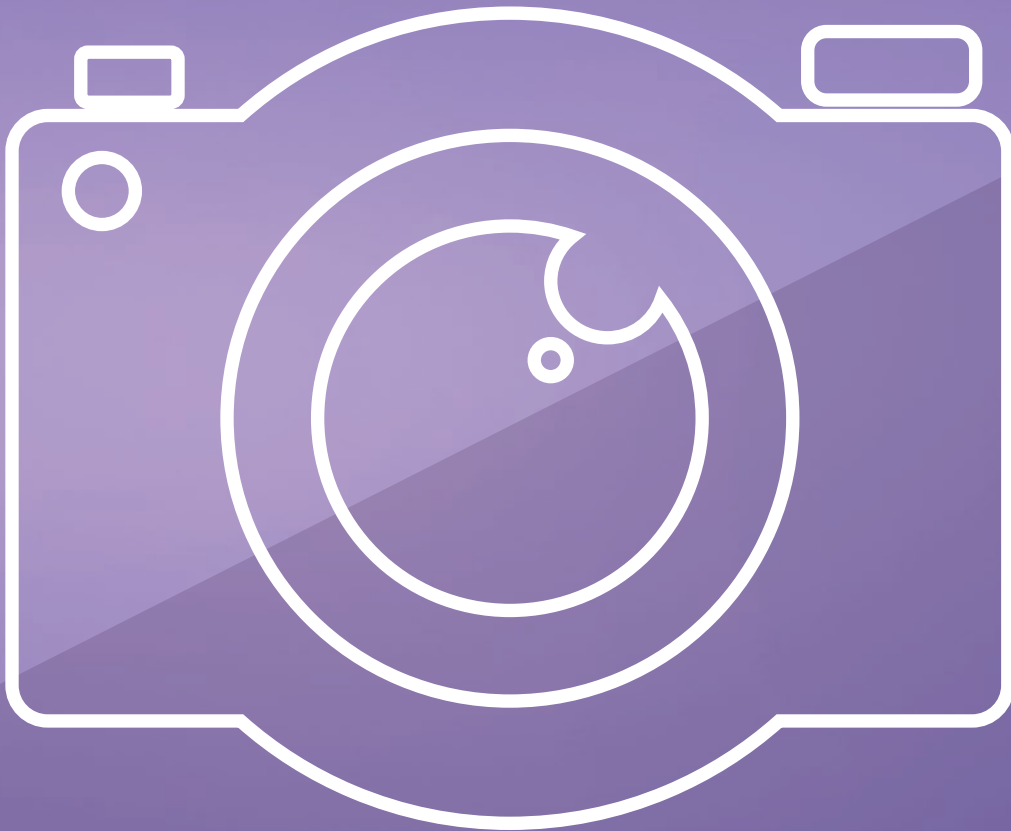


Top Tips for Imagery that Engages and Sells



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Why are visuals important?

Fáilte Ireland research shows that images are the strongest motivating factor when people are deciding to go on a trip. Once they have made their decision, they watch videos to get ideas about what to do during their holiday.

Visuals play a key role in communicating with our potential customers and so it is imperative the images you use on your website accurately reflect your business and portray it in the best possible light. Bad quality photos are not going to set the right first impressions.

Equally, any other channels where visitors may find you, such as on [DiscoverIreland.ie](https://www.discoverireland.ie), should also be reviewed and updated to include high quality images that are captivating and inviting. You can find more details on the streamlined Get Listed process on [failteireland.ie](https://www.failteireland.ie).

This document explores how to create imagery that evokes emotion, what makes a great photograph, how to take high quality images with your smartphone and how to elevate your photos so that they stand out and entice people to book with you.

If you'd like inspiration on what kind of content will entice people to book with you in the Covid-19 era, have a look at the [video supports](#) on 'Optimising Direct Sales Conversions through Digital with Own Brand Web', which are available as part of these supports, and also the videos 'Imagery That Engages And Sells' and 'Video Content That Engages And Sells' which this document supports.

Visuals address the emotional needs of customers

Visuals are experiential: they give viewers a sense of what they will see, hear, touch, taste and smell if they book with you. Visuals also evoke emotions through creating atmosphere. One of the key emotional needs in the COVID-19 era is reassurance: people need to feel reassured that safety protocols are being adhered to, so that they can enjoy their holiday with peace of mind.

This photo which was tweeted by @chacha0rca, is a fantastic example of reassurance. It is from the restaurant area in a zoo in Japan. In order to ensure guests maintain a social distance from one another, an army of stuffed animals were deployed to occupy seats that were not meant to be used. Children think this is great fun and adults feel comfortable, knowing they are eating in safety.



Visuals can reassure customer safety

Here's a lovely example of a light-hearted atmosphere from a fantastic burger restaurant in Galway. The staff are celebrating the manager's birthday and you can see how far apart all of the staff members are. This creates a sense of reassurance without having to mention social distancing.

Top Tip: Don't forget to post about all of the fun occasions you used to share before the pandemic: birthdays, anniversaries, friends celebrating their friendships – anything that creates a sense of joy!



BOTOWN
· 31 May · Edited ·

Happy birthday to our GM Fran the Man 🎂

Tricky to give him the bumps from a social distance, but we are where we are!!

Time is standing still these days, which begs the question: do you still have to add a year during lockdown?? 🤔🤔

Every day feels like a bday around Franny. His leadership qualities are surpassed only by his classic good looks and all round soundness.

