

Getting great photos has more to do with what you fit in the frame than the equipment you use. Following a few basic principles of composition will result in vastly improved images.

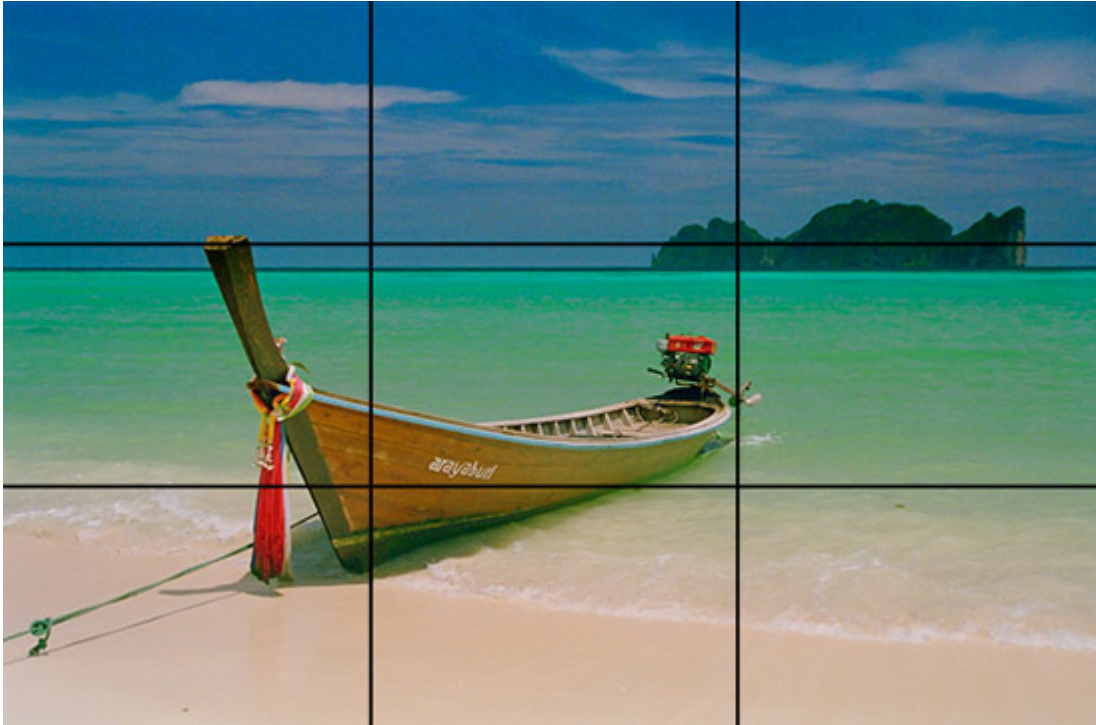
Composition refers to what you fit into the frame when taking a photo, so it makes sense that you think about what you actually want to capture in your image. There are some straight-forward rules to composition that if followed will result in better quality images.

One of the best things about [digital cameras](#) is that you can immediately review what you have taken. So if it hasn't turned out as hoped, the errors can be rectified straight away by taking another photo. And that's a big help when it comes to composition.

Rules are made to be broken, however. Once you have grasped the concept of good composition, you can think outside the square and bend the guidelines to produce some very different results. But as a basic guide, following these simple rules will help improve your images noticeably.

Rule of thirds:

This is probably the most recognised aspect of composition and does not only refer to photography. Painters have been applying this rule for centuries and many of the most famous works of art and the best photographs adhere to it. Essentially, the rule of thirds is dividing the frame into three vertical and three horizontal sections. Where the lines separating these sections intersect is the best place to position your subject. Of course, this is something that you need to visualise, but moving the focus away from the centre of the frame increases the emphasis on the subject. Using the focusing guides you see when looking through the viewfinder, such as the ones on [Canon cameras](#), can help you break up the frame.



Framing:

This is using the surroundings to enhance your subject and could be anything from bushes outside to a window inside or a door arch. Take note of what is available to you and think how it could be used to increase the focus on your subject.



Distractions:

You want to avoid anything at all that will detract from the subject of your photo. It can be something in the background, odd lighting, or even someone else in the picture. Just think that it is only your subject that you want, so have a close look at the surroundings and eliminate anything that has the potential to ruin it.



Use the lines:

If you find there are lines in your photo, such as walls, use them to your advantage. Position your subject so the lines lead to them, rather than away.



Get close:

The closer you get to your subject, the better you are going to be able to capture it and eliminate any distractions in the foreground and background. The best way to make the most of this rule is to remember to make your subject the centre of attention.



Explore angles:

Have a look at your subject from different angles and then decide which is the best one. It can't hurt to snap off a few shots from different vantage points to help you decide.



Break the rules:

Good composition takes practice and after a while you will find it comes naturally. Once you are comfortable with this, experiment by throwing away the rules for a while and get creative. Having the confidence to try different things can often result in the most striking images.

