



How To Take Better Instagram Photos Than Your Kids

7 mins read

Learn up your phone photography skills with these tips.

I've recently decided I wasn't going to grow the more and more my first Instagram account. After a few weeks of posting random photos of my neighbourhood, something hit home. Calling my son over I asked him "Hey uh, why do you like my Instagram photos?"

"No, because your photos are boring (uh) he laughed, hearing that, I can't say I wasn't a little hurt, but the boy was right. The next day, I decided to level up my Instagram game, and signed up for a phone photography class at the Community Centre. Here are some useful tips that I picked up!

It's all about the selfie

Selfies are synonymous with Instagram, so let's begin there! If you're tired of posting the same old poses as everyone else on social media, these pointers can help to add some 'bumpf' to your selfies.

Selfie Tip #1: Turn off the flash and use natural lighting



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

The first rule of selfieing is to pay attention to lighting - it's the best beauty product you don't have to pay for! Natural light that's soft and diffused is flattering to your complexion, and can help to mask blemishes like under-eye circles and freckles. If you're shooting indoors, stand beside a window to take advantage of the natural sunlight streaming in. Try angling your face to one side to achieve optimal side-lighting for that classic 'journalist' look!

Selfie Tip #2: The right angle changes everything



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

Finding your best angle can be challenging, but one thing for sure - looking into the camera straight on isn't going to produce the most flattering results, because most faces aren't naturally symmetrical!

Ty tilting your phone slightly up, down or to the side for a more interesting angle, won't be too hard for the sake of creating more of a higher camera angle makes your eyes look bigger and has a flattering effect on the face too! For the girls, shooting from a lower angle can make you look taller and more dynamic.

Selfie Tip #3: Look away from the camera



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

I get it, not everyone is a natural in front of the camera. Staring into the lens can be quite intense, leading to an awkward or feeling a little self-conscious. If you're an awkward selfie taker like me, one useful tip is to try looking to the side or at an object in the distance, as if you're deep in thought. It has the added bonus of producing shots that don't look like typical selfies. You can also try holding a prop like a coffee cup to make the picture a little more interesting.

Composition (no, not the ones you did in school)

The composition of a photo refers to how the elements within the shot are arranged. How you put things within the frame of your shot can help you tell a story, and is often the difference between a good and great shot.

Composition Tip #1: Rule of thirds



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

A quick way to ensure a decent shot is to apply the Rule of Thirds. Imagine your photo as a 3x3 grid, dividing it into 9 equal parts. Next, place the main subject of your photo along the grid lines or at their intersection points, like the subject in the photo above.

Aligning the subject like this creates a more interesting shot, rather than simply placing the subject at the center of the photo. If you're using an iPhone, you can turn on the Grid feature to see guidelines in the Camera app. To enable this feature, go to **Settings > Camera > Grid**.

Composition Tip #2: Use leading lines



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

Another technique you can apply is the use of leading lines to draw attention to the subject in your photos. Our eyes are naturally drawn to lines like paths or roads. Use them to "lead" the viewer's eye - in the example above, the straight road draws attention to the bus stop on the lake.

Composition Tip #3 - Add depth



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

You can also consider adding layers to your photos to make them more visually interesting. Rather than focusing directly on the subject, try including patterns or objects in the background and foreground. This often something to look at within each layer of the photo, and draws the viewer in.

Get creative

One of the great things about Instagram is that it's a platform that's all about personal expression. So don't be afraid to experiment, have fun and get those creative juices flowing!

Creative Tip #1: Symmetry



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

When two halves of your composition look the same and balance each other out, symmetry is achieved. Look for signs of symmetry both in nature and the man-made world. It's a great way for photographers to create visually pleasing and cohesive images.

Creative Tip #2: Patterns



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

The human brain likes patterns. Its repetitive nature suggests harmony and rhythm, which is why patterns appeal to our eyes much like music appeals to our ears. We're surrounded by patterns in our daily lives - you can seek inspiration from buildings, objects, and nature for all kinds of fascinating motifs.

Creative Tip #3: Colours



Image credit: @mikejonesphoto

Bright, vibrant colours are a great way to add a pop of energy to your pictures. Colours give off positive vibes and can make a great impact on your Instagram photos. They can even make a seemingly mundane scene look interesting and beautiful!

Taking better Instagram photos isn't difficult

There are just a few tips to get you started on the journey to taking up your phone photography skills. Now get out there, make your own personal style, and who knows, you may even impress a few of your kids along the way!

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