

Move In Closer

When you are taking pictures of people or pets move in closer to eliminate excess background. Generally speaking, portraits with one or two subjects should be photographed vertically and three or more horizontally. Keeping your subject's heads in the top 2/3 of the frame (never bulls eye your subject's face) frame your picture and then take another step forward.

Zoom In

Most point and shoot cameras have a zoom. The wide zoom is great for large groups and/or tight spots where you cannot back up. The drawback is that there may be distortion of the image. If you have the ability to back up and zoom in on your subject(s) you will eliminate distortion. Depending on your camera's zoom capability, you may also create separation between your subject and the background. The background may become out of focus while your subject is sharp creating a soft, blurry background that will really make your subject stand out.

Use Your Flash

Your camera is metering for "middle grey" which means it will expose for the average between the darkest and brightest areas of the image. With a point and shoot camera, using the flash is the best way to ensure that you have a good exposure for any subject that is 5-15 feet away. This gives your camera control over the light source. This rule of thumb is true for indoor and outdoor photography. Bright, sunny days create hard shadows on your subject's face. Using your flash will "fill" these shadows with light. Also, arranging your subjects with their backs to the sun and using the flash will result in more even light on their faces.

Pay Attention to the Background

Sometimes we become so focused on our subject that we forget what is behind them. Watch for street signs, telephone wires, other people and reflective surfaces (windows, mirrors, reflective signs, etc.). Also, make sure you don't have things "growing" out of your subject such as a tree branch or light pole. Depending on the angle of the sun and cloud cover, you may be getting a blown out sky which will appear very bright in the camera. You can avoid this by either changing your location or your camera's angle to your subject to eliminate the sky.

Take Lots of Pictures and Edit

With the advancement of digital photography we have the option to take more pictures without wasting film. Take multiple pictures of the same scene/portrait. The more subjects in the photograph, the more likely it is that someone blinked or started talking or looked away. The downside to digital photography is we can take lots of pictures. Now we have to sort and store all these images. If you want to maintain order of your pictures and save space on your hard drive **edit your pictures while you are still excited about them**. Don't wait and don't be afraid to delete. Ask yourself, "Self, will I ever *really* want to look at this image again or have an actual print made?" You'll be glad that you did!