

# **Basic Techniques**

**Angles/Viewpoint, Rule of Thirds, and some other principles of composition**

# Low-angle shot

Taking a photograph from a low angle, also known as a “worm’s-eye view,” makes subjects appear larger than normal. The lens sees the scene from a point of humility while the subject towers over the world. A photograph taken from a low angle to help establish dominance or power.





# **The High-Angle shot**

**The high angle can be used to make a subject appear small or vulnerable. Commonly known as the "bird's-eye view," shots like these may be used to signal that a subject is in danger or has lost dominance in her environment.**











# The Dutch Angle

In the Dutch angle, the the camera is tilted so that the horizon line in the shot is not level with the bottom of the frame. It has been used in film often to create a sense of psychological trauma or anxiety. It can simply be used to disrupt an illusion of harmony.





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# Rule of thirds

Imagine that your image is divided into 9 equal segments by 2 vertical and 2 horizontal lines. The rule of thirds says that you should position the most important elements in your scene along these lines, or at the points where they intersect.

Doing so will add balance and interest to your photo. Some cameras even offer an option to superimpose a rule of thirds grid over the LCD screen, making it even easier to use.



The horizon and main subject in this photo have been positioned near lines or intersections for maximum impact.

Image by K. Praslowicz



Notice how the building and the horizon are aligned along rule-of-thirds lines.

Image by Trey Ratcliff.

# Balance



Here, the visual “weight” of the road sign is balanced by the building on the other side of the shot.

Image by Shannon Kokoska.

# Leading lines

When we look at a photo, our eyes are naturally drawn to the lines within it. Our eyes tend to follow the lines (whether man-made or natural) in the direction they flow; they “lead” us.

They can:

1. Show us where the focus of the picture is
2. Create depth in a photo
3. Guide your viewer through the whole scene





The jetski guides you across the image from left to right.

Image by Silentmind8.



The path in this photo naturally leads your eye through the scene to the church.

Image by Giuseppe.

# **Symmetry and Patterns**

**We are also drawn to and attracted by symmetry (or balance) and patterns. They can give a sense of stability and harmony.**

**But you can also use symmetry only to break it, and offset the balance you've created.**



The symmetry of this chapel is broken by the bucket in the bottom right corner.

Image by Fabio Montallo.

# Framing

Frames help us isolate our objects/subjects of interest in our pictures. The world is full of objects which can serve as natural frames, such as trees, buildings, archways, etc. Placing these at the edge of a composition will help you focus your image.





Here, the surrounding hills form a natural frame, and the piece of wood provides a focal point.

Image by Sally Crossthwaite.

# Cropping

Maximize the impact of your photo by cropping out all the unnecessary objects in the picture (the “noise”).



This photo is cropped well.



This photo should be cropped.



# Design principles to keep in mind

**Balance**

**Contrast**

**Repetition/rhythm**

**Unity**

**Emphasis**



# Guidelines courtesy of

“Ten Top Photography Composition Rules.” *Photography Mad.*

<https://www.photographymad.com/pages/view/10-top-photography-composition-rules>