

# TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

HEWLETT PACKARD <http://www.hp.com>

*With a few tips you can master in an afternoon, you can consistently produce outstanding photos. The simplest suggestions usually make the biggest difference. Try putting these tips to use, and you'll be rewarded with better photographs. They're easy to learn, and all your photos will benefit from your newfound skills. Even a beginner can take professional-looking pictures suitable for framing/publishing..*

Your camera is charged up, your subject is posed and smiling, and you're seconds away from snapping the picture. But, is there anything you can do to improve the photo you're about to take?

#### BE PREPARED

Gather everything you'll need, such as a tripod, extra batteries, and any props you'll use. (A camera bag really comes in handy for transporting everything.) If you plan to take photos in wet weather, bring a plastic bag to protect your camera.

#### HOLD YOUR CAMERA STEADY

Camera movement causes most of the blurry pictures you see. Prevent your camera from shaking by planting your feet firmly on the ground, and then steady your upper body by tucking your elbows in close to your sides. If you feel unstable, use a tripod or try leaning against a wall or a tree. Gently press the shutter release in one motion; if you press too hard, you could jerk the camera downward.

#### GET CLOSER

Try to get within two to four feet of your subject. Ideal photo composition is 90 percent subject and 10 percent background. If you're photographing people, getting this cozy might seem awkward at first, but try it anyway—you'll get better photographs.

#### CUT THE CLUTTER

Nothing ruins a photo like stray objects that detract from your composition. If there's a phone wire, an aluminum can, or anything else unsightly, remove it from view by either rearranging the area or blocking it out of the frame. Also, notice how objects in your background interact with your subject. A plant that appears as if it's growing out of someone's head, for example, will ruin an otherwise great picture.

#### TAKE MORE PICTURES

Most of us are frugal with the number of pictures we take. But with a digital camera, you can simply delete the images you don't like, so don't hesitate to capture every memory. Why not fill the entire memory card with photos of your new puppy? The odds are better you'll take a few pictures that will really thrill you.

You know a great photo when you see one, and you've probably taken at least a handful of shots that stand above the rest. What is it about those photos that sets them apart, and how can you achieve similar results again?

#### FIND THE RIGHT LIGHTING

Use the flash sparingly, especially when photographing people. Natural light, such as the light coming in from a window, provides a more flattering tone and a higher-quality photo. For a dramatic effect, experiment with shadows created by natural light.

Another way to improve a picture's lighting is to use HP adaptive lighting technology. You'll achieve a better balance between light and dark areas, bringing details out of shadows. As a result, your photos will look more like what your eye sees.

#### REMOVE RED EYES

There are a few factors that cause people to have glowing eyes in photos, including the amount of pigment in their eyes. While red-eye isn't 100% preventable, you can take measures to avoid it.

- Snap pictures when your subjects aren't looking directly at you.
- Avoid using the flash whenever possible.
- If you decide to use the flash, turn on the

red-eye reduction flash on your HP camera.

If you've taken a photo that has red-eye, use HP's exclusive in-camera red-eye removal to automatically correct it. It's an instant way to edit your images before they even leave your camera!

#### TRY A NEW ANGLE

Get creative by using different angles. Get down on the ground or up on a chair, and look at your subject from a different perspective. Take time to find the best viewpoint and take several shots of the same subject from various angles.

#### DON'T SAY CHEESE

Sometimes you want a perfectly posed picture, such as a portrait of the kids with their grandparents. But you don't need to pose your subjects every time. Part of the beauty of digital photography is that it's much easier to capture life's candid moments. So forget "cheese" and tell a joke or two! Your subjects will look relaxed and natural, allowing for pictures with more personality.

#### AVOID THE BULL'S-EYE EFFECT

There's nothing wrong with placing your subject in the exact center of the frame, but there's nothing particularly interesting about it either. It's actually more aesthetically pleasing to place your subject off center than mid-frame.

We're referring to the rule of thirds, a trusted compositional technique. Here's how it works: In your mind's eye, divide the picture area into vertical and horizontal thirds (like a tic-tac-toe grid).

Rather than placing your subject directly in the center of the grid, try placing it on one of the four lines to create a more interesting picture. You might line up a human subject on line A or line B, for example. Or in a landscape photo, you could experiment by aligning the mountains or horizon on line 1 or 2. Use the rule of thirds to create a picture with a more dramatic sense of scale.

#### OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY

You don't have to travel far to find fascinating nature and wildlife ... just head into your backyard and look around. No matter where you live, outdoor photography will help you look at your world with new eyes - and improve your photo-taking skills, too.

**LIGHT IT RIGHT:** Using light to your advantage is what separates good photos from great ones. The best times to take pictures are usually early morning and early evening; the worst time is generally midday, when light is most harsh.

Let your camera be your guide. HP adaptive lighting technology is an exclusive HP Real Life technology that allows you to create pictures that look more like what you see with your own eyes. It balances brightness, preserves contrasts, and ensures details aren't lost.

And HP automatic white balance can help make photos look more realistic no matter what type of light you're in. Sun, shadow, dawn, dusk - HP cameras with this breakthrough technology will automatically find the right setting for each shot.

**NATURE UP CLOSE:** Perfect for shooting flowers, butterflies, and other aspects of the great outdoors, close-up photography reveals details the naked eye can't see. Close-ups isolate the subject from surrounding clutter. Learn more about Close-up photography.

