Tips and Tricks

In this lesson, we'll be taking a look at
Tips and Tricks.

If you see a magnifying glass at the bottom right corner
of a photo, click on that photo to make it full screen.

Tips and Tricks

OK, now that you've learnt all about your camera phone, let's have a look at a few more tips and techniques to help improve your mobile photography further.
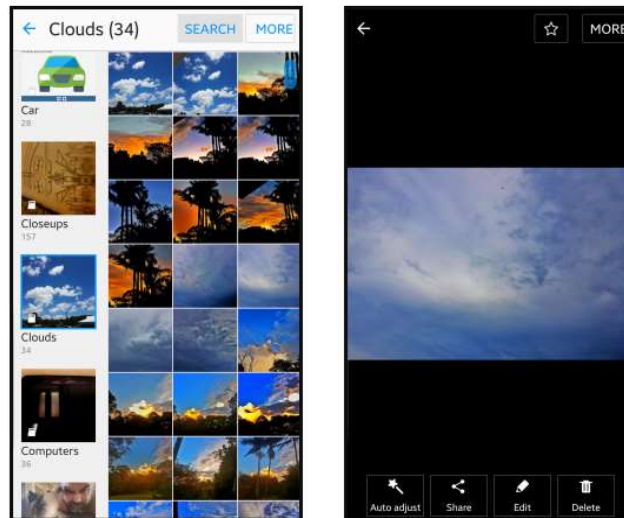
We'll also look at some cool things you can do with your photos and photo library on your phone.
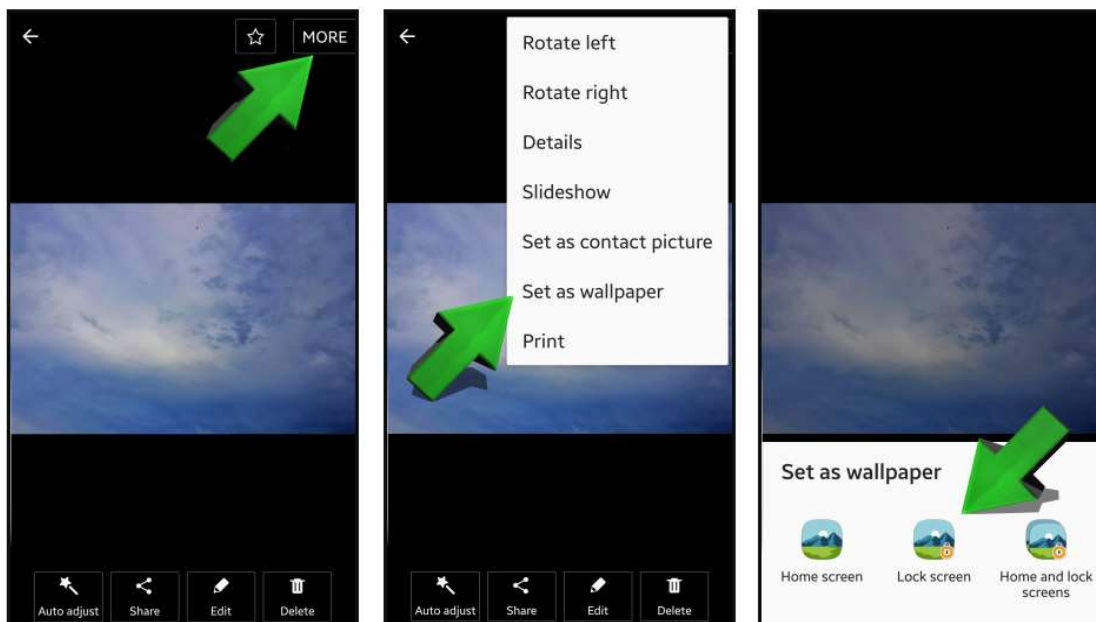
Tips and Tricks

Setting a Photograph as Your Phone Wallpaper. The wallpaper one your phone displays in the background of your lock screen, as well as your home screen. And you get to determine what image(s) are used.

There are several way to do this, but let's look at the most simple way, directly from your photo library. Open **Google Gallery,** or **iPhotos,** and select an image you want as your wallpaper.

Tips and Tricks

You'll then see the option asking whether you want to set the home screen, or lock screen wallpaper, or both. In this exercise, we'll do both.

