



FINDING TIME FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Quick Guide
Written by Leanne Cleaveley



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When I told my daughter about the topic of my latest guide, she responded with, “Oh Mom! You find lots of ways to fit photography in.” She continued with a long list, at which point I struggled between grabbing a pen and paper and taking notes or just asking her to write for me.

It is true that many of us lead busy lives that have nothing to do with photography. So, whether it is your hobby or something more serious, how DO you find the time to fit it in?

Like most things that are important to us, we must “make” time. Making time isn’t as difficult as it sounds, and there are many ways that we can bring photography into our daily lives.

In this guide I am going to share some of my techniques for ensuring that I shoot every day – yes, every day! I am also going to offer some suggestions to help you find time to fit photography into the busiest of lives.

In this article you will learn the following:

- Why you should always have a camera handy
- How multitasking can support your hobby
- Techniques to inspire and encourage you to shoot every day
- How to set achievable photography goals

When I first began taking photography seriously, I was a working mother of two young children. My job didn’t involve photography, and most days I flopped into bed exhausted after work, leaving little time to add anything new to my daily routine.

Also, I was not in a situation where I could attend photography classes or spend a lot of time reading guides or watching instructional videos. But I also knew that to learn and improve, I had to be using my camera.

I decided that shooting one image a day would be a reasonable goal. To add a little weight to it, I decided to make my goal public by sharing it with a group of people on social media.

I spent one year in my self-imposed photo-a-day challenge, and it helped me build some good photography habits that continue to influence my practice years later.

To be truthful, there were days that I struggled. The day I lay sick on the couch and my husband brought me the camera so I could snap a shot of our cat laying nearby was a low point. But the days where I grabbed my camera on the way out the door to go shopping felt like wins. And that brings us to one of my tips for keeping photography a part of my daily routine.



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

Combining photography with my other hobby, gardening, has allowed me to capture shots like the one in this image while also getting my yard chores done!


COMBINE PHOTOGRAPHY WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES


It took me a while to figure out that, as a photographer, there are multiple subjects around us all the time just waiting to be snapped. When my photographer's brain really started working, I would find myself looking at a scene and wishing I had my camera at hand so I could capture the image.

How many times do we find ourselves thinking, "Oh, I wish I had a camera!" So, why don't we? During my photo-a-day challenge I got into the habit of taking my camera with me on everyday outings. Dropping the car off at the mechanic? Bring the camera! Taking the kids to soccer? Bring the camera! Going grocery shopping? Bring the camera!

One of the things I love to do is gardening. As much as possible, I take my camera out to the garden with me when I do my chores. Naturally, I have a lot of shots of flowers and bugs. But this works well for me, as I love gardening and macro photography.

So, if you have a hobby that you can photograph, try putting the two together to maximize your time. If you are into automobiles, keep your camera on you at car shows or when you are working in the garage. If cooking is your thing, snap a few gourmet food shots.

 **Key Lesson:** Combine taking photos with another activity you enjoy, or one you have to do, to maximize your time.

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to create gorgeous, perfectly lit flower photographs? Grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [Photographing Fabulous Flowers](#).

Photography has never felt like a chore for me when I have combined it with things I already do and things that I love to do. Grabbing my camera whenever I head out to do yardwork has actually made my chores MORE fun. However, for this to work well, I had to make my kit manageable. And this brings us to my next tip.

TAKE ONLY THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

If your camera bag is massive and contains fifty pounds of lenses and other equipment, you aren't as likely to take it on an outing. It will be a nuisance to carry around, and you will end up resenting bringing it along.

I found a nice compact bag that sits diagonally across my body. In it, I only carry my camera with one lens attached and one extra lens. The bag can also hold my wallet and any other necessities so that I don't have to carry a purse around as well. Because the bag is manageable, I feel fine grabbing it when heading out to the garden, on a walk around the neighborhood, or on a bike ride.

For the days I want to travel even lighter, I take my phone. The cameras on our phones are quite simply amazing. If you are still a doubter about the quality of shots that can be captured on a mobile device, do a quick online search.

