

14 Photography Projects to do at Home: Part Two

14 projects for you to try whilst in the current lockdown situation that we find ourselves in.

Each activity is coded so you can see which can be done with either a camera or smartphone and which are kid friendly. Most are easy to do with what you have around you in the home.

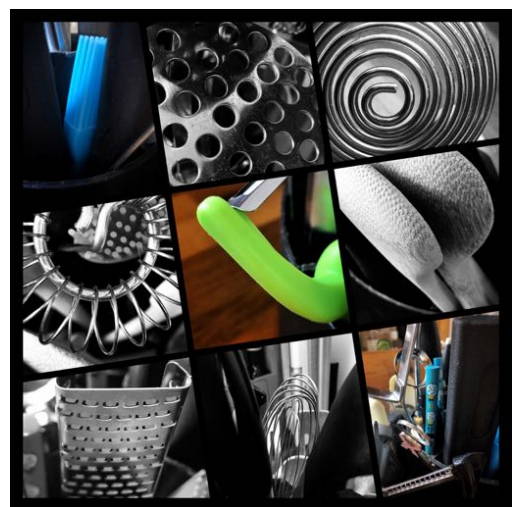
I believe in the power of creativity to make us happier even in the most troubling of times so I've chosen activities designed to be the most fun and creative for you. If you can get your kids involved too that's great!

I will be posting additional instructions/tutorials via my Facebook page and blog over the coming weeks to help you with the projects. Let me know how you get on - I'd love to see your photos!

Key: Family friendly 🧸
Camera 📷
Smartphone 📱

9 photos - 1 subject 🧸 📷 📱

1. Choose a reasonably large or detailed subject that has lots of different details - eg your car, part of your garden, a room in your house, a large toy with plenty of details
2. Shoot at least 9 different photos showing only the details of your subject.
3. Create a grid of the images using an app like Photogrid
4. If your children are doing this - get them to do different subjects to avoid arguments!



I shot the utensil holder in my kitchen - notice that most of my grid are black and white so I placed the colour ones to create a line across the grid. Usually you would do either colour or black and white if creating a set; if you are going to mix it up - make it part of the design of your grid!

Flat lay collage 🧸 📷 📱

You'll need:

A table top, floor or other background to lay out your collage (be creative - wrapping paper, mats, cloth etc)

A collection of things for your collage (ideas below)

1. Pick a theme like things I've used today, things of a specific colour, round things, small things, my favourite things, the things I can't do without, ingredients for a meal/ cake, what's next to my bed, my collection of... and so on.
2. Lay them out on your chosen backdrop - I suggest if using a tabletop or the floor that you mark out an area to confine your collection to (60 x 60cm is a good size)
3. Set up in good but not direct light to avoid harsh shadows
4. Shoot from straight above your collage (doing this on the floor makes it much easier!)

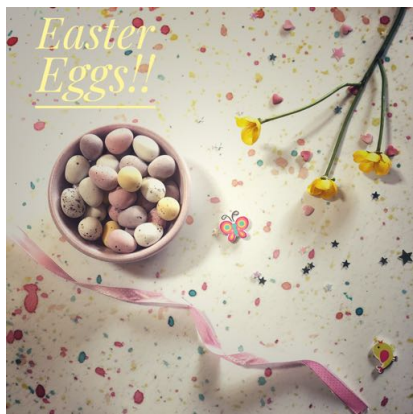
Tips for your layout:

1. Put the largest things on first
2. If your theme is a colour - can you arrange them tonally?
3. Make sure the straight things are straight
4. Use really small things to scatter around your collage - like my shells and the butterflies
5. Try laying your things out symmetrically and/or creating patterns

The internet is a great place to get inspiration for this type of photo. Search the hashtag #coolflatlay or look at @5ftinf on Instagram or just google flatlay collages!



Six flowers in my garden today



An Easter theme



A collection of yellow things

Light trails 🧸 📷

You'll need:

A room that can be made as dark as possible

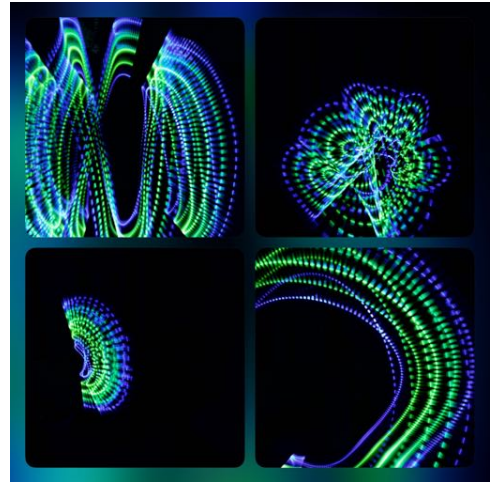
A camera that enables you to set your shutter speed (TV or S on your mode dial or menu)