Here's to many more buddy 🍻

👍❤️🤔 36 1 comment 1 share

Like Comment Share

Most relevant ▾

👑 Top fan
Chrissie O Donnell

Sometimes you will be showing safety features in a photo. In this example, Dan Murphy's Irish pub in Amsterdam is showing its new plexiglass panels in front of the bar – with a gap for serving drinks, of course. So, when you need to do that, tell a story and show a happy person to create a positive mood.



Top Tip: Tell stories to take the focus off safety features in photos.

Visuals can be positive communicators

Companies are being encouraged to seek innovative ways to persuade people to support other local businesses. This is a great example from Hodgins Hair Design in Drogheda – they use a receipt to show that there are lots of ways to support other local businesses that don't cost anything, such as giving positive reviews, word of mouth and engaging with them on social media.



Top Tip: Create goodwill for your brand by showing support for other businesses.

Visuals can connect businesses and customers

Here is a fabulous photo shared by Blas restaurant in Portumna! It is a brilliant piece of content by the Death Wish Coffee Company. Everyone needs a smile, especially during these difficult times!



Top Tip: if you can show people that you will make them smile, they'll want to come and spend time in your coffee shop or restaurant or at your activity centre.

Composition: the foundation of a great image

The foundation for a great photograph is composition. Here are eight checklist items to consider as you create that compelling image.

1. Apply the rule of thirds

Instead of centering your subject, it's more creative to use the Rule of Thirds. Divide the frame into 9 equal rectangles, 3 across and 3 down. Then place the important elements of the scene along the vertical or horizontal lines or where the lines intersect.

Top Tip: Switch on this grid on your smartphone camera when taking photos to help you get used to this technique, and to start thinking more creatively when snapping photos.



2. Frame your subject

Framing the subject of your photo helps draw attention to it, so always look for natural frames in your environment that you could use. For example, you could use frames like windows, doorways or archways, like you see in this example at Trinity College.

But also think outside the box: could you maybe look through the railings of a gate or the spokes on the wheels of a bicycle, or in between the branches of a tree? Doing this is also an effective way to portray depth in a scene. Take risks, they just might pay off!



3. Use focus to direct the viewer's attention

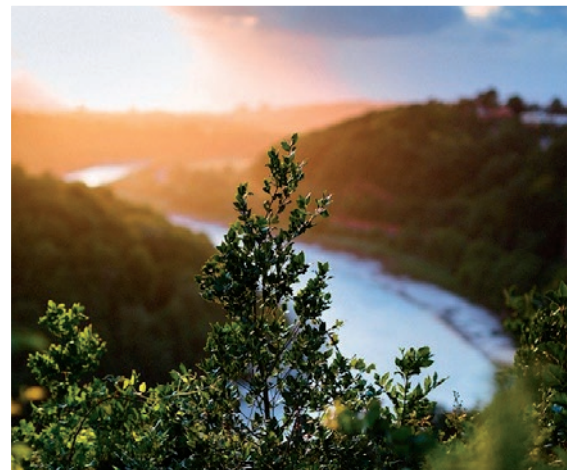
To ensure that people focus on the part of the image you want them to look at, put that part in sharp focus and the rest of the image out of focus.



Top Tip: see the section “Set the focus of your shot” later in this document for details on how to do this on your smartphone.

4. Consider depth of field

Depth of Field is the distance between the closest and farthest objects in a photo that appears in sharp focus. In a photo with a narrow Depth of Field, only a small slice of the image is in focus: this area could be close to the camera but doesn't have to be. Conversely, in a photo with a large Depth of Field, a significant part of the scene is sharp – perfect for landscapes.



Top Tip: If you want to use the blur effect in your photos make sure the subject is close to you. The closer the lens is to the subject, the blurrier the background will appear.

5. Use leading lines

Leading lines draw the viewer's gaze to the important element of the scene. Leading lines are more impactful when they are diagonal; however, they don't have to be straight. In fact, curved lines can result in a very creative composition to a photo.

6. Change your point of view

Changing the perspective of your photo can have a huge impact. Instead of always taking photos at eye level, look at the point of view generated by a high angle (which can make the subject appear more important than their surroundings as they appear larger and taller than in real life).



7. Use colour to create the right mood

Colours are one of the key factors in creating the mood of a picture. Cool colours like blue, green and white evoke a sense of calmness, while warm colours such as red, yellow, and orange create an atmosphere of energy, excitement and even risk.





Top Tip: Even if you do not capture these colours in your original photo, you can saturate them using a smartphone app afterwards.

8. Capture the action

The most captivating photos are those with people in them. People connect with other people. And to make it even more compelling, include dramatic action!



Top Tip: See the section “Shutter Speed – Freeze the Action or Capture the Movement” for more details on what apps and settings you need to use to achieve the effects in these images.

GDPR Obligations

Important: you need signed release forms for people and locations that appear in your photos – these are effectively contracts that govern what permissions you’ve agreed with people who appear in your photos and those who own locations featured in your photos. If you are photographing children, a parent or guardian must sign the release form.

The release form should ensure that you and third parties associated with your business can use it for tourism promotion and sales purposes – if possible, in perpetuity across all media, public and private.

It’s really important to understand your obligations in relation to processing people’s personal data and that you comply fully with GDPR requirements. **Please read the GDPR section on page 22-24 carefully.**

Copyright Relating to Images

If you wish to use images created by someone else, you must license that content. Please read the Copyright section on page 22-24 carefully to ensure that you do not infringe anyone’s copyright on a creative work.

