



Shooting & Processing Tips

In this lesson we walk you through various iPhone photography techniques and post-processing tips that I used during my trip to Northern Europe. With these ideas you'll be able to take more creative and visually appealing photos with your iPhone and effectively edit them to achieve a professional look.

Key Concepts

Here's a summary of the main techniques we'll cover:

1. **Vertical Panoramas:** Capturing tall structures or scenes by rotating your iPhone in panorama mode.
2. **Low-Angle Shots:** Placing your iPhone close to the ground to create dramatic perspectives.
3. **Utilizing Reflections:** Using puddles, car roofs, or other reflective surfaces to add depth and interest to your photos.
4. **Long Exposure with Live Photos:** Creating motion blur effects with iPhone's Live Photo feature.
5. **Selective Color Adjustments:** Correcting color imbalances and enhancing specific elements in your photos using masks and point color adjustments.

Capturing Vertical Panoramas with an iPhone (00:53)

To capture a unique perspective of tall structures or scenes, I use the panorama mode on my iPhone with the device in a horizontal orientation.

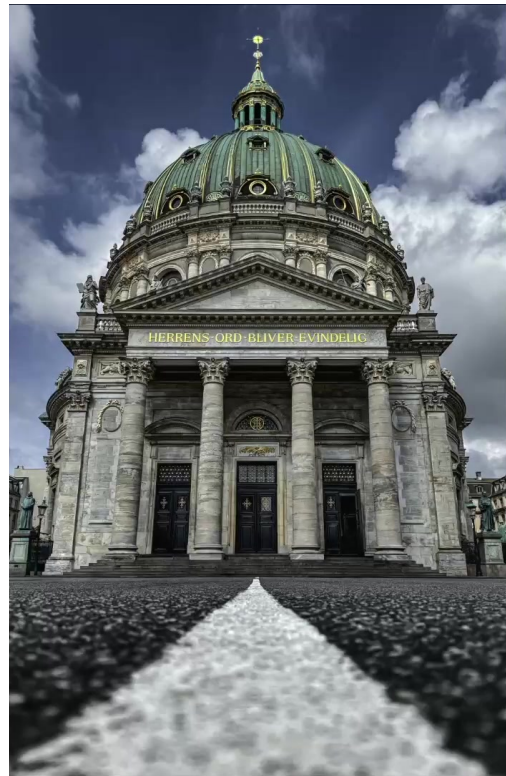
1. **Enter Panorama Mode:** Open the Camera app on your iPhone and select the "Pano" mode.
2. **Rotate Your Phone:** Hold your iPhone horizontally. This will make the panorama arrow point upwards, indicating that you're capturing a vertical panorama. If you'd rather pan starting at the top and panning downward, then tap the on-screen arrow and it will rotate 180°.
3. **Start the Panorama:** Tap the shutter button to begin the panorama.
4. **Extend Your Arms:** If there's an obstruction like a railing, extend your arms as far as possible to avoid including it in the shot.
5. **Pan Upward:** Slowly tilt your phone upwards, keeping your arms extended.
6. **Reverse Direction to Finish:** Instead of tapping the shutter button again, simply reverse the direction of your panning. The iPhone will automatically recognize this and stop the panorama.
7. **Keep Phone Level as You Pan:** Try to keep the phone as level as possible to avoid distortion in the final image.



Capturing Low-Angle Shots (03:39)

To create a dramatic perspective, I often place my iPhone close to the ground.

1. **Rotate Your Phone 180°:** Rotate your iPhone so that the lenses are at the bottom and therefore as close to the ground as you can get them.
2. **Position Your Phone:** Place your phone in a vertical orientation with its bottom edge touching the ground, then lift it slightly until the ground is framed nicely in the shot.
3. **Focus on the Subject:** Tap on the subject in the distance (e.g., a building) to set the focus and exposure, otherwise you might end up with in-focus ground and a blurry subject.

