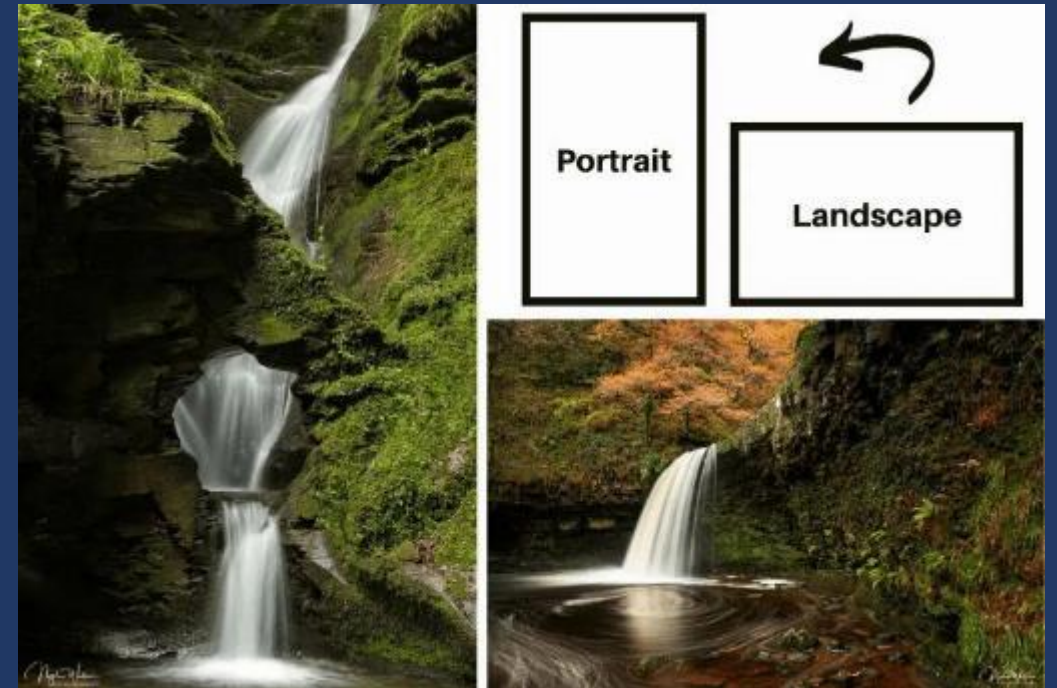
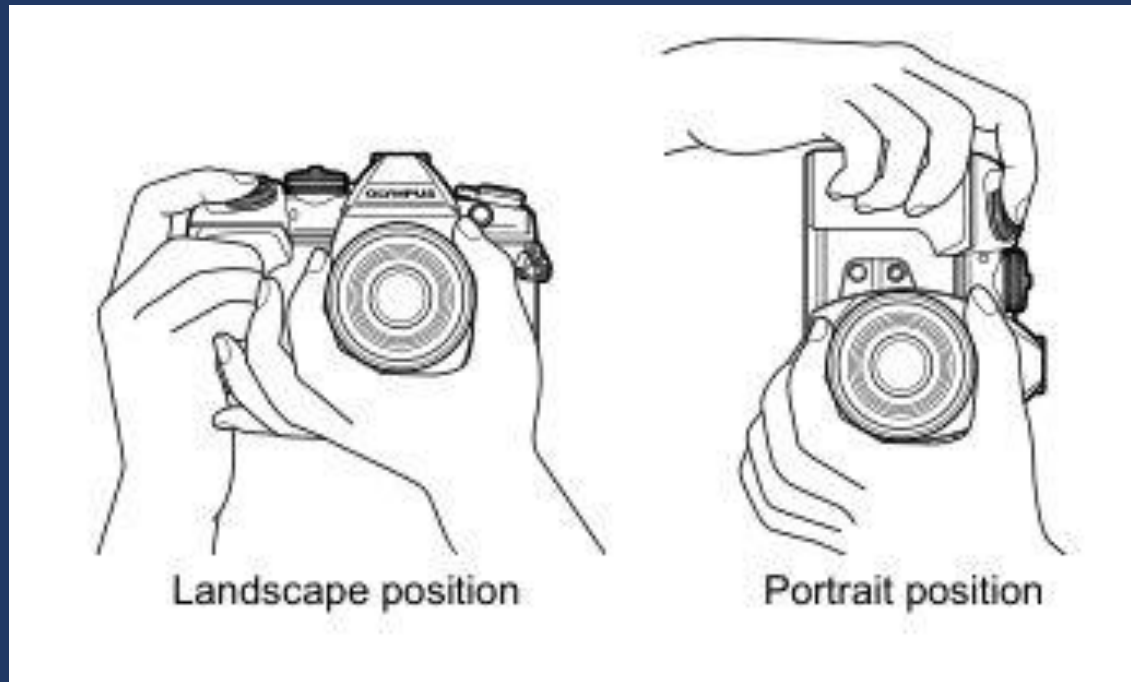