Top tips for taking quality photos with your smartphone

So, now that you know what a great picture looks like, how do you go about taking one with your smartphone?

Take photos at the highest resolution

A photo is made up of tiny dots or squares called pixels and the more pixels a picture has then the better the quality and the sharper the image. So, a picture that is 4000px wide by 2000px tall has 8 million pixels (or 8 megapixels), whereas a picture that is 1000px wide by 1000px tall has only 1 million pixels.

If you only want an image to post on social media, then 1000px x 1000px is perfect, but if you want to use that same photo as a full-width banner image on your website, it will not look good and will appear blurry and grainy.

Why? Well, most PCs and laptops have larger screens that can display images at higher resolutions, which means they can fit more pixels on them. The most frequently used resolutions on laptop nowadays are 1366-by-768 (also known as HD) and 1920-by-1080 (Full HD or 1080p).

So, can you imagine what an image that is 1000px wide would look like when it is stretched to fit on a screen nearly twice its width?

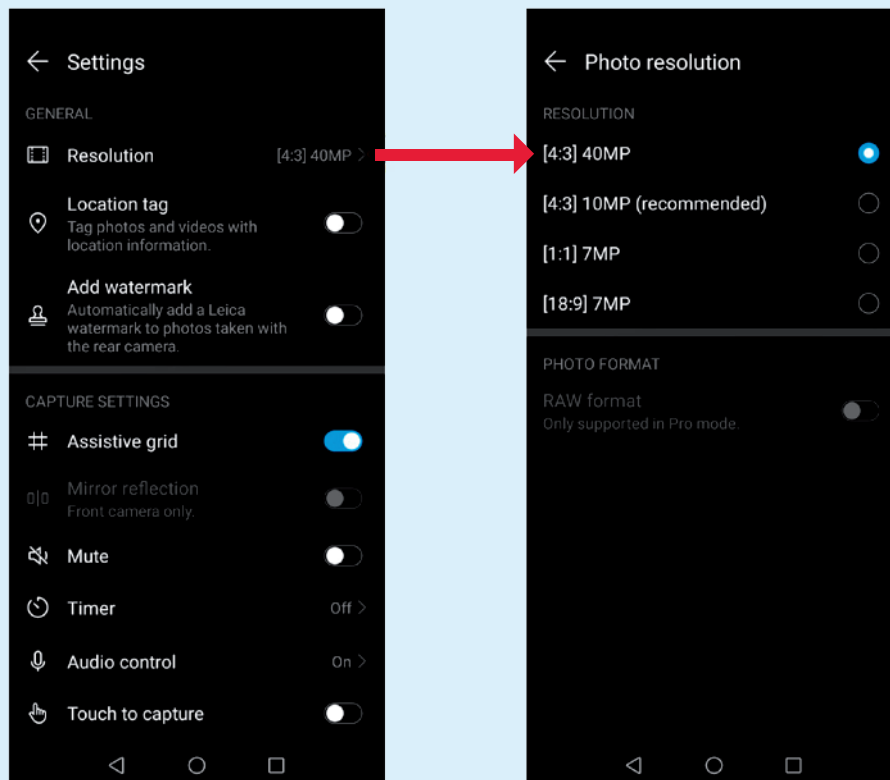
Blurry images create a bad first impression for your website visitors. So, when taking pictures with your smartphone you need to make sure you are taking them at the highest resolution or size. That way you have more choices with how and where you can use them.



To set the resolution on your smartphone:

- iPhone – you cannot change the resolution (or size) of images taken with an iPhone (you can only change the resolution of videos). All iPhones therefore take photos at the best possible resolution.
 - iPhone 4S to iPhone 6 = 3264x2448 px (8MP)
 - iPhone 8 upwards = 4032 x 3024 px (12MP)
- Android – most Android phones let you set the resolution of both pictures and video. While in the camera app, click on the Settings icon. Choose Picture size and set the size to the highest setting.

Top Tip: The higher the resolution, the larger the file size, so make sure you have space on your phone.



Settings taken from Huawei P20 Pro (location of setting on other Android phones will vary).

Set the focus of your shot

The autofocus function on your smartphone camera is likely to be very good at picking out faces, but if there's no face in the picture, it will probably focus in the centre of the scene. If you're using the Rule of Thirds, the most important detail won't be in the centre. So, the way you make the camera understand what to focus on is by tapping the important object on the screen.

This will put the subject in sharp focus and blur the other parts of the image.

To do this, open your camera and tap on the subject of the photo. A yellow square indicates your focus point. As you can see in these examples, if you focus on something that is in the foreground, the background will blur and vice versa.

Top Tip: The closer the lens is to the subject, the blurrier the background will appear.

