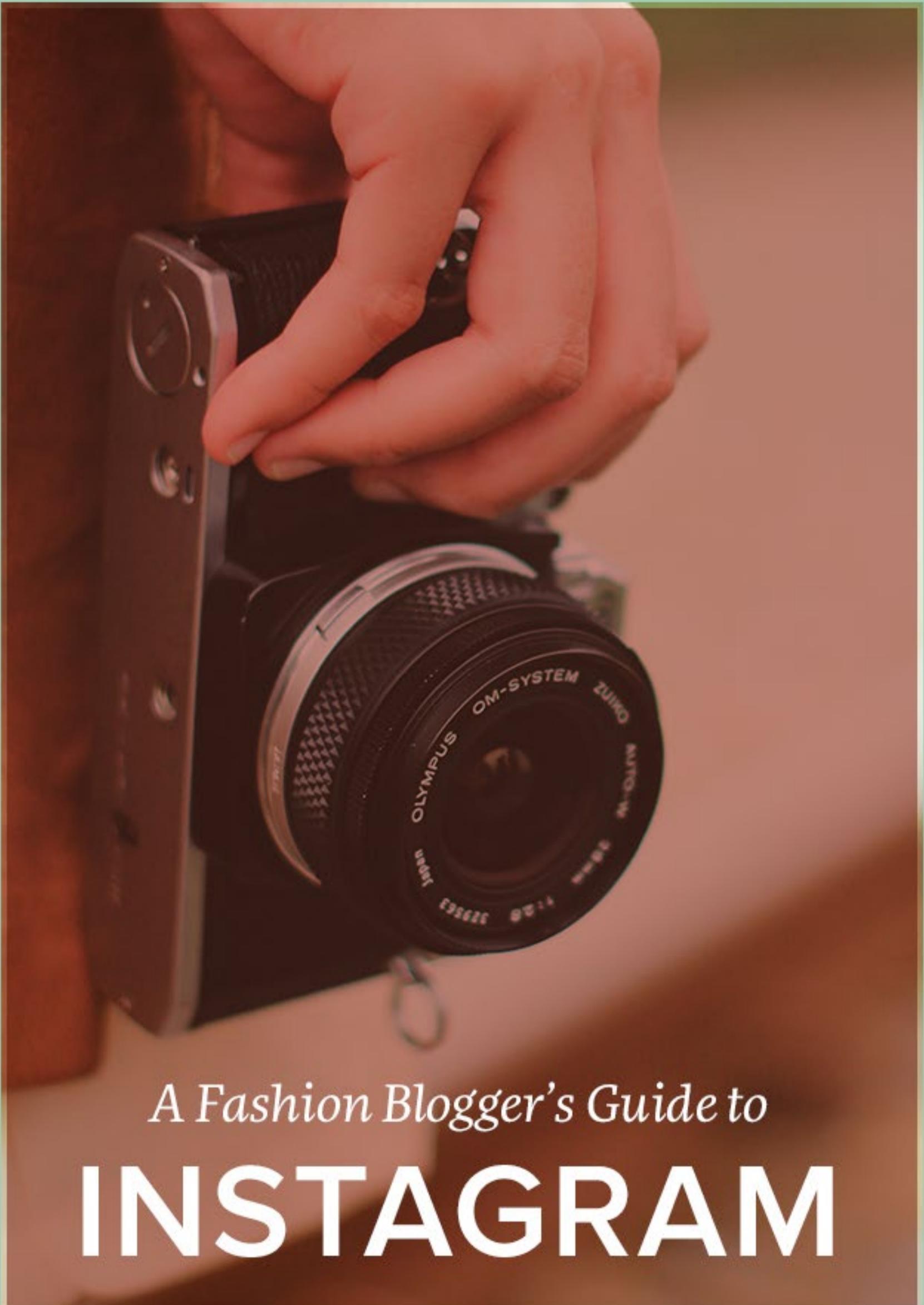


## Independent Fashion Bloggers



*A Fashion Blogger's Guide to*

# INSTAGRAM

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In so many ways, maintaining an Instagram account is just like keeping your blog up—and you already excel at that. So why not dive into one of the other most influential social media spheres.

As you do through your blog, share often, share smart, share honest. The main difference is that Instagram requires you to be more intense than your blog does:

- Posting frequently means not weekly or even daily but two to four times a day.
- Sharing with smarts means giving followers the concentrated essence of you, one photo at a time.
- Working with integrity with Instagram means being patient with the time it takes to gain followers in this fast-moving medium.

## Do What You Do Best

Fortunately for you, the artistic, creative, right-brained fashion blogger, you've already got an eye for the beauty that exists anywhere and everywhere. And you've got an innate sense for good aesthetics. So you're a step ahead of a lot of people who are trying to wow Instagram audiences. Support your instincts with the following checklist. (Oh, and don't forget that other key attribute you have: you know how to break rules! Make what we're suggesting your own.)

♥ **Know your brand, message, and audience—before you take a single photo.** How can you know what to take a picture of, and how to take it, if you don't know what your point is? When

answering who you are, think about how you want to make customers see your point of view, consider what you and you alone offer, and how you can create relationships with others. Save yourself time and effort and save your followers from confusion by knowing what you're aiming for from the very beginning.

