and really examine what you can see in the viewfinder before you press the button, your success rate will improve.

Simple things to look out for include; trees and power-poles appearing to grow out of the head of the subject (move yourself or the subject to a better position); litter on the ground (pick it up); aircraft or distracting clouds in the sky (wait for them to pass by); blurry branches on a windy day (wait for conditions to settle for a moment). All these things and more can ruin a photo, and they can all be remedied by taking a good look to make sure your picture has captured everything you want, and nothing you don't want.

So there you have some easy tips for good photography without getting hung up on technology. Above all, pay attention to tip #5 and slow down to concentrate on what you are doing. The other golden rule is to take lots of photos. Experience will teach you a lot more than being told what to do. Remember with digital cameras it doesn't

cost you anything to keep on snapping. With patience and attention to detail, you will be taking better photos in no time – guaranteed!



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