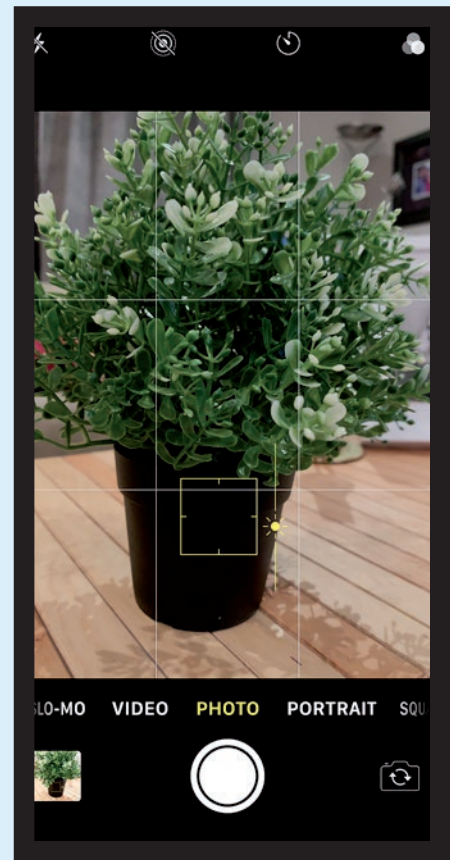


Adjust the camera's exposure

In photography, exposure means how bright or dark your pictures appear. If you expose the photo correctly, you'll capture high levels of detail in all parts of the image. If you'd like to adjust only the darker areas, you can use the 'Shadow' setting; and if you'd like to adjust the brighter areas without changing the shadows, you can use the 'Highlights' setting.

On a smartphone, the exposure of your photo is linked to what's in focus. To adjust the exposure, tap on the subject of your picture – a slider will appear with a sun symbol. Then slide your finger up and down to adjust the exposure.

A key thing to remember is that it's better to under-expose a picture (i.e. have it slightly darker) rather than over-expose it (where it's too bright). Why? Even if the picture is a bit dark you have still captured all the detail in the shot, and you can fix it afterwards in post-processing. But if areas of the picture are too bright, the detail is lost, and you'll never be able to retrieve it.



Top Tip: Use the HDR (High Dynamic Range) setting when taking pictures of high-contrast scenes like landscapes. This will enable the camera to pick up a lot more detail in the picture such as details in the bright areas, like the sky, as well as in the darker areas in the landscape. On the iPhone, go to your Camera Settings and either set Smart HDR on, so every picture uses it, or by switching it off you can see it as an option when you are taking a photo. On Android, it is generally one of the camera modes you can choose from in the Camera menu.

Shutter speed – freeze the action or capture the movement

By controlling the shutter speed of your camera, you can reflect movement and action in a picture, which when done right, takes your photos to another level. Shutter speed relates to how long the camera's shutter opens for when taking a photo.

A fast shutter speed will freeze any movement in the scene, while a slow shutter speed will capture any movement in the picture as a blur or a streak.

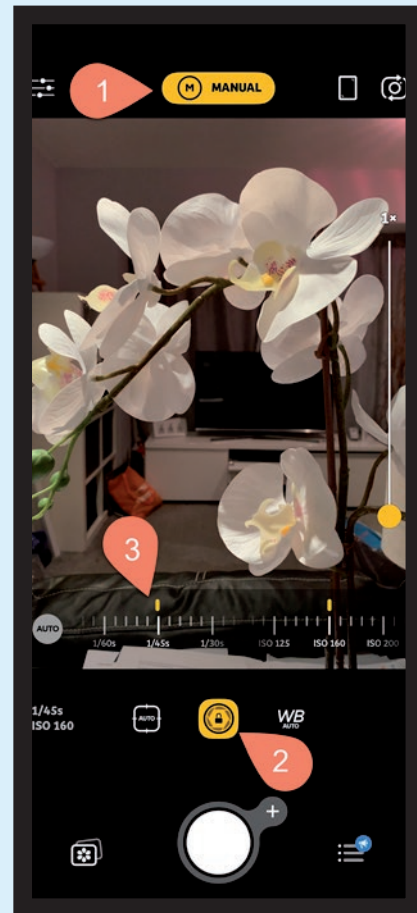
Shutter speed is measured in seconds (1s, 2s) or fractions of a second (1/60th, 1/500th). A normal shutter speed is around 1/60th. To achieve a motion blur, a shutter speed of about 1-2 seconds should be enough. To freeze the action like kids taking part in an activity, use a shutter speed of about 1/500th or above.

To control the shutter speed on your camera:

- iPhone – the native camera on iPhones does not let you change the shutter speed so you will need to install an app to give you this control. There are so many apps to choose from but a few great apps you could use are **VSCO (Free)** or **Camera+2 (cost involved)**.

The example here is using Camera+ 2. Select Manual mode from the top menu, then select the Shutter and ISO icon in the middle. Drag the slider to select the shutter speed you want.

- Android – most Android phones have either a Manual mode or Pro mode. Choose this and then set your shutter speed as needed.



Top Tips: A fast shutter speed can help eliminate camera shake. If you want to capture motion, then you will have to use a tripod. Also be very careful when pressing the button to take the picture, so as not to shake the camera, as any movement will ruin the shot.

Tips for taking good quality images

There are some general things that you should always take into account when taking photographs:

1. Always ensure your lens is clean of fingermarks and dust. Use a lint-free cloth if you have one (like the ones used to clean eyeglasses)
2. Use two hands or a tripod to avoid blurry shots, especially in low-light conditions. Or lean your elbows on a flat surface to steady your hands.
3. Use natural light whenever possible and ensure the subject is facing the light source. If the subject is backlit, by having the light source behind them, they will appear dark in the final image.

Photography mistakes and how to fix them

For every photography mistake, there is an app that can solve it! In this section we will look at these common issues and show you how to fix them.

