



14 Photography Projects to do at Home: Part One

14 projects for you to try whilst in the current lockdown situation that we find ourselves in. Here are the first seven to get you started. Another seven will be available next week.

Each activity is coded so you can see which can be done with either a camera or smartphone and those 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 📱

1. My Day 🧸 📷 📱

1. Take one photo roughly once an hour through the day to document what you were doing.
2. Aim to shoot about 6 - 8 photos.
3. You could make it all about your view, where you are standing, and so on. You can be in the photos or not.
4. Once you have your set of photos make it into a timeline image. You could do this using a programme such as Word or Powerpoint. (Make sure you use a landscape orientation of your paper for the best effect) Or, you can use the grid builder in apps such as Photogrid - Photogrid has a great filmstrip layout that's perfect for this.

If you're doing this project as a family compare your timelines at the end of the day!



2. Oil on Water



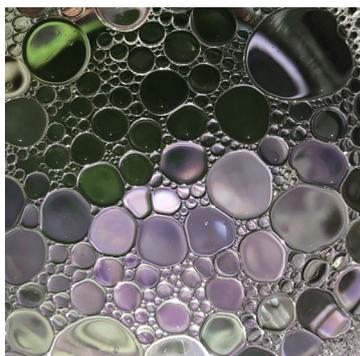
For this project you will need:

- A clear glass or bowl
- Washing up liquid
- Cooking oil
- Coloured paper/magazines etc
- A camera or smartphone



Technique:

1. Fill your glass or bowl with water and add some washing up liquid. Stir to mix and then leave for 10 - 15 mins.
2. Find some different coloured papers, pages from magazines, wrapping paper etc. The more variety of colours on your backgrounds the more variations you will be able to create. For the example shown I used a magazine from a local garden centre.
3. You will need to shoot this in plenty of light so set up on a surface near a window - direct sun is good for this project.
4. Place the glass on top of the coloured paper. Add some oil to the glass. It will bounce down into the water and then rise to form cells on the top of the water.
5. Shoot your photos as close as you can get so that you don't see the edge of the glass/bowl.
6. This is a great project if you have a macro lens or close up filters for your camera. Alternatively use the Macro/Close-up mode available either via a flower button on the back of the camera or via the SCN menu.
7. If you are using your smartphone you will be able to get quite close. Apple users may like to look at the Macro feature of the Camera+2 app (which I used in the examples below), whereas Android users need to go into the Pro mode menu of their camera (swipe right usually) and look for the focusing tool - swipe the tool towards the flower symbol.
8. I found shooting at an angle to the surface got the best results.
9. Move the glass to get the best light effect through the oil.
10. Stir the oil around to change the pattern or to fill any gaps with a cocktail stick or similar.



3. Flower 'Portraits'

For this project you will need:

- A flower (or other single subject)
- Coloured and white A4 card or paper
- Bluetack or masking tape
- A well lit window (though not necessarily direct sun)

This project enables you to take photos that mimic being lit by studio lights.



Technique:

1. Attach the white card/paper to the window
2. Place your flower in front of the card - either on the window sill itself or on a table. Make sure that the flower is positioned so there are clear margins of card at the top and down the sides
3. Take the photo making sure you focus on the flower itself. If using a camera you may find you need to change your metering modes to get the best result. If using your smartphone tap on the flower and adjust the exposure with the slider that pops up
4. Don't worry about seeing the edges of the card in your image - you'll be able to crop out unnecessary details afterwards. See below for a link to my editing tips for this project
5. Shooting against a white or light background gives you a backlit style shot
6. Change the card/paper for a black or dark colour and you will get a spotlight effect from the light spilling over the top and sides of the card!
7. Option: Use other pieces of card to block light from one or both sides to get different lighting effects
8. No black paper or card? Use a place mat, large book or baking sheet!

More information about this project and how to edit your photos afterwards will be available in a blog post here:

<https://www.sarahstephens.photography/post/flower-portraits>

4. Out of My Window 🧸 📷 📱

Choose a window with a view. Over a week or at least three days try one of the following ideas:

1. Notice something that you could photograph that may have escaped your notice before. We often don't notice the details of what's very familiar to us
2. Look out for any differences from previous days - this could be people, blossom coming out or disappearing, more leaves on trees, the weather and so on. Try to do this at the same time of day each time. Capture the differences
3. Take the same view but frame it differently each time - zoom in or out, change your angle of view, shoot landscape and then portrait orientation etc. Take the view at different times of the day to see it in different lighting



If you're doing this with children I suggest the first option is likely to be the most engaging for the youngest. You may want to suggest finding a specific number of things each time - find 2 things and then 2 different things the next day and so on

5. Shoot an Abstract 🧸 📷 📱

For this project you will need to use macro or close up modes on cameras and smartphones (as with the oil on water project)

1. Good abstract subjects have strong colours, textures and shapes and lines
2. This is a good project to do both around the house and when out exercising. Shooting close up enables us to abstract even the most mundane subjects in our homes
3. Try different angles of view when shooting
4. Try converting your image to black and white to abstract it even further
5. With children challenge them to capture something in a way that means you can't immediately see what it is!



6. Multi Exposure Images 🧸 📷 📱

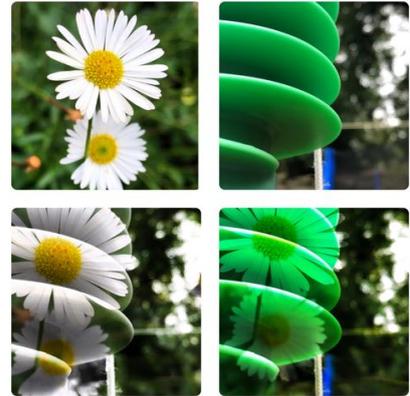
This is most easily done on your smartphones as it uses an app to create the images.

However if you can get your images off the camera onto your phones you can do this project that way - especially if your camera has wifi capability.

You will need to download the editing app Snapseed - a great free app that's available for both Apple and Android devices. It will also work on tablets.



Google



Snapseed allows you to merge two images into one using their Double Exposure tool.

1. Open your first image
2. Click on Tools and open the double exposure tool
3. Click on add photo in the tool bar at the bottom of the screen. You can resize and move this photo to where you want it - as I did in the example above
4. Choose one of the blend modes available by tapping the card icon in the centre of the same tool bar - with my example; bottom left used Lighten and bottom right, Overlay
5. Change the opacity of the blend using the droplet icon

7. Shoot a mini adventure! 🧸 📷 📱

You will need:

Small toys or figures (Lego people or toy cars are perfect for this project!)
Some imagination!

Try one or all of the following projects:

1. Shoot your chosen figure in a series of images that tell a story or place them in odd situations
2. 'Involve' the figure in your day's routine - have them helping with the cooking, cleaning, watching tv etc. This is a great one for the children to do
3. Force the perspective by shooting close to them to make them seem larger than they are

Tip: Shooting at 'eye level' gets the most engaging images

