

# How to take magazine worthy photos with your phone

Elevate your photos, elevate your brand





## SPECIFICALLY, WE'RE COVERING

- How to use your smartphone like a DSLR camera
- Composition: Best practices to get your lines straight
- How to master the lighting for interior photos (the cliff note version)
- Two favorite editing apps



# About Me



@lindaholtcreative



Linda Holt Creative



Linda Holt Creative



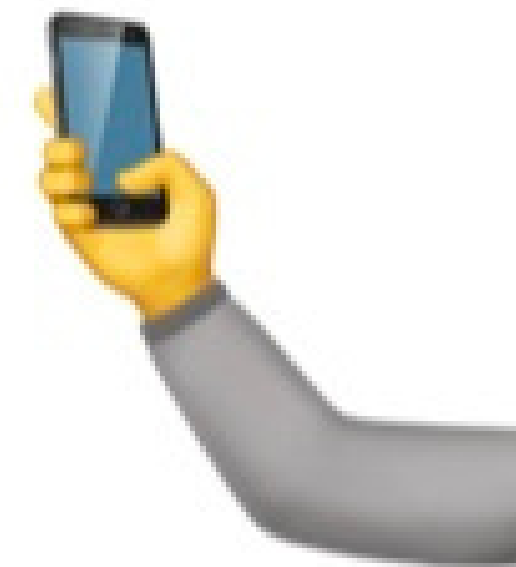
[linda@lindaholtcreative.com](mailto:linda@lindaholtcreative.com)

- I live just outside of Boston
- I was a professional photographer for twenty five years
- I went back to school in 2009 to study interior design
- I opened Linda Holt Creative in 2011
- I'm a dog person and own a rescue dog named Nevers
- I'm passionate about travel, learning and good coffee
- Creator of multiple online smartphone photography courses including, "Smartphone Photography For Interior Designers", and "Travel Photography with the Smartphone".



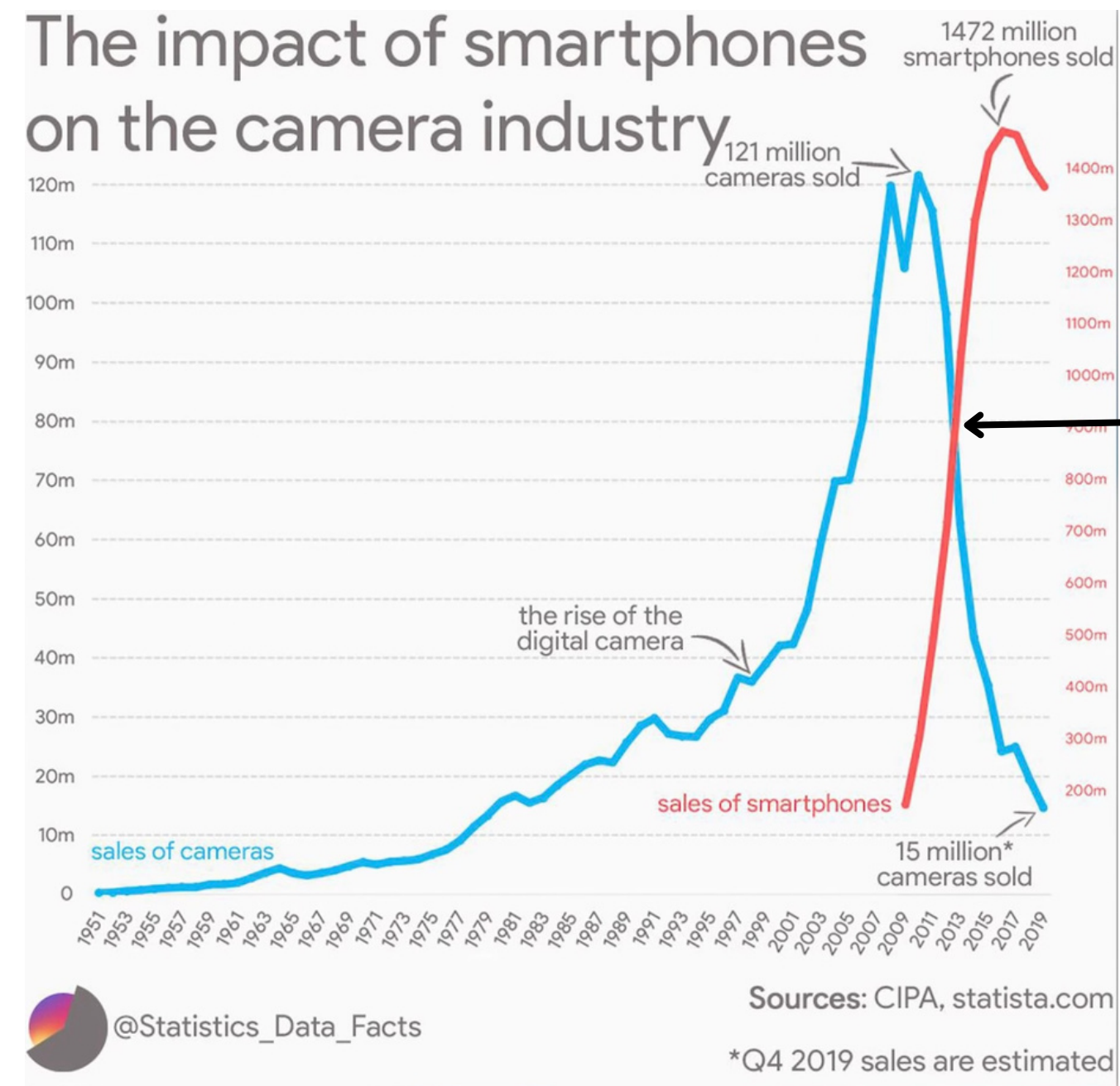
## **Can you really get magazine worthy photos with your phone?**

Smartphone cameras have become so good and so "smart" that even some professionals are shooting with their smartphone.





Sales of digital cameras are down 98%



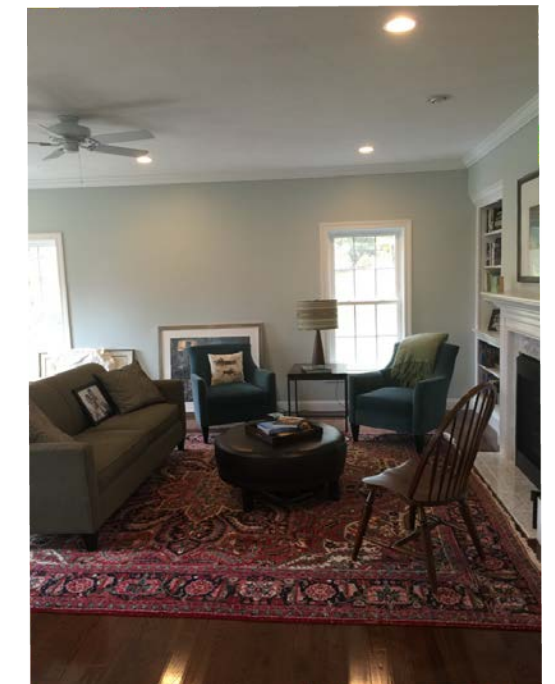
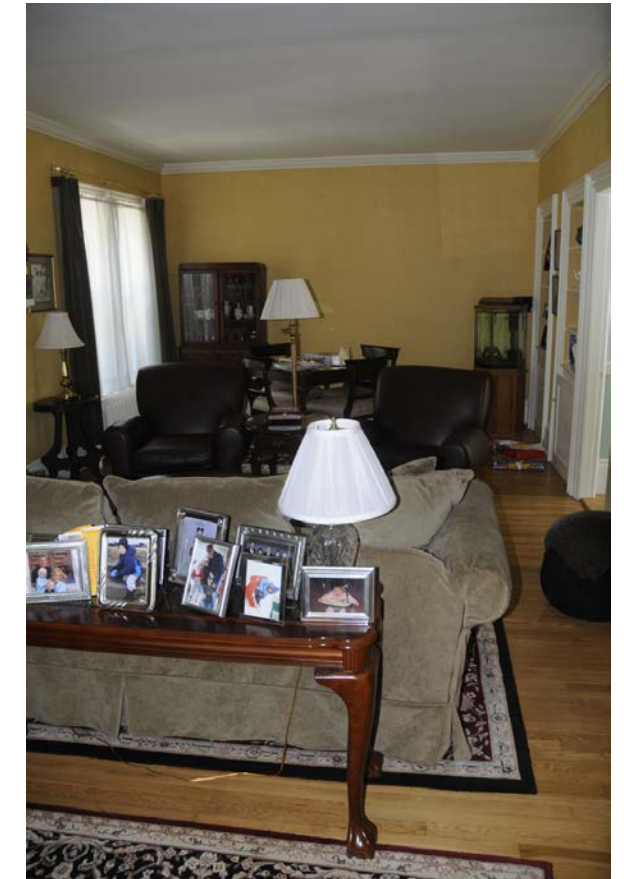
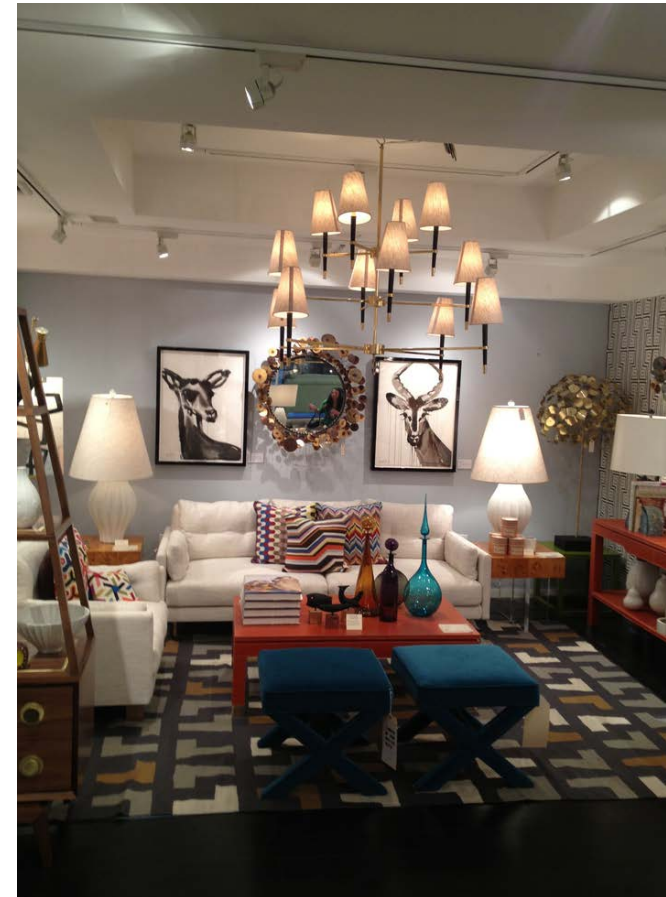
The year I switched  
from shooting with  
my DSLR camera to  
a smartphone

Was it easy for me to switch from a DSLR to a smartphone?

