

Five tips on how to use the wide angle lens

A wide angle lens is any lens with a short focal length. The focal length is basically the distance from the optical center of your lens to the film or sensor of your camera when your lens is focused at infinity. The shorter the focal length of the lens, the wider the field of view, and the more you will be able to fit in your frame.

Wide angle lenses are basically any lens under 35mm. 50mm lens is considered a “normal” lens because it has the same angle of view as the human eye, 85mm, 135mm and 200mm are called portrait lenses. Choosing these portrait lenses tend to lessen the presence of the background and depending on the aperture these lenses will give you a thick, creamy “bokeh” allowing a better separation between your subject and your background.

A wide lens give you the opposite of portrait lenses. They tend to push the background further back. You will have much more in focus, more depth of field (DOF). These lenses can be the friend and enemies of architecture photography. Both wide angle and telephotos have the same DOF at the same aperture, but in the real world we perceive more DOF in wide angles than telephotos

Wide angles are now used to photograph people and describe graphically their backgrounds. All of a sudden they are being use in street photography. Another use is shooting documentaries when the story need to be told by using photography.

1. Giving impact to an image

Many elements are incorporated in your frame when you go wide. **By getting close**, you can immerse the viewer in the photograph. **Fill the frame** with important element that will tell the story, unless you need negative space for editorial purposes.

2. Exaggerating Perspective, use distortion at your advantage

Be creative. Be bold. Take advantage of distortion. If you have a main subject, place the subject in the center of the frame away from the curved and warping effect of the wide angle.

3. Frames and leading lines are more effective

Leading lines tell where the main subject is placed. These warping lines can be distracted without a subject included in the frame. Make sure this warping help to identify the subject.

4. Shooting in tight spaces

Obviously in tight spaces you will not reach for a short telephoto or portrait lens. For many years wide angles were used to expand space. Be careful with objects close to the edge of the frame, they will be distorted. Make sure to have a balance picture.

5. Shoot low. Belly whop

Many street photography is done now shooting low. Carry foam pad or knee pads for comfort. Take advantage of the foreground with interesting elements. A floor with old tiles, patterns, lines make an interesting picture.