

Cheat Sheets

Photo and Video

Texts and Photos Beat Küng 2025



Camera Distance



Camera Angle



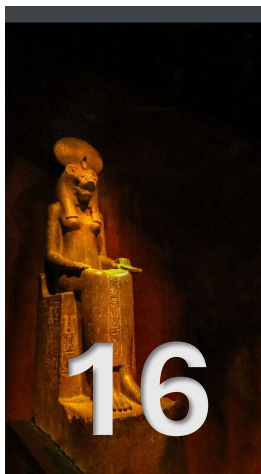
Format



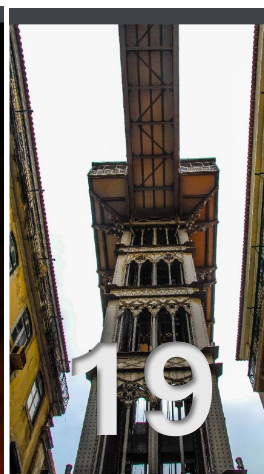
Depth of Field



Creating with light



Composition 1



Composition 2



Exposure Time



Aperture, Exposure Time and ISO





The three most important camera distances

Long shot

Far away – overview



Medium shot

Always OK – widely used



Camera Distance



Close-up

Up close and personal



Tipps

Close-ups make stories interesting and personal.



Videos should alternate between different shot sizes. Do not use two long shots / two close-ups in succession!

Distorted faces in close-ups?

Wide-angle lenses in close-ups distort the image.

It is better to take close-ups (e.g. portraits) with a light telephoto lens.



The selfie cameras of smartphones have wide-angle lenses and lead to distorted faces.

It is better to have someone else take your photo - at a slightly greater distance.



Camera distance for pros



Extreme long shot



Long shot



Medium long shot



Medium shot



Close-up



Extreme close-up



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A more detailed overview of camera distances in photo and film.

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The five most important camera angles

Eye-level

Also important for children and animals! Natural and well-balanced. Common, sometimes boring.



Camera Angle



Low

Slightly from below. Emphasizes size, awe, strength.

Horizon low, often not visible.



High angle

Slightly from above. Overview. Shows uncertainty, loneliness.

Not suitable for action.



Below

Extreme bottom-up view. Magnifies size, appears threatening.

Use rarely, so stronger effect.



Overhead

Extreme top view. View from "outside", flight shot, distance.

Often seen today (drone pics).



Camera angles



With a smartphone on a selfie stick, you can easily capture different camera angles / perspectives. However, below and overhead views often don't look so great on people!



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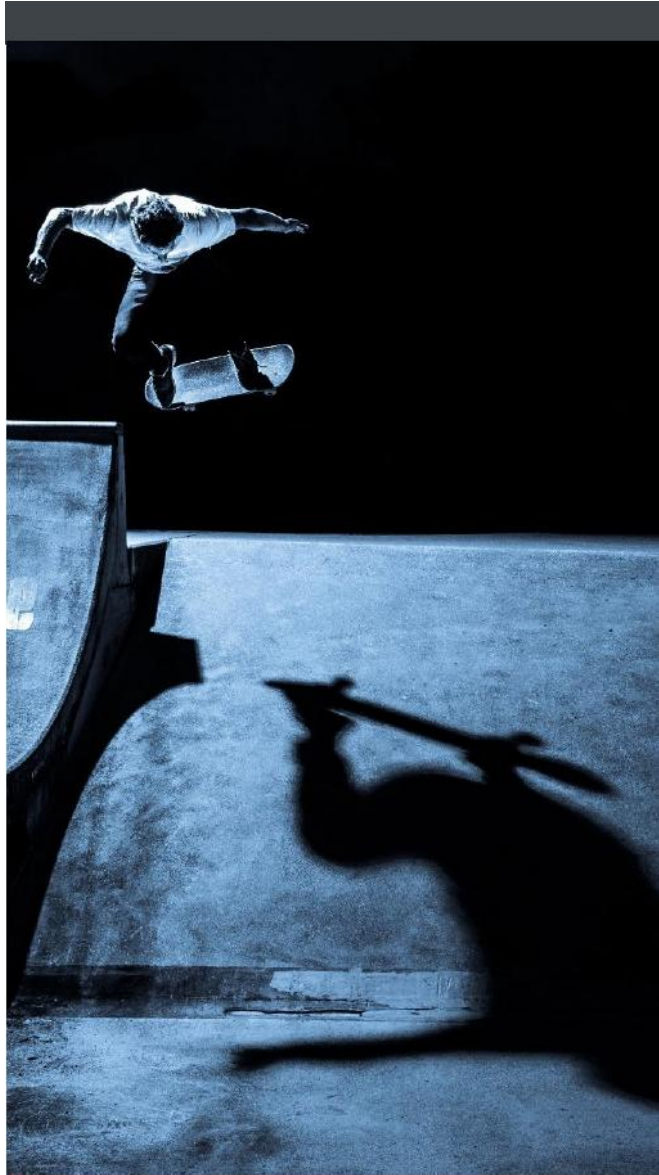
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The most important formats