Simple Composition Techniques #1

Portrait and Landscape Orientation

Camera Orientation

The easiest thing you can do to affect your photo composition is to change how the camera is orientated, i.e. hold it in Portrait or Landscape **orientation**.



Portrait Orientation



Portrait orientation is ideal for photographing people, but also tall things like trees and buildings etc.

Our bodies and faces are tall and narrow, so this orientation matches how we normally see other people. The result is a pleasing, natural image.

You can also photograph the entire body without being far away, so this results in a closer, more intimate image.

In portrait orientation we lose the elements to the sides, so the subject will be the main focus of the image.

Whether it's a person or thing, your subject takes up most of the frame.

Portrait Orientation



Portraits in “Horizontal Orientation”

We don't always have to take pictures of people in a vertical orientation.

Benefits of Portraits in landscape format include....

- When viewing on a laptop or computer monitor, the landscape images fill the screen
- Landscape orientation images can more easily be cropped to portrait than the other way around
- Landscape allows for “negative space” to give your subject room within the frame
- Landscape allows you to include the environment to add context

Portraits in “Horizontal Orientation”



What is a Landscape ?

Definition: “A landscape is the visible features of an area of land, its landforms, and how they integrate with natural or man-made features.”

Related words....

Scenery: the natural features of a landscape considered in terms of their appearance, especially when picturesque

Setting: relating the scene to its time and geographic location

Picturesque: a beautiful view, which could be a painting

View: the sight of a landscape; an area viewed by the eye from one point



Landscape Orientation

Landscape orientation is ideal for photographing natural places, where you want to capture as much of the view as possible. It can also be used for cityscapes. It also allows for greater depth and scale and helps you fit many different elements into one image.

If the image is intended to be viewed on a monitor or TV screen, landscape orientation is a better fit for the screen, allowing the whole image to be viewed without black side-bars, or reducing the image size.

