

PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE

- 1. Pay attention to framing.** Nothing ruins a nice photo faster than distracting elements in the background. Don't get so focused on the photo's subject that you ignore what else is going on around them. Watch out for poles, trees and power lines, and look all the way around the edges of the frame, asking, "Is this what I really want in my photo?"
- 2. Learn the Rule of Thirds.** One of the most popular rules of composition—the Rule of Thirds—dictates that you imagine the viewfinder is divided into thirds, both horizontally and vertically. This grid creates four intersection points. Place your subject where the lines intersect, instead of in the center of the frame.
- 3. Every image has a foreground and a background.** How you want people to view your picture determines what you do with the foreground and background. For example, zooming in, and choosing a large aperture setting, blurs the background while keeping your subject sharp. This is a pleasing effect for portraits. Conversely, zooming out to a wide angle setting, and choosing a small aperture, allow you to show the subject and their surroundings in more equal focus. Have your subject prominent in the foreground, and use the background to tell more about the subject or the environment.
- 4. Change your angle of view.** Try kneeling, or even putting the camera on the ground. Climb a flight of stairs so you're higher than the subject you're photographing. Digital cameras with twist and tilt LCD screens are ideal for this. Changing angles provides a fresh perspective, and makes for a more dramatic photograph.
- 5. Look for elements in a scene that draws a viewer's eyes through the photo.** A winding path, a row of telephone poles or even a line of chairs at the beach can serve as elements in a good photo.
- 6. Keep your eyes open for patterns in nature or man-made objects.** Interesting photos can be made of the waves and patterns created by drifting snow, a flock of birds flying in formation or pipes stacked at a construction site.
- 7. Try getting in close.** Look for texture in the wrinkles of a face or the bark of a tree. Hands can say a lot about a person. Pay attention to the details.
- 8. Cropping brings a photo to life.** If you edit photos on your computer, you are no longer constrained by the standard 4 x 6-inch, 5 x 7, or 8 x 10 formats. Look at each photo carefully and think about what you really want people to see and react to, then crop everything else away. Try some unusual shapes, like wide horizontals or narrow verticals.