

Editing Photos on Your Phone

Why do we make photographs?

- We wish to share our experiences, in the form of photographs, with others.

Why should we edit our photographs?

- If we are going to share, we should share in the best form possible!
- Cameras do not “see” as we do, but the result of their seeing can be modified to make it more like ours.
- A photograph may convey what we see, but not what we *feel*. We can sometimes edit a photograph so that it comes closer to conveying what we feel, even if it is not what we (or our camera) really saw.

Editing Photographs

There are a variety of actions we can use to modify photos, which can best be thought of in four groups:

- **Geometric Controls** allow you to change the tilt and borders of your photograph.
- **Tonal Controls** let you lighten or darken your photo in various ways.
- **Color Controls** allow you to alter the colors of your photograph.
- **Other Controls** do a number of more specialized things, and are generally not as useful as the above three types of controls.

All of these controls are what we call *global*, which means they affect the entire photo. There is software that can be used to do *local* controls, affecting only a designated part of a photo - that is usually done on a computer.

How to get into edit mode: Pull up a photograph, then look for either a little pencil symbol, or the word “Edit.” Tap whichever one your phone has to get started. At various points during editing you can then tap “Done” or “Save” to save the changes.

Geometric Controls - You can access these by tapping the crop symbol when you are in edit mode. That symbol is two interlocked, rounded corners, with an arrow curving around them. Once you’ve tapped that icon you should see a border around the photo, and a scale below it.

- ◇ **Leveling** - Your photo may not be level - it may have a tilted horizon or non-vertical objects that should be vertical. Touch in the middle of the scale and slide left and right to rotate the photo until it looks right.
- ◇ **Cropping** - This is the act of changing the frame of your photo. You can grab edges of the photo and pull them in, or you can grab a corner to pull in two edges at once.

Tonal Controls - These are controls that allow you to change darkness and lightness in your photograph. To access these actions, you will tap a circle with dots around its edge. (It is called "Adjust" on an I-phone.) When you do that, other circles will appear below the photo, with a scale below that. When you tap any of the circles (or slide them over the center of the scale on an I-phone), the name of what it does should appear. *Note that not all phones will have all of these actions.*

- ◇ **Exposure/Brightness/Brilliance** - These all allow you to lighten or darken your photo overall. The difference between them is not clear to me (and a search on the internet wasn't helpful about this). If you have more than one of them, you will need to experiment to see which you want to use. I find that I prefer brightness over exposure on my phone.
- ◇ **Contrast** - Adding contrast makes light things lighter, and dark things darker, and decreasing contrast does the opposite.
- ◇ **Highlights** - This makes the highlights brighter or darker, without changing the middle and dark tones.
- ◇ **Shadows** - This can lighten or darken dark areas in a photograph. *This control is particularly useful when you take a photo of people, and you can't make out their faces because they are in shadow.*
- ◇ **Black Point** - This is similar to shadows, but generally acts on the very darkest tones. *Making the darkest parts of a picture darker can sometimes add more "punch" to a photograph.*

Color Controls - As indicated by the name, these controls alter the colors in your photograph. They will appear as circles after all of the tonal controls.

- ◇ **Saturation** - This alters "how colorful" the colors are in a photograph. *Decreasing the saturation as much as possible creates a black and white photograph.*
- ◇ **Vibrance** - Similar to saturation, you will have to experiment to see its effect.
- ◇ **Temperature/Warmth** - This makes a photograph more blue or more yellow/orange. *Photographs taken in shade under a clear blue sky will often have a blue cast to them - this can remove that.*
- ◇ **Tint** - This makes a photograph more green or more magenta. *You will likely not need this control, but you can try it if colors seem a little "off."*

Other Controls - These are found after the color controls.

- ◇ **Sharpness/Definition** - These increase or decrease the "crispness" of a photograph. You will have to experiment to see the difference between the two.
- ◇ **Noise Reduction** - When we photograph in low light, some of the pixels (the very tiny color dots that make up the photograph) "go haywire," and end up the wrong color. Noise reduction can fix (at least some) of that. *You will likely never use this.*
- ◇ **Vignette** - This lightens or darkens the edges of a photograph. It is usually used to darken the edges, to direct our attention into the center of the photograph. *This control may appear at the end of all controls.*