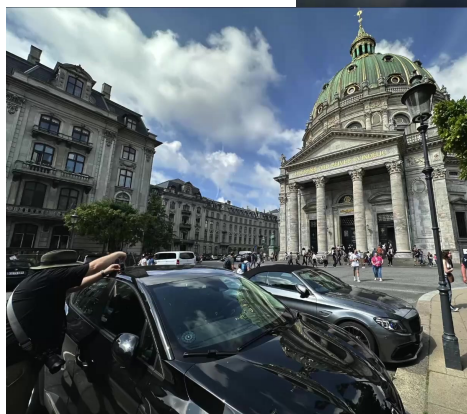


Reflections for Symmetry (05:06)

Reflections can add depth and interest to your photos. I use various reflective surfaces like car roofs and puddles.

Using a Car Roof for Reflections

1. **Find a Black Car:** Look for a black car with a shiny roof. The dark, reflective surface can be used like a mirror to produce a reflection of a distant scene.
2. **Rotate Your Phone:** Rotate your phone 180° so that the lenses are at the bottom.
3. **Position Your Phone:** Place the bottom edge of your phone so it touches the roof of the car while pointing at the distant subject. Then slowly raise it above the surface until you achieve the desired reflection.
4. **Focus on the Subject:** Tap on the subject in the distance (e.g., a building) to set the focus. If you skip this step, your phone might decide to focus on the dust on the surface of the car and your distant subject will be out of focus.



This can also be an effective method to eliminate crowds of tourists by obstructing your view of what is found at the bottom of a scene

Using Puddles for Reflections (07:14)

After a rain shower, you'll have the opportunity to use the shiny surface of puddles as if they were mirrors, creating reflections of distant objects. The setup is similar to the technique that utilized the roof of a black car. The main difference is that you probably won't want to lie flat on the wet ground to compose the scene. Therefore, you'll likely want to take many shots, varying the tilt of your phone, and check your results before trying again until you get something you like.

The only thing I'd change when working with puddles is to tap and hold on the distant subject while holding your phone at eye level before positioning your phone near the puddle to lock the focus (AF Lock) on the distant object. This prevents the camera from focusing on the water droplets instead of the reflected subject. Passersby will likely give you strange looks when you use this technique, but once you show them your results, they'll be instantly eager to try it themselves.



This technique is best practiced every time it rains so that you get accustomed to holding your phone (or a big camera) just right to capture the shot. This way, the idea becomes second nature, allowing you to recognize the opportunity each time it arises. Eventually, you'll find yourself capturing a truly epic shot when the perfect situation presents itself. Here's an example from an earlier trip to Taipei, Taiwan, where most photographers were complaining about the rain and wet conditions, while I was thrilled about how the puddles would transform the scene.



Creating Long Exposure Effects with Live Photos (10:06)

To capture motion blur, I use the Live Photo feature on my iPhone.

1. **Enable Live Photo:** Make sure the Live Photo feature is enabled in the Camera app.
2. **Hold Still:** Hold your phone very still when taking the photo, as the long exposure effect captures a few seconds before and after you press the shutter button.
3. **Capture the Photo:** Take a photo of a scene with slow-moving subjects.
4. **Apply Long Exposure Effect:** After capturing the Live Photo, open it in the Photos app where you should find the word LIVE just above and to the left of the image. Tap on LIVE to reveal the effects menu, and select "Long Exposure". This will create a motion blur effect, blurring any movement in the scene.



iPhone Long Exposure Advice

Long exposure shooting on iPhone requires careful planning to avoid subjects moving too rapidly. A three-second exposure will result in the subject completely disappearing from the frame. While this technique can be effective for removing moving cars and similar objects, it may not be ideal for achieving a motion blur effect.

The most successful motion blurred images feature at least one stationary object that serves as a reference for the blurry content. For instance, in the provided example image, the non-blurred bicycle across the street is a weak reference. It would have been better if one of the nearby cyclists had remained motionless while the others moved.