Tips and Tricks

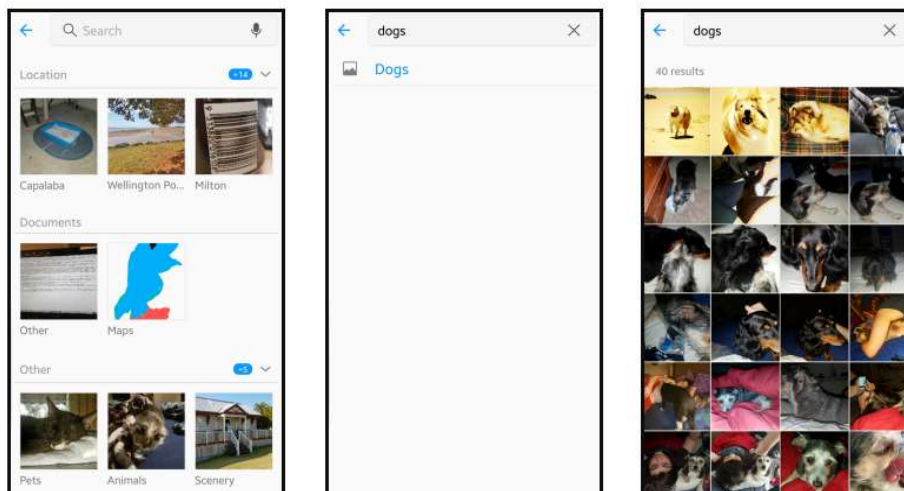The middle screen below illustrates what happens next - a preview of the home screen and lock screen. If you like this, you select **SET AS WALLPAPER,** and it's done - exactly as you can see in the third screen below.
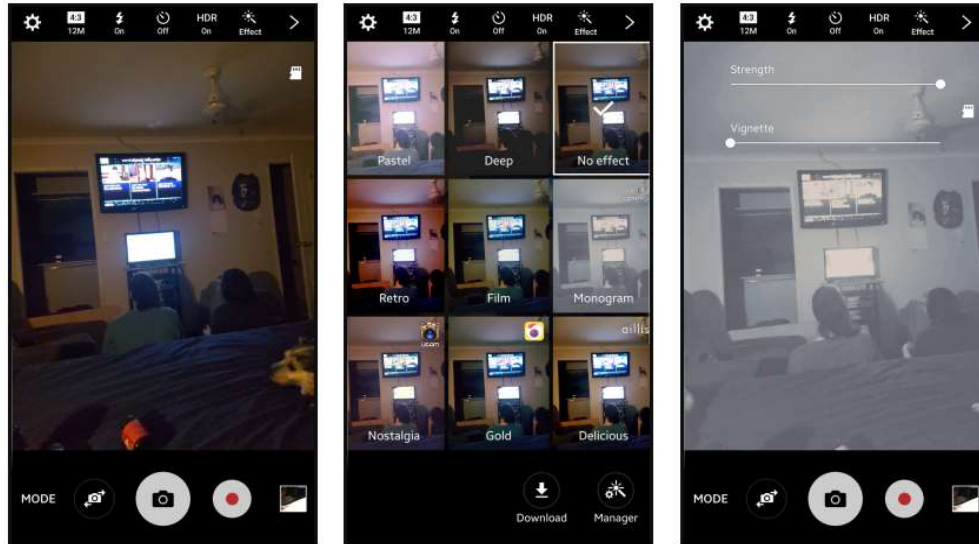

Tips and Tricks

Searching for Photos. Both Android and iOS photo applications have a neat search feature. Not only can you search by location, or date, but you can also search for content.

Open the **Pictures,** or **Gallery** app, and select the **Search** option. Then, enter a topic to search for - dogs, or people, or cats, or scenery - something like that. The app performs a search based on the content of your images, and displays the results.
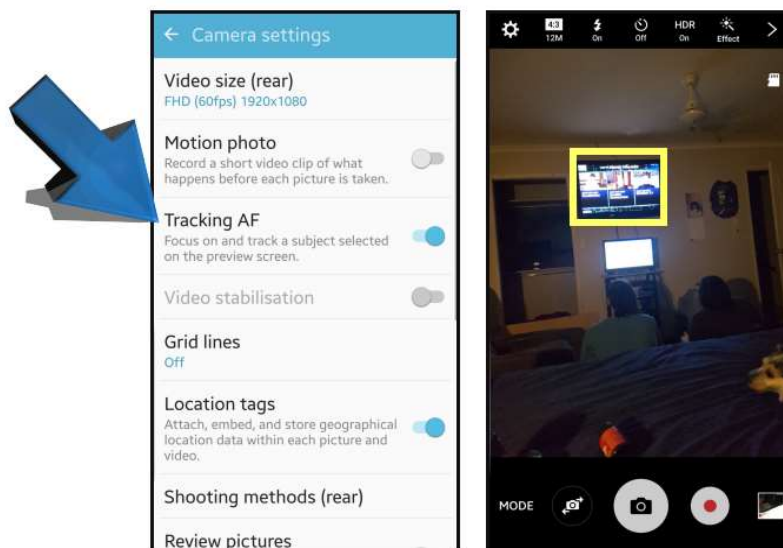
Tips and Tricks