GOLDEN RULE

Your original picture is the holy grail, you must protect it at all times. NEVER overwrite the original file as once it's overwritten, it's gone. Always create a copy of the file before you start editing it. Most apps will take care of that for you, but don't assume they will – always check first and make sure they do!

Wonky horizons

If the horizon line in your photo looks like it's tilting upwards instead of being perfectly horizontal, there's a simple fix.

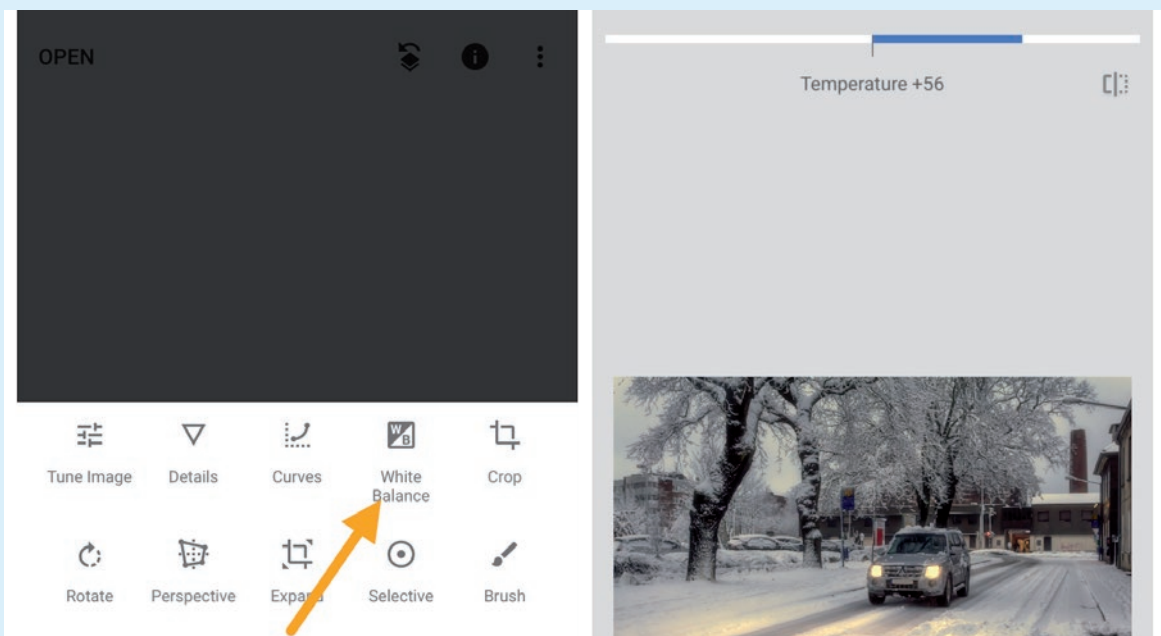
1. Open the photo in your Photos app.
2. Choose the Edit option.
3. Select the crop/straighten option as shown.
4. Move your finger along the slider to rotate the image left or right.



Unnatural colours in your photos

Sometimes a camera doesn't capture the colour 'white' as true white. Instead bright areas will look like they have a colour tint. To fix this you need to adjust the white balance (WB) or tint of the image – you can use any number of apps (including the Photo app for your smartphone) but for this example we will use an app called Snapseed (free) [Snapseed for Android](#), [Snapseed for iPhone](#).

1. Open the image in Snapseed.
2. From the Tools menu, choose White Balance. Select the AW icon from the toolbar at the bottom which is for auto white balance.
3. The app automatically adjusts the temperature of the photo to make it warmer, which eliminates the blue tint from the snow – as shown here. Once done, tap the checkmark.
4. When prompted, choose to Save a Copy of the image.