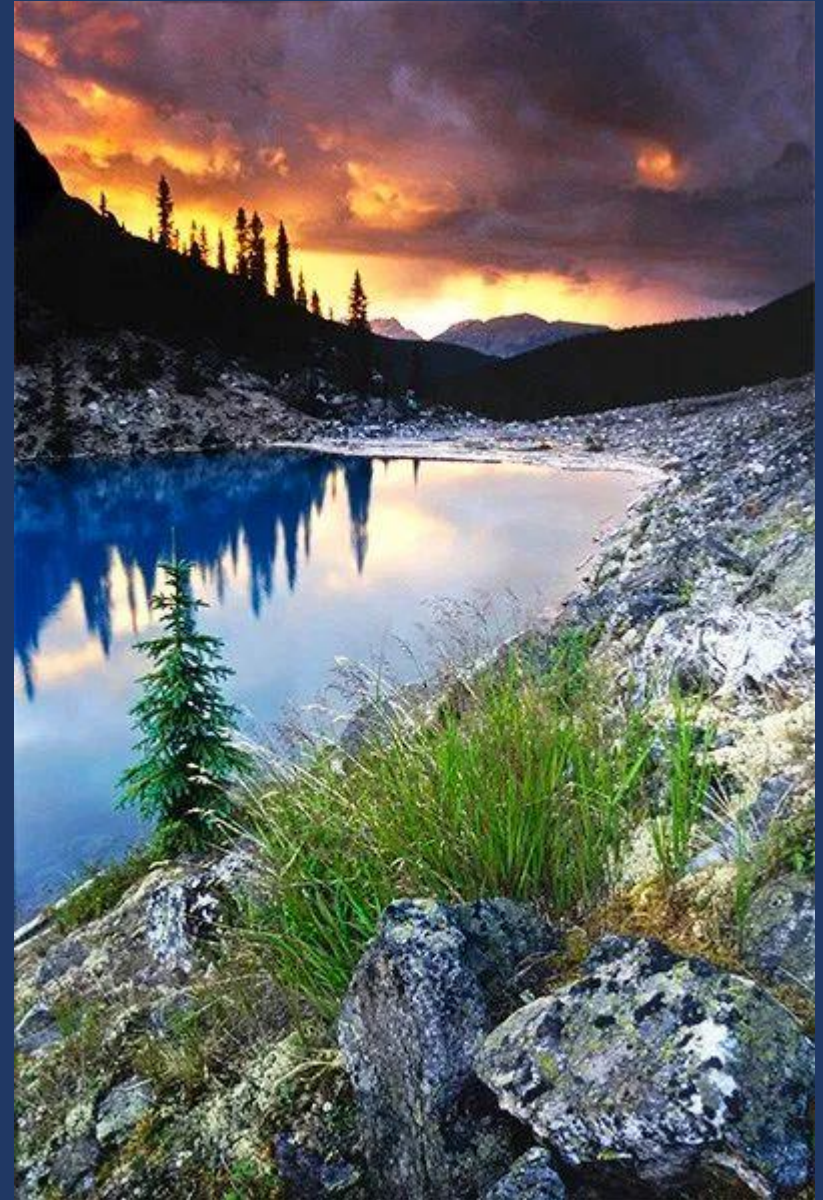


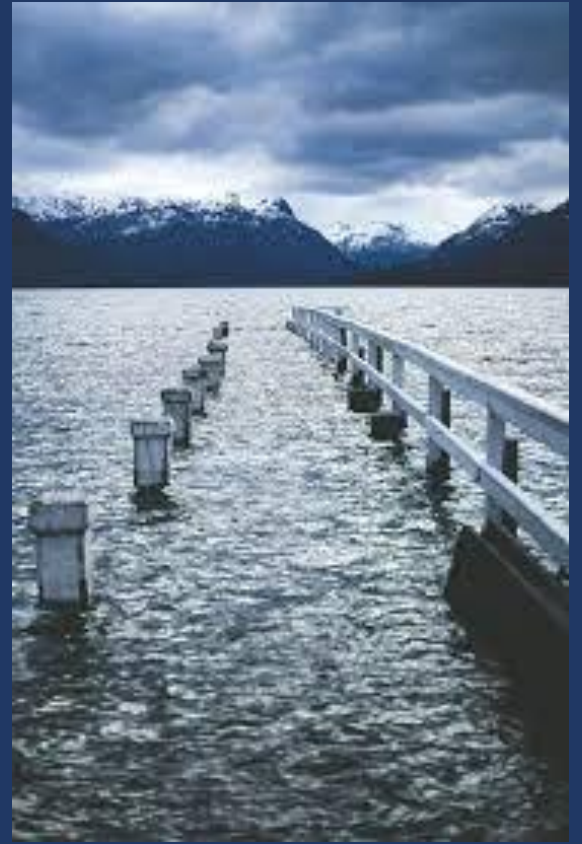
Landscape in Vertical Orientation

We don't always have to take Landscapes in a horizontal orientation.

Benefits of Landscapes in portrait format include....

- We can include more of the foreground
- We can add dynamism to the photo
- We can include “leading lines” to the subject
- Portrait orientation also allows for **negative space** to give your subject room within the frame.
- It helps our photo to stand out – be different !





Landscape in “Vertical Orientation”

Technique 1 - Recap

You can easily change the camera orientation in almost every camera.

It doesn't require any other camera settings to work, just your hands !

So next time, try holding your camera in both Portrait or Landscape orientation

Or even better, why not take 2 images and see which you prefer !



