

- <http://digital-photography-school.com/five-ways-improve-eye-composition/>

5 ways to improve your Photography

An eye for composition is one of the things that elevates the work of the best photographers above the rest. One of the best ways to learn about composition is focus on applying one idea at a time. You can treat it as an exercise that will help you improve your composition skills, the same way that piano players practice scales. Here are five ideas to get you started.

Use a single lens



Lenses have an enormous influence on the look of a photo, and the best way to learn exactly what effect they have is to spend some time using just one lens. Ideally it would be a prime lens, but if you have a zoom lens you can tape it so that the focal length does not alter. Some lenses have a lock you can use.

Telephoto lenses



Telephoto lenses (here, an 85mm, on a full-frame camera) help you exclude the background by cropping it and using a wide aperture to throw it out of focus.

Black & white



In the black and white photo here, notice the shapes in the photo? I'm referring to the white rectangle of the cinema screen (yes, that's what it is), the shapes of the Chinese letters and the diamond pattern in the stones on the ground. All these things are easier to see in black and white.

Repeating patterns and shapes



Another thing to look out for is repeating patterns and shapes. Notice that the repeating shapes of the cards made an interesting composition.

There are two strong elements to this photo. The first is the pattern formed by the lines of cards. The second is the lines created by the shelf edges and the cards themselves. This photo was taken at an angle so the lines created by the shelves moved diagonally across the frame.

Lines



Straight lines (like the horizon) stretch across from one side of the image to the other. Horizontal lines can create a peaceful feeling, whereas diagonal lines are exciting and dynamic. Vertical lines fall somewhere in-between. A wide angle lens (18mm) exaggerates the perspective and adds depth to the scene.

Negative space



Negative space is the empty space in a photo. You may have read that you can improve a photo by getting closer to the subject. This is often true, but there are times when you need to step back and give the subject room to breathe.