
HOW TO CREATE A ONE PHOTO A DAY PROJECT

Quick Guide
Written by Jenn Mishra



A One Photo a Day Project (also called a 365 Project) can be deeply rewarding. It has the potential to change your photography, and it may even change your life.

I know this from personal experience. I started a One Photo a Day Project a few years ago on a whim. Before this, I took casual photos when I was on vacation. I had no intention of completing a 365 Project; that is, one photo a day for a year. I rarely stuck with anything this long. But surprisingly, I did! I posted a photo every day for nearly two years.


By the end of the project, my photographic skills had increased tremendously. I was also a very different person with a different outlook on the world around me.

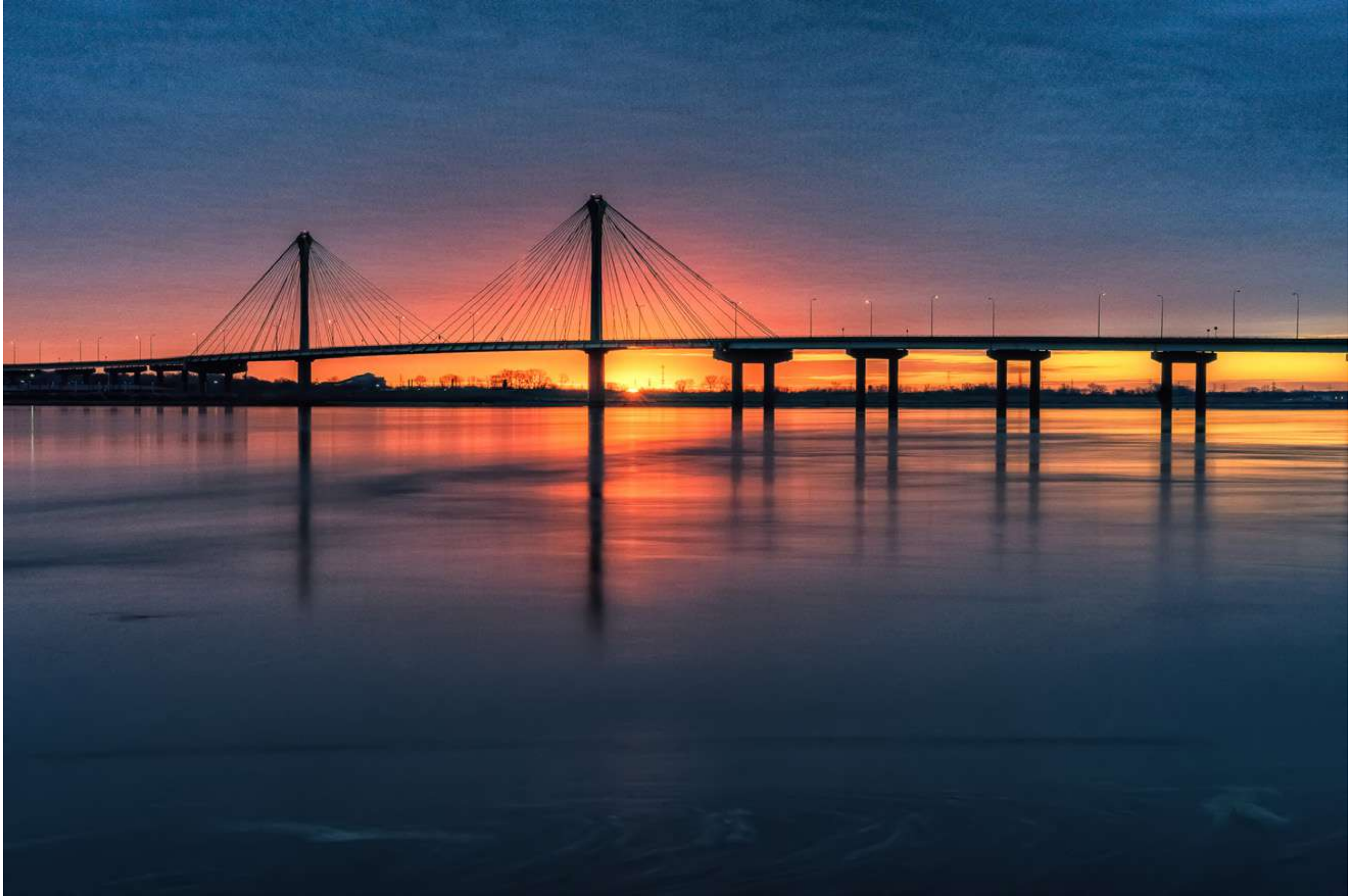
This guide is about starting and staying with a One Photo a Day Project. We'll talk about different ways you can personally define the project and how to stay

motivated over time. I'll finish with a few tips to make your daily photographic journey a success.