Portrait:



Landscape:

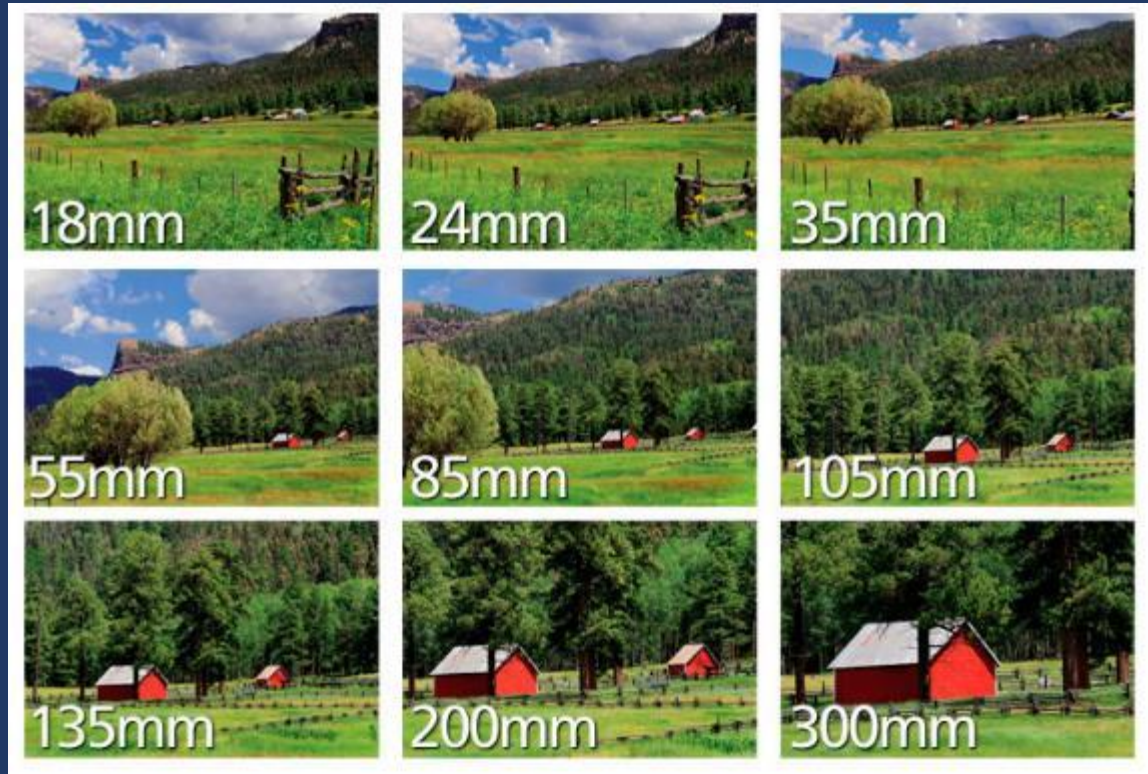


Simple Composition Techniques #2

Wide Angle versus Telephoto

Part 2 – to zoom in or not ?

The next easiest way to affect composition is using the zoom, if our camera has one. Notice how the image changes as we zoom. (Not all lenses have this zoom range !)



Depending on our lens, we can go from a wide view to isolating one object, even at a distance.

Zoom controls

Many cameras will have an option to zoom into the scene. Using magnification, this makes distant objects larger in the frame, making them appear closer to us.

We change the zoom using a “W/T” button, or by turning the lens. “W” stands for “Wide-angle” and “T” for “Telephoto”.

Some cameras have “+” and “-” buttons instead. The “+” acts the same as “T” and the “-” the same as “W”.

Sometimes, this zoom action makes the lens extend (get longer), but not always.

Some cameras cannot do this – they have a fixed lens. We call these “Prime” lenses.



What happens when you zoom #1

By zooming, we can make distant objects larger in the frame and appear closer to the camera than they actually are.