Landscape format

Allround format, video standard

Natural impression, always OK, seems rather calm, can also be boring.

Horizontal and vertical lines.



Format



Portrait format

Emphasizes the vertical, tall objects, depth in the picture.

Vertical lines!



Panorama

Extreme landscape format, by cutting / assembling

Used almost exclusively for landscapes, cityscapes, etc.

Horizontal lines!



Square

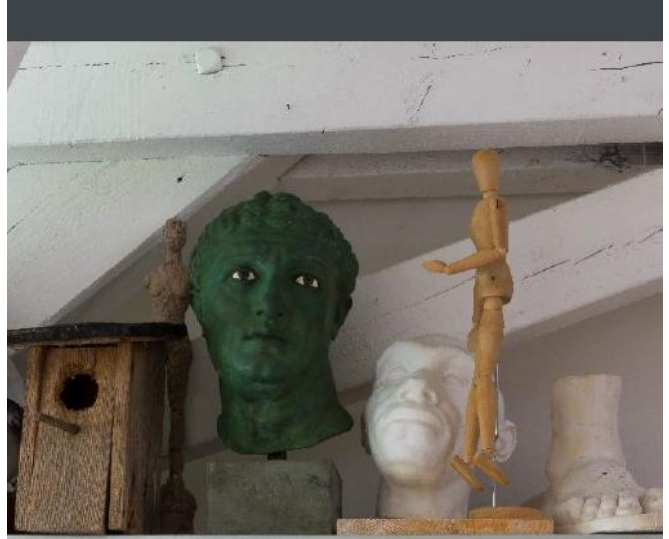
By cropping portrait or landscape format

Emphasizes center, very quiet.

Often symmetrical!



**Videos always in
landscape format!**



*Basic rule for smartphone videos:
Always record in landscape format.*

Landscape format ist the way our eyes see the world.

Portrait videos only look good on a smartphone. On a large screen or a television, only a fraction of the pixels are used in portrait format: the image is small, and the effect is poor.

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Aperture and depth of field

Closed aperture

Lots of depth of field (aperture 16)



Open aperture

Little depth of field (aperture 2.8)



Depth of Field



***Focal length
and depth of field***

Wide-angle lens (24mm)
Lots of depth of field (aperture 5.6)



Telephoto lens (200mm)
Little depth of field (aperture 5.6)



***Distance to object
and depth of field***

Close to the object (model)
Little depth of field (aperture 8)



Far away from the object (original)
Lots of depth of field (aperture 8)



Sensor size and depth of field



Small image sensor

Lots of depth of field at every aperture

With smartphones and compact cameras, little depth of field can only be created to a limited extent.