**OVERNIGHT SUCCESS? NOOOOOO**

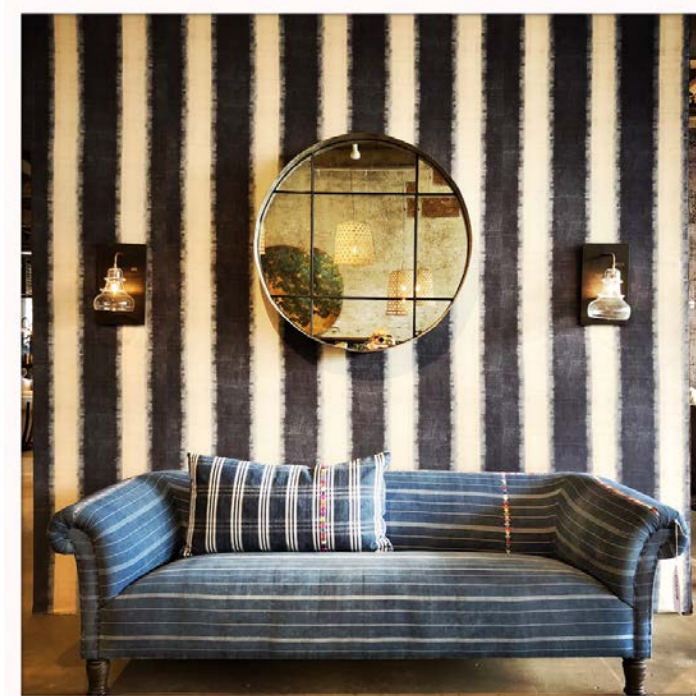
When I was forced to switch to shooting with my smartphone, (due to debilitating neck and spinal pain) my photos were TERRIBLE!

I was an experienced professional photographer, yet what I got from my phone **were embarrassingly bad photos!**



My early smartphone photos





My smartphone photos today



# 1

## Magazine Worthy Photos with the smartphone

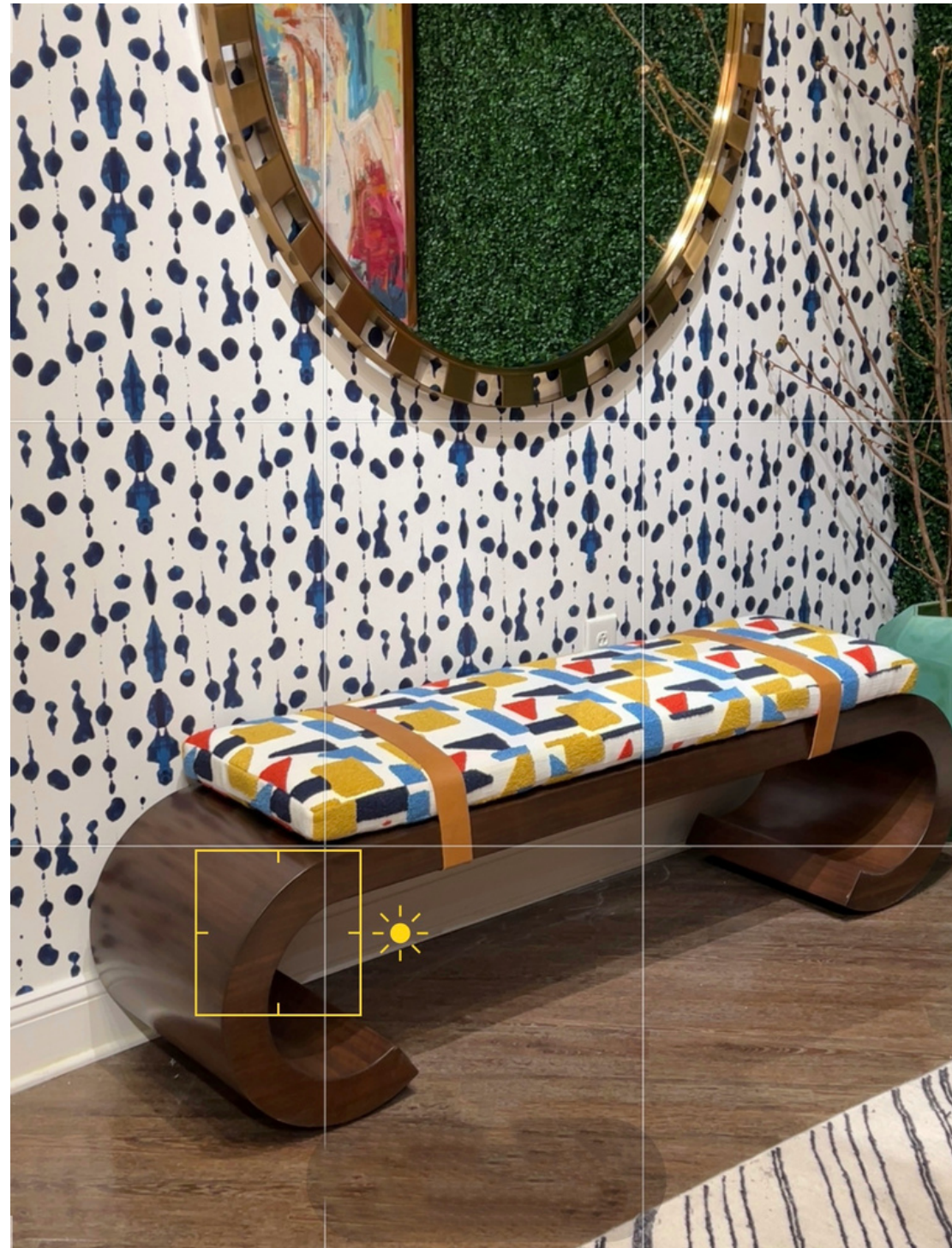


## Use your Smartphone like a DSLR camera

Use the features of your phone that turn the smartphone camera into a DSLR camera!

1. Learn to set exposure and focus manually
2. Use portrait mode for things other than portraits





## How to set the exposure on the iPhone

1. Tap your finger on the screen where you want the in-camera light meter to set the exposure

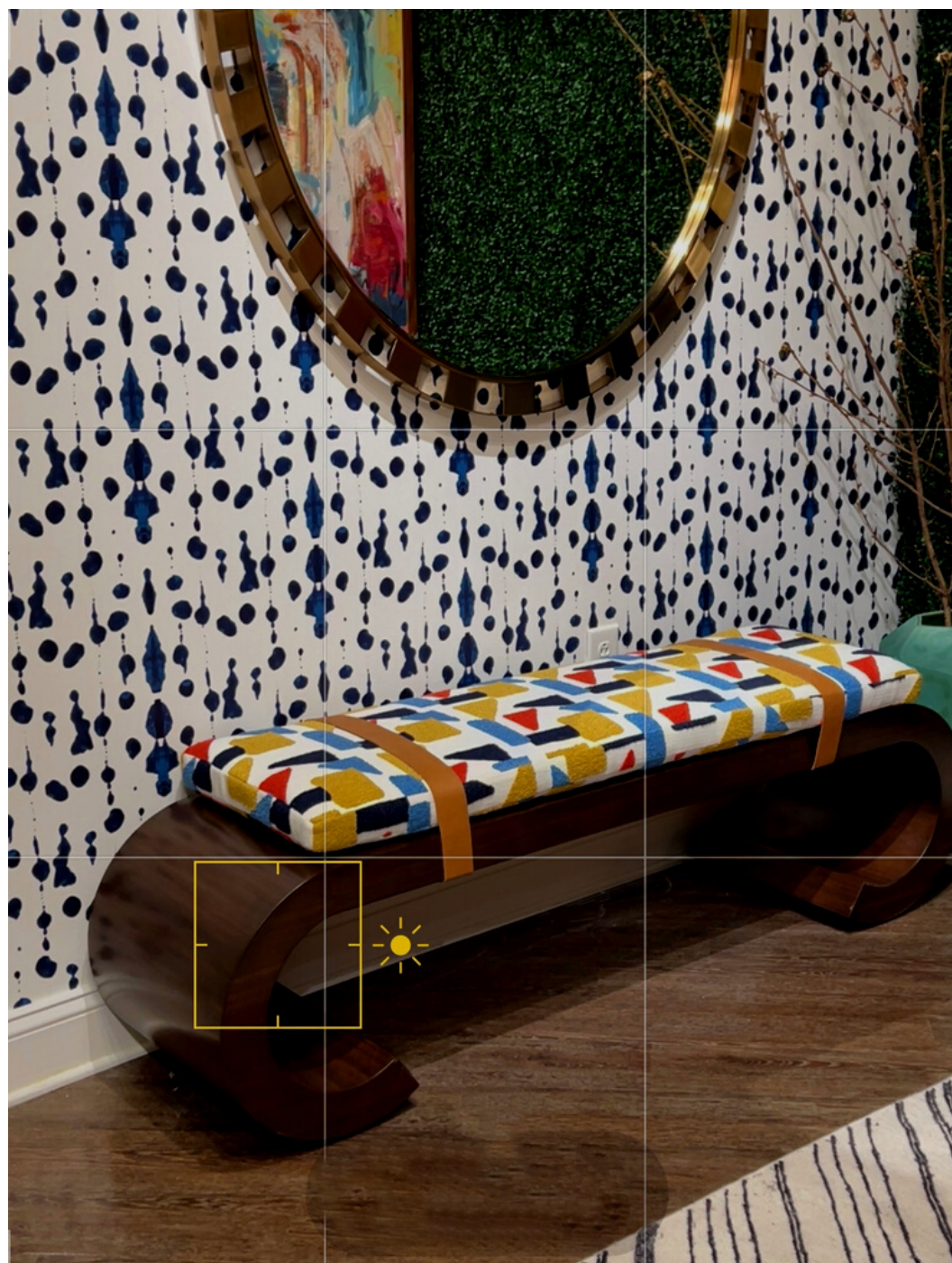
OR.....

