

*** 7 Tips for Mastering Macro ***

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1) **Eliminate movement.**

Not only is the subject magnified with macro, but so too is every mistake you make. Windy days and macro don't usually mix, but if you have no other choice, be sure to bring along something to block the wind for a bit (*a piece of cardboard can do wonders*). Clothes pins and other such clamps also come in handy to stabilize spindly subjects.

2) **Beyond bugs.**

Most folks automatically think of insects and flowers when approaching macro photography, but a whole tiny world exists out there! Sometimes I just sit down and really look closely at everything within a couple of feet with an eye on the abstract. Look for textures, bark, patterns, fibers, etc. until something unique strikes your fancy—and gets you thinking in the abstract.

3) **Parallel pleases.**

Maximize your depth of field by placing your camera on a parallel plane with your subject. Be sure to square the sensor to the subject.

4) **Get intimate.**

While your macro lens gets you up-close and personal, it's up to you to say something special about your subject. Think about why it caught your eye in the first place, and how to communicate that. Changing your perspective—seeing it from a different angle, under slightly changed lighting, or with something else in the background—often helps highlight the special essence of your subject.

5) **Add light.**

The closer your lens is to the subject, the less light will be available. Since we usually stop down to maximize depth of field, the loss of light put a serious damper on your shutter speed. To compensate, raise that ISO and/or use flash (or other supplemental light such as a flashlight).

6) **Focus with your feet.**

While most say a tripod is a macro must, try telling that to the butterfly you're trying to get in focus before it flutters away! In such situations, rather than trying to autofocus, use manual focus, shooting in high-speed burst mode, while—ever so slightly—moving the camera (and your body) forward and backward until you achieve focus.

7) **Composition counts.**

Minutiae can mesmerize when working in macro, causing us to hone in our subject without considering its surroundings. But, just as with any other image, composition counts. So too does color. If you have a choice, give your subject a background comprised of a complementary color. Who knows? That may mean only moving a few inches.

Award-winning nature & wildlife photographer, Jeff Parker, leads photo tours & workshops for the naturally curious™ throughout North & South America. Join him!

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