Here's what we'll cover:

- Reasons for doing a One Photo a Day Project
- Getting your project started
- Making your own project "rules"
- Staying motivated
- Tips for making your project a success

 **Recommended Reading:** If you want to avoid boredom and repetition in your photography, you can inject some creativity into your work by using the fun and challenging assignments in our Creativity Catalog. [Go here now to take a look!](#)



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

I discovered this bridge and sunrise vantage point during my One Photo a Day Project. It was only about a half-mile from where I worked, and I didn't know about it! It has become one of my favorite places to photograph.



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

There's always something beautiful to photograph. This tree is located not far from my house. The morning was just an average day, but nature gave me beautiful sun if I opened my eyes to see it.

WHY DO A ONE PHOTO A DAY PROJECT?

There are many reasons to do a One Photo a Day Project, not all of which have to do with photography.

Many photographers start a One Photo a Day Project to improve their photographic skills or get themselves out of a photographic rut.

Doing anything every day almost guarantees that your skills will improve. Each day you can explore a different photographic technique or genre. You can try street photography today and make a landscape tomorrow. The project gives you permission and time to explore your photography at a deeper level.

Others do the project to document their daily lives.

Families grow and change. We sometimes forget to take a moment and document everyday life. We might take vacation photos but forget to take a photo today, thinking it too common to photograph. Cell phone cameras have made it so easy to document everyday life that we sometimes just forget to do it. A One Photo a Day Project makes every day a special photographic opportunity.

I started my One Photo a Day Project for therapeutic reasons.

When I started the project, I was struggling with depression. Photography gave me a reason to get out of the house. I could go out with my camera and for at least a few minutes forget my problems.

The journey each day to find a photo – to find one beautiful thing I could share with the world – was therapeutic. Curiosity and a desire to learn broke me out of old habits and made me think ahead rather than dwell on my current or past problems.

Whatever your reasons for starting, the journey of a One Photo a Day Project can change your outlook. Each day I began looking for and seeing compositions everywhere. Very quickly, my outlook changed. I began to see light and beauty. I could visually order my world.

Creating a One Photo a Day Project gives you the framework for improving your photography and maybe even your outlook on life.



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

This photo started my One Photo a Day Project. I had to start somewhere. I had to start sometime. I started with a quick pic of my front door late at night. It's a terrible photo, but I had started my journey.

HOW TO START A ONE PHOTO A DAY PROJECT

There's no secret to starting a One Photo a Day Project. Take out your camera or your phone and snap a picture.

Go and do it now. Step away from your screen and take a photograph. Take a photo of the room you're in, or step out your front door and take a photo. You've officially started your project!

It doesn't matter *how* you start. It matters that you started. Tomorrow you can plan better, but today is the day to get started.

My very first photo for my One Photo a Day Project was truly terrible. I walked out my front door and snapped a shot. It was late at night and I didn't know the first thing about night photography.

I'm sharing my first photo with you because it's important to know that not every photo has to be good. We all have to start somewhere. There's a good chance that the photo you just took to start your One Photo a Day Project is better than mine.



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

When I started my project, I didn't know anything about taking photos at night. Now, I love to go out and photograph the Milky Way.

To start my One Photo a Day Project, I had to let go of perfection. This project is a journey and there will be good days and bad. It's not about the quality of the image, it's about the experience of finding and making the image.

By taking my first photo, I learned that I didn't know how to take photos at night. Looking back, there was a lot I didn't know. I didn't know how to use any of the buttons on my point-and-shoot camera and I hadn't yet come across the idea of post-processing. But I had time to learn all of this at my own pace. I was going to take one photo a day for the foreseeable future, so each day I could explore something new.

A few months later, I'd return to the technique of night photography and figure out how to take images at night. Now, I love photographing the night sky.

PERSONALIZING YOUR ONE PHOTO A DAY PROJECT

Starting a One Photo a Day Project can be daunting, especially if you're doing a 365 Project. It's a BIG commitment to take a photo every day for an entire year! Some get overwhelmed before they even start.

We get hung up on the "one photo a day" commitment, but the important word in the One Photo a Day Project is "project."

It's your project. Make your own rules and let them evolve.

