

How To Take
Amazing
Photos Of
Your Pets

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If you haven't yet experienced the joy of owning a pet then you're missing out on one of life's simple pleasures. While owning a pet isn't a wholly positive experience – especially when they pass away after far too short a time on this Earth – the positives far outweigh the negatives. Especially if you choose the right animal to suit your personality.

Pets provide a great subject for photographers, both professional and amateur alike. They're unpredictable, busy, and inquisitive. Just like children, in fact. Having already shown you [how to take amazing photos of kids](#), it's now time to turn our attention to our furry and/or feathered friends.

You may have already noticed I've used cats throughout this article. This is simply because [I love cats](#) and think they're the most naturally photogenic animals out there. But these tips are good for all pets, no matter what their species. Hell, even [smelly dogs](#) are welcome to the party.

Up Close & Personal



Keep your camera ([or smartphone](#)) close to hand at all times. Pets are notoriously unpredictable, and you never know when they'll do something or act in a way that deserves recording for posterity.

Be aware that you're much more likely to get great results from photographing your own pet rather than someone else's pet. They know you, they trust you, they may even like you, if we can ascribe such sentiments to animals.

Spend time with your pet. Know how to read their feelings. There will be times when your pet is happy to be photographed, and others when they're more keen on being left alone. Take heed of these moods.

Natural Is Nice



I'm not a fan of posed photographs. You can tell when someone is trying just that little too hard to look good when the shutter button is pressed. If it looks bad when humans do it, it will also look bad when animals do it.

Taking photos of your pets in their natural environment is a far better idea than dressing them up or making them stand in a certain place. Follow them see where they hunt, or sleep, or do whatever it is animals do when we're not looking.

This rule also applies to personalities. Try to capture the essence of your pet. If it's a grumpy cat (no, [not that one](#)) then capture that. If it's an energetic dog, then capture that. This is, after all, how you'll remember them when they're gone.

On Their Level



The relationships we share with our pets is often an unequal one. We're in charge, we're their masters, we take care of their essential needs. We also look down on them for the most part. Literally.

Most domestic pets are much smaller than us, so we tower over them. Try switching this perspective up when it comes to taking photographs of your pets; get down to their level and make your pet feel like it's the star of the show for a change.

Not only will this gift you interesting angles, your pet is likely to respond by either becoming docile and infinitely photographable, or playful and infinitely photographable. You win either way.

Light=Good, Flash=Bad



Getting the lighting right is important when taking photographs of pets. The more natural the better, so shoot during the day with curtains and blinds thrown fully open. If shooting at night then use artificial lighting to create moods (as demonstrated in the photo above.

Then there is flash, which should be used very sparingly, if at all. Using flash will do two things: scare or temporarily blind your pet; make its eyes glow like it's some sort of demonic presence. Neither of which is particularly useful.

Treats & Tricks



If you need your pet to behave (rather than act naturally) there are various ways of making it happen. Using rewards for good behavior is an obvious example, with their chosen treat often having the power to get even the most rambunctious of animals to suddenly fall under your spell.

You can also use a second person off camera to draw your pet's attention in order to obtain a particular shot. Or you can throw a favorite toy in order to capture your pet in full flight. Or wake them from their slumber suddenly in order to ensure an alert animal.

Patience Is A Virtue



Even if you follow all of the advice above you'll still have to be very patient if you want to take photos of your pets that sail past being just ordinary to being exceptional. Like a perfect storm, various elements have to come together to make it happen.

Shoot liberally, because somewhere in amongst a pile of nonsense photographs is likely to be one that captures your pet exactly how you wanted. But remember [not to delete digital photos](#) you initially assume have no merit, as you may regret it years later.