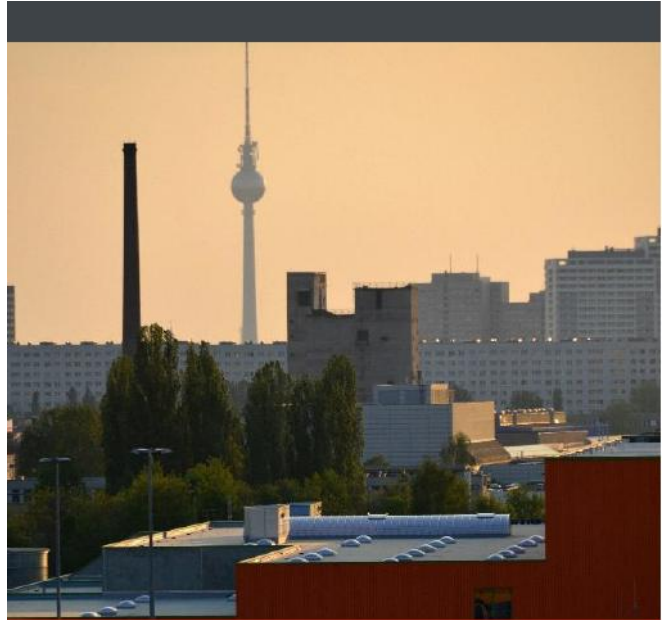
In **smartphones**, little depth of field is artificially created in portrait mode.



Special case video

Control of the depth of field by the aperture is only possible in advanced / professional cameras.

Use the focal length and distance to the object to control the depth of field!



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***Diffuse light:
Overcast is perfect!***

Great photo light in a slightly overcast sky

No hard shadows. No extreme contrasts.

Soft light, ideal for portraits.



When the sun shines

Shoot in the shade!

Avoid sunlight in the background!



Creating with Light



Making the best of backlighting

Backlight

Works particularly well with transparent objects.

Try different exposure variants!



Backlight

The sun in the picture, spots of light, highlights in the hair.

Use exposure compensation (+) or manual settings!



Light color: Blue hour and artificial light

The blue hour

Dawn shortly after sunset / before sunrise. Ideal für Nachtaufnahmen.

Intense colors!



Artificial Light

Switch off the automatic white balance and try out the effect of neon light and spotlights!



Creating with light for pros



High Key

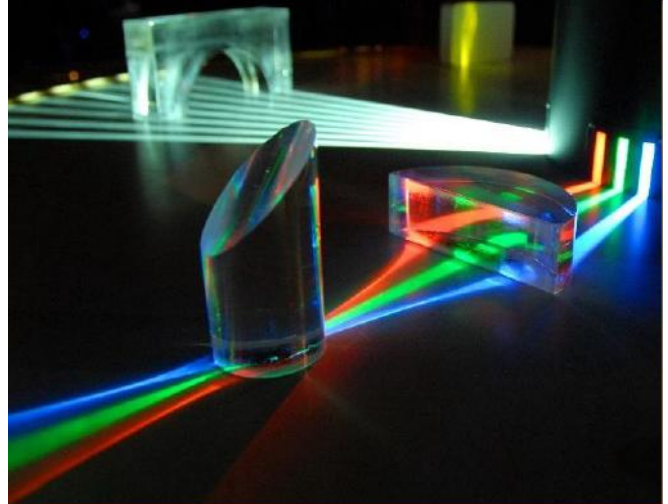
Has a light, gentle effect.

Light color tones, slightly over-exposed, soft light, low contrasts.

Low Key

Has a mysterious, dramatic effect.

Many dark to black color tones.
High-contrast main motif.