First, you don't have to commit to one photo a day for a full year. Choose your own time period. This could be a week or a month or some arbitrary amount of time.


When I started my project, I only committed (in my head) to do one photo a day for about six weeks. At the end of this period, I was going back to school and probably wouldn't have time to continue. I ended up taking a photo a day for 700+ days, but I could very easily have stopped at the end of six weeks. I would have successfully completed a 42-day Project.

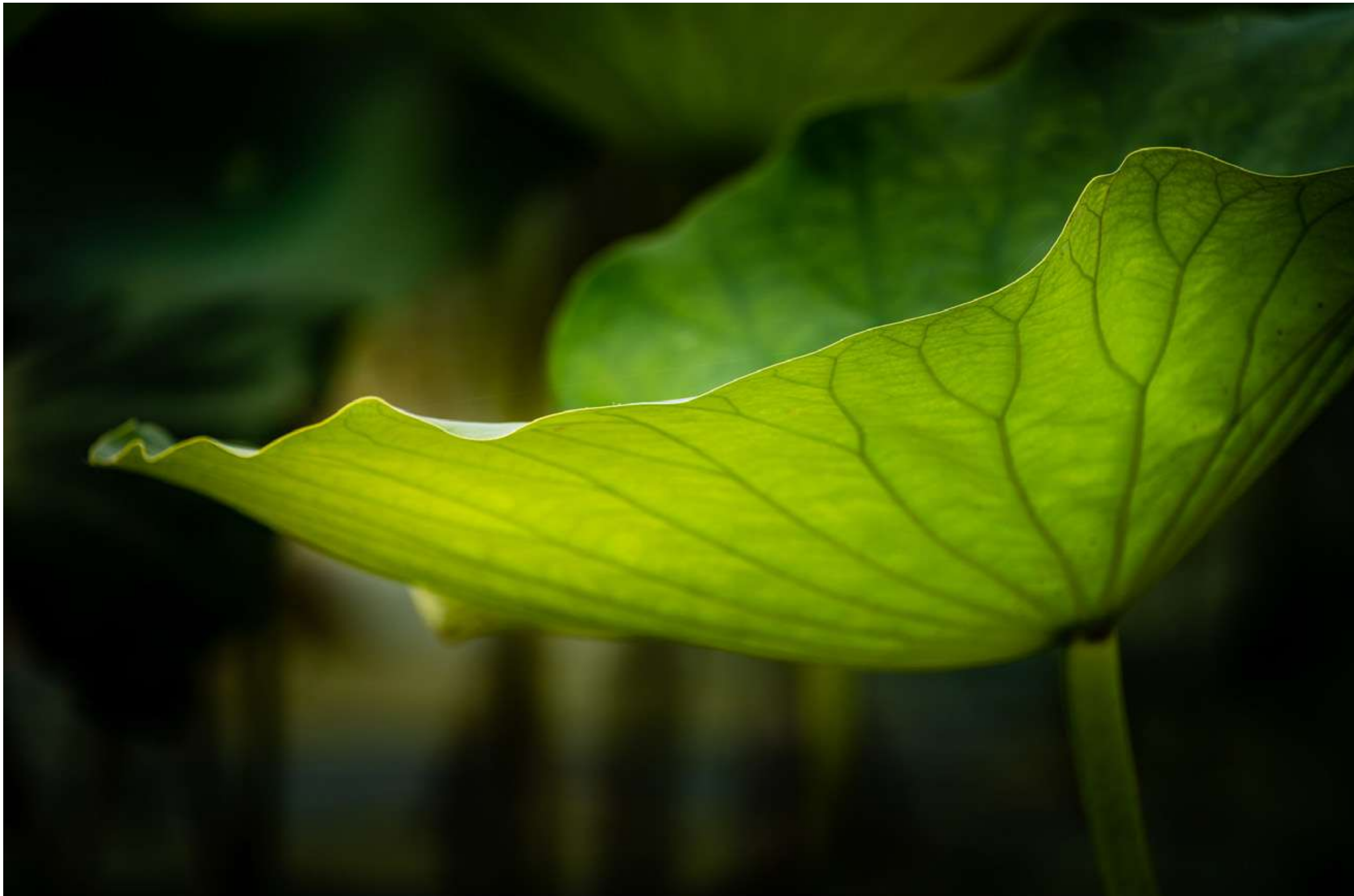
A popular alternative to a One Photo a Day Project is a One Photo a Week Project. Make 52 photos in a

year rather than 365. Weekend photographers can sink their teeth into this since it fits perfectly with their schedule.

