

25 Ways to Jump Start Photography Inspiration

Article by <http://winatphotography.com/>

1. Enter a Photography Contest

What a great concept. Get given a brief, a theme, a deadline, compare your work to other likeminded enthusiasts and maybe win a prize at the end. Contests are one of the best ways to find inspiration. It gives your photography a purpose, fills you with motivation and you never know there might be an award waiting for you at the end. Just entering already makes you a winner because of what you'll learn along the way

2. Go to the Movies

Movies are great inspiration. Before you go, prepare yourself mentally. You can find inspiration in the story of the movie, in the photography, in the morals, in one of the characters and in the dialogs.

3. Try to Learn a New Lighting Technique

Sometimes you can get inspiration not by focusing on the what (the subject), but by focusing on the how. Even if you shoot a plain subject in an interesting way, you can get a great picture.

4. Join a Photowalk

Almost every town has a club that you can join and go out for a have-fun-together session. Your benefit is threefold: 1. You will be forced to get out of that couch. 2. You'll interact with other photographers. 3. You'll get some shooting ideas.

5. Look at Popular Photoblogs and Get Inspired

Getting ideas from other photographers can be very inspirational. When you look at a fellow photographer blog or gallery you expose yourself to new ideas, photography styles and techniques. You can later employ those ideas on your photography. If you see anything you like, ask: how I would have taken this image, or how can I use this technique to make a say of my own.

6. Go through Your CD Covers

One of the ways to get your inspiration going is to tap to other great creators and their creations. By browsing your CDs (does anybody still has CDs? or have everyone gone to iPods??!!) you get a double kick. You get to watch the work of great photographers who shot the covers. You also get to find some great lost music that can get you inspired. Shooting a new cover to an "old" CD is a great project. (And you can always alphabetize the collection as you promised to yourself on New Years Eve)

7. Listen to Your Favourite Music

While you are going through the covers, find one artist that really inspires you and put it in the player. Try to think what image can best describe one of the songs; The first verse; A single line; the mood of the entire CD.

8. Take on a Photo-a-Day Project

Sometimes what you need to get your inspiration going is a little push. A great push is a photo-a-day project. In such project you commit to take one picture each day. Such projects have various themes and lengths. Some of the projects are portrait oriented (or self portrait); some are generic; some have a general theme. Some are a

month long, some are a year long and some are a picture a week. No matter which one you choose, the need to create something new on a deadline can give your creativity that little push it needs.

9. Read an (Art) Magazine

Actually read an Art / Fashion / Fun magazine. Magazines like Wired can trigger new ideas just because they are so packed full of inspirational stuff. Fashion magazines like Elle or Vogue often have lots of great photos that one can try and analyse both for technique and composition. (Even the advertisements are shot in a great way).

10. Shoot a Sporting Event

Sporting events are everywhere. At your local school, College or down at the park where your little (or big) brother is playing football. It is a great opportunity to take action shots as well as portraits. It is also a great opportunity to practice action shooting if you ever want to make a career at sports shooting.

11. Look 360

When you walk, you are always looking forward, right? As a photographer you should get used to looking sideways, up and down. You'll be amazed at the amount of photo opportunities you can find on ceilings, second floors, looking down the escalator. Reflections in puddles, car windows, shopping windows. shadows on the floor, walls. You get the point.

12. Shoot for a Holiday Theme

Have you got a holiday coming? Great! Shoot something in the holiday spirit. An item related to the holiday: snow-slide; Cross; Menora; Shoot a scene from the Bible, New testimony; Koran – give it a twist.

13. Reproduce Art by the Old Masters

All the old masters are not called masters for nothing. They had it when it came to lighting, composition and posing. Trying to make an image like the old masters did it, is not an easy task. You can learn a lot by trying to produce a very similar image. You can also learn a lot from trying to homage art made by one of the great ones.

14. Shoot a Gorgeous Model

There is nothing more inspiring then shooting a gorgeous model, whatever your definition of gorgeous model may be, the effort to bring one's beauty to the final picture is demanding and challenging. The bonus is that you get to spend time with your definition of beauty.

15. Treat Yourself to “Photo Inspiration” Coupons

Use [Inspirational Coupons](#). Each coupon has a theme or an exercise divided into three: Theme, equipment and time. By combining all three you can generate an assignment. So, if you don't know what to shoot next? Just pick a card!

16. See an Art Show

Art shows are a great resource of inspiration. They can give you a new idea to focus on, help you understand a technique or take on a new perspective. Art shows often act as creativity singularities and the mere fact that a place is packed with art can help you to get inspired.

17. Take on a Photo Assignment or Challenge

Like I said before sometimes all you need to get inspired is a little positive pressure. Taking on an assignment is a great way to put yourself in a spot that will make you feel committed for inspiration. It will also narrow down your choices – which sometimes can be a good thing

18. Photograph Your Family

This is the ultimate there-is-no-way-out decision you can take to jump start your photographer block. Your family is always there, no need to get out, to schedule anything. Just decide how you want to make the shot and start taking photos

19. Shoot Your Favourite Food

Has your Mama ever told you not to play with your food? Well she never said, don't photograph it. Taking a photograph of food in an appetizing way is challenging but well worth the effort.

20. Shoot in the Dark

Venture out at night? City scenes, car light trails, fireworks, painting with light, moonscapes. Get yourself a sturdy tripod, learn how to set up your camera for long exposures (may mean you need to switch to manual) and prepare yourself for a pleasant surprise

21. Shoot a Family Event

This is another great opportunity for you to take photos. The setting is there, everybody want in on the fun. And you'll be Aunt Naomi's favourite nephew.

22. Use a Prop in an Interesting Way

Take a look around you. Are there any objects on the table? Something the kids left on the floor? Take this object and try to use it in an interesting way in your picture. Trying to look at ordinary things in unusual ways is always a great exercise; not only to your photography skills, but also to the way you see the world. Once you have that ability acquired, you can apply it to anything.

23. Tell a Story in 5 Pictures

Telling a story is a difficult task. It is difficult when you are unlimited with words and images. It is even harder to try and tell a story in five pictures. You need to know what you want to tell; make up an interesting way to tell it; find a beginning, middle and an end and sum it up in five pictures.

24. Shoot an Ordinary Item Seven Times, but Make Each One Unique

This has to be a nice trick to get some inspiration going. Get an (ordinary) object and shoot it. Got the shot? The lighting is OK? The focus? Great! Now start playing with all the parameters of the image. Focus, Angle, Depth of Field, Background, Movement. OK, you get the point. Try to make seven of those pictures.

25. Take a Self Portrait

This is another challenge that is always available. Shooting yourself requires nothing but a camera and some creativity. Step one – shoot yourself. Step two – shoot yourself in an interesting way. Find an unusual pose; unusual angle; multiple exposures; hold something. Anything to make it interesting.