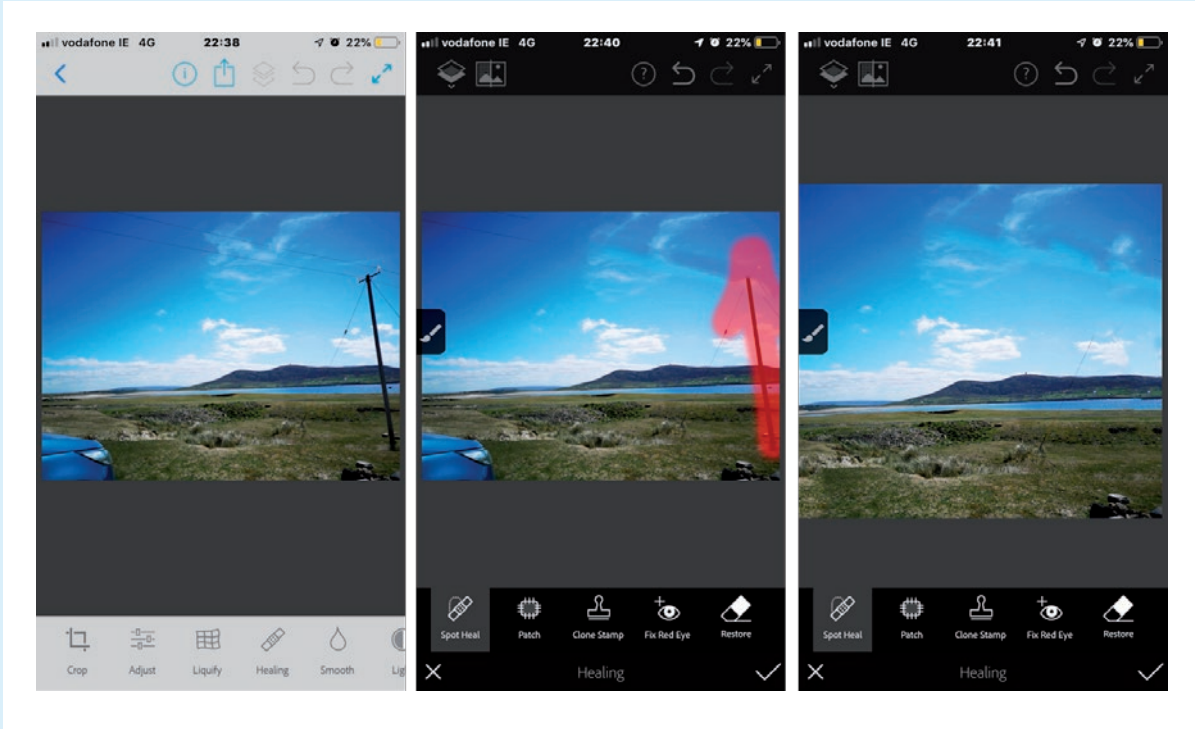
Removing an object from a photo

When there are objects in the photo that you would prefer not to be there, you have two options:

- (a) Crop the photo to remove the object – assuming it is at the edge of the picture.
- (b) If the object is right in the middle of the photo or, as in this example, going right through the picture, then you will need to use a more intelligent tool like Photoshop Fix. [Photoshop Fix for iPhone](#), [Photoshop Fix for Android](#).

1. Open the picture in the app.
2. Click on the Healing tool.
3. Using your finger draw over the top of the object you want to remove.
4. The app will then remove the object.
5. Once you are done, click on the tick.

Top Tip: You may need to zoom in a bit to the photo to be a bit more accurate with what you are highlighting.



Top tips for elevating your photos

So, what if there's nothing wrong with your photo but you want to make it stand out on social? You have many options, in particular, the three highlighted here.

1. Use filters to enhance your images

Filters can enhance the look of your photo in many ways, including making the colours more vivid, adding drama to the story, or changing it to classic black and white.



Filters can also change the style of an image by giving a cathedral a gothic look (on the left) or a historic sepia tone (on the right).

If you would like to get more help on developing a brand aesthetic or a mood board for your Instagram images in particular, I would advise you watch the video on [“Getting Instagram Right”](#) which is available as part of the supports on [Boosting Sales with Social Media](#).

2. Elevate the story through captions

Adding a caption deepens the story of the photo.

This image is a powerful photo of a couple making a connection with history by placing their palms on the ancient tombstone. The caption “Feel the hand of history” gives us a sense of how they are feeling, as well as adding poetry to the art of the story.

There are many apps for adding captions to photos, including [Snapseed for Android](#) and [iPhone](#), [Wordswag for iPhone](#) or [PicLab for Android](#).



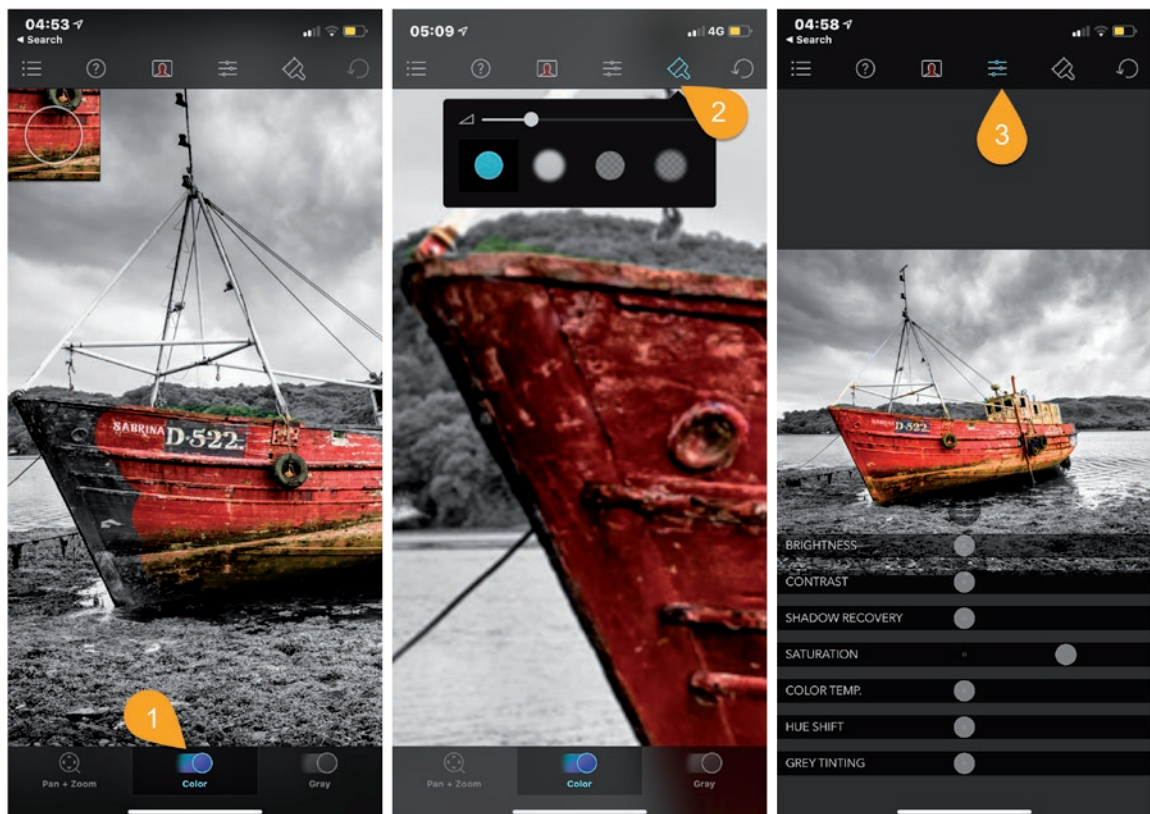
Or you could use an app like Canva – a fully featured graphic design solution for non-designers. [Canva](#) is available on both desktop and mobile and has a ton of beautifully designed templates and assets to choose from.