HP cameras with a macro-shooting mode are great for taking close-up images when the focal point is very tight on the center of the subject. The camera automatically adjusts the aperture and shutter speed so that the subject will be sharper and clearer. This takes the background and foreground out of focus, so you can capture a single flower, leaf, or ladybug with crystal clarity.

**FARAWAY VIEWS:** Once you've mastered close-up shots of the natural world, broaden your horizons with wide-format pictures. Many HP cameras include an automatic landscape-

shooting mode so you can capture scenes with deep perspective, and keep the foreground and background in focus.

Mountain ranges, desert plateaus, and the ocean at sunset also provide amazing opportunities for memorable panoramic images. To make your photos unique, be sure to position a person, animal, or unusual landscape feature in the foreground of your photo.

HP in-camera panorama preview lets you see an outline from your first shot on the LCD so you can precisely line up the second shot. In-camera stitching combines up to five photos that can be reviewed on the LCD so you can see the whole panoramic picture. When downloaded to your PC, the pictures are easily stitched together to create a final, seamless panorama photo.

**GOING ABSTRACT:** Abstract photography is about capturing color, shape, and pattern to create an intense visual experience for the viewer. Begin with subjects that lend themselves to abstraction: leaves and water reflections, for example. Seek out interesting patterns and textures in tree branches and leaves. Objects you've never considered photographing will suddenly seem like prime subjects.

You can always use image-editing software to create unique effects in your photograph. HP Photosmart Essential has features that let you adjust color, lighting, and apply artistic effects to add a surreal quality to your pictures.

**ART SHOW:** There are so many creative ways to use your outdoor photos. Frame two or three images together as a series. Or save your favorites in a photo journal. Not only is a journal a great way to collect your best shots, but you can use it for practical purposes too, like recording plantings so you don't forget what will bloom where.

See how you can use your outdoor photos to make perfect presents in Sharing photos as gifts or make a Garden photo journal just for you.

#### BAD WEATHER

Bad weather doesn't mean bad pictures. It just changes your options and sets the stage for some unique photographic opportunities. In fact, rain can be a photographer's friend, intensifying colors and adding drama to just about any subject. These tips will help you get the most out of wet-weather photo shoots.

**TAKING THE PLUNGE:** Before you put on your rain gear and embrace the elements, follow these tips:

1. Always keep your camera inside your jacket or sweater to protect it during a downpour.
2. For added protection, use a plastic bag to waterproof your camera. Just cut a hole for your lens to poke through.
3. Keep a soft, clean cloth handy to wipe water droplets off the lens. Don't use a tissue directly on the lens. You may also consider getting a waterproof case for your camera.

**GRAY SKIES, GREAT PHOTOS:** Overcast skies can be used to your advantage. Color contrasts are muted on a gray day, and colors seem richer - creating the perfect setting for photos of trees and plants. And fog can subdue colors and soften objects in the background, making a lake or your neighborhood park look ethereal and mysterious.

HP digital cameras feature special shooting modes that adjust for lighting (i.e., beach, snow) and situation (i.e., macro for close-ups, portrait). Experiment with the action mode to freeze raindrops hitting a puddle, or a car's speeding tires flinging water. You can also capture wet scenes beautifully with black-and-white photography.

**AFTER THE STORM:** Storms and heavy rain intensify an image. A particularly good time for dramatic landscape pictures is right after a storm: the sun is beginning to break through, and billowing clouds can be seen in the distance. This combination of bright sun and dark skies creates an extraordinary backdrop: colors seem deeper, and objects glisten under the emerging rays of light.

To capture it all, try using the landscape-shooting mode on your HP camera - it provides great range and sharpness.

**CAPTURE A RAINBOW:** Rainbows always make stunning subjects. They're formed by the refraction of light through raindrops, and



you'll usually find these conditions before or after a summer storm. Act fast when you see a rainbow - a storm can recede quickly, and the moisture that creates rainbows can vanish in an instant. Rainbow photos are especially striking with other dominant objects in the frame, such as a mountain, body of water, or other natural feature.

**PORTRAIT IN A PUDDLE:** And what about the water at your feet? Think of all the interesting reflections you can capture in a puddle: trees, clouds, city lights. Include surroundings in the shot, too, like the soccer field and bleachers that the puddle reflects. And puddles attract kids like magnets - a great opportunity for candid shots and another reason to keep your digital camera handy.

**RAINY-DAY PHOTO PROJECTS:** Drizzly days are not only a good time to head outside with your camera - they're the perfect occasion to start a photo project. Enlarge a favorite rainy-day picture as a contemplative piece for your home office, or frame it for a housewarming gift. Gather snapshots for an album or scrapbook. Or e-mail a few photos to someone in a faraway, sunny place, just to share the joy of playing in the rain.

Get project ideas at the HP Activity Center to learn more about outdoor photography.

**SEE ALL ARTICLES AND GLOSSARIES**

**LEARN MORE**

Take a free online class in digital photography! Explore the many features of your digital camera, find tips for cropping and editing your images, and discover new ideas for sharing your photos in creative ways.

**On 12 JANUARY  
the world  
won't come to an  
end, but you will have  
missed your chance  
to be in our  
state of the art  
ANNUAL for 2006.**

**For full details see  
page 29 of our October  
issue (and take note  
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