A "100" Project roughly doubles the output of a weekly project. Make 100 photos this year. This project allows for more or less productive weeks throughout the year. Posting on social media with a numbering system helps keep track of where you are. Label your photos 1/100, 2/100, etc. You're announcing your final goal and tracking your progress towards the goal, which provides additional motivation.

It's your project. Make rules for yourself and stick to them. The framework adds consistency to your photography.

 **Recommended Reading:** If you want to avoid boredom and repetition in your photography, you can inject some creativity into your work by using the fun and challenging assignments in our Creativity Catalog. [Go here now to take a look!](#)



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

I no longer get out every day to photograph, but I like to get out at least a few times a week. This image was taken recently on a trip to a local lake to see if the lotus were blooming.



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

This photo was taken specifically for the photo competition "From Afar: People." I would have never thought to make this photo without the challenge. The weather was foggy and rainy, but I went out anyway, grabbing the most colorful umbrella that I owned. I used the delay feature on my camera to capture me walking along the boardwalk at a local nature reserve.

STAYING MOTIVATED

Some days it's hard to be motivated to take a photo. Life can get in the way of being creative and finding a photo. After a while, it may be difficult to find things to photograph. Themes and a social network both provide that extra creative push you need to get the next shot.

THEMES

If you're struggling to find that next thing to photograph, you're not alone. Many photographers need daily inspiration. Luckily, there are many sources of daily and weekly photographic themes. Simply Google "photo themes" and dozens of sources will appear.

The website 365project.org runs daily and weekly challenges to help keep you motivated. Flickr also has many groups based around themes. One of the biggest is [Flickr Friday](https://www.flickr.com/groups/friday/), which hosts a weekly photo challenge. Photo competition websites like [GuruShots](https://www.gurushots.com) and [Viewbug](https://www.viewbug.com) are based around themes.



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

When I started my daily project, I was incredibly shy about photographing strangers. Not anymore! I have had lots of practice. This shop owner is bundled up against the cold at a winter market.

It's not really about winning the challenge or competition but having an idea and a deadline for posting an image. Themes will keep you motivated to capture images.

These sources provide you with a lot of diverse photographic ideas, but you can also have a theme for your entire project.

If you like to photograph people or seek to improve your street photography, a popular themed project is "100 Strangers." The goal – you guessed it – is to photograph 100 strangers. This project focuses on taking street portraits and getting to know a little something about 100 new people. There is a [Flickr group](#) for this project where you can post your photos and interact with other photographers.

The 100 Strangers Project can easily be adapted. If your goal is to focus on studio work, the project may be reframed as "100 Portraits." If you like to photograph wildlife or landscapes, the project could instead be "100 Birds" or "100 Trees."



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

An ABC Project can get you thinking about new subjects. A is for Abandoned.

Color-based projects are always fun. I followed a photographer doing a 365 Project where photos each month focused on a different color. A “7-Rainbows” Project is a color-based project where each photo focuses on a color of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) – in order.

An “ABC” Project focuses on making 26 photos for the year – or about two per month – with the subject of each photo starting with a different letter of the alphabet. Just don’t forget X!

Themes give your project direction and help motivate you to take the next image. And the next.

June



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

One month from my 365 Project posted to www.365project.org.

POST TO SOCIAL MEDIA

One Photo a Day Projects are popular and communities form around the experience. Knowing that there are thousands of people around the world doing the same project you are can be highly motivating.

Posting your photos on social media becomes an event. It's a way of announcing that you've completed the next step on your journey. You'll get feedback from others, usually positive, which can help with motivation.

When I was doing my project, I posted to the website 365project.org. I liked how the website organized my photos into a calendar. I could easily see what I photographed a month ago or a year ago.

I admit that some days during my project I took a photo simply so that I didn't have a blank space on my calendar. It was a silly motivation, but it got me out of the house with a camera in my hand – whatever works!

Initially, I was uncomfortable about sharing my photos publicly, but this ended up being just what I needed. Some days I'd take a photo only because I felt a sense of accountability to the group. I knew at least one person would comment on my image.

There are many other places to find a community of photographers doing a One Photo a Day Project. Here are a few Instagram hashtags devoted to this project:

#365photochallenge #365project #project365
#365 #photooftheday #photoaday
#photoadaychallenge #365challenge
#365photoproject #365dayphotochallenge
#365days

Flickr has many groups for posting daily photos including the [Project 365](#) group.

