

## 6 Easy Steps for Taking Remarkable Photos

By Chuck Palmer

Becoming a better photographer has much more to do with what you pay attention to than the camera you use to capture the moment. Becoming a better photographer is all about lighting, composition, framing, point of view, etc. Regardless of whether you take photos with your cell phone, point and shoot camera, or a DSLR, there are a few fundamental photography tips that can help you take better pictures.

The steps for taking remarkable photos outlined below certainly are not an all-inclusive summary of all you can do to improve your photography. However, following these easy steps will give you a firm foundation on which you can build your skills for making remarkable photos.

### Think Subject



We can study all the rules of composition, or better learn how to use our camera to improve our exposure, but if our subject is not interesting, or does not tell a story, the photo will have little interest to our viewers. Many photographers struggle to understand why they are taking the photograph, without thinking about the story they want to tell, or the main subject of their shot.

It may seem obvious but incorporating a strong and interesting subject in your photographs will catch your viewers' eye and engage them in the story you intended to tell. This is especially true in landscape photography. Capturing the entire wide-view of the landscape without including an element of interest that draws your viewer into your image often results in a missed opportunity for a remarkable photograph.

Find ways to create an interesting story by incorporating a strong subject that adds an element of interest in your photographs.

## Pay Attention to Your Background



Most professional photographers commonly blur the background in a portrait to minimize distractions as seen in the image above. Paying attention to backgrounds as well as our subject is a key step to making a remarkable photo.

A mistake for many photographers is that we get so focused on the photo subject that we forget there is a background that is also part of the frame. Pay attention to your background and your main subject. Often a better background that supports your story is just a couple steps away or is as simple as minimizing your range of sharpness by setting your f/stop to a lower number to blur what's behind your subject.

Place as much attention on your background as you do for your main subject for the most remarkable images.

## Change your Point of View



If we subscribe to the view that our most interesting photos are those where our viewer lingers the longest, then nothing will make our viewer linger longer than creating a unique point of view. Most people view their world at an adult standing height. So, nothing is more boring than seeing the same world they see every day in your photographs.

What helps add interest to your photographs is to constantly find new ways to capture the same scene. Bend your knees, shoot from above, give your viewers a bug's eye view of the subject. Keep experimenting with your camera position. For a remarkable photo, give your viewers a point of view they have never seen before.

Here's a great exercise. . . The next time you have your camera in your hands, no matter what you are shooting, challenge yourself to photograph the subject from 5 completely different viewpoints. Take the time to investigate different possibilities for framing the shot. Find those unique perspectives that help you create an interesting image you and your viewers will love.

## Look for “Good Light”



We have all taken a picture in intense sunlight where the harsh shadows and washed out colors are just not visually appealing. And we have all probably taken a photo an hour before sunset, or just after sunrise where the light is warm, rich in tones and colors. . . just plain beautiful!

Intuitively, we all know “Good Light” when we see it. That means we need to chase good light to add to the quality of our photographs. Whether we are shooting indoors or out, pursuing “Good Light” makes us a better photographer.

As already mentioned, when shooting outdoors, pursue the light at the end of the day or first thing in the morning. When shooting indoors, look for a window to take advantage of the natural soft light coming into the room. If you’re stuck in the harsh mid-day sun, manage the light by seeking the soft, diffused light in covered shade. The point is, the quality of light you pursue will go a long way to determining the quality of your photography. By becoming skilled at recognizing good light, you will be much better equipped to create remarkable photos.

## Shoot the Details



Another important way to improve the interestingness of your images is by looking for and capturing the small details that might go unnoticed as people go about their daily lives. By doing so, you open a whole new understanding of the world for your viewers.

Looking for the details and bringing these unique images to our viewers will most certainly please them. This might mean that you take a close-up image of the textures in a plant's leaves, or capture shadow patterns in the late afternoon sun, or even photographing the shapes and colors of fruit boxes discarded in an alleyway as in the image above.

Rather than just photographing the large scene, break it down and find the remarkable photos in the details. Looking for the small details also helps develop your creative eye and composition skills that can elevate all aspects of your photographic art.

## Slow Down



Digital photography has made photography a lot more accessible to more people. This is especially true since all our phones have excellent digital cameras on board. We are taking photos of everything! But the downside is that we can point and shoot at everything without worry that we will use all the room on our memory cards.

I remember in the days of film where there were limitations. Instead of taking an endless amount of shots, we had 24 or so shots per roll of film. We had to be thoughtful about the image we were about to capture.

If you want to improve your photography, slow down. Pretend you are shooting with film. By limiting the number of shots you take, you will be more selective. You will be more thoughtful about your subject, exposure, focus, composition, framing, and point of view. All the things that make up a remarkable photograph.

The next time you frame up a shot, take an extra 10 seconds to check your background, make sure your exposure is correct, the image is focused appropriately, the elements included tell an interesting story, and so on. This tip may just improve your photography more than any other tip on this list!

These six steps to taking remarkable photos are not a complete list of things you can do to improve your photography. But they do represent 6 fundamentals that will go a very long way to improving the quality of your photographs. Photography is just like any other art. Improving results takes time and practice. By spending quality time practicing the fundamentals, anyone can be a remarkable photographer.

Keep shooting and may only the remarkable photos always be yours.

Chuck