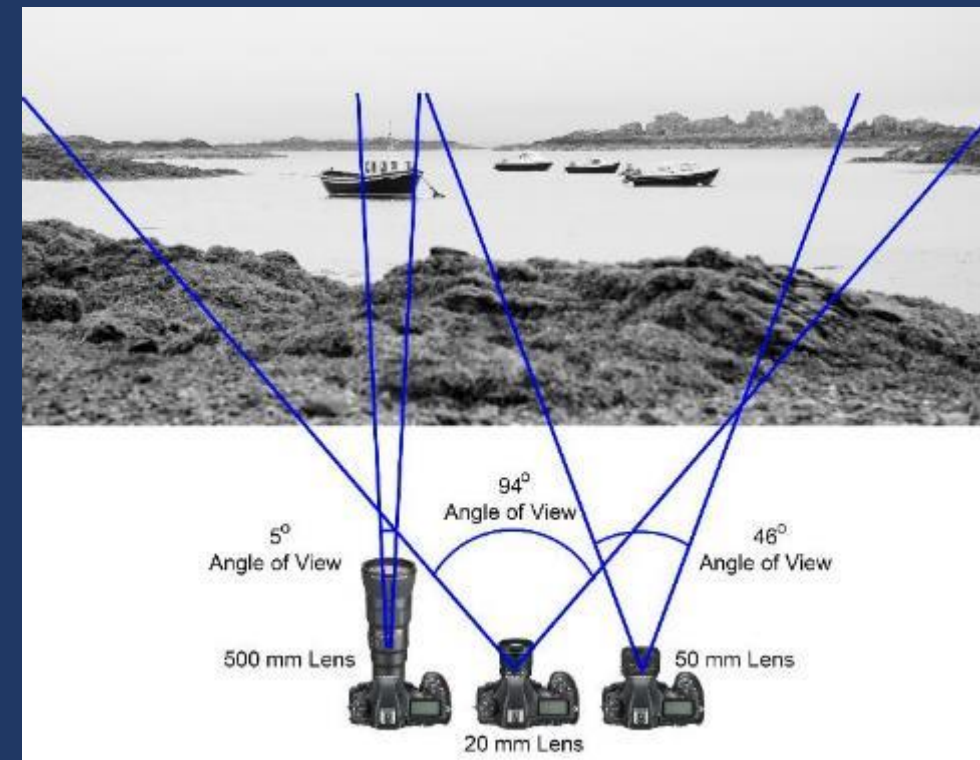
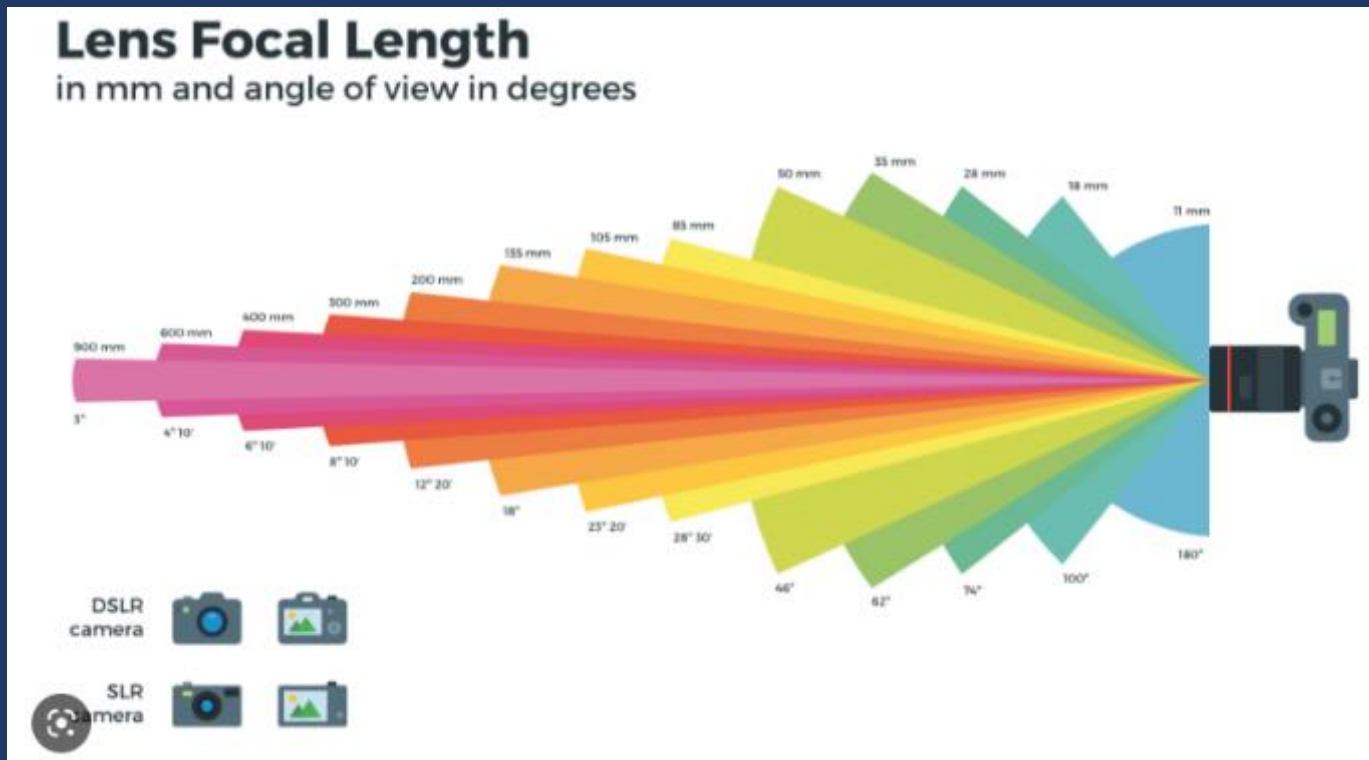
This can be ideal for photographers who are unable to be close to their subjects—either due to physical constraints, or out of concern for safety.



