GoalTodo

Take a photo a day: a prompt every day, and one new idea a week

Take a photo a day

10 weeks · Mon, Nov 30 → Sun, Feb 7

Week by week

Tick a box each time you do a session.

Nov 30–Dec 6
Week 1

One photo a day

Start the habit

- [ ] Take your photo at the same point in each day, such as on your way to work or after lunch, and set a daily reminder
- [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Don't worry about how good it is yet: the point this week is to take one every day
  5 minutes
- [ ] Look back at your seven photos and pick your favourite. Say to yourself what you like about it
  10 minutes

Done when: You've taken a photo on seven days in a row

Sticking point: Some prompts will feel dull, and your photos will look ordinary. That's expected. A photo taken is a good day, whatever it looks like, and the ordinary ones teach you plenty.

Dec 7–13
Week 2

Notice where the light comes from

Light

- [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Before you take it, find where the light is coming from, such as a window, the open sky or a lamp, and turn yourself or your subject so the light falls on it. Leave the flash off indoors and move your subject near a window instead
  5 minutes
- [ ] Light test: photograph the same thing three times on one day, in the early morning or late afternoon, around midday, and indoors by a window. Put the three side by side and compare them
  10 minutes
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've taken a photo every day this week, and one set of three light test photos

Sticking point: Early morning and late afternoon light won't always fit your day. Light from a window, or the soft light at the edge of a shadow, works at any hour.

Dec 14–20
Week 3

The rule of thirds

Composition

- [ ] Turn on the grid in your camera's settings, so two lines across and two lines down split the screen into nine parts
- [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Put your subject on one of the grid lines, or where two lines cross, instead of in the middle. If there's a horizon, put it on the top or bottom line
  5 minutes
- [ ] Thirds test: photograph one subject twice, once in the centre and once on a third, and compare them
  5 minutes
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've taken a photo every day with your subject on a third, and one centre-and-thirds pair

Sticking point: Not every photo suits the thirds. Something symmetrical, like a doorway or a face looking straight at you, can look strong in the middle. Treat the thirds as a starting point, not a rule you must keep.

Dec 21–27
Week 4

Take one step closer

Get closer

- [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Before each photo, take one step closer than feels natural, so your subject fills more of the frame. Move your feet instead of zooming in
  5 minutes
- [ ] Distance test: photograph one subject from three distances, far away, close, and as close as your camera will still focus, and compare them
  10 minutes
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've taken a photo every day from closer than you'd usually stand, and one set of three distance photos

Sticking point: Getting close to something in public can feel awkward. Start with things at home or in a quiet corner, and leave people until week 10, when you'll ask first.

Dec 28–Jan 3
Week 5

Check what's behind your subject

Backgrounds

- [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Before you press, look past your subject at the background and around the edges of the frame. If something distracts, such as a bin, a bright sign or a pole coming out of someone's head, move yourself, move your subject, or change your angle
  5 minutes
- [ ] Background test: photograph one subject against a busy background, then move it, or yourself, so it's against a plain one, such as a wall, the sky or the ground, and compare them
  5 minutes
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've checked the background before every photo this week, and taken one busy-and-plain pair

Sticking point: You'll often only see the distraction afterwards. That's normal for now: the habit of looking behind before you press takes a few weeks to build. Thirty days in a row lands this week.

Jan 4–10
Week 6

Low down, high up, and several shots

Angles

- [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Take today's photo from somewhere other than standing eye level: crouch low, hold the camera near the ground, or look down from above. Take several shots from slightly different places before you choose
  5 minutes
- [ ] Walk-round test: pick one subject and take five photos of it from five different heights or sides, then pick the one that works
  10 minutes
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've taken a photo every day from a height other than eye level, and one set of five

Sticking point: Crouching or holding the camera low in public can feel silly at first. Nobody watches for long, and a low angle is often what turns an ordinary subject into a picture.