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Composition 1

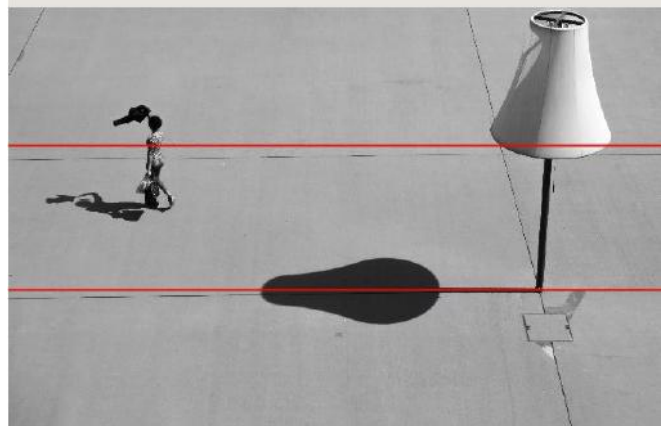
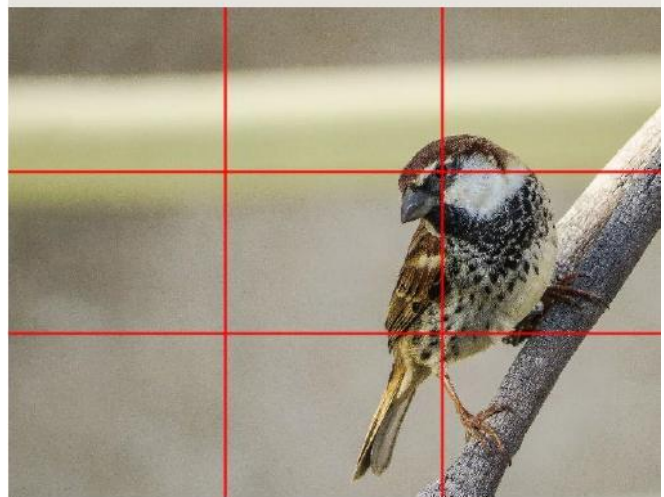


The rule of thirds

Main subject off center

Important elements lie on the 1/3 lines. This looks more interesting than a central arrangement!

Simpler version of the golden ratio.



Make room!

Room for movement

Moving objects should have plenty of space in the direction of movement.



Room for views

People should have plenty of space in the line of vision!



Giving depth to the image

Foreground, middle ground and background

Effective: Objects in the foreground!



Framing through windows, doors, archways, trees

Looks three-dimensional, interesting!



Composition for videographers



Walk away to the right!

If a person leaves the scene, it is best to do so at the right edge of the picture.

Come back from the right!

Entering a scene from the right and moving to the left is recognized as coming back.

These impressions result from our reading direction.



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Cut out

Figure-background contrasts emphasize the main object

Blur (shallow depth of field)

Simple background

Brightness contrast

Color contrast



Composition 2



Guidelines and diagonal

Guidelines lead into the picture

The viewer's gaze follows them to the central pictorial elements.



Diagonals are dynamic

Durch Diagonal and diagonal arrangement of objects can create depth and tension.



Symmetry

Symmetrical images are perceived as pleasant

The central perspective reinforces the spatial impression.



Patterns



With patterns that are interrupted, thereby highlighting individual elements, you can create exciting images.



Image composition is not reserved for photography! Even if much less attention is paid to it in videos - moving images also look better through good composition!



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Exposure time and freeze

A short exposure time

prevents jittered images and motion blurring due to movement.

Rule of thumb: exposure time shorter than focal length is OK (at 50mm 1/60 second or shorter).

Longer times are possible with an image stabilizer.

However, even shorter times are needed to freeze movement. Sports shots and animals in motion: 1/500 second or shorter!

Exposure Time



Exposure time and motion blur

Exposure time 1/15 second:

*Person moves - camera pulled along -
background blurred.*

With the camera on the tripod, the
reverse effect is achieved (person
blurred, background sharp).



Exposure time and motion blur



Smartphone-cams automatically
increase the ISO setting in poor light.
This enables shorter exposure times
and therefore sharp images.

However, many smartphones have a
photo mode for motion blur effects
and long exposures.

Example of smartphone picture

Motion effect mode, pulled along.



Exposure time and image effect



Exposure time is an important creative tool in photography. By selecting the exposure time, movements can be depicted in a flowing or frozen manner. Here a combination of long exposure time (1/30 second) and flash.



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Aperture

The size of the aperture controls the amount of light that falls on the sensor.

Each f-stop (4, 5.6, 8, ...) doubles / halves the amount of light.

more light

less light



Aperture 4	Aperture 5.6	Aperture 8	Aperture 11	Aperture 16
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Exposure time

The duration of the exposure time controls the amount of light that falls on the sensor.