But don't just post your photo and run. Take a few minutes and look at what other photographers are posting. There are many great ideas. You might see an idea for a subject or a photographic technique that you want to try. Often, I'd plan my next day's photograph based on something another photographer posted.

Posting daily photos on social media provides motivation and a sense of camaraderie with others who are on a similar photographic journey.



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

Potential images are everywhere. This image of one Impatiens blossom was taken while I was sitting on my patio writing this guide.

11 TIPS TO COMPLETING YOUR ONE PHOTO A DAY PROJECT

Finally, here are a few tips to help you succeed during your One Photo a Day Project.

TIP #1: PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES ARE EVERYWHERE

Once you start looking for photo opportunities, you'll find them everywhere: walking down the street, driving home from work, even in your own home.

TIP #2: CARRY YOUR CAMERA ALL THE TIME

We all have a camera in our pockets, but if you're using an SLR or DSLR, make sure you always have it with you. You never know when you'll find a photo op.

TIP #3: FEW PHOTOS ARE FOUND SITTING ON YOUR SOFA

Walk out your front door and take a photo! That crack in the sidewalk can be photographically interesting if you really look.

TIP #4: BUILD PHOTOGRAPHY TIME INTO YOUR LIFE

Make this project part of your daily life. Build it into your schedule. It doesn't have to be a lot of time. It only takes a fraction of a second to take a photograph.

TIP #5: NOT EVERY PHOTO HAS TO BE EPIC

Some days you'll only have time for a quick pic, but it's important to still stop, however briefly, and capture the moment. It might be an average moment – life's full of them!

TIP #6: LEARN NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES

With photography, there's always something new to learn. If your motivation lags, try out a new photographic technique or a new photo app. Explore the world with different eyes.

TIP #7: BE SOCIAL

Find someone to share the project with. Look for local photography meetups, classes, or clubs. Go on a photo walk. Others can help motivate you.

TIP #8: FIND YOUR NICHE

In photography, there's a place for everyone. If you like to photograph something, chances are others like to photograph it, too. Look for a Flickr group or Instagram hashtag that fits your interest.

TIP #9: REPEAT PHOTOGRAPHS

You don't always have to find something new to photograph each day. Return to places or photograph the same people at different times. You'll always find something fresh.

TIP #10: TAKE MANY PHOTOS

Don't just take *one* photo a day. When you find something interesting to photograph, take many shots. You never know which one you'll like best.

TIP #11: CELEBRATE YOUR GOALS

Set yourself small goals and celebrate them. Making an eBook of your favorite moments at the end of a month or a year lets you see how far you've come.



Recommended Reading: If you want to avoid boredom and repetition in your photography, you can inject some creativity into your work by using the fun and challenging assignments in our Creativity Catalog. [Go here now to take a look!](#)



Photograph by Jenn Mishra

FINAL THOUGHTS

A One Photo a Day Project can be life-changing. It was for me. By the end of the project, I saw the world very differently and my photographic skills had increased tenfold.

There's no secret to starting a One Photo a Day Project. Walk out your door and snap a photo. The project is about consistency.

But don't worry about it. It's your project and you can make of it what you want. You know yourself and your life. Do the project for 30 days or do one photo a week for a year.

I started with no real expectation that I'd finish, but I ended up posting a photo every day for nearly two years. During the project, I learned a lot about photography, about where I lived, and about myself.

Self-Check Quiz:

- 1) What is a 365 Project?
- 2) Describe a “100 Strangers” Project?
- 3) What are three reasons for starting a One Photo a Day Project?
- 4) Why is it important to post your images on social media?
- 5) Brainstorm three themes for your project.
- 6) Where can you go to find daily photographic themes?
- 7) List at least three tips that will help you succeed in your project.
- 8) Why is it important to look at the photos posted by other photographers?

Assignment:

- If you’re new to a One Photo a Day Project, take a photo a day for a week. Don’t worry about a long-term commitment. Just go out each day this week and see how it goes. If you’ve been doing the project for a while, try setting a particular theme for the week.
- You can decide whether you want to take a series of diverse images or if you want to focus on a theme, a location, or a time of day.
- If you don’t already post to social media, find a platform that you like (Flickr, Instagram, blog, etc.) and post your images.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jenn Mishra is a fine art travel and landscape photographer based in the St. Louis metro area. Jenn is an active photographic educator and has been invited to speak at conferences such as Out of Chicago. Her photos have been featured in a number of solo exhibitions. Her studio is Wits End Photography.

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Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/jae_at_wits_end/

Congratulations! You've completed this Photzy guide!

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