

# 11 Ways to Add Randomness and Creativity to Your Photography

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One of the wonderful things about digital photography is the creativity that you can engage in once you've got your image on your computer and in Photoshop. All kinds of effects can be achieved to make your shots look any number of ways.

But what about in-camera techniques for more creative and artistic shots?

Here are eleven fun in-camera hacks to experiment with to get more abstract and artistic shots – the results are only limited by your imagination!

## 1. Move your Camera



Every good photography course drums into its participants the importance of keeping your camera absolutely still while shooting to ensure fantastically sharp images.

Of course, sharp isn't always what you're after and one way to add motion into your shots is to experiment with moving your camera while shooting. Here are a few ways to experiment with:

- **panning** – a technique often used in sports photography.
- **rotate** – ever whirled a child around you? why not do it with your camera and take a shot mid whirl.
- **camera throwing** – not for the faint hearted – this technique involves a long shutter speed, setting the self-timer, throwing your camera in the air just before the shutter is released and a safe pair of hands. It's 'extreme photography' and can result in stunning shots (like the one to the right which was a camera throw shot in front of a computer screen) – as well as the need for a new camera.

## 2. Zooming While Shooting



Another way of getting a sense of movement into your images is to keep the camera still but to zoom in or out with your zoom lens while actually taking the shot.

While panning (above) injects a vertical movement into shots – zooming gives your shots a dynamic 3D look and feel.

Combine this with slow sync flash (see below) and you can achieve some pretty special results. Read more about the Zoom Effect.

## 3. Creative Focusing



One of the most common problems that I see in reader's photos is poor focusing with photographers either focusing slightly in front or behind of the part of the image that needs to be sharp.

Why not take your focusing problems and make them worse by some creative focussing where you don't just get it slightly wrong – but make your shots obviously out of focus.

This technique is especially effective when you either have a plain background which means nothing in your shot is in focus – or when there's a secondary element of the image that you leave in focus with the main focal point out of focus enough for it to be obvious but in focus enough to still know what it is.

#### **4. Shoot from your Boots**



Putting your camera on the ground and taking shots of your subject from that low angle introduces a completely new and often random point of view for your shots.

You (and the viewers of your images) will see the world from a new perspective, add interesting foregrounds to shots and even capture a few surprising subjects along the way. This might mean you need to get down low (and get a little dirty) to frame your shots – or you might want to be a little more random than that and introduce luck into the equation and just hold your camera low and see what you get.

## 5. Over expose your shots



Experiment with different exposure levels.

Bump up your exposure compensation to the max and you'll end up with brightly burnt out images.

This can be particularly effective if you're photographing brightly colourful objects as you can end up with them on a background of bright burnt out parts of the scene.

Check out these examples of Overexposure for a little more inspiration.

## 6. Slow Sync Flash



This is a great technique for lower light shooting conditions where there is ambient light that you want to capture in addition to a subject that you'd like to light up with a flash.

Experiment with front or rear curtain flash for different impacts.

## 7. Get Up High – Monopod extenders and Kite Aerial Photography



On the other end of the spectrum to getting down low (above) is to get your camera up high and shoot down on situations. One fun way to do this is to attach your camera to an extended monopod (or a tripod), a long shutter release cable (or a wireless one if you have one) and start shooting.

This will help you to both photograph things up high (street signs for example) as well as to help you shoot down on scenes that you'd never have been able to see from above before.

This is particularly fun with a wide angle lens (a fish eye can be even more fun)!

Another more extreme technique is one called Kite Aerial Photography where you attach a camera to a kite and take shots from up high. The beach image to the right was taken with this technique!

## 8. Multiple Exposures

I used to love experimenting with multiple exposures on the same frame with my old film SLR. Many digital cameras don't have the ability to do it – but if you're lucky enough to have one that does you can achieve some fun results.

One way to do it is to take pictures of the same scene at different focal lengths or holding the camera on a slightly different angle. I find this is particularly effective on shots with a repeating pattern.

If you don't have the ability for multiple exposures on your digital camera you can always get similar results in Photoshop using layers.

## 9. Go Grainy



There's something about shots with lots of grain that adds an element of mood into an image.

Override your camera's ISO settings by boosting them right up to the maximum number available. The higher you go the more noise or grain you'll get.

This can be particularly effective in black and white shots – especially when you blow them up for display.

## 10. White Balance

Experimenting with different white balance settings on your camera can inject different colour casts into your images.

White balance settings are meant to be used to help you compensate for different types of lights (each type of light gives off different subtle colours). However, if you know what you're doing you can really warm up or cool down an image quite a bit and get some lovely and creative images.

## 11. Master the Bulb Setting

At the slow end of many digital camera's shutter speed settings is one often labelled 'B' or 'Bulb'.



The bulb setting allows you to keep your shutter open for as long as you hold down the shutter release. This opens up all kinds of possibilities for creativity – particularly in low light situations.

The Bulb is great for capturing light trails (moving traffic at night, a friend drawing out a message with a torch or fireworks) but to get the most of it you'll probably want to secure your camera with a tripod (unless you want to add camera movement into your shot as well).

At the extreme end of bulb settings astro photographers will leave the shutter open for long periods of time (hours) to capture star trails. To do this you'll need a small ISO, small aperture and should be aware that on many cameras it'll drain your batteries significantly.

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