

Composition Toolbox

Here is a list of compositional aids that you may want to consider. No specific order - just ideas that may help create a picture that helps 'snag' the viewer and avoid distracting elements.

Simplify

Fill the frame (or eliminate all unwanted elements)

Use natural frames

Reflections

Repetitions

Selective focus

Movement

Subject placement - Rule of thirds, Golden ratio, Diagonals.

Leading lines

Background

Foreground interest

Gesture (expression, pose)

Other thoughts.

Ask yourself 'What is this a picture of?' Sounds obvious! It can help you to identify/think about the main subject and structure your composition around it.

Format

Landscape or portrait is an obvious choice but you could also go beyond that. Camera's tend to take pictures in the 3:4 ratio. You may want to try 16:9, 15x5 letterbox, square format or maybe panorama. The crop may have to come in post but if you have that in mind when you compose the shot it can help. To pre-visualise the image format a set of card mounts with windows cut in the various format ratios might help, or two card Ls can also work.