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# *Three Tricks to Better iPhone® Photography*

*by*  
Marc Bollon

# Three Tricks to Better iPhone Photography

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Welcome to my *Three Tricks to Better iPhone® Photography* eBook. Here is what I will cover in this short eBook.

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## Only 3 Tricks?

Now, to be clear, there are way more than three tricks to taking great photos with the iPhone®, but I’m going to provide you three that I use almost every time I take a picture. They are simple and will make a huge difference.

## Who am I?

I’m a guy who has been doing photography for over 20 years as a hobby. Two years ago, I decided to make it into a side-business and get paid for it. I specialize in professional headshots, outdoor portraits, company photos, and sports action photos.

I’m also a part-time copywriter. Well, a junior copywriter. I’ve only had a couple of paying clients, but I’m working diligently to change that. I love writing and telling stories

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with the hope that I can help people. That's my goal. Whether it's taking great photos for a family or writing a sales landing page that gets my client revenue, I enjoy seeing other people or businesses benefit from my talent.

Photography is a lot like writing but without words. You tell a story with your photos. But it isn't the photo that tells the story; it's the object or person in the photo that tells it. The expression on their face, hairstyle, clothing, what they were holding; all of that tells the viewer a story.

But it goes beyond that, literally. The background behind your subject plays a part as well from the color of the backdrop in portraits or the scenery behind them; it says as much about the photo as the subject.

So, I would say that photographers are writers, just not always with words. I am both and hope that this short eBook will give you some quickly learned skills to improve your iPhone® photos and tell a story.

### Why iPhone?

Since the iPhone 4 came out, I've used nothing but iPhone. In fact, since 2012, I've learned mobile app design and have, over the years, released four iPhone apps. So, I can't write about Android® phones with any level of expertise, and this eBook is exclusively about taking better photos with the iPhone. But the concepts I'm going to talk about apply to any camera.

### Which Phone do I Use?

So, I recently purchased the iPhone 11. It's the base 11 and doesn't have the third camera, but that doesn't matter for the tricks I'm about to teach you. My previous phone was the iPhone 6s, so this is my first phone with the "portrait" mode. I like the portrait mode because it's the first one to offer background blur or "bokeh" control. We will talk more about that shortly.

So let's get started.

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### Trick 1 – Minimize Haze

The first thing people will see me do when I take a photo is to wipe down the phone camera lens. People have asked me about that multiple times as to why I do that.

I think it was about four years ago when I took a photo of one of my children and the photo came out with a huge glare. I thought about it for a second and realized that it might be because the lens is dirty. So, I wiped it off with my shirt, took another picture, and it was clear.

Now the below photo isn't that photo, but it's an example. The left side is hazy, and the right side is clear. All I did was wipe off the back lens.



That's it for the first trick. Wipe off the lens. How simple is that?

If you're taking a self-portrait with the front lens, wipe off the front lens. You get oil and dirt from holding it up to your head. Just a quick wipe down, and you'll see an improvement.

### Trick 2 – Tap to Focus

The second thing people see me do, and which I tell others to do, is I tap the phone screen where I want the focus to be. If you're taking a photo of a group, you want to tap on someone closest to you in the front of the group. If you're holding out an object, but it's the background you want to focus on, then make sure you tap on the background. It's that simple.

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Below are two photos I took outside my door. I'm holding up a coffee mug. I focused the first photo on my mug and the second photo on the pond. I tapped where I wanted the photo to focus. Notice the difference.



The iPhone is good about automatically recognizing faces and objects, but to make sure you get the perfect photo, manually tapping on the object is your best bet.

### Trick 3 – Adjust Background Blur

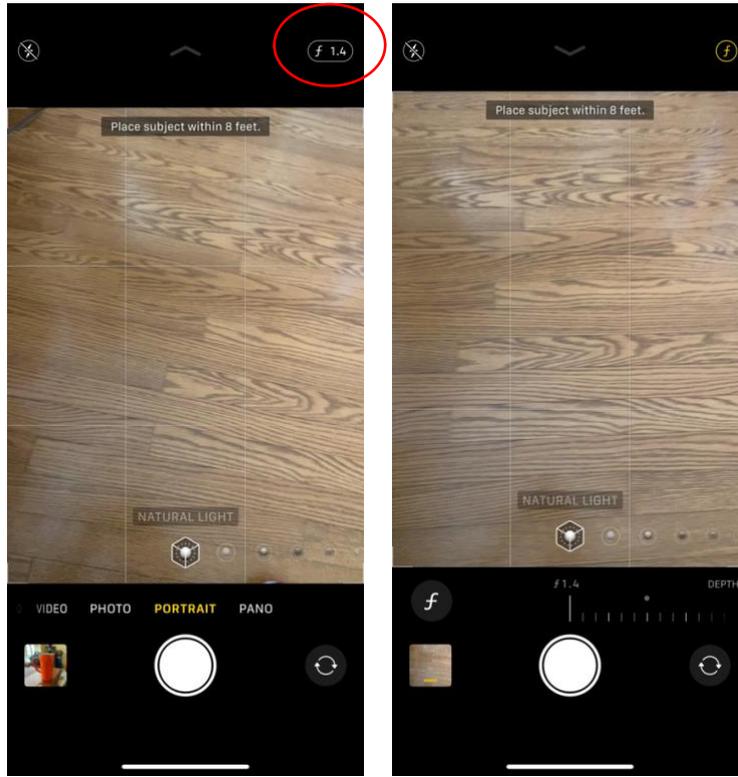
This trick is for iPhone X and above with Portrait mode. I love this feature because it allows the user to create background blur or “bokeh.” However, it is software-based (a kind of AI if you will) and not hardware-based. You will notice the edge of your subject a little fuzzy sometimes. But it still does an excellent job for everyday photography.