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♥ **Pay attention to composition.** If you have time to take a photo, you need to make the time to do it right, from start to finish.

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♥ **Look for a distinct subject.** A closet of clothes may look as beautiful to you and your followers as a sunset, but it's also as one dimensional to the camera's eye. You can succeed with a sunset photo by making sure to capture the colors the moment that a bird is swooping across the sky or a sailboat is gliding underneath it. Likewise, a shirt in a contrasting color from the rest of the clothes or one turned out when the rest are hanging sideways can be the focal point that helps followers enjoy the whole wardrobe.

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♥ **Follow the rule of thirds.** Divide your screen into vertical and horizontal thirds (in your imagination, or turn on your camera's grid feature) and place the most important subjects along the gridlines and at their intersections. For a human subject, that means positioning the eyes, the first thing viewers connect with, along a gridline. [Insert Image]

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♥ **Remember the "white space."** Don't center your main subject in the photo—leave more space on the side toward which the subject is moving, looking, or angling. So, a model looking or stepping toward the left should herself be at the right side of the photo.

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♥ **Save an unedited copy of each photo.** When you experiment one step too far in postproduction—and you will! and that's OK!—you'll want a copy of the original in order to start anew. [link to resources sidebar]

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♥ **Pay attention to your captions.** Let's be honest—most photos have been done before. Even with a filter, your photo may look strikingly similar to another. So let your words—thoughtful, witty, emphasizing a point—help your followers connect with your point of view.

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♥ **Focus in on the important hashtags.** Five or fewer per photo will help your work rise to the top—both for viewers, who see too many hashtags as spammy looking, and for Instagram, which doesn't award you more exposure for more hashtags.

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## Resources

Instagram is no different from any other technology—it's always growing, with old techniques updating and new apps coming on the market. Regularly search online for new tools to add to the ones we suggest you download (or order—some are physical!) right now.

### Apple

- Create a grid of photos: [PicStitch](#), [Diptic](#), [PicFrame](#)
- Play with special effects such as lighting, filters, decorations, and blemish removers: [VSCO Cam](#), [Photoshop Express](#), [moreBeaute2](#), [Pixlr-o-matic](#), [Color Splash](#), [aillis](#), [LensLight](#), [BeFunky](#), [Facetune](#), [Creative Market](#)
- Give your lens a boost: [Camera+](#), [Big Lens](#)
- Go offline and invest in some real-world products: [Olloclip](#), [Joby GorillaPod Stand](#), [HISY Camera Remote](#)

### Android

- Create a grid of photos: [Photo Grid](#)
- Play with special effects such as lighting, filters, decorations, and blemish removers: [PicsArt](#), [Pudding Camera](#), [Pixlr-o-matic](#), [PhotoWonder](#), [FX Photo Editor](#), [Creative Market](#)
- Give your lens a boost: [Camera ZOOM Fx](#)
- Go offline and invest in some real-world products: [Joby GorillaPod Stand](#), [Shutter Halo](#)

## All that Glitters Is Not Always Likeable

Coco Chanel advised that your last stop on the way out of the house be your mirror, to take off one accessory. The very different but equally iconic style maven Iris Apfel might suggest the opposite. The point is, with Instagram, as with fashion, a variety of techniques can work—the trick is in knowing what to use when and how in order to garner likes, and all the benefits that come from having a pleased audience. Watch out for these ten common fumbles you can make while using your Instagram resources:

**1. Wildly white teeth:** Unless you're Instagramming photos of your own prize-winning Misty of Chincoteague, beware of over-correcting smiles into horse chompers.

**2. Alien eye sparkle:** A twinkle in the eye is meant to be more metaphorical than literal, so be careful not to add too much glitz to your subject's peepers.

**3. Toxic fog:** A blurred background can look romantic or artsy or otherwise help the main subject pop—but it can just as easily make your photo look like pea soup.

**4. Morphing mania:** Remember that when you change one thing in your picture, you indirectly change everything else, so if you plump your subject's backside, check how that affects the chair she's sitting on.

**5. Oversaturation:** Similar to morphing mania, this misstep can be avoided if you pay attention to the parts of your photo you're not correcting. Popping eye color, for example, can unintentionally add unappealing gray or red shades to skin.

**6. Plastic pitfalls:** Only Barbie looks good in plastic (and even that's debatable), so watch that you don't smooth away or cover over all signs of humanity on your subject's face.

**7. The ouch factor:** There is such a thing as an image that is too crisp, so sharpen by one degree at a time.

**8. Watermarks:** Simply put: don't add 'em. They offer no positives and lots of negatives. You possess the original photo and were the first to share it—don't worry about theft.

**9. Too close for comfort:** Camera phones such as the iPhone don't have an optical zoom—the zoom is digital. So if you zoom in on a subject, you lose pixels. Also think of it this way: zooming with a camera phone is like cropping, and you know that cropping always happens after you take the picture.

**10. Flashing:** Flash adds a cold glare, and even in complete darkness, your subject must be within one meter of your camera for the flash to be effective. Take the photo in low light and then...use your many apps in postproduction to make it truly shine!