A tripod

A release cable (optional)

A light source - glow stick, torch, light up fairy wands etc

1. This is a fun project to do with the kids
2. Choose a room that is as dark as possible
3. Make sure your child/assistant is also dressed in dark clothes (this just hides them more in the resulting images)
4. Set up your tripod and camera
5. Choose a shutter speed of at least 20- 30 seconds
6. Keep your ISO at 100 to avoid grainy results
7. Turn off the lights and get your assistant to swing the light source about - experiment with different movements and length of exposures
8. If you have a release cable use this so you don't knock the camera unnecessarily. Alternatively use the timer function and set to 2 seconds
9. Use clear sweet wrappers to create coloured trails if you don't have a coloured light source



No assistant?

Set up your tripod if possible so the camera looks down towards the floor

Attach a torch with some string to the tripod so that it can swing freely

Set the torch swinging and shoot away!

The images above were taken using a kids light up 'wand'. Exposures were between 1/2 second and 5 seconds.

I edited the results by deepening the shadows to hide more any background details.

Be inspired by great artists and shoot a still life!



All the early photographers were inspired by the art of painters who came before them - their early cameras were immensely slow in comparison to the modern camera so they need to shoot static subjects.

What you'll need:

Some inspiration

Props from around your home/garden

A well lit area to set up your still life

1. Search for images that appeal to you on sites such as Pinterest and of course Google. The aim here is to inspire rather than find something for you to directly copy
2. Collect together the props for your image and set up in a space with enough light - avoiding direct light which will create overly harsh shadows
3. Look at your source image for ideas on how to place your props, the variety of colours, textures etc
4. Experiment, experiment - take as many photos as it takes to get it right. You will find that the camera may see things differently to you - especially when it comes to the spacing of things

Example:



My inspiration was a Van Gogh painting of a pot of garlic chives
© Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

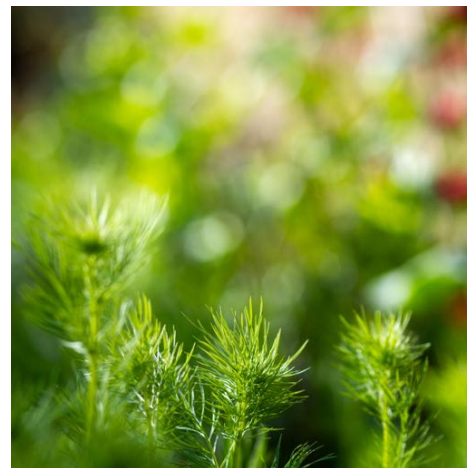
5. I added some texture to the photo using a basket to put the pot of basil in (which also creates a frame) and some linen
6. I added the tomatoes for a pop of colour -who doesn't associate basil with tomato!!
7. Shot using late afternoon natural light, edited in Lightroom and then a painterly texture added using the Distressed FX app (you can also do this in the Snapseed app using the Grunge tool)



Bokeh effects

Bokeh (pronounced boh-keh) is Japanese for out of focus and refers photographically to the out of focus light in the background of images. It's an attractive way to add sparkly light to a photo.

Outside this can occur quite naturally - as in this garden shot - but we can also create it ourselves inside in a few different ways!



What you'll need:

A subject

Fairy lights

Kitchen foil or bubble wrap (large air pockets are needed)

1. Bokeh happens when we use an aperture that creates a shallow depth of field (DOF) - ie some of the photo is blurred out whilst our subject remains sharp. Our subject is usually close to the front of the photo and us
2. If using a camera use Aperture Priority (A or AV on your mode selector). Select an aperture value of F5.6 or below
3. If you don't have this - choose the Macro/Close Up mode in your scene modes
4. If you have a 50mm lens use this as it's the best lens to get great bokeh effects
5. If using your smartphone try the various portrait modes you have available as well as any macro modes you may have (see Point 7 in the Oil on Water project in Part 1 for more details on this)

Options:

1. String up fairy lights on a wall some distance from your subject. Focus on your subject and shoot away. Experiment with light levels - if the fairy lights are in a darker area of the room you'll get more pronounced results
2. Scrunch up some kitchen foil and stick to a wall that is getting some direct sunlight. You'll get different results depending on the quality of the light/time of day (see below)
3. Set up your subject on a table - not too close to the foil - focus on your subject to make sure you throw the background out of focus
4. Bubble wrap - use in the same way as the foil



Against foil - strong overcast light



Against foil - strong direct afternoon sun

cont...