2. Hold your finger on the screen until a yellow box with a sun appears. Slide your finger up the screen to lighten the image or down the screen to darken the image





Before setting expose manually



Tap dark area to set expose manually



After setting expose manually

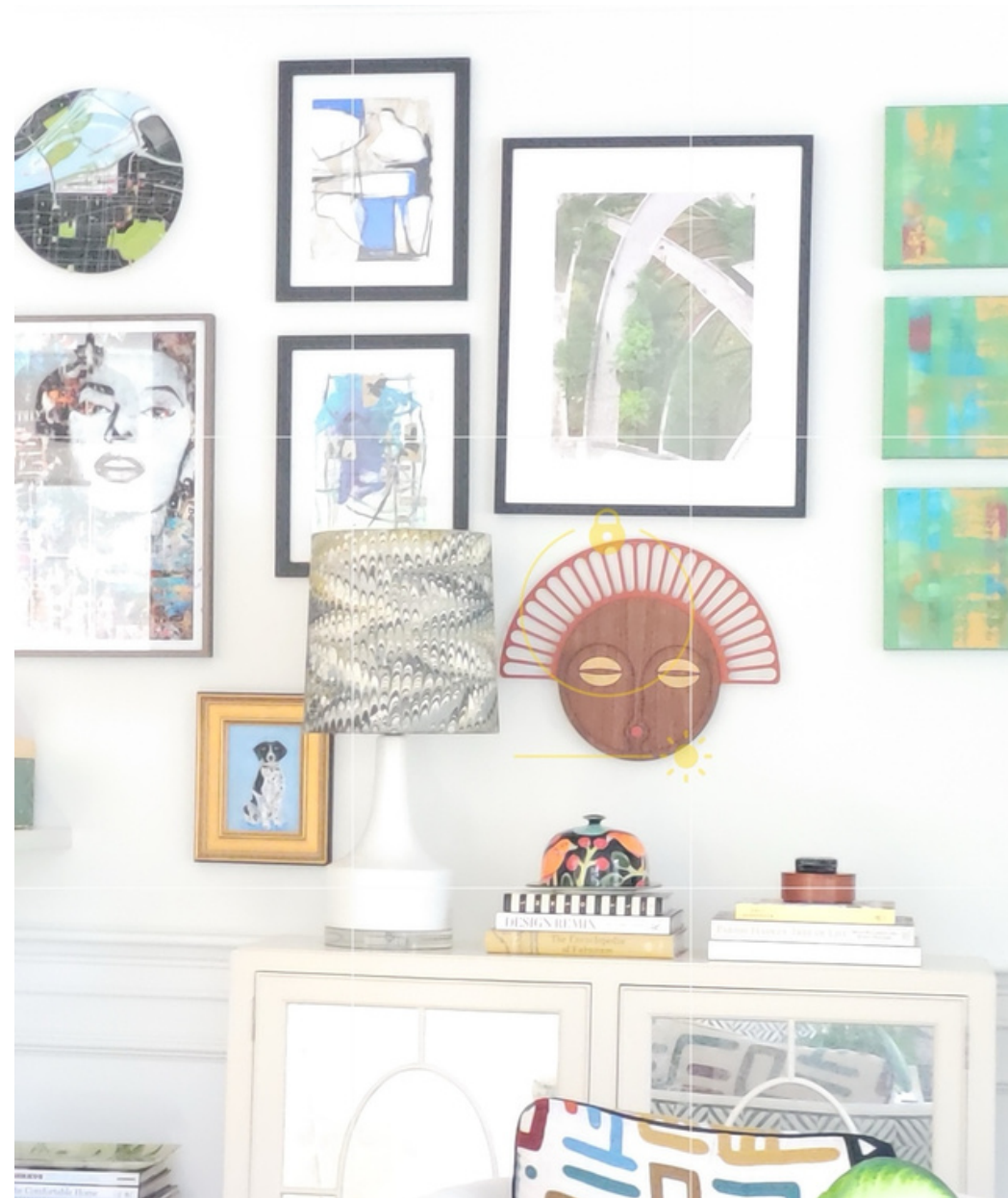


## How to set the exposure on the Samsung

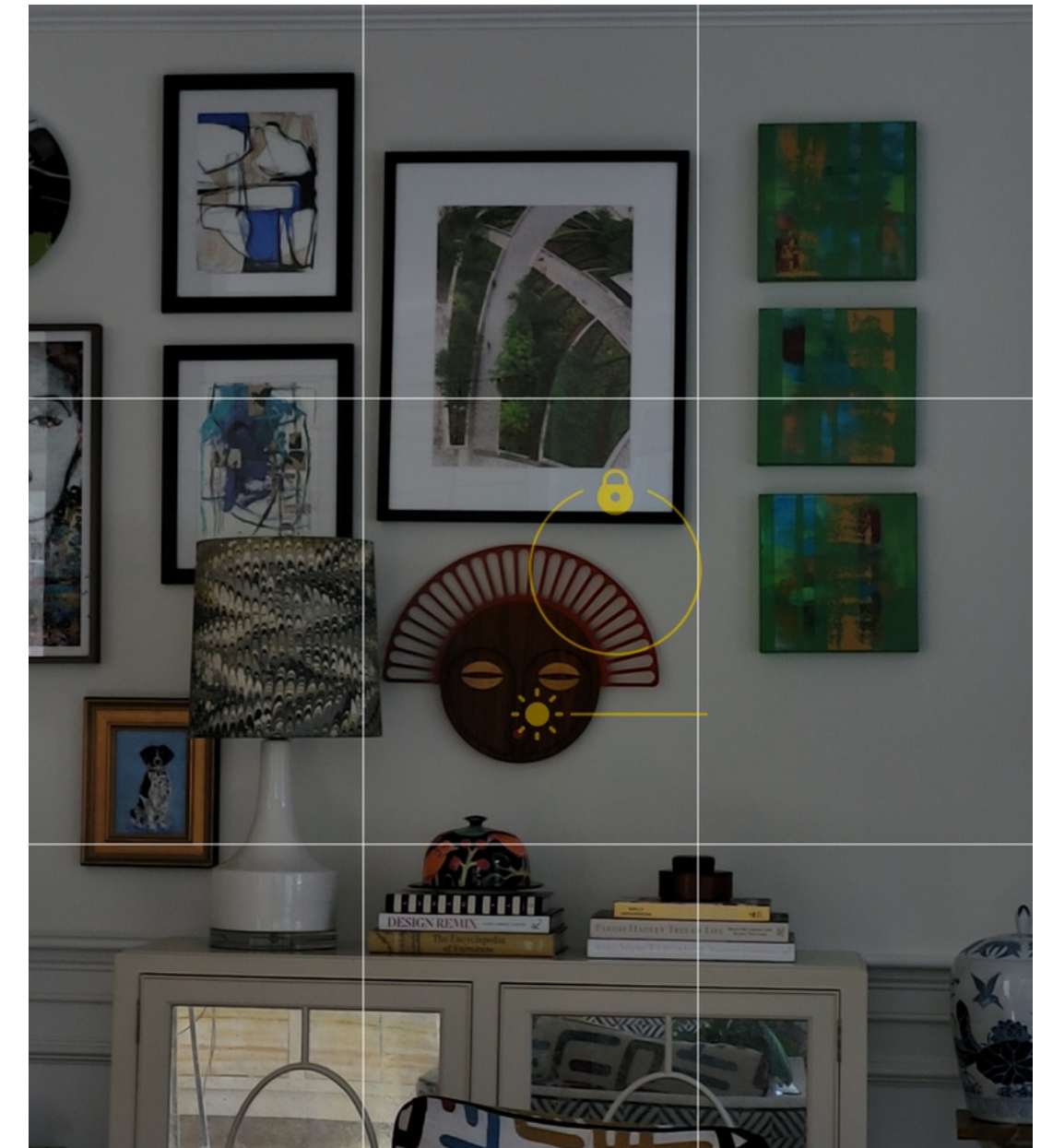
Tap on the screen and you'll see a white circle. Slide your finger to the right to brighten image or to the left to darken image.



