

## Taking Pictures and Videos with Cell Phones

Summer vacations are here and what better way to capture the moment than with a photo or video of the event. Today many people simply use their cell phone (or tablet) to snap that photo. Every year the cameras in these devices get better and better. If you are a photographer, when shopping for a new cell phone or tablet, realize that the devices with the better cameras usually are the more expensive models. I'm talking here mainly about Android cell phones. Most people would agree that all newer iPhones take amazing photos.

### Photo Tips

Here are a few tips to help you become a better photographer. (Note: Depending on your cell phone model some of these tips may not work for you.)

- **Turn the phone horizontal:** Almost always turn your cell phone horizontal (with the volume buttons up) when taking photos and always when taking videos. You will capture more of the scene and fill whatever screen you show them on. (Note: Computer and HDTV screens have a larger horizontal dimension than a vertical dimension so you will want to fill them with your gorgeous photos and videos. If you don't turn the phone horizontal you end up with skinny pictures on those big screens.)

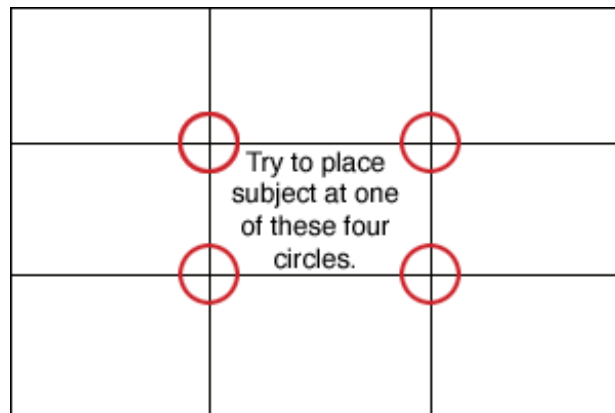


- **Volume Buttons:** An added benefit to turning your phone horizontal is that the volume buttons are in a more natural position to use as a shutter button making it much easier to take the shot. This is especially handy in bright sunlight when you can't always see the button to press on the screen and you can hold the phone more

steady when taking the picture. The volume buttons will also start and stop a video.



- **Use the rule of thirds:** Divide the frame into thirds horizontally and vertically. Then place the subject of your photo as close to the 4 intersections as possible. In other words, don't always place the subject directly in the center of the photo.

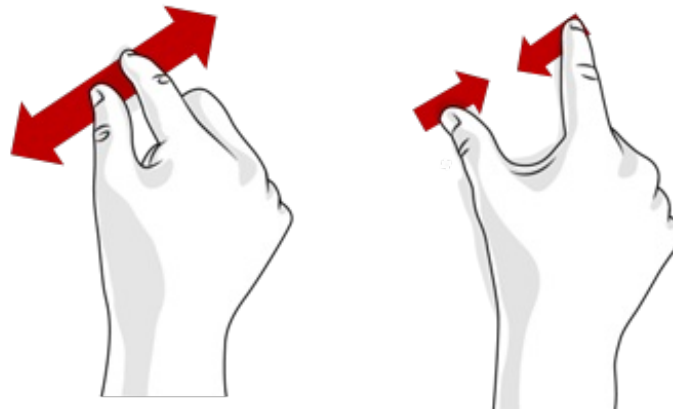


- To turn on grid lines:

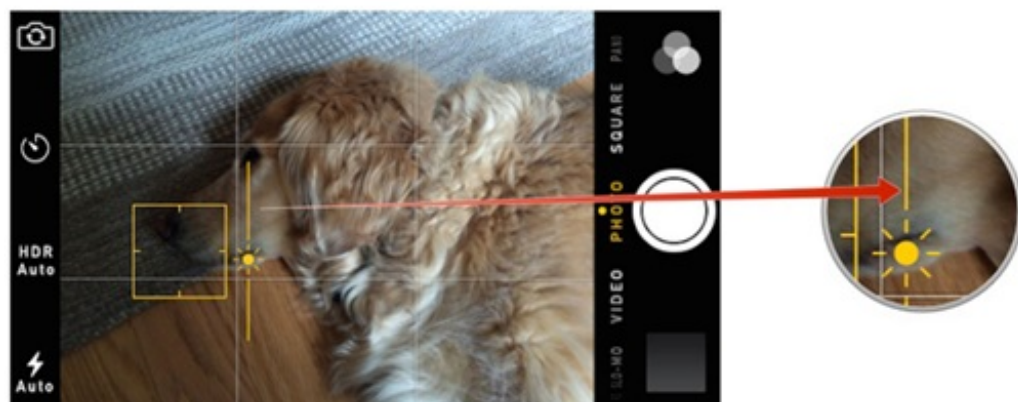
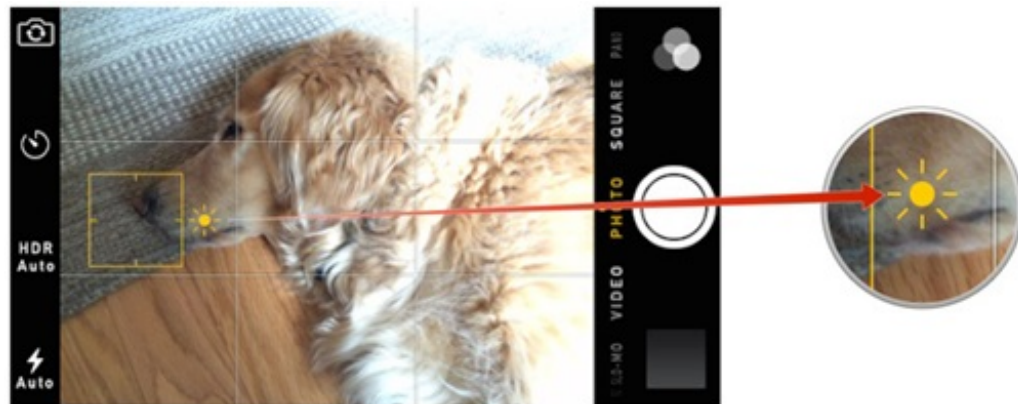
***iPhone or iPad:*** Go to the Settings app, then Photos & Camera, then Grid (touch the circle to the right, green means on)

***Android:*** In the camera app touch the screen and go to settings (3 dots or 3 lines or gear icon). Look for the grid lines settings. On my cell phone I found it under the Professional settings.

- **Pinch to zoom:** To zoom in with two fingers (usually your thumb and index finger) press them together on the screen and then move them away from each other on the screen. This is done with a light touch. You can also reverse the process by starting with your fingers apart and bring them back together to zoom out.



- **Brightness:** If the photo is too dark or too light, touch the screen to bring up the brightness adjustment. You will see a box with a "Sun" icon. Drag the sun icon up or down to adjust the brightness.





- **High Dynamic Range (HDR):** HDR blends the best part of 3 separate exposures into a single photo. Basically the camera quickly takes 3 shots, all at different exposures, and combines them into a single photo giving you the best exposure for the different thirds of the photo. Remember to hold the phone steady for a second longer while the camera takes 3 photos quickly.

- To turn on HDR:

***iPhone or iPad:*** In the camera app look for HDR on the screen near the shutter button. If you see a line through HDR that means off. Touch HDR to remove the line through it.

***Android:*** In the camera app touch the screen and go to settings (3 dots or 3 lines or gear icon). Look for the HDR settings. On my cell phone I found it after touching the 3 lines.

- **Flash:** Sometimes the flash will go off when you don't want it to or sometimes you want the flash to go off but it doesn't. To adjust what the flash does touch the screen and look for an icon of a lightning bolt. It will usually have the letter "A" or "Auto" next to it meaning "Automatic". When you touch it you should see other choices such as "On" or "Off". On an Android device you may see a lightning bolt without the letter "A" meaning "flash on", and a lightning bolt with a line through it meaning "flash off".

Sometimes, even in bright sunlight, someone's face may be shadowed, in which case you would want to turn the flash on even though the camera may think there is already too much light to use the flash. In this case turn the flash from "auto" to "on".

At other times in dark situations the flash may be too bright and "wash out" the subject or create a undesirable shadow. In this case you would want to turn off the flash and maybe just adjust the brightness (see above).



I hope these simple tips help you take better photos of the important people and places you visit. For more tips see the articles below. Have a good summer!

### **More information**

[Business Insider: The single biggest mistake people make when taking a photo with their smartphone](#)

[Photography Mad: Rule of Thirds](#)

[12 Tips for Improving Camera Phone Photos](#)

[Phone Photography 101: How to Take Good Pictures With Your Phone](#)

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