An even more creative project, if you are using your camera and a 50mm lens, is to make the bokeh into any shape that you like - see my festive tutorial on my blog here for more information.

<https://www.sarahstephens.photography/post/festive-bokeh-tutorial>

You can turn those lights into any shape you like!

Forced perspective 🧸 📷 📱

This is a great project to do with the kids as it's really creative and a lot of fun!

1. This technique makes use of optical illusions to make objects appear larger, smaller, farther, or closer ...
2. You can use almost anything to create fun images - Google 'forced perspective photos' to see all the different ideas you could play with! Using toys, using things in the landscape and so on
3. You will need a bit of space and a lot of patience as it can take a while to get things lined up properly
4. Make sure you focus on either the nearest thing to you (as in the photos below) or about a third into the scene
5. If you want it all to be sharp make sure you have plenty of light and set your camera to shoot at at least F8 or 11. On a smartphone avoid the portrait or macro settings to get maximum sharpness
6. The smaller the object the further away the rest of the scene needs to be and the closer to it you need to be
7. Family photos - make the youngest one the biggest, tallest one the shortest etc



Create some Word Art 🧸 📷 📱

Sometimes it's nice to use a photo as the background to a quote, a song lyric or poem that you love. I've been learning how to create word art in Photoshop but you can some great results with apps and your smartphone. If you can transfer images to your phone from your camera then you have even more options.

Tips for images:

1. There needs to be space for the words to 'sit' - too much clutter on a photo can get in the way unless you totally over lay the picture with text as I did with the DH Lawrence quote on the next page
2. So if you are looking for a photo or planning to shoot one, think about making space for the words and compose accordingly or find a photo that has the space
3. You can either start with the quote, lyric etc and shoot something you feel fits or take an image and then find something afterwards (I did this with the trees image)
4. Always include the credit for the words - even if only found on Pinterest (which is a great place to find quotes on just about anything!)
5. You could plan to use these on your walls at home, use to create cards or on social media so think about what you might do with them afterwards

Recommended Apps

Snapseed (both Apple and Android)

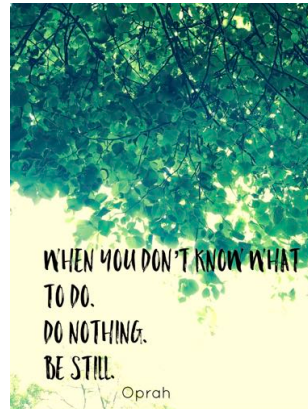
This free app has a basic text tool which can be perfect for simple quotes. You can adjust the style, colour and opacity of the text. To add more than one block of text you will have to save and reopen the tool.

Tip: Use Line 2 text type, all uppercase and then invert via the opacity settings - this will fill the text with the underlying image. Choose a contrasting colour to make it stand out - you can adjust the opacity too so that some of the background image shows through (my Yellow example below)



Over (Apple - free with in app purchases)

This app has a lot more styles to play with so if you find Snapseed a little restrictive then try this one. Like Snapseed you can alter the colour and opacity of the text. You can also add multiple text onto the image without having to save and repeat.



Typorama (Apple - free with option to pay for Pro version)

This app has lots of preset designs in different styles which each have multiple looks within them. Apply the text, choose a style and then keep tapping the style icon to see all the options available.

You can select colour, add shadows and other effects. (see examples below)



As an iPhone user I have not played with the following apps but they appear to have all the same options as the apps that I use and have high ratings.

TextArt (Android - free with in app purchases)

Text on Photos - Photo Text Edit (Android - free with in app purchases)

As all the apps have free options so you can try them to find the one you most enjoy using!

Make a photo book! 🧸 📷 📱

So now might be a great time to create a photo book you've always meant to or maybe just a book of the projects you've all had a go at during lockdown.

You could create books at home with the kids using your printer and websites like [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) to create layouts.

If you want something a bit more then use one of the many online book printing services such as [photobox.com](https://www.photobox.com), [blurb.com](https://www.blurb.com), or [inkifi.com](https://www.inkifi.com). There are many more. Both Inkifi and Photobox have other options for printing your photos.

I write a blog last autumn about all the things you could do with your photos which has lots of tips on making successful books and gifts. Click the link below to read it:

<https://www.sarahstephens.photography/post/what-you-could-do-with-holiday-photos>