Jan 11–17
Week 7

Tell your camera what matters

Focus and brightness

- [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Tap the screen on your subject to focus on it. If your subject is off to the side or the camera keeps refocusing, press and hold until the focus locks, then take your photo. If the picture looks too dark or too bright, slide your finger up or down to change the brightness before you press
  5 minutes
- [ ] Bright window test: put an object, or a willing person, in front of a bright window or sky. Take one photo letting the camera choose, one tapping on the subject, and one after making it brighter, and compare them
  10 minutes
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've chosen the focus point yourself every day this week, and taken one bright window test

Sticking point: Every camera does this a little differently. If tapping and holding doesn't lock the focus on yours, look in its settings or its help pages for focus lock or exposure lock. Many cameras without a touch screen lock focus when you half-press the button.

Jan 18–24
Week 8

Photograph the weather you get

Weather

- [ ] Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Take at least four of this week's photos outside, whatever the weather. On grey days look for mist, shine on wet streets, puddles and reflections; on bright days look for strong shadows
  5 minutes
- [ ] Before you go out in rain or cold, check the forecast and dress for it. Keep your camera in a pocket or a plastic bag between shots, and wipe the lens dry before each one
- [ ] Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
  10 minutes

Done when: You've taken a photo every day, at least four of them outside in whatever weather came

Sticking point: Bad weather is the easiest reason to skip a day. On a day that's truly unsafe, such as a storm or ice, take your photo from a window or a doorway instead. It still counts.

Jan 25–31
Week 9

Three small changes

Edit lightly

Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. Then edit it with your camera's or phone's built-in editor, or any free editor, making no more than three changes: straighten it, crop it, and adjust the brightness. Leave the filters alone
5 minutes

- [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Before and after: pick three of your photos from earlier weeks, edit each with at most three changes, and compare them with the originals
10 minutes

- [ ]

Look back at the week's seven photos. Pick your favourite, and for one you don't like, work out what went wrong and what you'd change
10 minutes

- [ ]

Done when: You've taken and lightly edited a photo every day this week

Sticking point: Strong filters are tempting and can make every photo look the same. If you can't tell straight away that a photo has been edited, you've probably done it about right. Keep the original in case you change your mind.

Feb 1–7
Week 10

Photograph people, and set your routine

People, with permission

Take today's photo: the day's prompt from the list in the guide. Wipe the lens, take a few shots, and keep one. On at least three days, photograph someone you know. Ask them first, tell them where the photo might end up, and delete it if they ask you to. For a child, ask their parent or carer
5 minutes

- [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Set up the rest of the year: decide where you'll keep your photos, such as one folder or album for the year, and keep your daily reminder going

- [ ]

Look back over all your photos so far. Pick your ten favourites, and see which weekly ideas show up in them
10 minutes

- [ ]

Done when: You've taken a photo every day this week, three of them of people who said yes, and you've set up somewhere to keep the year's photos

Sticking point: Asking can feel awkward, and some people will say no. A no is fine: thank them and photograph something else. People who agree often relax if you photograph them doing something, such as cooking or reading, instead of posing.

Milestones

Mon, Nov 30	Take your first photo
Sun, Dec 6	Seven days
Tue, Dec 29	Thirty days

Tue, Mar 9	A hundred days
Mon, Nov 29	Every day of the year

How the plan works

You take one photo every day, with whatever camera you have: the one on your phone is fine. You don't need to buy anything, and a photo can take five minutes. Each day has a prompt from the list below, so you never have to wonder what to photograph.

Each week adds one simple idea. You start with the habit itself, then learn to notice light, use the rule of thirds, get closer, check your background and try new angles. Then you learn to tell your camera what to focus on and how bright to make it, to photograph in bad weather, to edit lightly, and to photograph people with their permission. Once a week you do one short test, such as photographing the same thing in three kinds of light, and look back at your week's photos.

The milestones follow the steps on your board. Your first photo is day 1, seven days in a row is the end of week 1, and thirty days in a row lands in week 5. A hundred days comes one to two months after the weekly lessons end, and the last step is a photo every day of the year. After the last week there are no new lessons: you keep going with the prompts and use everything you've learned.

Which level to pick

▪ I just point and shoot: you take photos now and then, mostly of whatever's in front of you, and haven't thought much about how. You get one new idea a week, over 10 weeks.

▪ I know the basics: you already think about light and composition sometimes, perhaps you've heard of the rule of thirds, and you want to make it daily. You cover the same ideas faster, two or three at a time, over 6 weeks.

