

The Rule of Thirds

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VIDEO

Image of a poorly composed photograph fills the screen.

Previous image falls off the screen and is replaced from the side with a well-composed photograph of the same scene.

Previous image fades through black into a slide showing a grid dividing the frame into nine equal rectangles.

The grid fades slightly and the 'well-composed' picture from before fades in behind it.

AUDIO

Is this how you want to remember your vacation?

Or is this? This photo was taken using a time-tested guideline called 'the rule of thirds'. It's a handy trick to keep in mind when you're composing photos. Well, that's great but ... what is it really?

This grid is what it's all about. These four lines divide the picture into nine equal rectangles, but we're more interested in where the lines are, and where they cross.

Often, photographers will use the lines or their intersections as guides to where the focus or the subject of the image will be. Placing objects or action at the points or along the lines helps to give a sense of space, direction, or perspective in many situations. Let's

take a look at some of the same scenes and objects, first without using the rule, and then applying the rule.

The grid fades further but is still visible. A series of pictures appear in pairs – first poorly composed, then well-composed.

As you'll notice in each of these photos, using the rule of thirds to organize your shot leads to a better-looking photo. Often, photos taken with the rule in mind suggest balance, motion or distance. Remember that this rule is more of a suggestion, and is a great tool to add to your collection.