What happens when you zoom #2

A wide-angle lens provides a wide field of view and allows you to capture more of the scene in front of you. As we begin to use the telephoto zoom, the field of view narrows.

At extreme zoom, we may have a close up, but a very narrow field of view.

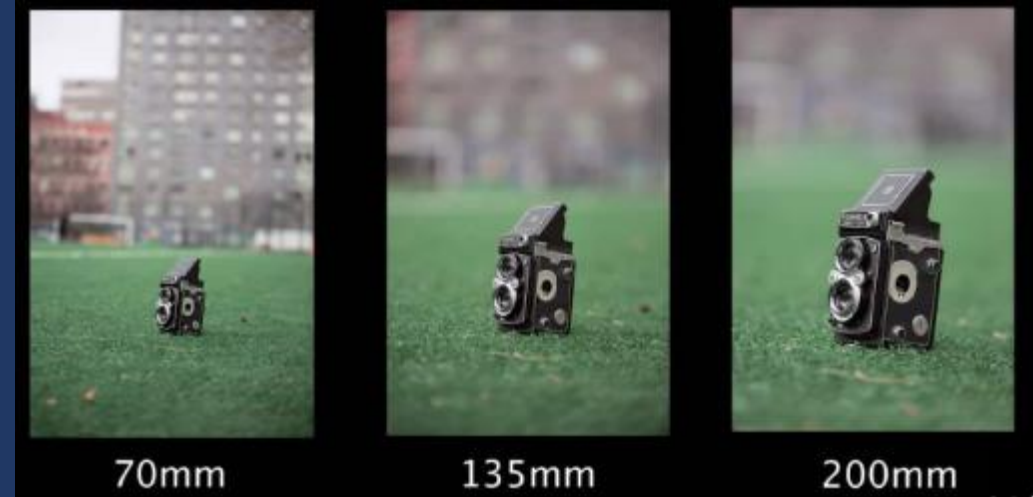


What happens when you zoom #3

“Depth of field” decreases with longer focal lengths.

So, if you need to create a “shallow depth of field” and blur the background, it can be done by using a telephoto lens.

Note : the telephoto lens does not really alter the depth of field, but brings the blurry background closer. This gives the appearance of having more blur.



What happens when you zoom #4

Telephoto lenses affect the relative size of your subject to the background and compresses them together.

This makes your background look bigger and closer to your subject—as if your subject is leaning against the background.

You can use this for creative effects, such as holding the sun !



What focal length should I use ?

24mm and below produces wide views for landscapes.