If you're not sure, pick the first level. The early weeks are short, and it's easy to move on if they feel too easy.

Before you start

▪ Pick a time. Choose one point in your day for your photo, such as your walk to work, lunch, or the hour you get home, and set a daily reminder. A photo you take on the way to something you already do is easier to keep than one you have to make time for.

▪ Pick a place to keep them. One folder or album for the year makes it easy to look back, and looking back is where you'll see yourself improve.

▪ Stay safe. Don't step into a road, onto private land or near an edge for a photo, and pay attention to where you are while you're looking at a screen.

▪ Think about people. You'll photograph people properly in the last week, but read the section on photographing people now, so you know where you stand if someone ends up in a photo before then.

What you need

Any camera or phone that takes photos. Nothing else is needed.

▪ Wipe the lens with a soft cloth before you start. A phone in a pocket or bag picks up fingerprints, and a smudged lens makes photos look soft and hazy.

▪ Turn on the grid in your camera's settings when you reach the rule of thirds week.

▪ Free space on your phone or memory card, so a full camera never becomes a reason to skip a day. Delete the extra shots you didn't keep each week.

▪ A plastic bag in your pocket for wet days.

You'll see guides that talk about aperture, shutter speed and ISO. You don't need any of them for this plan: everything here works with your camera on automatic.

Your 365 prompts

You never have to think of what to photograph. Each week has a theme, and each day of the week has an angle. Day 1 of a week is the theme close up, day 2 is the theme from low down, and so on. 52 themes times 7 angles gives you a prompt for 364 days, and day 365 is the last one below.

The seven daily angles

1. Close up: fill the frame with one small part of it.
2. Low down: take it from near the ground, or looking up.
3. From above: look down on it, or find a high spot.
4. In good light: find it in window light, early or late sun, or strong shadow.
5. On a third: put it on a grid line, off centre.
6. Plain background: find it, or place it, against a wall, the sky or the ground.
7. Your choice: the photo of it that says the most about your week.

For example, day 9 is week 2, angle 2: hands, from low down. Day 18 is week 3, angle 4: a door or window in good light.

The 52 weekly themes

- Week 1, days 1 to 7: Your morning
- Week 2, days 8 to 14: Hands
- Week 3, days 15 to 21: Doors and windows
- Week 4, days 22 to 28: In the kitchen
- Week 5, days 29 to 35: Something round
- Week 6, days 36 to 42: Shadows
- Week 7, days 43 to 49: Red
- Week 8, days 50 to 56: Your street
- Week 9, days 57 to 63: Plants
- Week 10, days 64 to 70: Water
- Week 11, days 71 to 77: Textures
- Week 12, days 78 to 84: Reflections
- Week 13, days 85 to 91: Lines and paths
- Week 14, days 92 to 98: Shoes and feet
- Week 15, days 99 to 105: Breakfast, lunch or dinner
- Week 16, days 106 to 112: Light through a window
- Week 17, days 113 to 119: Letters and signs
- Week 18, days 120 to 126: The sky
- Week 19, days 127 to 133: Something old
- Week 20, days 134 to 140: Something new
- Week 21, days 141 to 147: Books and paper
- Week 22, days 148 to 154: Blue
- Week 23, days 155 to 161: Patterns
- Week 24, days 162 to 168: Trees
- Week 25, days 169 to 175: Your way to work or school
- Week 26, days 176 to 182: After dark

- Week 27, days 183 to 189: Corners
- Week 28, days 190 to 196: Today's weather
- Week 29, days 197 to 203: Yellow
- Week 30, days 204 to 210: Tools
- Week 31, days 211 to 217: Stairs and steps
- Week 32, days 218 to 224: Animals and birds
- Week 33, days 225 to 231: Pairs
- Week 34, days 232 to 238: Green
- Week 35, days 239 to 245: Small things
- Week 36, days 246 to 252: Things in a row
- Week 37, days 253 to 259: Someone you know (ask first)
- Week 38, days 260 to 266: Lamps and lights
- Week 39, days 267 to 273: Leaves
- Week 40, days 274 to 280: Wheels
- Week 41, days 281 to 287: Cups and glasses
- Week 42, days 288 to 294: Fabric
- Week 43, days 295 to 301: Numbers
- Week 44, days 302 to 308: The ground under your feet
- Week 45, days 309 to 315: Fruit and vegetables
- Week 46, days 316 to 322: Things that move
- Week 47, days 323 to 329: White
- Week 48, days 330 to 336: Rest
- Week 49, days 337 to 343: Places you wait
- Week 50, days 344 to 350: Light and dark together
- Week 51, days 351 to 357: Something you're grateful for
- Week 52, days 358 to 364: Your year

Day 365: go back to your first photo and take it again, same place, same subject, with everything you've learned. Put the two side by side.