Circle



slide finger to right to lighten image



slide finger to left to darken image

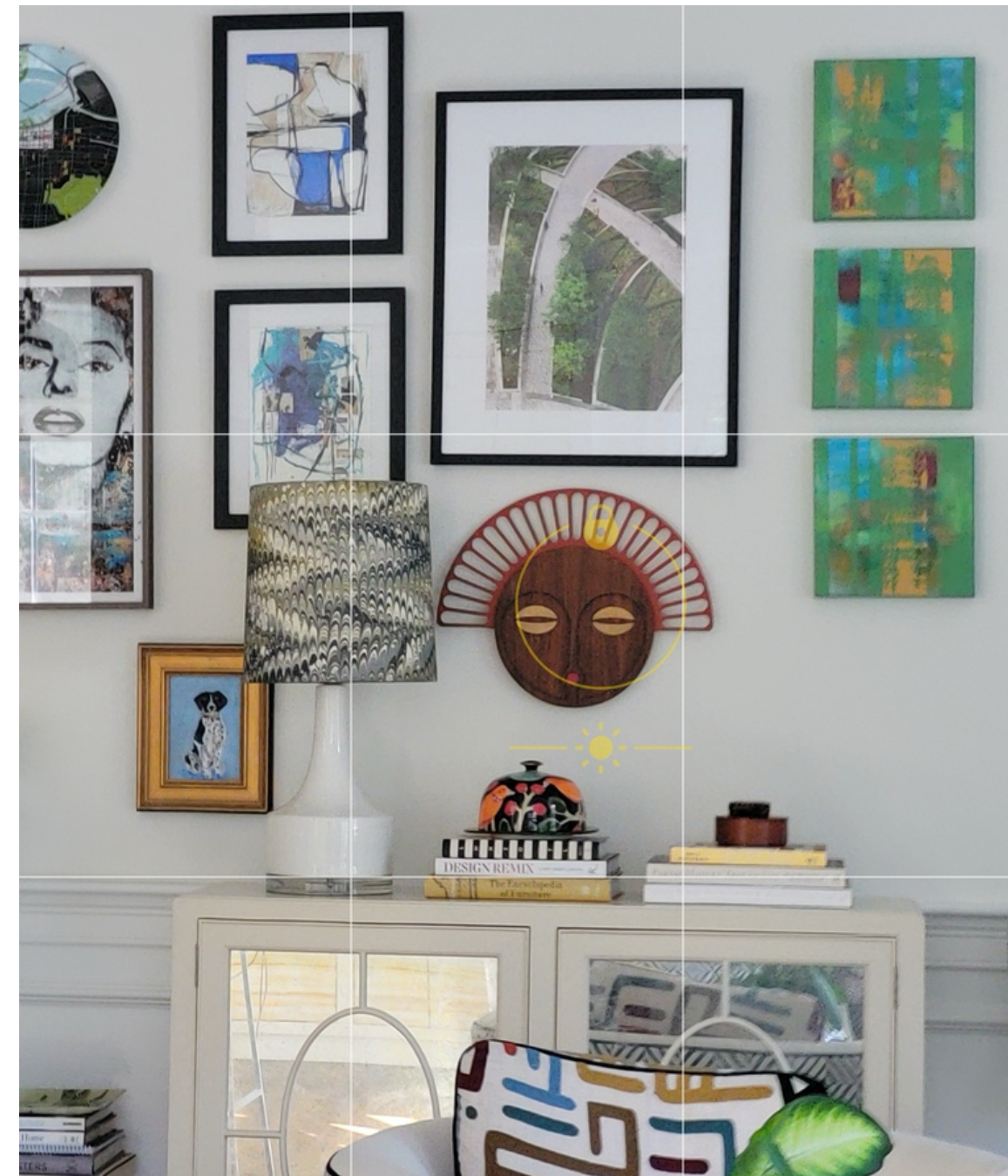


Manually set and lock the focus

Locking in the focus will help prevent blurry or “soft” images



Iphone



Samsung



Manually set the exposure whenever the camera screen looks too dark or too bright



Original image



setting the exposure



Final image



## 2. Use portrait mode when photographing vignettes and products



photographed with normal default lens



photographed in portrait mode



If you shoot in portrait mode you can adjust the blur amount later in editing.





Tabletop shots look best when photographed in portrait mode





# 2

## Magazine Worthy Smartphone Photos



### Composition

Get your Lines Straight

1. Hold your phone correctly
2. Use the in-camera grid
3. Step back and use the telephoto lens



When you don't want any distortion (furniture, or interiors) hold your phone on the same level as what you are photographing



Holding camera at eye level tilting downwards



Holding camera at waist level on same plane as furniture



Converging perspective lines always will happen when phone is held too high and tilted downward





All three of these images have one thing in common. The phone tilted downward was NOT held level







Body is distorted by shooting from a high angle (notice shortening of legs and tiny feet)

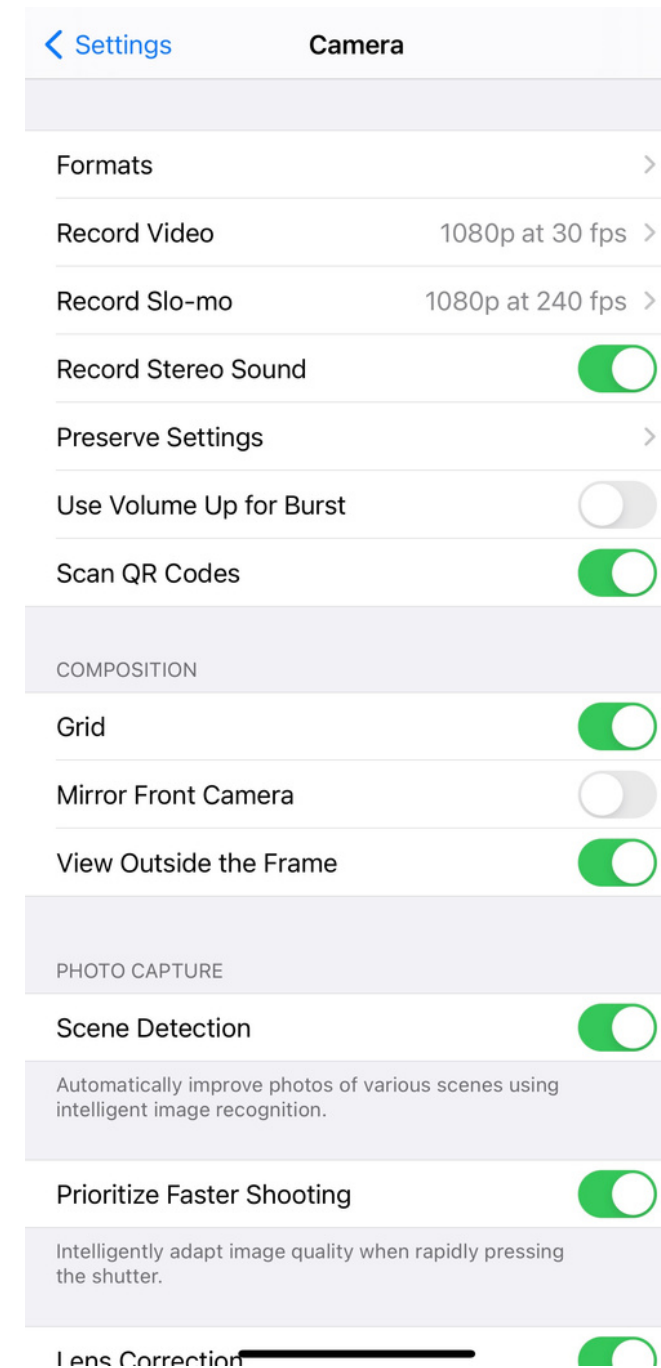
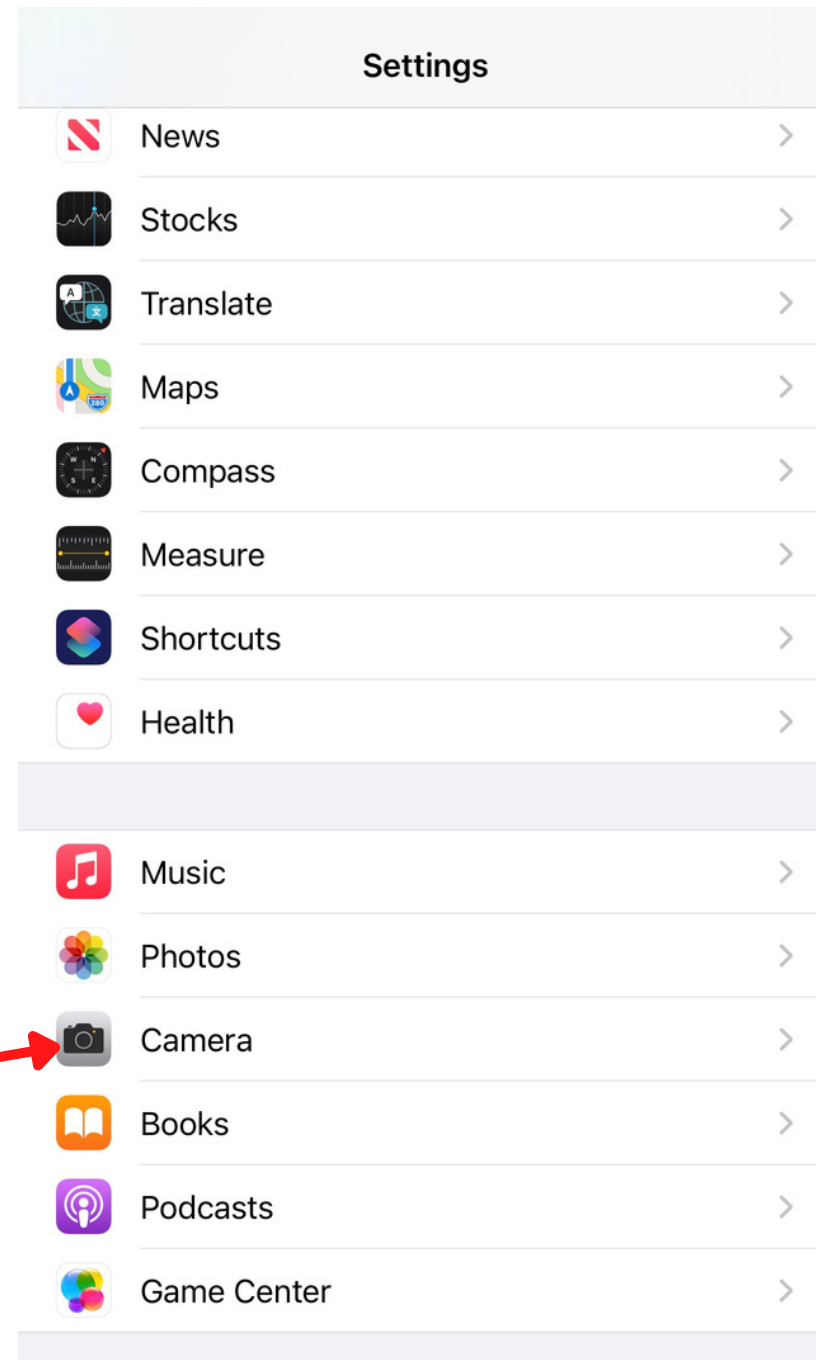


Little to no distortion when photo is taken sitting on the floor at same level as dog