Each exposure time step doubles / halves the amount of light.

1/1000 sec	1/500 sec	1/250 sec	1/125 sec	1/60 sec
---------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	-------------

less light

more light

Aperture, Exposure
Time and ISO



Aperture + Exposure Time = Exposure

The camera suggests the right combination of aperture and time for a particular situation.

Here: Aperture 8, 1/250 second

more light less light

Aperture 4	Aperture 5.6	Aperture 8	Aperture 11	Aperture 16
Exp. Time 1/1000	Exp. Time 1/500	Exp. Time 1/250	Exp. Time 1/125	Exp. Time 1/60

less light more light

However, other combinations would also be possible in the same situation.

E.g. aperture 5.6, 1/500 second
aperture 16, 1/60 second

more light less light

Aperture 4	Aperture 5.6	Aperture 8	Aperture 11	Aperture 16
Exp. Time 1/1000	Exp. Time 1/500	Exp. Time 1/250	Exp. Time 1/125	Exp. Time 1/60

less light more light

The more light that enters through the aperture, the shorter the exposure time - and vice versa.

ISO Sensitivity

The ISO number indicates how sensitive the camera's sensor is to light.

Each ISO level doubles / halves the amount of light required.

needs more light needs less light

ISO 100	ISO 200	ISO 400	ISO 800	ISO 1600
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The choice of ISO setting therefore makes other exposure combinations possible!

A high ISO number results in shorter exposure times and closed apertures.

The image quality is better at low ISO settings (100)!



With good cell phone cameras, the time and ISO can be selected manually.

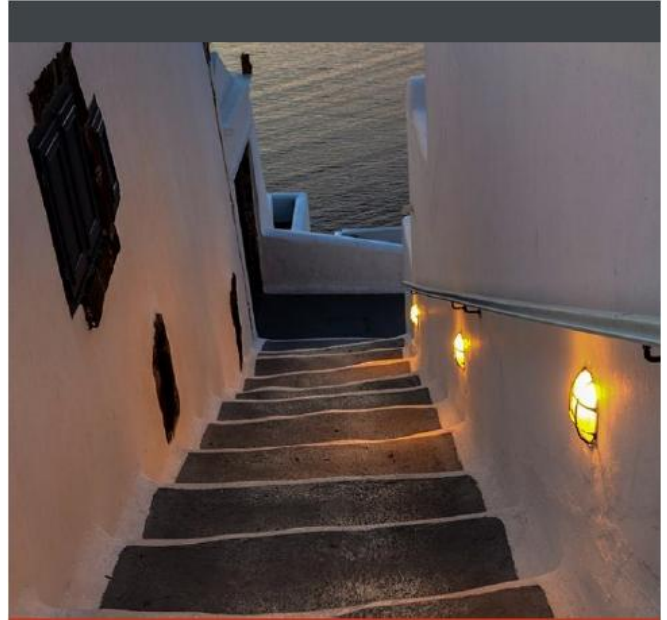
Belichtung für Profis

		Exposure time				
		1/60	1/125	1/250	1/500	1/1000
Aperture	16	ISO 1600	not possible	not possible	not possible	not possible
	11	ISO 800	ISO 1600	not possible	not possible	not possible
	8	ISO 400	ISO 800	ISO 1600	not possible	not possible
	5,6	ISO 200	ISO 400	ISO 800	ISO 1600	not possible
	4	ISO 100	ISO 200	ISO 400	ISO 800	ISO 1600

In low light: Short shutter speeds and closed apertures not possible.

		Exposure time				
		1/60	1/125	1/250	1/500	1/1000
Aperture	16	ISO 100	ISO 200	ISO 400	ISO 800	ISO 1600
	11	not possible	ISO 100	ISO 200	ISO 400	ISO 800
	8	not possible	not possible	ISO 100	ISO 200	ISO 400
	5,6	not possible	not possible	not possible	ISO 100	ISO 200
	4	not possible	not possible	not possible	not possible	ISO 100

In bright light: slow shutter speeds and open apertures not possible.



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