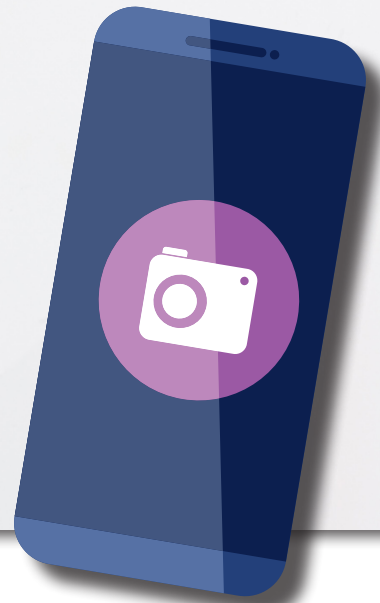


7 TIPS for Taking Great Photos at Night

On *Light It Up! For NDEAM* Thursday, get out and have fun with your smartphone camera taking photographs of illuminated structures and landmarks in your community! Here are some tips to help you make *Light It Up! For NDEAM* images that shine.



Some composition quick tips:

- Look for interesting angles instead of photographing everything head-on — our eye is accustomed to 90° lines, so diagonals are jarring and appealing
- Zoom in with your body instead of the camera's zoom feature
- Use “leading lines,” like sidewalks and lamp-posts to draw the eye towards the subject
- Don't photograph everything at standing eye level — aiming the camera from low down or higher up often makes a more impactful image
- Wait for people to get out of the way
- “Frame” your subject (if it's in the background) between foreground objects



1

Don't use flash. Use Night Mode

Today's smartphone cameras have a lot of advanced features. **Night Mode*** is perfect for photographing night scenes like buildings lit at night. In Night Mode, the camera automatically adjusts exposure for all elements in the scene. It helps you easily take photos hand-held that are sharp, clear images without “noise,” or digital graininess. To avoid blur, keep the camera steady (see **Tip #2**) until Night Mode renders the image. This takes a few seconds.

*Name may be different, depending on the make of your smartphone.

2

Compose your shot — focus on the subject

There's “taking a snapshot,” and there's making an image. Take time to compose your image before you take the photo. Are you photographing the building or structure from up close (foreground), or is it across the street (middle ground or background)? Always ask yourself these three questions: What's the main subject? How can I focus attention on it? What can I do to simplify the photo?



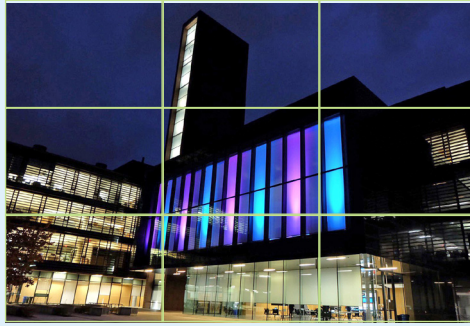
The CN Tower is in the background but it's the main focus. It's framed between the foreground objects.

3

Turn on the Grid Overlay in your camera settings

Use The Rule of Thirds. It helps you make a more visually interesting image. With the Grid Overlay on, you'll see your smartphone camera divided into nine rectangles. Generally, compose your image so your main subject is at or close to an intersection of grid lines. Unless you're doing it deliberately for creative reasons, avoid placing prominent vertical and horizon lines in the middle. Shift slightly so they are just off horizontal or vertical centre.

Photo courtesy City of Vaughan



6

Use the highest image resolution setting

For the best-quality images, go into your camera settings and make sure the image resolution is set at its highest setting. This is usually 3:4 (3000 x 4000 pixels). Your image will look sharp and crisp whether you post it online, or print it, at any size. Low-resolution images get grainy and lose detail, especially when enlarged.

4

Keep the camera steady

If your smartphone is your main camera, use your body to support the camera when you're taking the photo. Here's how to do that: Stand steady. Keep a firm grip on your phone with both hands. Tuck in your elbows and press them firmly against your body. Before touching the shutter button, breathe in. Touch the shutter button lightly (to avoid shaking the camera), holding your breath as you do. Breathe out when the camera has rendered the scene.



5

Tilt your camera

If you're feeling confident about your skills and creativity, tilt your camera sometimes. This can result in a really dynamic and interesting shot depending on your subject.

Tilting works well if you're photographing a building close-up along a wall like in the image above.

7

Avoid "perspective distortion"

Tilting your camera solely to get a whole building in the shot creates "perspective distortion." This happens two ways.

- When you photograph buildings head on, with your camera **tilted up** instead of **perfectly vertical**. The vertical lines of walls start to converge.
- When you photograph a building ultrawide (0.6x or 1x), **from an angle** instead of **head-on**. Walls look skewed.

If you still can't get the whole building in, zoom out wider....with your body! Then recompose the scene (see **Tip #2** and **#3**).