



**Primary
Health
Care
Research &
Information
Service**

Fact Sheet

Taking great photos for publication

Sarah Eckermann, Ellen McIntyre

Photography, as a powerful medium of expression and communications, offers an infinite variety of perception, interpretation and execution. – Ansel Adams

Photographs are an excellent way to liven up a publication, be it a report, newsletter, manuscript, presentation, or flyer. When used well, photographs will add to the reader's understanding of your work. In this fact sheet, we give you the tips you need to take great photos for publication.

Getting ready

The camera

- ▶ A digital camera is preferable: it will make uploading images so much easier.
- ▶ Photos taken with a film camera can be uploaded using a scanner. However, ultimately the picture quality will suffer and it is a time consuming process.
- ▶ Know how to use your camera: digital cameras come with many features such as auto focus, auto flash and white balance making picture taking easy, however, there will be a few occasions when you will want to override these features – so take the time to look at the instructions before you start.

Before you start

- ▶ Prepare your camera for the occasion – recharge it and re-familiarise yourself with the controls.
- ▶ Have a suitable memory card available, check there is enough memory left on it.
- ▶ Having a spare battery and memory card are excellent backups – if you are going overseas remember to also take a socket adaptor.
- ▶ Take some time to think about the type of photos you want to take and how and where they will be used.

Understanding flash

Flash can dramatically enhance your pictures when used correctly:

- ▶ You can help prevent red eye from flash by asking your subjects to look over your shoulder rather than directly at the camera.

- ▶ Flash need not only be used at night. Flash can be used to enhance daytime pictures e.g. fill flash is a feature that can be used on sunny days to lighten dark areas under the eyes.
- ▶ Flash will only be effective when used at the right distance - about four feet from the subject.

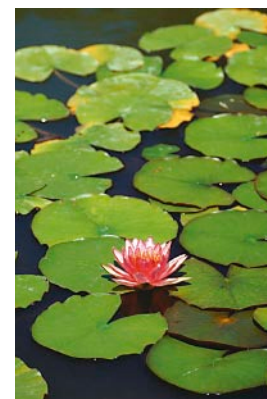
Getting the shot

Composition

Good composition is essential ... [it] allows you to convey messages and emotions through the images that you shoot.¹

Consider:

- ▶ The angle: Create visual interest by choosing unusual angles from which to take your picture.
“Look for angles that are interesting and demonstrate the mood and inspiration you're trying to capture.”¹
- ▶ Balance: try and achieve a balance of colour, light and depth in your picture.
- ▶ Perspective: include an object that will give the image a sense of perspective. In large landscape shots include a person to show the magnitude; in a seminar try including the podium with the speaker, it will create a sense of drama.
- ▶ Move in close: cut distractions out of your picture by moving in close on your subject; your aim is to fill the picture with the subject.
- ▶ Use a plain background: this will keep the focus on your subject; bright, colourful objects or signs and letters directly behind the subject of your photo will detract from it.²
- ▶ Place your subject off centre to create visual interest.



Taking great photos for publication

Examples:



This photo of Michael Quinn Patton at the 2005 GP & PHC Research Conference is close up, off centre, with a clear background so that there are few distracting elements.



The photo of Larry Green (left) is not as effective because of the distracting background, it would have been better had the photographer changed their point of view, ensuring the

poster remained in the shot but not behind the subject. The photograph is successful in that it is shot from an interesting angle and includes the speaker's podium providing perspective.

Light

Light is the most important factor influencing the quality of your photograph. You can find the best time to shoot your picture by understanding the way light will affect your picture at different times of the day.

Inside:

- ▶ Shoot near windows and natural light, have your subject face the light and take the photo between them and the source of light.³
- ▶ Use fill flash to create extra light inside.
- ▶ When shooting indoors you may find your pictures come out green under fluorescent light and orange under tungsten light (normal house globes). Counteract this is by switching your camera's default "white balance" to tungsten or fluorescent.

Outside:

- ▶ Sunlight directly overhead – creates bright light and harsh shadows and squinting; at these times it is better to shoot in the shade.⁴
- ▶ Overcast or afternoon – ideal for shooting, sun is not as bright and shadows are reduced, subjects are less likely to be squinting and there are no dark shadows under eyes and caps.
- ▶ Night – use flash or fill flash.

Using your pictures

- ▶ Always include the names of your subject(s) or provide a caption for the photograph.
- ▶ Make sure the photo relates to the article, a picture says a thousand words – so make them count.
- ▶ Use editing programs such as Photoshop to edit your images – reduce red eye/brightening/enhancing colour/cropping etc.

By following these simple tips you'll soon be publishing photographs Ansel Adams and Annie Leibovitz would be proud of.

Useful Resources

Practice your photography with these interactive tips on the Kodak website: http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=38/39/6369&pq-locale=en_US

Having the same problems again and again try this interactive troubleshooting resource: http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=38/39/6369/734&pq-locale=en_US

References

1. **Taking better pictures: composition**
By Kleber Stephenson
<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/learnmore/composition.msp>
Accessed 26/10/06
2. **Taking Pictures**
http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=38&pq-locale=en_US&_requestid=9587
Accessed 26/10/06
3. **Taking Pictures**
http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=38/39/6370/339/424&pq-locale=en_US
Accessed 26/10/06
4. **Making Photographs**
a tutorial by Philip Greenspun
<http://photo.net/learn/making-photographs/light>
Accessed 12/4/07



To contact PHC RIS:

Phone: +61 8 8204 5399
Web: www.phcris.org.au
PHC RIS Assist: 1800 025 882
Email: phcris@flinders.edu.au

Publication date: May 2007