3. Use colour popping to add drama

Colour popping is a very eye-catching way to draw attention to what's important in a photo and also to make your photo stand out on social media. When you do colour popping you are essentially adding a black and white layer on top of the image and then choosing the part of the coloured image you want to show through. There are many apps – such as Snapseed – through which you can do colour popping, but this example uses an app called **Color Splash**.

1. Load an image into Color Splash.
2. The app turns your image grayscale.
3. Using your finger, trace over the area of the picture you want to be in colour.
4. If you make a mistake, select the Gray tool to turn a section back to grey again.
5. Once you have done that, adjust the saturation of the image to enhance the intensity of the coloured part of the image, so it is even more in contrast with the grey.
6. Once you are done, click 'Save Image' from the menu in the top left.

Top Tip: When using this app, you may need to zoom in a bit closer to get the edges right, and you can change the size of the brush to help with this too.



Top tips for creating captivating imagery

1. Shoot at the highest quality so that you can crop or downsize the photo without losing quality.
2. Play around with all the modes and settings on your camera – practice as much as you can with focus, exposure, etc. until it becomes second nature.
3. Take multiple shots – even professional photographers take lots of shots of the same image then select the best one.
4. And finally, get creative – use techniques like captions, colour popping and filters to elevate your photos.

Use your new images on DiscoverIreland.ie

1. Get listed or update your listing on DiscoverIreland.ie by visiting <https://www.failteireland.ie/get-listed.aspx>
2. Make sure to add any new imagery to your listing.

GDPR, Model Release Forms and Copyright

GDPR and Permissions Guidance Regarding Image and Video Content

GDPR and Permissions Guidance

Acquiring, taking, using, sharing, keeping and deleting photos or video content containing and clearly identifying people (showing their faces) constitutes the 'processing of personal data' and therefore is bound by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and the subsequent Data Protection Act of 2018 .

Please refer to www.dataprotection.ie for further information on Individual and Organisational responsibilities under this legislation.

Therefore, **all images and video where people are identifiable in the content must have a Legal Basis.**

Whereas there is a legal basis for processing personal data, **2 of the most common** used by organisations to process images or video of people are:

- a. **Consent and**
- b. **Contract**
- a. **Consent** means the **explicit permission of those people in the photo or video to hold, share and use their data.**
- b. Contract is where you have a signed contractual agreement with the individuals to hold, share and use their data. An example would be a Model Contract or Model Release Form which would outline the terms by which the organisation can use the images or video, how and where they can be used, etc. as agreed by the individuals themselves. These agreements generally also deal with copyright.

Regardless of which 'legal basis' you use, it is your organisation's responsibility to:

(1) be completely transparent, providing the individual with clear details as to how their images will be used, how it will be stored securely, how it will be shared and with whom, how long you will keep it for and how they can exercise their privacy rights if they want to retrieve their images and information or have it deleted. These are some of the **'GDPR principles'** and it is important organisations understand these. This is particularly relevant where the individuals gave their consent. **Consent may be given but individuals must be afforded the right to retract Consent. The personal data you hold on individuals is theirs, not yours.** You should always have a Privacy Policy or Privacy Statement which outlines in detail how you process and protect the personal data of individuals and which specifically describes how individuals can exercise their privacy rights and details of whom they contact within your organisation to do that.

(2) always have and keep evidence of consent being given; signatures are required of written or digital acceptance ‘tick boxes’ if online, verbal consent must always be recorded and retained. It’s up to you to prove you have received consent.

For example, in the case of paying individuals to have the images taken, you should have a Contract in the form of a **Digital (image or video) Release Form, also referred to as a Model Release Form;** which describes how the images will be used and confirms the individual’s consent in the form of their acceptance of contract terms in return for payment.

Where individuals are not being paid or signing up to a contract, you **must still get their written consent** and therefore it is recommended that you use a similar procedure to using an **Image/Model Release Form;** amended to omit any payment terms.

An Image/Model Release Form should provide enough information to allow the individual make an informed decision about what they are consenting to, and should be accompanied by a hard copy of your Data Protection Policy or Statement in order that they have the opportunity to access further information before consenting. Links to your Data Protection Policy or Statement should be included in the form.

You don’t have to prove that individuals have always read your Privacy Policy/ Statement, but you do have to prove that you gave them every opportunity to do so before they consent.

It is good practice that you send your organisation’s Privacy Policy in advance to those participating in order that they have been given time to understand it before consenting.

All Digital Content Release Forms must be maintained on file by the business as reference, in the event of a query or inspection by the Office of the Commissioner for Data Protection.