## 2. To turn on grid

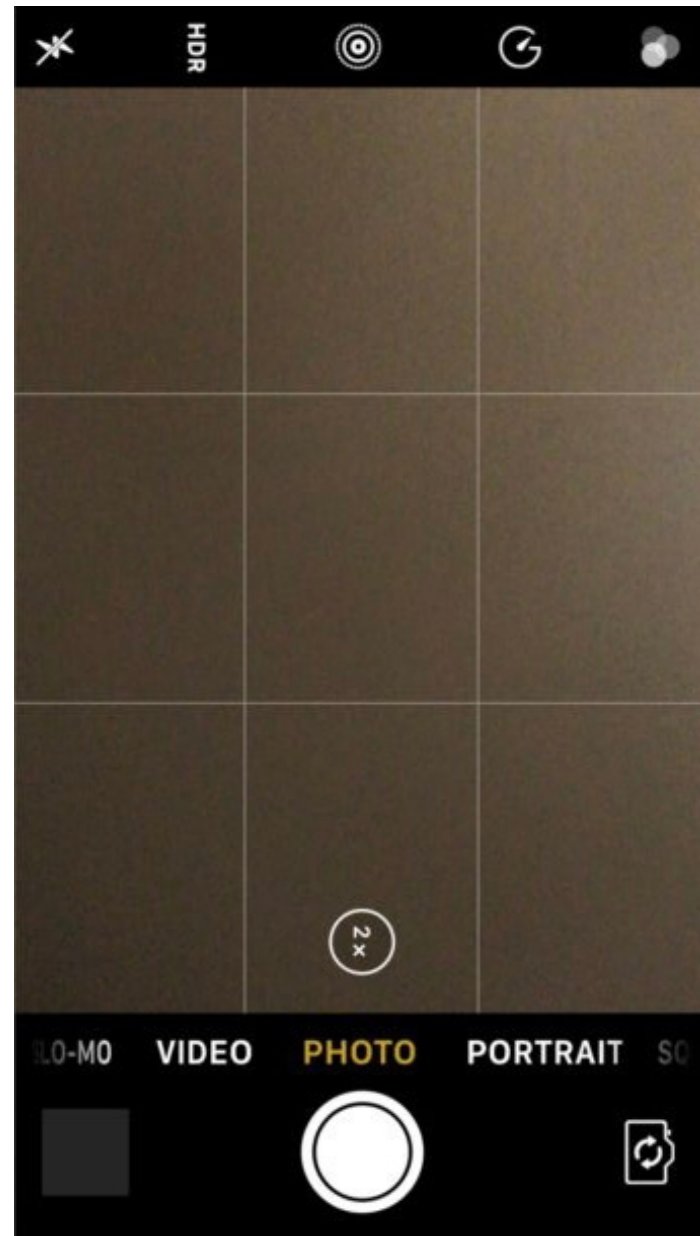
click on settings and scroll  
down to camera



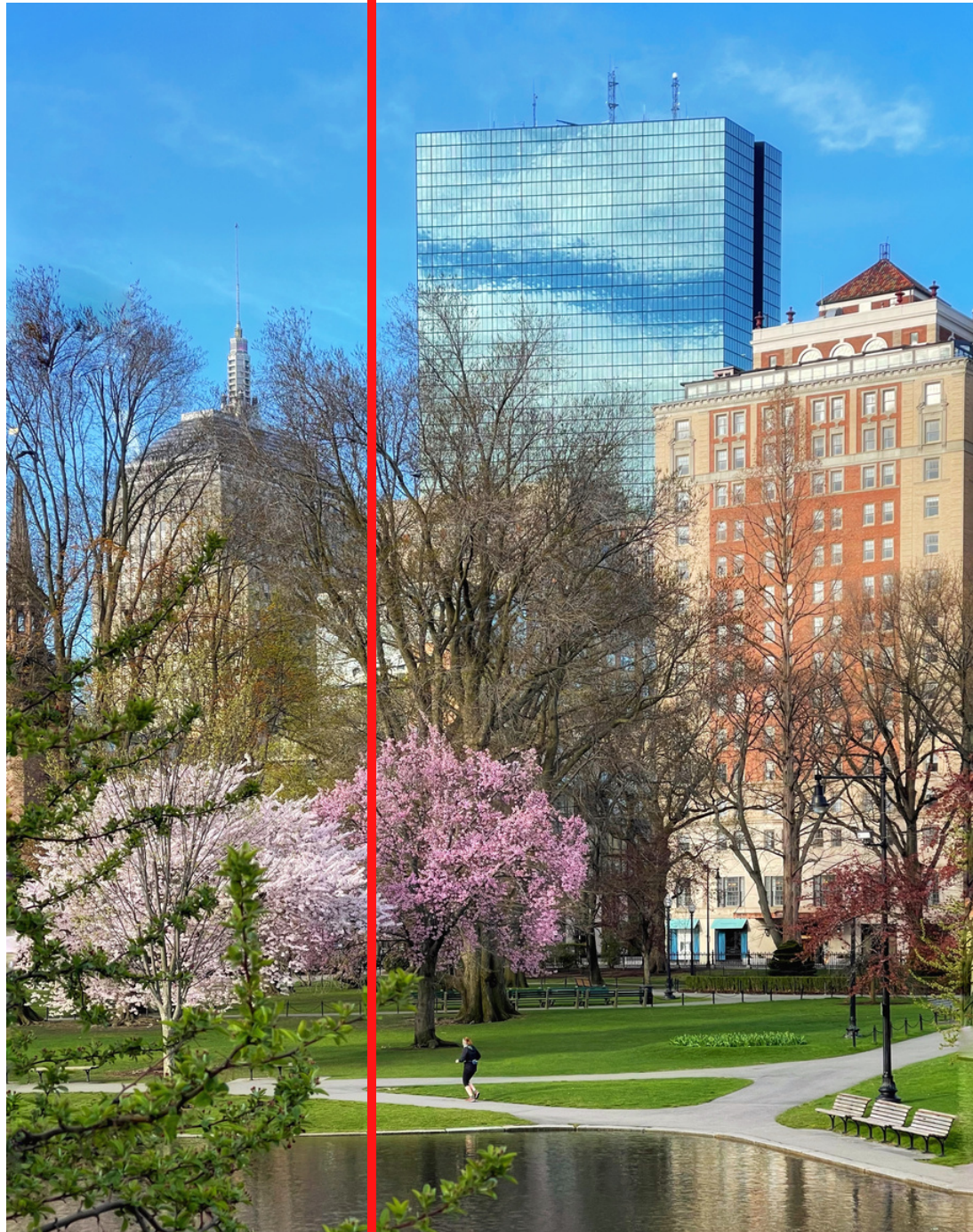
Turn on grid



Easy to line up a grid line with any of these horizontal or vertical lines in the photos







Use the grid to get straight architectural or horizon lines







### 3. Step back and use the designated telephoto lens

If your camera has three lens

Super wide angle

"Normal" (wide angle)

Telephoto

Smartphone "normal" default lens=26mm

The iphone 14 and 15 has a "normal" default lens=24mm



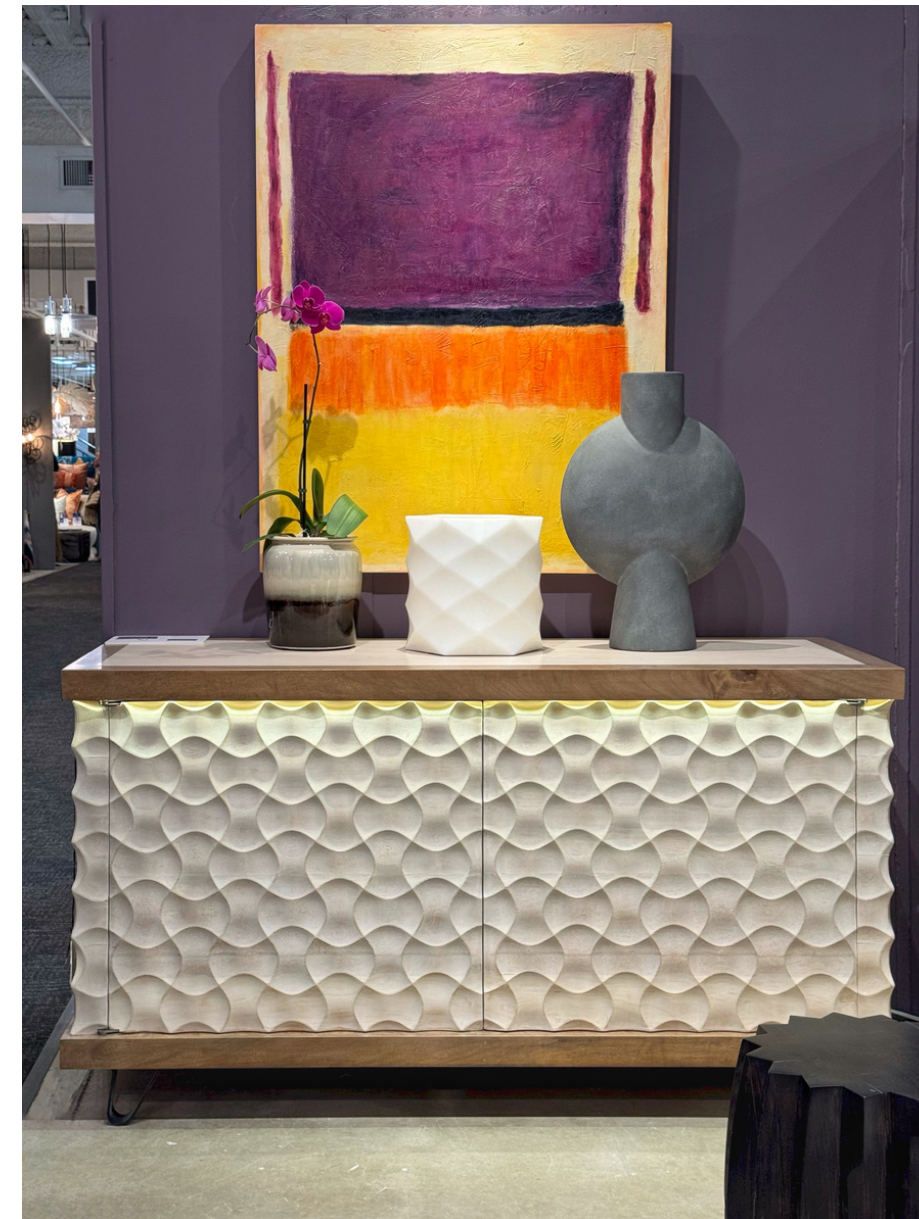
**The wider the lens the more the lines will bend-think of a fisheye lens**