Mobile devices go beyond snapshots. In the hands of a photographer, they can be used to create artful, inspired images. So, don't be shy about using your phone camera. The best camera is the one you have on you!



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

Still not convinced that your mobile device can do the trick? This image was taken with my phone while waiting to be seated at a nearby restaurant (they gave us buzzers so we could go for a walk!). This is a great example of using the camera you have on you AND multitasking!



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

This image was taken on day 163 of my photo-a-day challenge many years ago. I found the snake in a gardening bucket and quickly grabbed my camera to catch a shot as I tipped the bucket to let the snake go. Later I realized I hadn't adjusted my exposure for the conditions and the photo was horribly exposed. It turned into a happy accident in the end. Most days you get out and shoot to learn and improve. This image taught me a lot about checking my camera settings before shooting.

SET REASONABLE GOALS


I mentioned this earlier, but it bears repeating: set reasonable goals for yourself.


When life is busy, it can feel like adding that "one more thing" is the thing that will break you. Don't let that happen with photography.

When working on my photo-a-day challenge, I shot several images of the same subject and selected my favorite. Some days this took five minutes and other days it took much longer. Some days I got great results and other days the photos were just ho-hum.

Don't beat yourself up about the ho-hum photos. You got out! You practiced and you learned something! My goal wasn't ever to get a great shot every day. My goal was to learn and improve over time.

So, keep your goals realistic. If your goals are reasonable, it will be easier to stick to them.

 **Key Lesson:** Find a goal that fits your schedule. If shooting every day doesn't work, then aim to take five photos a week. Or set a goal to dedicate an hour a week to photography. Setting a reasonable goal will make it easier for you to stick to it.

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to create gorgeous, perfectly lit flower photographs? Grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [Photographing Fabulous Flowers](#).



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

CHANGE YOUR APPROACH

I don't take a photo every day now, although I do shoot something MOST days. This is mostly to stay in practice and because I love it. Photography is my downtime – my 'me' time.

If shooting every day doesn't work for you, dedicate some time after work or on the weekend to photography. A great way to do this is to schedule in a "photo walk" or "photo drive."

Depending on the type of photography you are into, you may find that you don't have to go very far to find your subjects.

The image on the left was taken after I dropped the car at the mechanic one day. I opted to walk around while they changed my tires. I relish opportunities like this. My mechanic knows this so well that he now says, "Have a nice walk! Have fun taking pictures!"



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

Here are a few ideas for ways you might change up your routine to allow for more photography time:

- Work photography into your commute by leaving the house a few minutes early and stopping along the way to shoot.
- If you take a train or bus, have your camera handy and shoot what you see on route.
- If you have the option to be a passenger on a car ride, take it, and create some great images while someone else does the driving.

FIND FRIENDS THAT WILL SUPPORT YOU

Finding a photographer friend to help support your photographic goals is a must! First off, that person will understand your need to make time for photography. And if you schedule a photo walk or plan a drive to shoot in a particular location, you won't find it as easy to opt out if you have another person expecting you.

If you don't have a friend that is into photography, lots of communities have photo groups that will meet weekly or monthly. Alternatively, you might want to find an online community with weekly challenges to encourage you to get out and shoot. That added bit of pressure to have something to share with the group just might be the impetus you need to squeeze in a few minutes of photography time.

If your family supports your efforts, even more power to you! My husband and children know that I bring the camera along on most road trips. They are kind enough to bring books along and entertain themselves when we stop for a quick photo opportunity. And I try not to slow them down when we go on walks and hikes, but it is understood that mom might lag a little to capture that image of a mushroom or wildflower.



Recommended Reading: Want to create gorgeous, perfectly lit flower photographs? Grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [Photographing Fabulous Flowers](#).



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

I had to get up at 4:30 a.m. and then drive a little way to capture this image. It would have been easy to roll over and go back to sleep at that time, but I was picking up my friend, who also loves photography, and knew she would be waiting for me. I would have missed the amazing sky and some really great shots if I was planning to do this alone and backed out.



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

You don't always have to travel a long way to capture a great image. Sometimes you don't even have to leave your neighborhood. For this image, I just had to step outside to capture the amazing sky created by some unusual clouds and the setting sun.