Additionally, compare the two images above and notice that the image is cropped on all sides due to your phone's attempt to compensate for camera movement. To avoid disappointment, it's crucial to loosely frame the subject to ensure that information near the edges of the frame is not critical to the composition.

Post Shoot Image Optimization Tips (12:04)

Now, let's shift our focus to post-shoot processing techniques. To enhance the color palette in my images, I employ masked adjustments in Lightroom Classic. These adjustments can also be achieved using Lightroom or Adobe Camera Raw. Here are some techniques that I consistently found useful for the shots I captured during my recent trip.



Compensating for Vibrance (12:29)

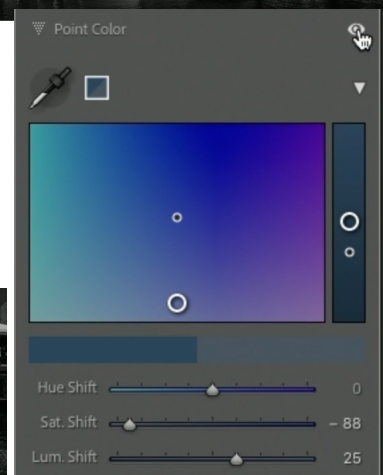
I often enhance the vibrancy of my images when they feature colorful subjects, like the one in the example above, which was captured in the Nyhavn area of Copenhagen, Denmark. By increasing Vibrance, I can make the image more colorful without causing the colors to become overly saturated. However, this adjustment has its own set of consequences that I then compensate for by using masked adjustments.

1. **Overly Colorful Skies (14:42):** In the example above, I wanted the colors in the building to get a boost, but found increasing Vibrance make the sky too prominent which make it compete visually with the buildings. The most obvious solution would have been to use a Sky mask to lower the saturation of that area. I find that sky masks end up including a large portion of the area below the sky and therefore I prefer to either use an Object mask, or a Brush mask with the Auto Mask setting enabled. Then when painting with the brush I'm careful to not allow the brush to overlap the non-sky areas all that much.



2. **Correcting Overly Blue White Objects (19:21):**

White objects that are in the shade will be lit from the blue sky above causing them to take on a blue color cast. Boosting Vibrance will cause those areas to become darker and more intensely blue. In the example above, the boat on the right is where I noticed the problem. To compensate for Vibrance's effect on the area, I used an Object Mask to isolate the entire boat. I then applied a Point Color adjustment and used the eyedropper tool to click on the shaded part of the boat and then adjusted the luminosity and saturation.



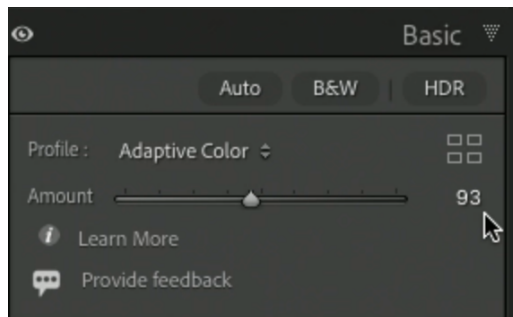
Enhancing Water

I had many photos that included water and found the Water option in the Landscape Mask to be useful in those situations. I would then increase Clarity and Texture to make details pop out and occasionally adjust white balance to shift the color every so slightly towards or away from blue.



Adaptive Profiles for Difficult Images (23:46)

I occasionally encountered situations where there was a significant disparity in brightness between two areas, as illustrated in this example. When viewed at default settings, the shaded area appeared almost solid black. However, by utilizing the Adaptive Color Profile, the image was transformed from the outset, making it easier to discern the content in the dark regions of the image. Subsequently, I employed masked adjustments to isolate the bright areas and subsequently darkened them.



By following these techniques, you can capture and enhance your travel photos to create stunning and memorable images.