As part of the terms and conditions of that consent, you as a named person, acting on behalf of the owner of the business, are legally responsible to ensure:

- the agreed permission in writing is secured for the capture of that data
- the responsible capture and processing of the data
- the secure holding and storage of that data
- the appropriate use of that data

in accordance with the terms and conditions agreed to its use/release.

In the case of **minors (under 18) this requires a parent or authorised guardian’s written consent** on behalf of the child for taking or processing image or video data, ensuring secure storage and use of this data.

Guidance on securing permissions

This section provides guidance on securing permissions for taking, processing, storage use and publication of Personal Data by way of Visual Content (Images or Video) As stated above, written consent for the taking, processing, storage and use of personal photos or video data requires the expressed consent of the individuals and this is best secured in the form of a **Digital Content Release Form (Image or Video) (see example below)**

The form should contain:

1. **The date the Data is intended to be captured**
2. **The name of the representative and the name of the business they are acting on behalf of**
3. **A short, concise description of what the image will be used for, how (which channels) and whether it will be shared, with whom and why and security assurances. This is effectively a short summary of your Privacy Policy / Statement, written in 'plain language' in an open, honest and trusting tone**
4. **A link to your full Privacy Policy / Statement**
5. **A statement indicating the named person** (the person to be photographed or video should be named):
 - a. **provides their full consent** to the capture, processing, secure storage, use and publication of their image or video data in accordance with agreed terms and conditions (see below for guidance on terms and conditions)
 - b. Has been provided with the **opportunity to read your organisation's full Privacy Policy / Statement** (either by being sent it in advance or offered a hard copy)
6. **Signature and date by the person to the release of their data** (or the parent/guardian acting on behalf of the minor)

The terms and conditions should indicate:

- **The person seeking the permission is authorised** to act on behalf of your business
- **Confirm how the media can be used and shared**, including if it can be shared with partners / 3rd parties
- **Confirm the media can be processed and edited** to meet the requirements of the business
- **What the content will be used for (e.g. 'for the sole purpose of promoting your business and tourism to support the economic development of tourism and the region/Ireland')**
- **Where the media can/may be used (i.e. what platforms)**

Most businesses will seek to secure this for all media, including 3rd party platforms such as TV and video streaming and other online media such as social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, WeChat, etc. as well as own brand web and 3rd party tourism sites such as Destination Marketing sites and possibly by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland

- **Confirm the media will be securely stored in accordance with your Privacy Policy** ensuring your privacy policy clearly confirms how digital media is securely stored and held
- Confirm how long the data will be maintained for (businesses usually try to ensure this is optimised for the likely lifetime of the content (e.g. 5 years or 10 years)
- **Confirm how the data will be removed/securely destroyed** at the end of the agreed period
- **How individuals can exercise their privacy rights** and who in your organisation they contact to do so (including Subject Access Requests and Right to Be Forgotten procedures)

Sample Model Release Form

Business Names/Branding Logo

I hereby irrevocably and absolutely consent to the unrestricted use by *(name of your business)* and those acting in partnership and with his or her permission to use any video footage, photographs, slides, transparencies and images of me that the photographer creates today, for all purposes and in any media (whether now known or hereafter devised). I give *(name of your business)* and their photographer/videographer my permission to create and use the content in any Media, for any purpose (excluding defamation) which may include, among others, advertising, promotion and marketing.

I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished footage, imagery, advertising copy, text, or other printed matter that may be used in conjunction therewith, or to inspect or approve the eventual use(s) to which the Images may be applied.

This release constitutes the sole, complete and exclusive agreement between *(name of your business)* and me regarding the video and/or images.

(Name of your business) may reproduce this video, photographs, slides, transparencies, and images and use and exploit same in any way they decide, altered or otherwise, without claims, demands or proceeding by me. *(name of your business)* may also delegate, subcontract or assign such consent to any third party without consideration.

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Photographer Information

Name: _____

Shoot Title _____

Date: _____

Model Information:

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Model Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Gender: _____

Signature _____

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Here's a [detailed explanation from the Irish Music Rights Organisation about copyright](#).

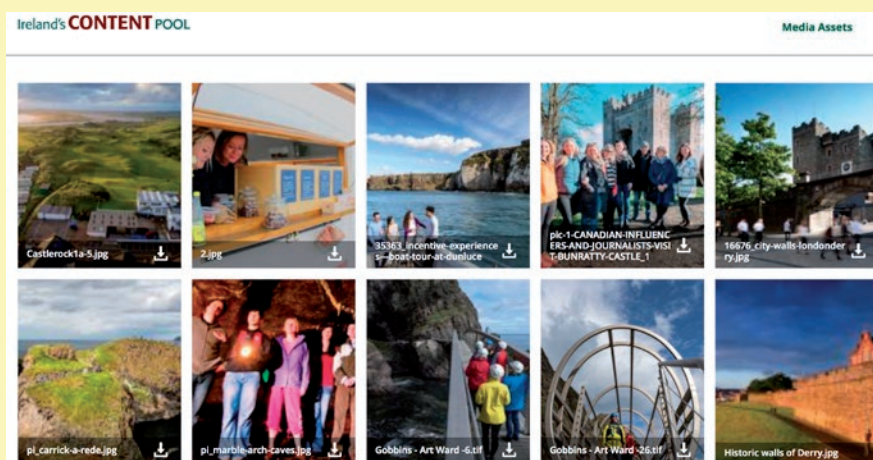
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