If an angle doesn't suit a theme on the day, such as the sky from above, swap it for any other angle. Start at week 1 whatever the date. If you miss days, carry on from the prompt where you left off. Prefer to choose your own subject on some days? Do. The list is there for days you'd otherwise skip.

Photographing people

Ask first. It's the kind thing to do, it gives you a better photo, because people relax when they've said yes, and it means nobody is upset to find themselves online. Say what the photo is for and where it might go, and delete it if they ask you to. For a child, ask their parent or carer, and take extra care with any photo of a child.

What the law says depends on where you live. In the UK, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) explains that data protection law doesn't cover purely personal use, such as a family album or a private account only friends and family can see. Posting to a public account is likely to go beyond personal use, and then you need to think about whether the people in the photo would expect it to be used that way. Ireland's Data Protection Commission gives a similar picture: taking photos of people in public is generally allowed as long as you're not harassing anyone, but selling them or posting them publicly can bring data protection duties. Other countries have their own rules.

If you want to share a photo of someone widely, or use it for anything beyond your own collection, the simplest step is their clear permission. Photographers use a model release form for this: a written agreement saying how and where a photo may be used. The Royal Photographic Society offers one free.

If a photo of you has been posted without your agreement, the ICO suggests asking the person who posted it to take it down first.

Common mistakes

▪ Standing too far away. A common first photo has a small subject in the middle of a lot of nothing. Take a step closer, then another.

▪ Zooming in instead of walking in. Digital zoom on a phone loses quality. Move your feet if you can.

▪ Not looking behind the subject. A bin, a bright sign or a busy wall pulls the eye away. Check the background and the edges of the frame before you press.

▪ Using the flash indoors. It flattens faces and throws hard shadows. Move to a window instead.

▪ Taking just one shot. Take a few, from slightly different places, and keep the one that works.

▪ Heavy filters. A little straightening, cropping and brightness goes a long way. Strong filters make every photo look the same.

▪ Deleting your bad photos straight away. Look at what went wrong first. That's the quickest way to learn.

▪ Waiting for something interesting. The daily photo is meant to be of ordinary things. The prompt is there so you never have to wait.

Keeping it up for a year

Make it small. On a busy day, five minutes and one photo of the day's prompt is enough. The day still counts.

Keep the weekly look back. Pick a favourite each week. After a few months, line up your favourites from week 1 onwards and see how far you've come.

Use the weather. Rain, grey skies and mist are not reasons to skip. They often give you more interesting light and reflections than a plain sunny day.

Pair it with something you do anyway. A daily walk is the easiest place to find your photo, and the Walk every day and Spend more time outdoors plans fit well with this one. If you keep a journal, a photo a day makes a good visual diary alongside it, and the Draw every day plan trains the same habit of looking closely.

When you miss a day, don't go back and fake it with a photo taken later. Take today's photo, carry on from where you were in the prompts, and start your count of days in a row again.

If you fall behind

Missed 1 week: Missed a week, or most of one? Repeat that week's idea. Don't make up the missed days with photos taken all at once: take today's photo and carry on in the prompt list from where you stopped. Your count of days in a row starts again from your next photo.

Missed 2 weeks: Go back one week and repeat it. Keep each photo to five minutes, and skip the weekly test until you've taken a photo seven days in a row again.

Missed 3 weeks: Start again at week 1 of your level. Look at what got in the way, the time of day, the reminder or the prompts, and change it before you start. Keep your place in the prompt list, and keep the photos you've already taken.

Missed 4 or more weeks: Start again at week 1 of "I just point and shoot", with one quick photo a day and nothing else. Move a photo to a part of your day you never miss, such as your journey home, and add the weekly ideas back once you've taken a photo seven days in a row.

