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100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Photographing Kids

By A.Charlotte Riley

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Kids grow up so quickly and while we are often left with countless memories, most parents have only a drawer packed with school photos, blurry holiday snaps and the forced grin of the inevitable yearly birthday picture to account for the years gone by.

It's time to stop bemoaning the latest photograph of your thumb obscuring your adorable baby and get on with improving your skills as a photographer.

Why should you bother when the near-by mall has a perfectly good photo studio, you ask? Photographing children poses specific challenges but yields numerous rewards.

While it can be frustrating when you miss that spontaneous moment, it is also highly satisfying when you manage to capture the joy in their faces as they dance in the summer's first sun shower. Capturing the day-to-day moments will provide a treasure trove of memories that you will cherish forever.

As well, your own images take on a more personal feel and a more meaningful connection, something that can never be achieved in a generic mall photography studio.

Follow these easy steps and immediately improve your snaps of the kids.

Making The Unusual Usual

Friends with children often say to me "My child always pulls faces for the camera and I can't get a picture without little Johnny sticking his tongue out and crossing his eyes." Kids ---and many adults as well--- are prone to hamming it up for the camera, however, they will be more natural if the camera is a part of their everyday life instead of brought out once or twice a year. By making it a regular part of their lives, it will increase the comfort level and encourage portraits that are more natural. Try bringing out the camera once or twice a week and focusing it on your kids. They will become accustomed to having it around and it will give you a chance to practice your technique, too. And, if they still clown around for the camera, get into the swing of things and enjoy it. Little monkey faces are a part of

childhood!

Kids' Eye View

As adults, we look one another in the eye and photograph our friends at eye level. Do the same for your children. Bend down on one knee or sit on the floor to get a picture that reflects a child's perspective. To add a little excitement, have fun playing with perspective by shooting the image from the ground up. Lie down on the ground and taking a picture from that viewpoint. Suddenly toddlers become giants and we can witness the world as they see it, by looking up.

Patience, Patience!

Small children have a limit of two or three minutes before they become bored with Mummy or Daddy's photo session. The urge to run off and play becomes just too much! Don't force kids to stay in one place for long, unless you like pictures of sullen little faces. If you are taking a formal portraiture-style photo be sure to plan ahead for the best possible results. Check your batteries, make sure there is film in the camera and if you are using a digital camera see that there is space on the memory card. Provide your toddler or small child with a prop, like a ball or a favourite toy to help create a more natural expression, instead of the one that says, "Just hurry up and take my picture, Mom!" Keep it fun and stress-free.

Fill The Frame

Because backgrounds can sometimes be distracting, do not be afraid to move in closer and take a picture of your angel's face. It creates drama and interest in the photograph and eliminates extra clutter. Unless you are taking a travel photo or an image of the child engaged in a particular activity, feel free to emphasize the most important element of the picture— your child. Use the zoom or macro tool on the camera to get in closer. Pictures of your little one's hands or feet can also be interesting studies, and one day you may find yourself saying, "I can't believe they were so tiny!"

Just A Little Off-Centre

Many professional photographers use "The Rule Of Thirds" approach which means that they mentally divide the frame into three sections both vertically and horizontally —like a tic-tac-toe grid— and place the subject of the photo at one of these intersecting points. It helps to create a more dynamic photograph, than one where the subject is smack-dab in the middle. Take note that if your camera is an auto-focus model, you may have to focus first on your subject and then, with the shutter button still half-pressed, recompose the image.

Natural Light Rules!

One of the tricks of the trade in photography is to use morning or late afternoon light. The sunlight at this time is wonderful and helps to produce pictures that are bathed in warmth. Direct light flatters the subject and adds to a more intimate and natural-looking photograph. It also helps to greatly reduce the bane of every parent photographer— red eye!

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Experiment with taking advantage of the sunlight pouring through a window, or march the kids outside on a sunny day and photograph them while they are playing tag. To have a well-lit photograph make sure the light is behind you, shining on the subject. To create drama, try using side light for impressive shading. If you try to take a photo with the sunlight behind your children, a technique known as "backlighting", you will end up with the subject looking like a dark silhouette.

The Last Word

It really is all about fun. View the time you are taking to photograph your children as time to share in their adventures and imaginary play. A frustrated mom directing kids to a more picturesque location and insisting on a smile does not reflect kids' reality. Pick up the camera only when everyone is relaxed and happy. Finally, don't expect every photo to be a masterpiece. The truth is that only a few images from each roll are frame-worthy, but the important thing is to keep snapping away to capture the moments that depict their ever-changing lives, in all its unique glory!

Charlotte Riley has worked as an Internet editor, content producer, marketing writer and researcher. She has a BFA from Concordia University, majoring in Photography. In her spare time she can be found cooking, working on crossword puzzles or hanging out with her daughter, Kate. Contact <http://www.acriley.com>

Photographing Flowers

By Albreht Moy

Flower photography is one of the most popular forms of photography. You can photograph flowers growing in the wild, flowers that are cultivated in greenhouses and gardens, or photograph cut flowers and arrangements indoors, in a studio setting.

Both film and digital cameras work well for flower photography.

Any lens can be used in flower photography, from the ultra-wide angle lens (17mm), to the super-telephoto lens (300mm or 400mm), but if you are serious about closeup flower photography, buy a macro lens. Most point-and-shoot digital cameras come with a built-in macro mode. Your digital camera's macro feature lets you get very close to your subject, and that is important when photographing flowers.

A tripod is essential because it reduces the chance that you'll get a blurry image. Many tripods, even when fully collapsed, are too high for photographing low growing flowers. That is why you need to get a tripod that allows you to get close to the ground. A special kind of tripod, called a tabletop tripod, is great for photographing small flowers and other objects.

Use a color-saturated type film. A film with an ISO 50 or ISO 100 will give you bright colors. Don't use film faster than ISO 400 for flower photography.

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The ideal lighting for photographing flowers is the soft, diffused light of open shade or a cloudy day. Night photography is also an option. A flower photo can be very attractive when illuminated by flash. Wind is the most annoying factor when photographing flowers, so be patient and wait for the wind to die down before you take a picture.

Whether you're photographing flowers indoors or outdoors, consider unusual angles. Try photographing your flowers in early morning light and photograph them again in late afternoon light. Use warming filters to create mood. Add water droplets to the petal of your flower and give it that dewy, morning look. Experiment with backlighting and try to highlight the transparency of the petals.

Don't forget that, although most people love color photography, creative flower photography can be in monochrome as well.

The only way of developing successful techniques in flower photography is to practice, and also learn more about flowers. Botanical gardens and nature preserves are some of the places where you can not only take photos of flowers but also learn more about them.

Albreht Moy owns

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