NB - distortion may start to appear at very wide angles (low focal length).



What focal length should I use ?

50mm produces natural looking results



What focal length should I use ?

Use 85mm and 135mm for sharp portraits with a blurred background.

A smartphone camera's "portrait mode" mimics an 85mm lens.



What focal length should I use ?

Use 200mm and above for wildlife or distant subjects



Technique 2 - Recap

Most of the time, we use our zoom to bring distant objects closer.

Think about also using zoom to

- Isolate the subject (get a blurred background)
- Narrow the field of view (remove unwanted objects from the frame)
- Take portraits from a distance to avoid distressing the subject

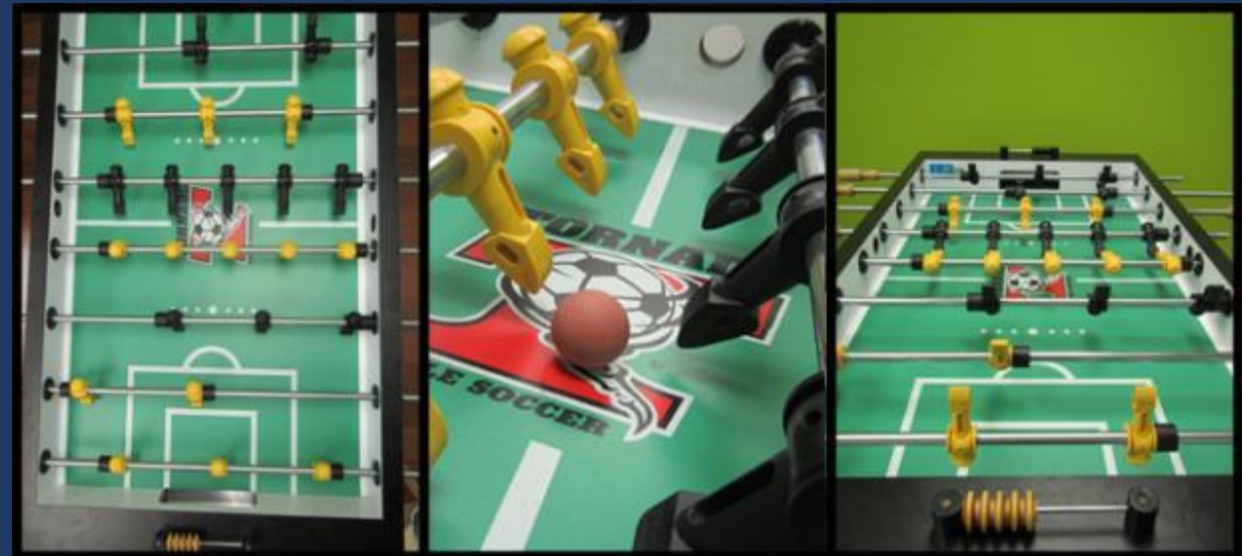


Simple Composition Techniques #3

Change Perspective by moving

Easy Composition #3 – Move yourself/camera !

Simply standing in a different position, or changing where we point the camera can produce markedly different images



Perspective in Photography

Perspective is one of the most important tools you can learn to take better images.

We all see the world through the same human eyes, so **changing elements in our photos can make them appear more interesting to the viewer.**

Perspective in Photography is also about adding depth and creating a three-dimensional scene within a two-dimensional photograph.

We achieve this by influencing the viewer's perception of the objects within an image.



Physical changes affecting Perspective

We can alter the perspective by changing where we place the camera.

When looking at a photograph, our brains automatically assume that the camera is close to the ground and the horizon is far away.

Instead of keeping the horizon central in the frame, as in the first image, if we move it up in the frame, we see more of the foreground (2nd image).

If we move it down, we see more of the sky, as in the 3rd image.

Moving the horizon up or down adds depth to our images.



Physical changes affecting Perspective

We can alter the perspective by changing where we place the camera.

Instead of shooting at eye level, place your camera close to the ground, to achieve a very different point of view.

This will also emphasise the foreground of your image, which adds depth.

Shooting people from low down also makes them seem taller and more powerful.



Physical changes affecting Perspective

If it's not possible to get down, try taking images with your camera held at waist level.