Sources

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https://bertie.ces.ncsu.edu/2025/08/making-the-most-of-your-smartphone-camera-tips-for-better-photos
“If possible, shoot during the “golden hours” (early morning or late afternoon) when the light is soft and warm.”

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“Avoid using your phone’s flash indoors, as it often creates harsh shadows and washed-out colors.”

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“After focusing, you can often adjust the brightness by sliding your finger up or down on the screen.”

BBC Bitesize, GCSE Art and Design: Photographic process
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgwpnbk/revision/1
“Moving around will give a different camera angle and change the relationship between objects in the shot.”

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“Working at different times of day gives different lighting conditions.”

University of Arkansas, Tips for Taking Great Photos
https://brand.uark.edu/visual-media/tips-for-taking-great-photos.php
“Imagine a grid placed over your images with two vertical lines and two horizontal lines that divide the picture into nine equal sections.”

University of Arkansas, Tips for Taking Great Photos
https://brand.uark.edu/visual-media/tips-for-taking-great-photos.php
“Fixing a distracting background can be as simple as moving your subject or changing your angle, but if that doesn’t work, it may be possible to obscure it by using a wider aperture and getting in as close to your subject as possible.”

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https://brand.uark.edu/visual-media/tips-for-taking-great-photos.php
“Instead, spend some time studying the photo to work out what went wrong and how you could improve it.”

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https://myextension.unl.edu/photo-taking-and-photo-release-forms/
“It’s preferable to get closer to your subject than to rely on the digital zoom feature.”

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, Photo taking and photo release forms
https://myextension.unl.edu/photo-taking-and-photo-release-forms/
“While your focus is on your subject, something or someone in the background could be distracting or embarrassing.”

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“Hold your finger until the focus locks in place and then take your photo.”

Royal Meteorological Society, Smartphone Photography Tips from Guest Judge Jo Bradford
https://www.rmets.org/smartphone-photography-tips
“Don’t shy away from taking photos on the grey overcast days, as the grey sky can still bring drama all of its own to the scene.”

Royal Meteorological Society, Smartphone Photography Tips from Guest Judge Jo Bradford
`https://www.rmets.org/smartphone-photography-tips`
“Be prepared before you head out for whatever kind of weather you might come across, that might mean carrying wet weather gear or sun cream and sunhats.”

Royal Meteorological Society, Smartphone Photography Tips from Guest Judge Jo Bradford
`https://www.rmets.org/smartphone-photography-tips`
“Edit sparingly and don’t let your photos be defined by the filters you choose.”

Information Commissioner's Office (UK), Taking photos in schools
`https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/photos/`
“However, if you post photos or videos to a public account, viewable by an indefinite number of people, this is likely to go beyond personal use.”

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`https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/photos/`
“However, you will need to consider whether individuals in the photos or videos would reasonably expect the images to be used in this way.”

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`https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/photos/`
“Data protection law states that you must take extra care when using children’s personal data, to ensure their interests are protected.”

Data Protection Commission (Ireland), Taking photographs and videos in a public place
`https://dataprotection.ie/en/faqs/topical-data-protection-issues/what-position-regarding-individuals-taking-photographsvideos-public-place`
“Provided you are not harassing anyone, taking photographs of people in public is generally allowed and most likely will qualify for the household exemption under Article 2(2)(c) of the GDPR.”

Data Protection Commission (Ireland), Taking photographs and videos in a public place
`https://dataprotection.ie/en/faqs/topical-data-protection-issues/what-position-regarding-individuals-taking-photographsvideos-public-place`
“However, what you do with that photo can potentially become a data protection issue, for example, if the photograph, which contained the personal data of individuals, was sold for commercial gain or was posted publicly on a social media account.”

The Royal Photographic Society, Model Release Form
`https://rps.org/resources/model-release-form/`
“A Model Release Form establishes a contract between the photographer and a model, defines how and where photographs may be used and the basis of any remuneration.”

This plan online	`https://goaltodo.com/photo-a-day`
Reach it with others on Welang	`https://welang.com/goals/photo-a-day`
Reach it on your own in HourLife	`https://www.hourlife.com`