

10 Creative Exercises for Photographers



Like the world's tidal waters, photographic creativity ebbs and flows for many of us. Sometimes creativity can use a jump-start, an artificial method to get the photographer to start looking at the world in a new way.

There are many ideas on how to get yourself to further expand your artistic boundaries. Not all of them involve the camera. I prefer the exercises that 1) involve using your camera, 2) are less assignment-based, and 3) are fun!

Treat each exercise as an exploration and see where it takes you. There is no time-line for completing any of these exercises, or how often you work on any one of them.

Masters of Photography - sample images (curated by Mr. Knox Garvin)
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/FMfcgxwHMZHmTwmXVvGZKCqwcqsrMSnL>

Exercise 1: Two Dozen

Pick a location. Stand in one spot and make 24 unique photographs while standing in the same place. You cannot move your feet.

Photographs © Todd Vorenkamp



The first time I did this, I hit a virtual brick wall after about 12 shots, and that was eye-opening in many ways. It really pushes you to be creative with your gear (including your iphone, and surroundings).

Exercise 2: Ten of One

Take 10 unique and/or abstract photographs of 1 small subject.



The smaller the subject, the more challenging this can be. A "small subject" should not be "Downtown Ghent or the Virginia Beach Boardwalk."

Exercise 3: Four Corners

Choose one subject and place it, where it exists, in each corner of the frame for 4 images.

Can you go to the other side of the subject? Do the same. Shoot all four sides in all four corners if possible. See what you come up with!

Exercise 3: Artificial Restrictions

Create restrictions for a day or weekend of shooting. Limits may include:

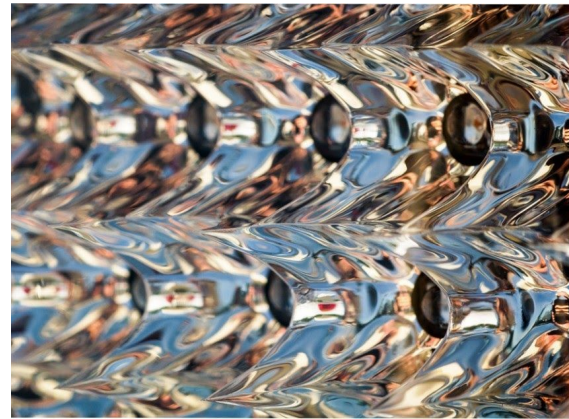
- *One prime lens*
- *One location*
- *B&W only*
- *4-5 P.M. only*
- *Manual mode only*
- *Overexpose/Underexpose everything*
- *Spot meter only*
- *Photograph while sitting*
- *Only things above you*
- *Only things below you*
- *No people in the frame*
- *No structures in the frame*
- *Fill the frame*
- **Negative space in more than three quarters of the frame*
 - * **Negative space** is the area surrounding the main subject in a **photograph** which is left unoccupied. Put simply, it is the **space** around the object itself that helps define the positive

space (or main focus). When used creatively together, **negative** and positive **space** can communicate the composition of your **photograph**.

Force yourself forward with restrictions.

Exercise 4: Twelve Abstracts

Photograph a dozen abstracts of a common object. Depending on the size of the object, you may need a macro lens or telephoto. Similar to Exercise 2, but only allowing the abstract, this exercise should force you to see deeper into an image.



Exercise 5: Portable Subject

Carry a subject with you and put it in the frame no matter where you are shooting.

Think about the famous traveling gnome. Bring a favorite "thing" on your outing and figure out how to include it in your images. Notice how it dictates framing and composition. Be creative with your placement of your portable subject.

Exercise 6: The Un-Selfie Selfie

You have to be inside every frame.

This is not a "selfie" exercise; so bring a tripod or alternative support. Compose, frame, and start the self-timer. Then, put yourself into the photo in a meaningful and thoughtful way.

Exercise 7: Change Up

Try a different subject.

Are you a portrait photographer only? Try pet photography for a day or photograph family



activities for a weekend. How about, stepping into your own backyard and shooting nature and the weather? So... 'change it up.'

Exercise 8: Nine Elements

Photograph these nine elements of a scene while in one location.

Go to a corner of one room in your home or yard and make photographs showing the following:

- *Light*
- *Shadow*
- *Line*
- *Shape*
- *Form*
- *Texture*
- *Color*
- *Size*
- *Depth*

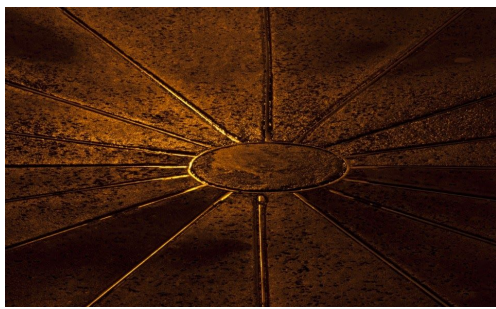


For an explanation of the photographic elemental terms, visit the following site:

<https://photography.tutsplus.com/tutorials/6-elements-of-design-for-striking-photographs--photo-2574>

Exercise 9: Comfort

Photograph something in your home which brings you comfort/ sense of beauty and well being.



Exercise 10: Snapseed

Once you've collected some digital images using an iPhone or iPad, you can download Snapseed - which is a free editing app and discover for yourself how to create original art using Snapseed.

[Snapseed](#) is among the most extensive [photo editing apps](#) available for [mobile photographers](#). The dozens of tools it features can seem intimidating to many people.

That's why we created this comprehensive Snapseed tutorial to help you get the most of what this app has to offer.

<https://expertphotography.com/snapseed-tutorial/>

Exercise X: Design Your Own

Take bits and pieces from what is above or come up with anything that gets you to take creative images and break through walls. Share them with us and other photographic artists on social media platforms.

You can find a lot more tips online or in books. Some of these take the shape of a photo assignment that takes you out of your comfort zone or introduces you to something different than what you usually do. Others are more creatively based. Beware of the creative exercises that focus on the technical workings of the camera—the goal should be to expand the creative mind. Getting bogged down in a camera's menu is not likely the best path to this goal. Having said that, improving technical proficiency is always a good thing, but just keep your focus on the creative and less on the nuts and bolts of a particular image.

The images are important, but they are not critical. If you get a few "keepers" from your exercise, awesome! If you come away with junk, but engage your mind and eye, then the mission is accomplished!

Lastly, not only should a creative exercise be challenging and self-inspiring, it should be fun and never, ever feel like a chore. For an audio-visual look at these exercises, check out