This will give you a different view of the world and will add interest to your images.

If you're photographing small children, try to get your camera level with their eyes/head, to show the world from their level.

This technique is also very useful for street photography, as it can hide that you're taking a photograph, resulting in more natural (candid) images.



Shooting up/down and Perspective

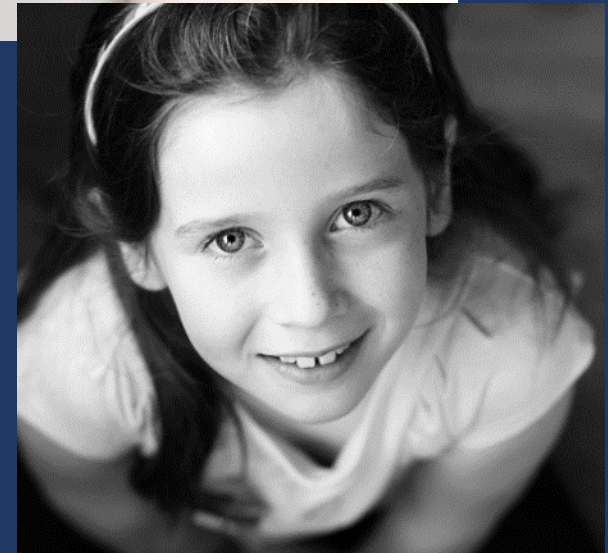
If you don't want to climb up on objects, or get down on the ground, you can still alter perspective by aiming your camera up or down.

When you aim your camera up, objects appear larger.

If you aim your camera down, you will create the illusion of a small subject.

When shooting straight down at children and animals, you create an image with a small body and large head.

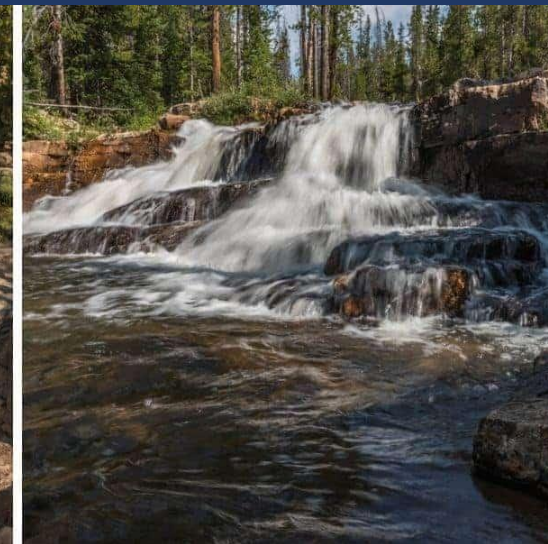
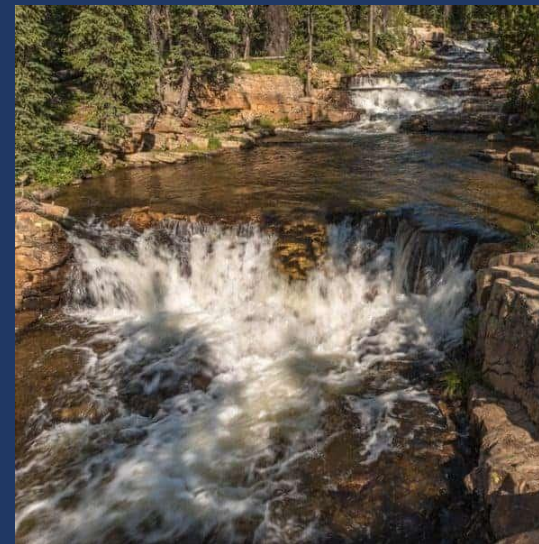
This can make your subject look more endearing (adds emotional appeal).



Technique 3 - Recap

Changing perspective in photography can help to improve our photos, by making them more interesting.

So when taking photos, don't forget to MOVE and try shots from different positions and angles !



Summary

Today, we have covered 3 easy ways to affect our image composition....

- Using Portrait and Landscape Orientation to change the shape of our image
- Zooming in and out of the scene
- Changing where we stand and how we position the camera to affect Perspective