3 Digital Photo Mistakes and How to Fix Them

With smartphones in all our pockets and handbags, we're all photographers now. Taking photos is an art that includes your individual expression, your trials, and your errors. But before you delete your "bad' photos, think again. I like to use digital editing tools to quickly fix so-so shots and keep my closely held memories intact.

Here are three common photo mistakes and how to fix them:

No. 1: The colors are off. Have you ever taken a photo of a sunset that seemed spectacular, but looks dull in your photos? Or maybe there is an orange cast to a shot you took indoors? If so, your "white balance" might need adjusting. Many smartphone camera apps have a white balance function (WB) that you can adjust in your phone's camera settings. To adjust your white balance:

- You can click on icons for cloudy, or indoor lighting — this might automatically solve your problem.
- Or you can use the slider that has numbers in Kelvin (a temperature measurement) on it. If your images are coming out too blue, you can use a higher number to warm things up (the lowest and bluest number on your app will probably be around 2000 and the highest or hottest number will be around 10,000), or to cool things down from too orange, slide to the left for a lower number.

No. 2: The focus is off. There are a lot of things to think about when taking a photo: the position of your subject, how close to get, what angle you want, and where to focus.

- Generally, if you are photographing people, you'll want their eyes to be in focus. Most camera apps now allow you to use your touchscreen to separate the exposure point — that little circle you see in your frame (often yellow or orange) from the focus point, which is the little box you see in your frame (often blue or purple). This let's you get the light where you want it.
- Also, editing tools in your camera app should include "sharpening" tools — the icon is typically a triangle — to make your images appear crisper.
- Look for a focus tool in some apps that lets you mimic a very short depth of field and blurs out the background, while keeping what you want to focus on in the foreground.

No. 3: The composition is off. When taking a photo, use the "rule of thirds." Pretend there is a grid on your screen (or look in your settings to simply turn it on) with three horizontal lines and three vertical lines. Where the lines intersect are the best places to center your subject. Try getting shots that are to one side, or one corner, for better-composed images. If that doesn't work, remember that you can move your focus point (the square you see on your screen when taking an image), or reposition your camera completely for a better angle. If you have a great shot but it still could use a boost from better composition, use your photo app's crop tool to reposition the subject based on the rule of thirds.

Susan Marque got her M.F.A. in creative writing from The New School, writes for magazines, television, and is currently working on a memoir. She is also a healthy food expert, loves both food and tech, and all things photo related. Her photo art has sold in Beverly Hills and London.