Use the telephoto lens to get back as far as possible from your subject



.5 lens



2x lens

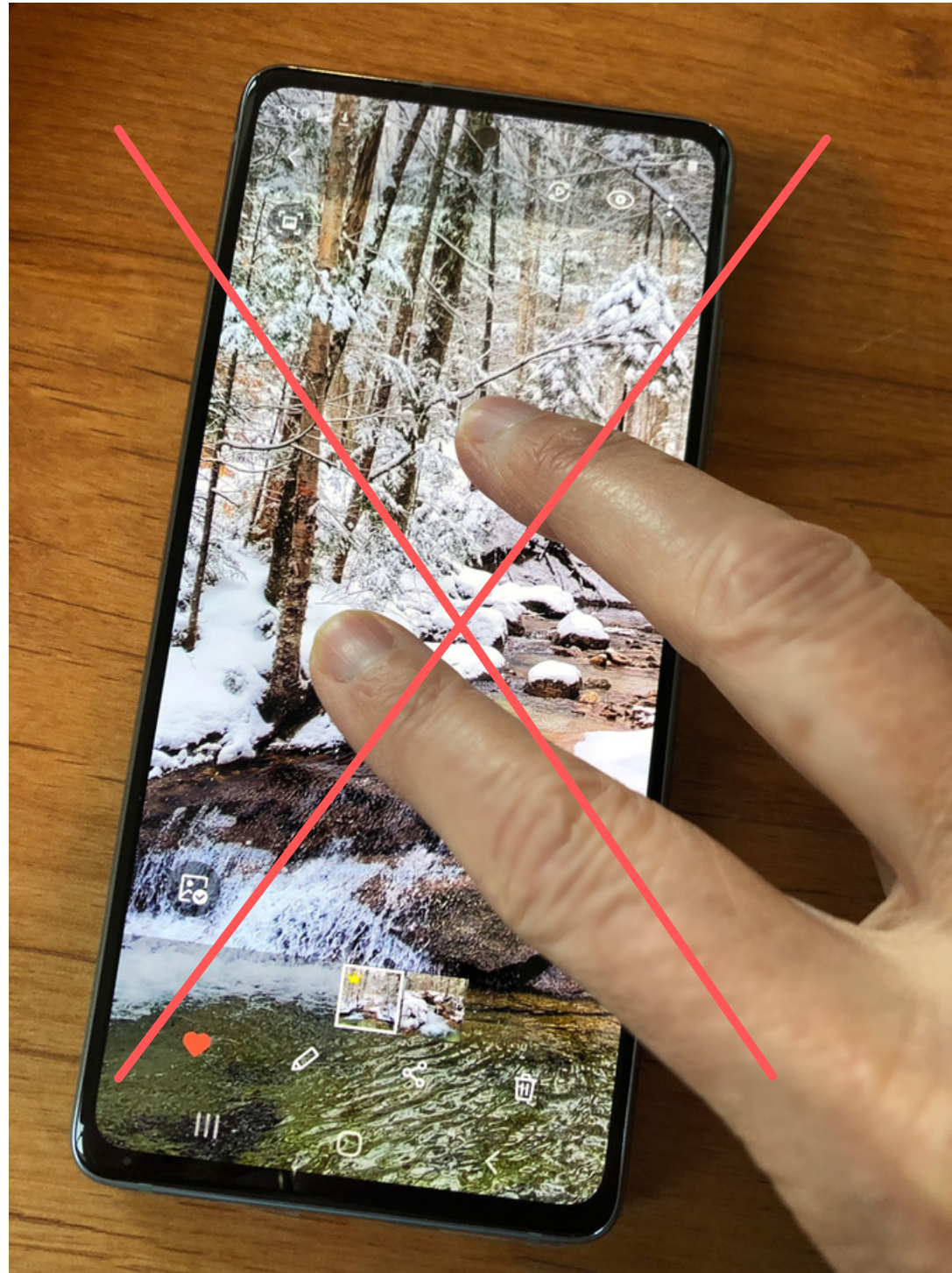


Don't confuse **optical** zoom with **digital** zoom

\*Optical zoom is using one of the designated lens







\*Digital zoom is pinching out with your fingers

Never zoom in by pinching your fingers out, this is called "digital Zoom"

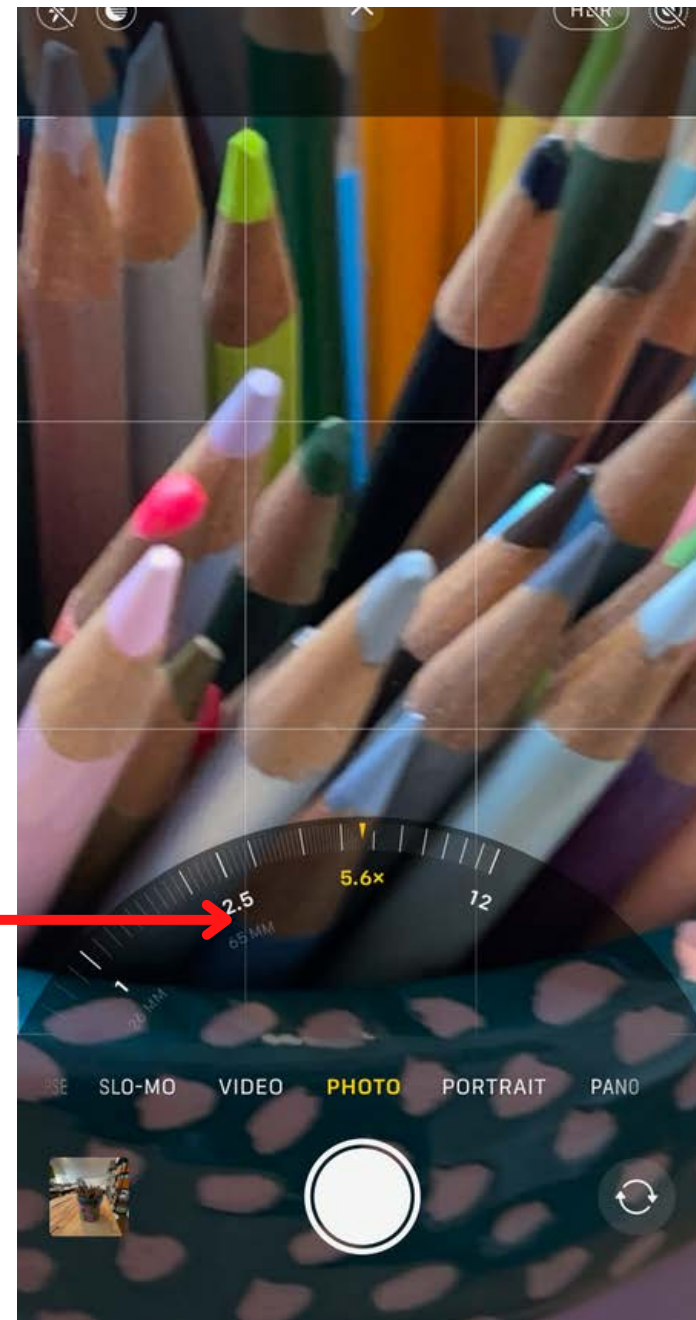
**Always Zoom with your feet  
not with your fingers!**



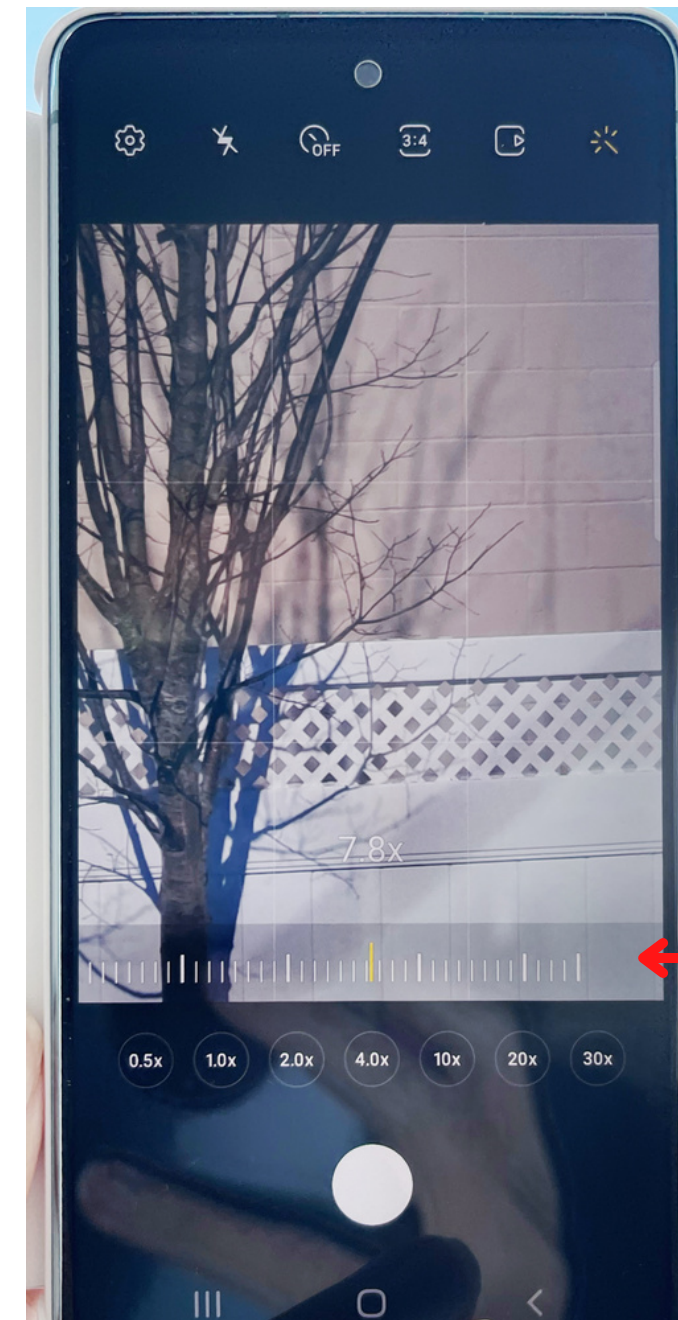
The wheel on the iPhone and the slider on the Samsung is another version of Digital Zoom.  
It is the same thing as pinching out your fingers to zoom in.

Avoid if possible!

iPhone Wheel



Samsung Slider





3

## Magazine Worthy Smartphone Photos



### **Master the Lighting**

1. Time your shoot
2. Turn off the lights



# 1. Time your shoot

Shoot with natural light

Timing is everything. Time your shoot for when the light looks the most even

Avoid harsh direct sunlight streaming through the window







Professionals don't want to shoot with uneven, contrasty light and neither should you.