SHOOT IN YOUR BACKYARD

There is a certain advantage to creating images of things that are close to home. If you feel you don't have much time for photography, then not having too far to travel to shoot images will help you.

There are many subjects right in your own home! Don't have time to go for a photo walk? Take one around your house or yard!

Shooting images close to home not only saves time but also gets you looking at subjects more creatively. We often take for granted the things we see every day, but photographing those everyday things forces you to look at them in a new way. This new sense of perspective can be a great advantage when it comes to your photographic artistry.



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

KEEP IT FUN

My last tip isn't so much a piece of advice but my personal mantra for photography: have fun!

When I have struggled with photography, I have searched the internet for inspiration. Projects like oil and water images or intentional camera movement have kept me interested and motivated and made shooting enjoyable.

Don't become overwhelmed with trying to do too much, either. Choose one thing you want to work on (for example, creating bokeh using a narrow depth of field) and go with that.

If you approach photography with a playful mindset, you will be more inclined to make time for it.

SHOOTING PROJECT #1 (BUILDING BETTER HABITS)

Make a list of activities that you find time for **every day**. Now decide which of these activities would pair up well with photography.

Take your camera with you while doing one of these activities and have a reasonable goal for shooting (for example: I will take 5 shots).

Repeat the above process with the same activity or a different one until you start to build a habit of taking your camera with you and shooting.

SHOOTING PROJECT #2 (MAKING PHOTOGRAPHY FUN)

Look through the guides on Photzy.com and find a guide on something you have never tried before but are interested in.

Read the guide and then set aside an hour or two to go and practice what you have read about. Gather your materials ahead of time so that you can make the most of that time shooting.

Choose your favorite image from your time shooting and share it with a photographer friend!

SHOOTING PROJECT #3 (SHOOTING IN YOUR BACKYARD)

Get your camera and go for a stroll around your house, yard, or neighborhood. Set a goal for a reasonable number of shots that you should take on your photo walk.

Do this once a day, once a week, or whenever it fits your schedule.

Give yourself a new challenge each time you go on your photo walk.

For example, shoot only things that are:

- red, blue, or green (whatever color you choose)
- living/non-living
- high up/low down
- tall/short

Create your own list of challenges for your photo walk so that you have something new to try each time you head out.



Hey there!

Let's get real for a minute... Learning photography can be super challenging! But we're here to help you every step of the way! Here are 3 of our most useful (*and FREE!*) photography resources:



3 Free Photography Cheat Sheets

Grab 3 free photography cheat sheets that will help you understand the basics.

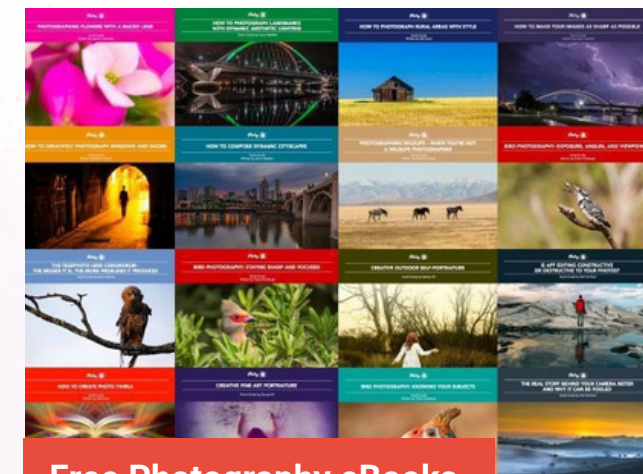
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Leanne Cleaveley is a hobby photographer, part-time elementary school teacher, and full-time mother and wife. She loves reading, gardening, crafting and music – and contemplates ways to find more time in the day to pursue her hobbies. Her photographs can be found at [Flickr](#).

Congratulations! You've completed this Photzy guide!

If you liked this photography tutorial from Leanne, you may be interested in her other books. Check out Leanne's premium guide on how to turn disappointing flower images into gorgeous and perfectly lit flower photographs: [Photographing Fabulous Flowers](#).



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