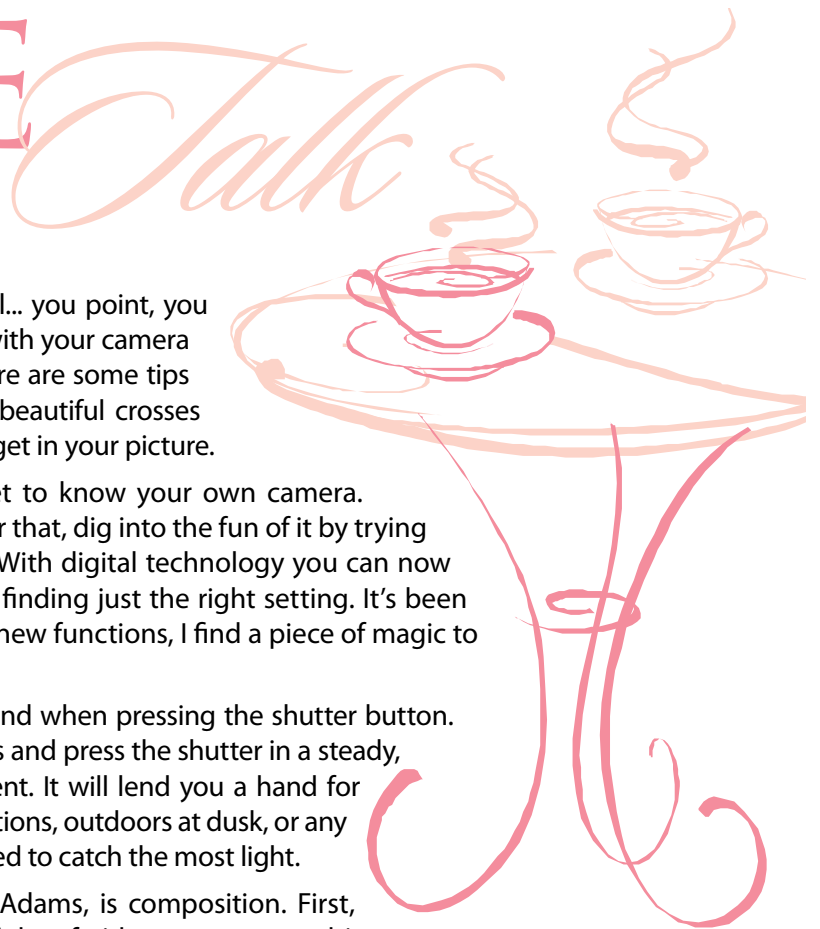


COFFEE



We've all been there... you see something beautiful... you point, you shoot, you upload, you frown. What you captured with your camera is not the striking sight you saw with your eyes. Here are some tips and tricks to make sure the next time something beautiful crosses your path, what you see with your eyes is what you get in your picture.

The first and most important suggestion is to get to know your own camera. Reading your manual is the best place to start. After that, dig into the fun of it by trying out the various settings your camera has to offer. With digital technology you can now afford to make hundreds of wrong choices before finding just the right setting. It's been my experience that every time I let myself explore new functions, I find a piece of magic to enhance my photos.

The key to taking clear, crisp pictures is a steady hand when pressing the shutter button. Be sure to always hold your camera with both hands and press the shutter in a steady, confident fashion. A tripod is also a great investment. It will lend you a hand for those pictures you want to capture in low-light situations, outdoors at dusk, or any other time you will want to extend your shutter speed to catch the most light.

Your next step to you becoming the next Ansel Adams, is composition. First, decide what your main subject is going to be. Don't be afraid to move your subject or yourself around until you see the look you're going for in your viewfinder. But, remember to always be aware of your background. We've all seen an amazing shot, only to realize that something or someone is causing a distraction in the background. Keep your eye out for trees, branches, or anything else that might appear to be growing out of your subject's head.

Another way to ensure a great composition is using the popular "Rule of Thirds". Imagine a tic-tac-toe grid each time you look into your viewfinder. Placing your subject on or at the intersection of any of those lines will not only create interest, but add depth to your picture. To follow the rule of thirds and maintain focus on your subject, simply centre your main subject in your viewfinder, press the shutter half way, then, while still holding, move your subject into position in the frame and press down the rest of the way.

Other quick key points to composing your photos is to ensure your horizon is always straight, and remember that not every shot needs to be a horizontal frame. Don't be afraid to tip your camera for some beautiful vertical shots as well.

To really depict a special moment, most times it's better to get right to the heart of the situation, and disregard all the business in the background. To do this, simply zoom in. Be sure to utilize the optical zoom in your camera as much as you possibly can. Many cameras will typically only allow you to get as close as a foot or two, but for more intricate subjects you may need to step closer or use your 'macro' setting, available on many digital cameras.

To avoid squinty smiles in your outdoor pics on a sunny day, try moving your subject to the shade of a nearby tree, and use your camera's flash as a fill light. This tip is also great for overcast days. The only thing you have to keep in mind is that your flash will only reach so far. In most cameras, you will find it shines for five or ten feet.

With the summer and its long, beautiful days on the way, stunning photos are literally at your fingertips! Be sure to get out there, have a great time, and take some of your best pictures yet.

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To read the entire article, or to learn more visit www.hicspics.ca.