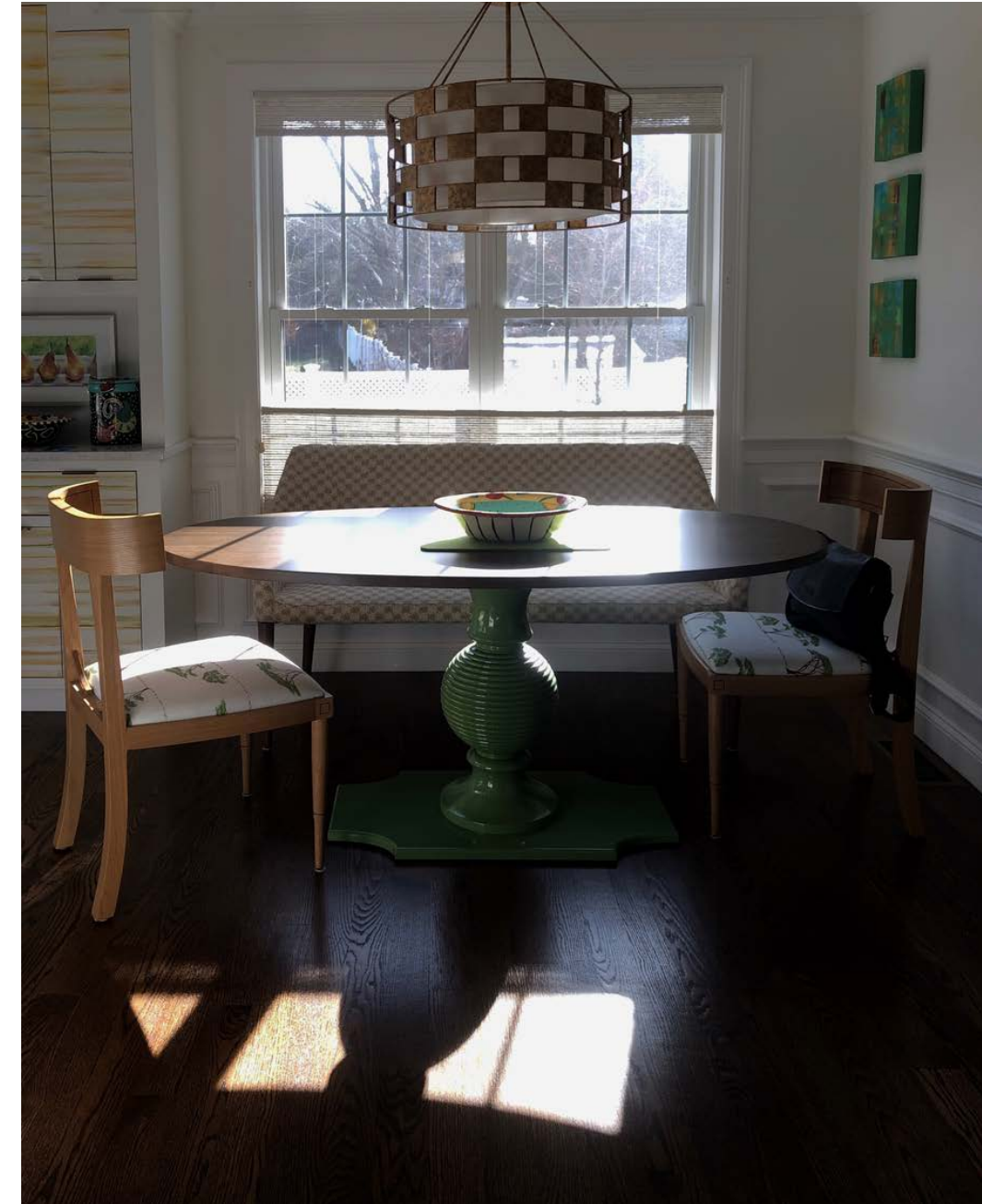




When shooting in hard light you have two choices



Exposed for the shadows



Exposed for the highlights





Same space photographed later in the day with natural even light. No hard sun coming in through the window.



Shoot was timed, no direct sun streaming through window and light is even







## 2. Turn off the lights

Interior lights produce hard light, like the sun. They cause blown out "hot spots" which can not be fixed in editing



Both of these kitchen shots are ruined because the lights  
were left on





Even if the lights don't show in the photo, they will affect the image



Lights on



Lights off



When shooting product shots it's very important the product is color correct!



Overhead light on



Overhead light off





There will be situations when we have no control over whether the lights are on or off. The newest phones do a fairly good job on the overall exposure. However, if the image doesn't look good and you see blown out highlights, my tip is to **manually set the exposure for the lights (the highlights)**



What do you do when you have no light?





You already know that turning on the interior lights is not the answer.



Internal bathroom with NO available light



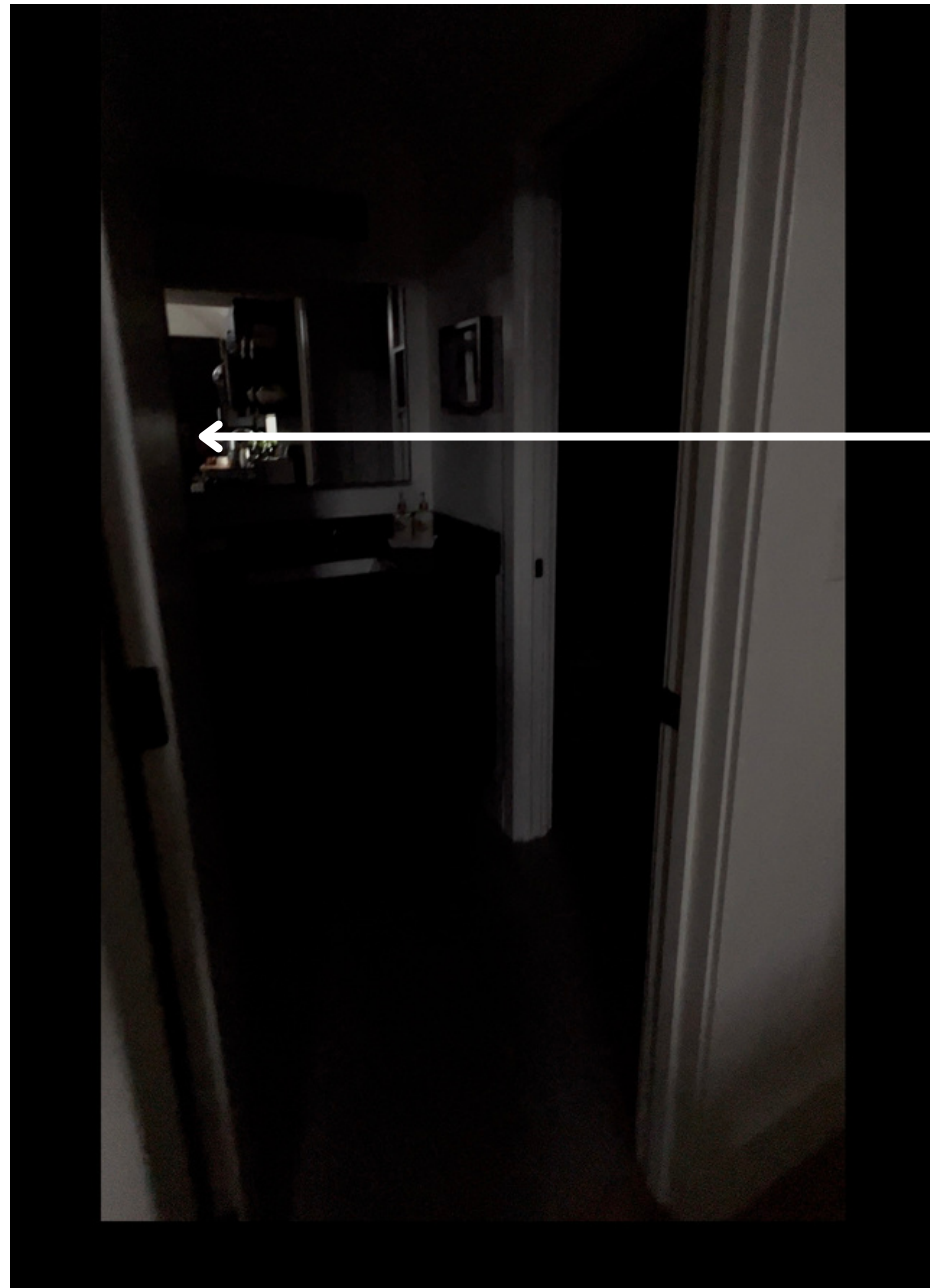


## **Solution?**

If you will shooting in a lot of low light situations then it's worth investing in some supplemental lights







Internal bathroom with no available light



My lighting set up

I used a single softbox pointed toward the left side of the bathroom wall.

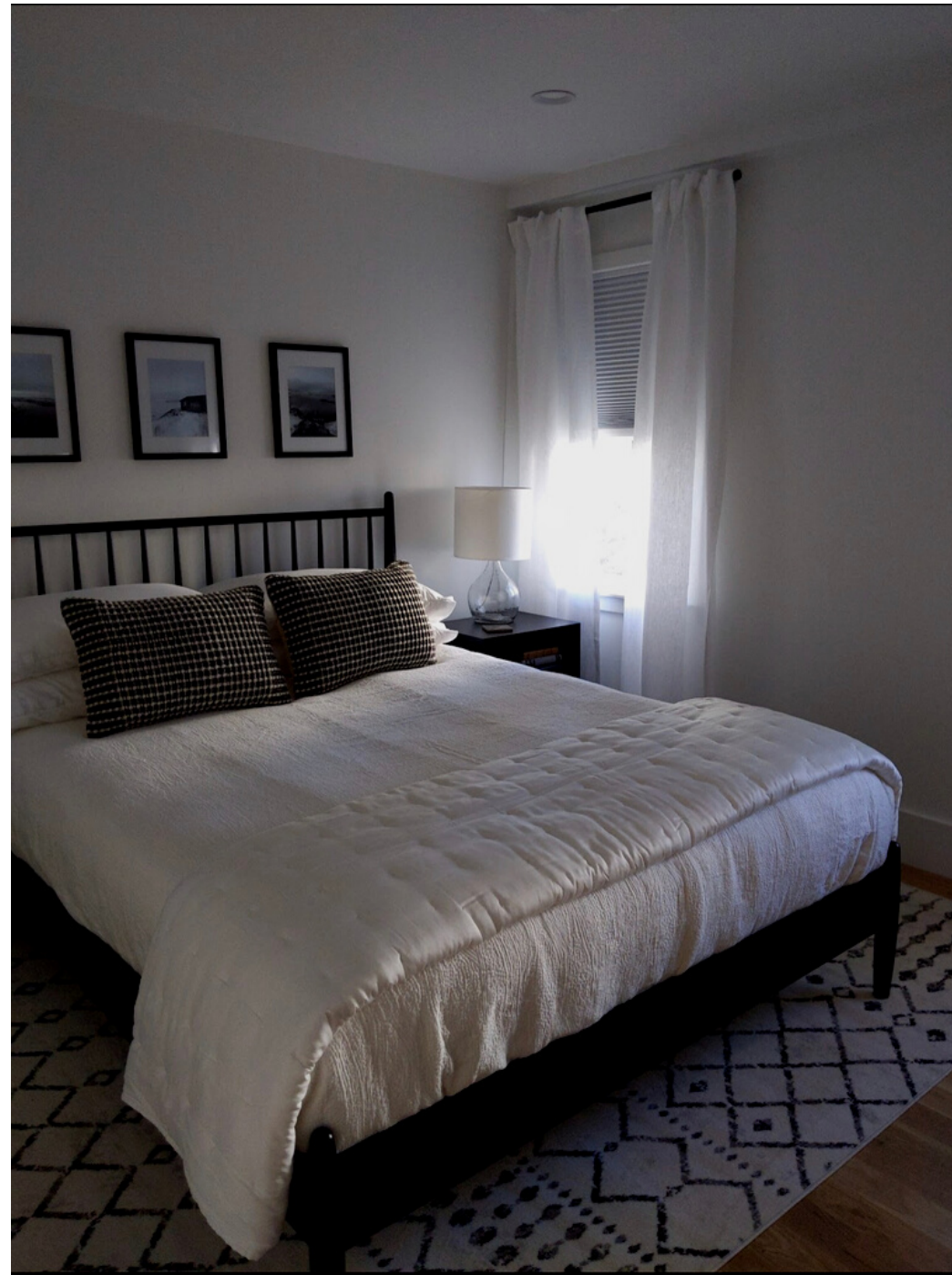


## The Results





Another example:



Original photo taken by designer



After photo using single softbox





without lights

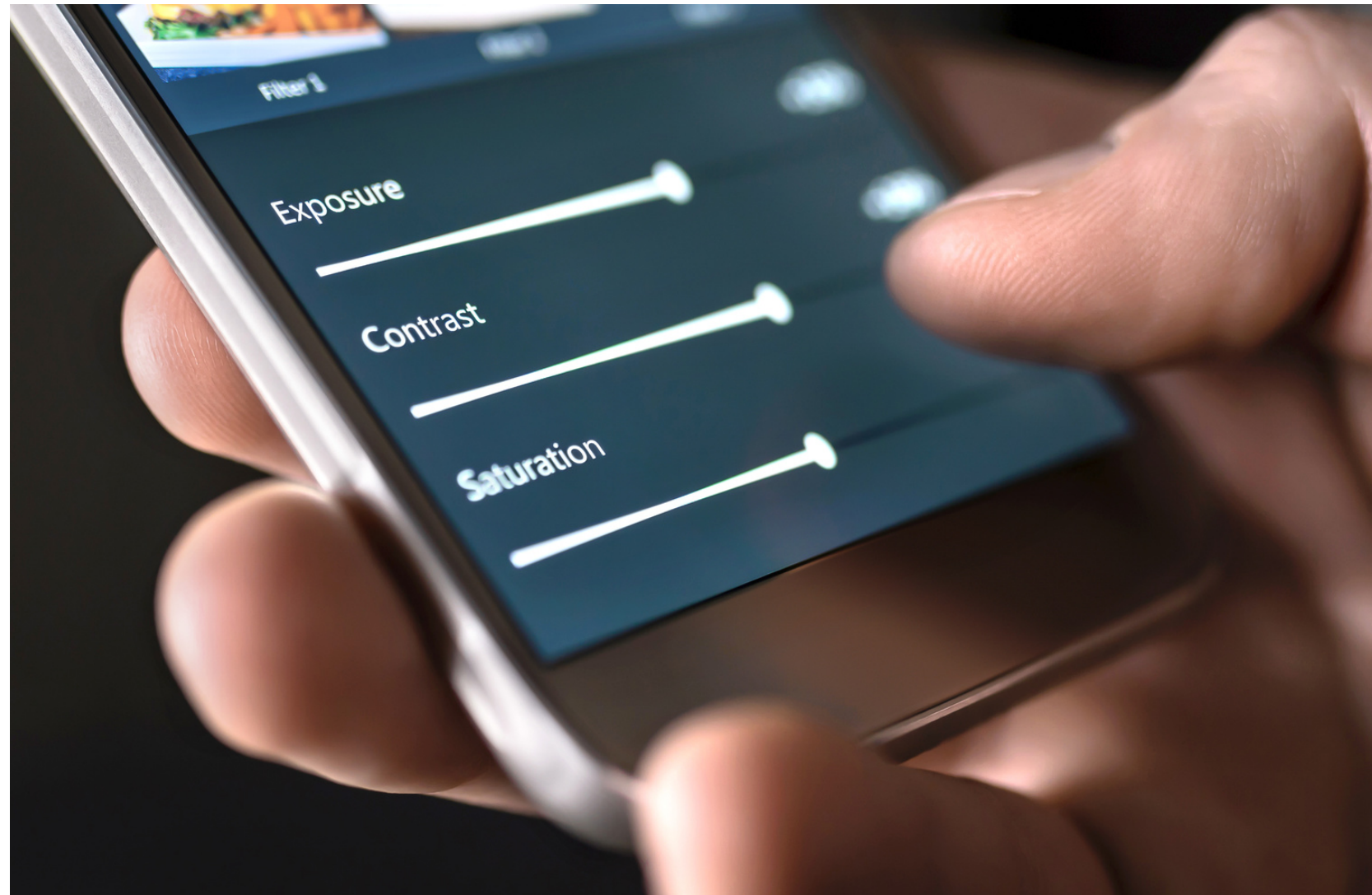


with lights



4

## Magazine Worthy Smartphone Photos



Learn to use a couple phone editing apps



For most of my editing I use only two apps



Snapseed

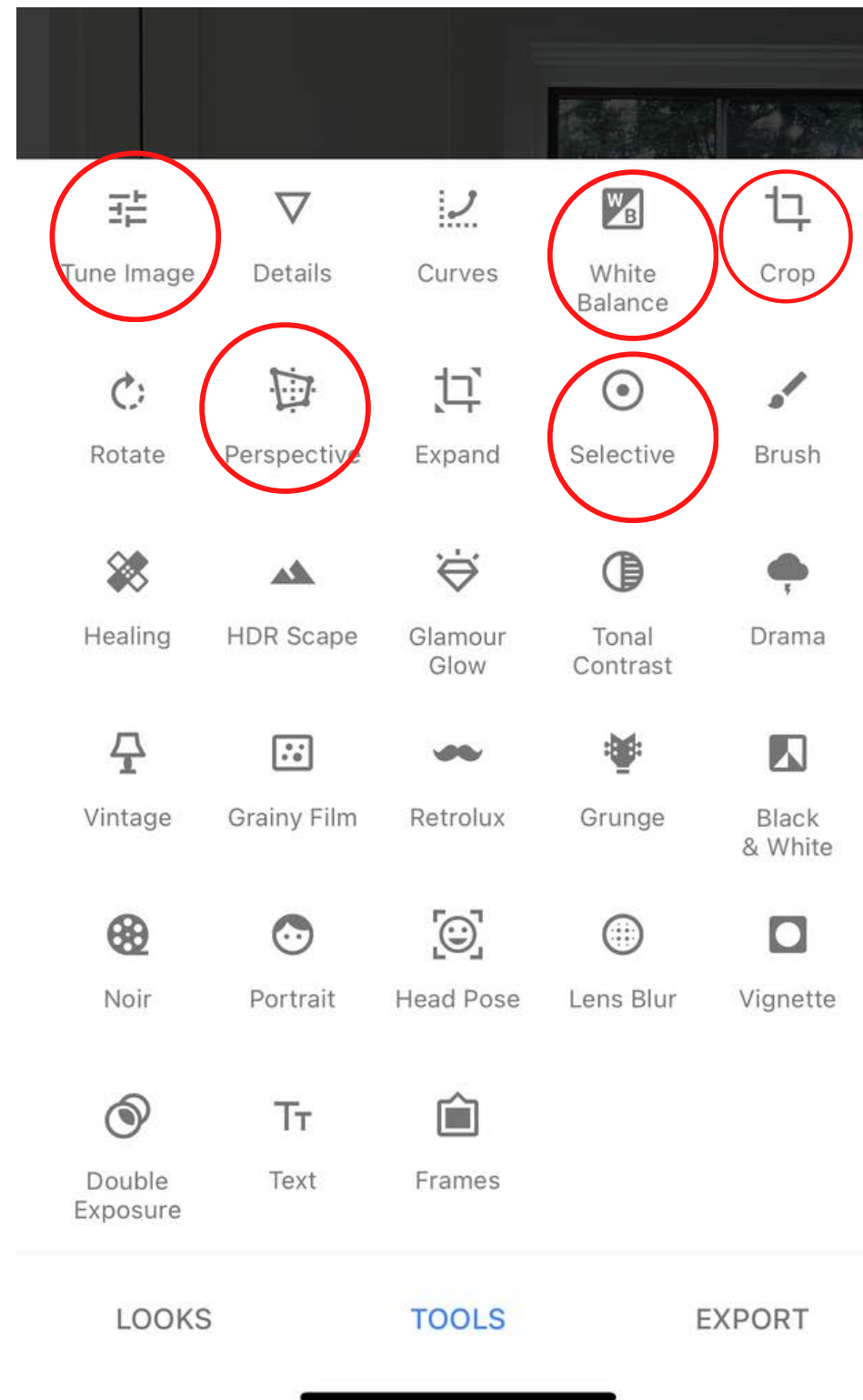


Touch Retouch

Snapseed and Touch Retouch fix the three main problems designers have with their images

1. Photo quality: lightness, darkness, saturation, contrast
2. Perspective problems
3. Removal of unwanted objects





## My basic go-to editing tools

Crop

Tune image

White Balance

Perspective

Selective





1. Corrected perspective
2. Lightened overall image
3. Selectively lighten the front gardens and entrance



Before editing



After editing





## Touch Retouch

---

Touch Retouch does one thing and one thing only. It removes (some) unwanted objects from your image.

1. Objects
2. Lines
3. Mesh









After Editing





Before editing



Lighten image



Remove unwanted elements in photo





After Editing



One FINAL tip that can make a huge difference in the quality of your images



**Clean the lens!!**







## Five Smartphone Photography Tips For Magazine Worthy Interior Photos

Interior Designers, Stagers and Decorators

*\*Own the photo copyright*

*\*Save money by shooting your own projects*

*\*Improve the look of your social media*

[www.lindaholtcreative.com](http://www.lindaholtcreative.com)

## Download your FREE Ebook



OR



**@linda holt creative**



# Questions??



@lindaholtcreative



Linda Holt Creative



[linda@lindaholtcreative.com](mailto:linda@lindaholtcreative.com)

