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Hold camera at the subject's eye level to capture the power of those magnetic gazes and mesmerizing smiles. For kids and pets that means getting down on their level to take the picture. They don't have to look directly into the camera, the eye level angle by itself will create a personal and inviting feeling.

### 2) Use A Plain Background

Before taking a picture, check the area behind your subject. Lookout for trees or poles sprouting from your subject's head. A cluttered background will be distracting while a plain background will emphasize your subject.

### 3) Use Flash Outdoors

Even outdoors, use the fill flash setting on the camera to improve your pictures. Use it in bright sunlight to lighten dark shadows under the eyes and nose, especially when the sun is directly overhead or behind your subject. Use it on cloudy days, to brighten up faces and make them stand out from the background.

### 4) Move In Close

To create impactful pictures, move in close and fill your picture with the subject. Move a few steps closer or use the zoom until the subject fills the viewfinder. You will eliminate background distractions and show off the details of your subject. For small objects, use the camera's macro or flower mode to get sharp close-ups.

### 5) Take Some Vertical Pictures

Many subjects look better in a vertical picture . from the Eiffel Tower to portraits of your friends. Make a conscious effort to turn your camera sideways and take some vertical pictures.

### 6) Lock The Focus

Lock the focus to create a sharp picture of off-center subjects. To do this:

Center the subject

Press the shutter button halfway down

Re-frame your picture (while still holding the shutter button half down)

Finish by pressing the shutter button all the way

### 7) Move It From The Middle

Bring your picture to life simply by placing your subject off-center. Imagine a tic-tac-toe grid in your viewfinder. Now place your subject at one of the intersections of the lines. Since most cameras focus on whatever's in the middle, remember to lock the focus on your subject before re-framing the shot.

### 8) Know Your Flash's Range

Pictures taken beyond the maximum flash range will be too dark. For many cameras that's only ten feet - about four steps away. Check you manual to be sure. If the subject is further than ten feet from the camera, the picture may be too dark.



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Great light makes great pictures. Study the effects of light in your pictures. For people pictures, choose the soft lighting of cloudy days. Avoid overhead sunlight that casts harsh shadows across faces. For scenic pictures, use the long shadows and color of early and late daylight.

#### 10) Be A Picture Director

Take an extra minute and become a picture director, not just a passive picture-taker. Add some props, rearrange your subjects, or try a different viewpoint. Bring your subjects together and let their personalities shine. Then watch your pictures dramatically improve.