When a photographer takes portraits with the subject being a person, the level of background blur is usually what separates the beginner from the experienced photographer. It's all about understanding focal distance, f-stop, and, well, you get the picture. I'm not going to bore you with the technical aspects of photography.

The only thing you need to know is how to create that blur with your iPhone in Portrait mode.

Base Portrait mode settings look like the first photo below. You can select the lighting effect if you wish (software-based, of course) and then take the photo. However, there is a little button in the upper right corner that looks like an “f 1.4” for “f-stop.” If you click on that little button, then the screen changes to look like the second photo.

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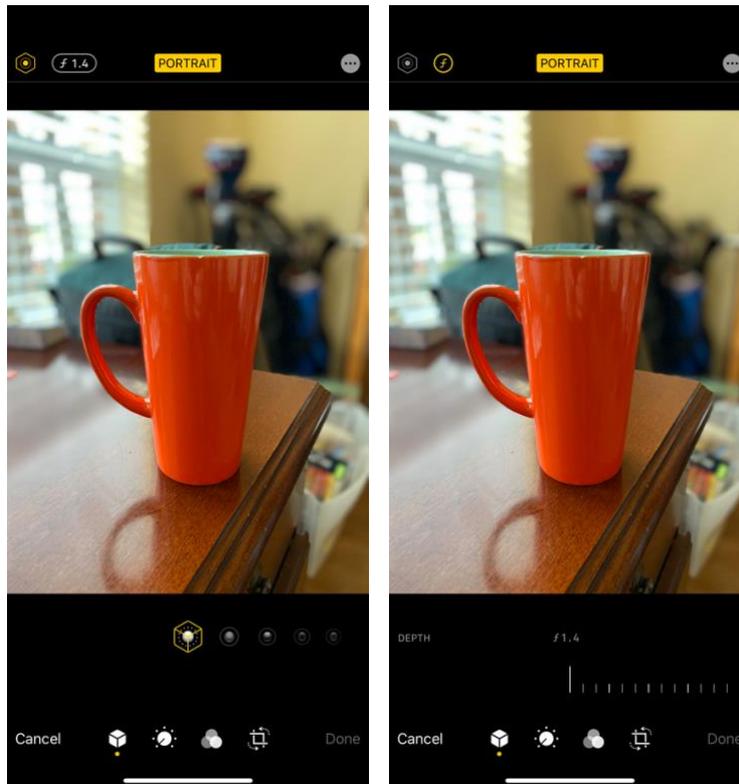
There is a dial below the image with an  $f\ 1.4$  on one side and the label “DEPTH” on the right. This is for “depth of field.” These are your f-stops. You can slide these numbers left and right. As you go lower, the more background blur there is, and if you go higher, the less background blur there is. Now, since this is software-based, you will notice it changes based on what you tap on to be the focus of the photo.



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Want more blur after the photo after you take the picture, but you've already taken the photo? Don't fret. Since the adjustment is software-based, you can also adjust the blur after you take the photo as long as it was taken in portrait mode.

As shown in the below photo, click on the "f" in the upper left corner this time when editing, and you get the f-stop slider on the bottom. Make your adjustments and save by clicking DONE.



Pretty simple, right. Your photos may not be as good as a professional camera with a professional photographer behind it, but for everyday pictures for social media or simply sharing with friends, it more than suffices.

### Happy Photo Taking

I hope these three tips help take better photos using your iPhone. With the iPhone (and I'm sure other brand phones), you can take photos that look professional, at least close enough for average, daily use.

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To learn more about what I can do for your company through photography or writing, visit my websites.

[photography.marcbollon.com](http://photography.marcbollon.com)  
[ntxwriter.com](http://ntxwriter.com)

Happy photo taking!