Applying Filters. The Android camera program allows you to select a filter before taking a photo. With the camera program open, select the **Effect** option, at top right of screen. Then, as seen in the second image below, you can select an effect. Once selected, as seen in the third image, that effect is applied even as you look through at the preview before taking the photograph.
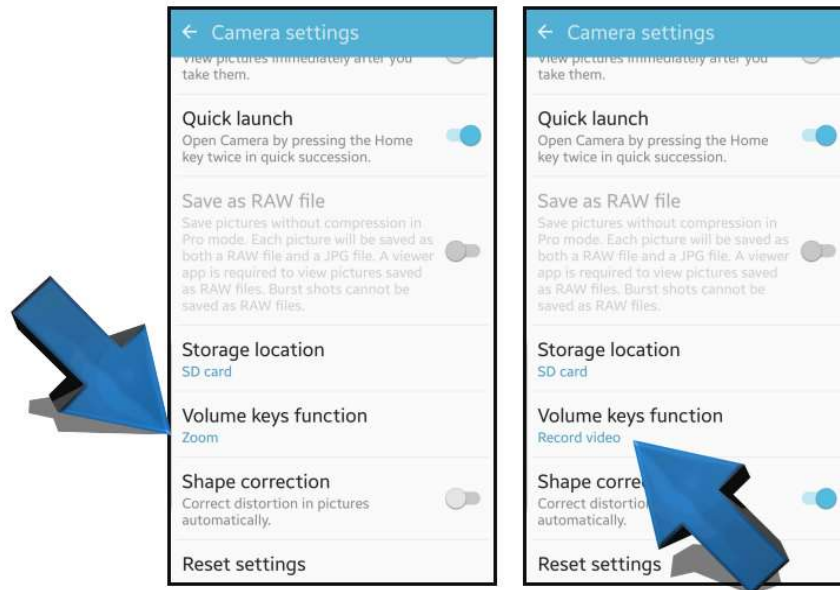
Tips and Tricks

Tracking AF. The Android camera program also allows you set an option called **Tracking AF.** This option is available using the **Settings** option in the camera program. With this option selected, you can select an object, or face, or other item before you take the photo - and the camera program will track that item (indicated by a yellow square) no matter how the camera moves, and constantly adjust focus and exposure to match.
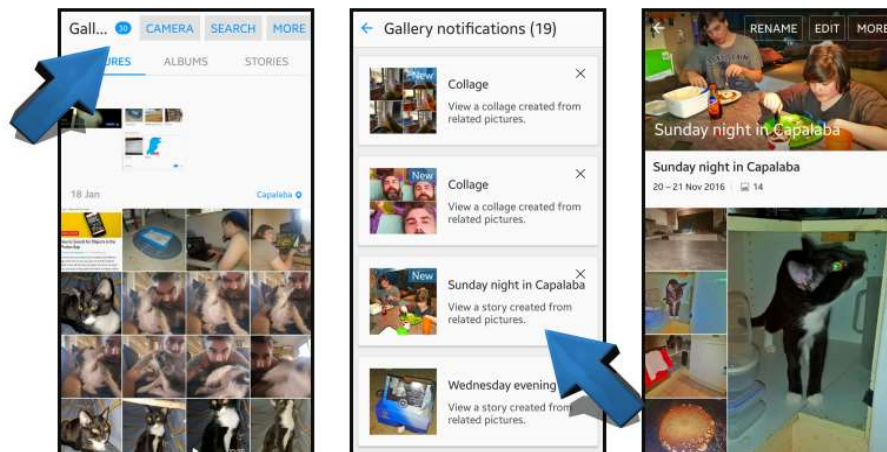
Tips and Tricks

Using Volume Keys. Both Android and iOS phones allow you to take advantage of the volume keys while taking a photo. Below, we illustrate some choices in the **Settings** program found in the Android camera program. The volume keys can be used to take a photo (which can result in less camera shake), zoom in/out, or take a video.
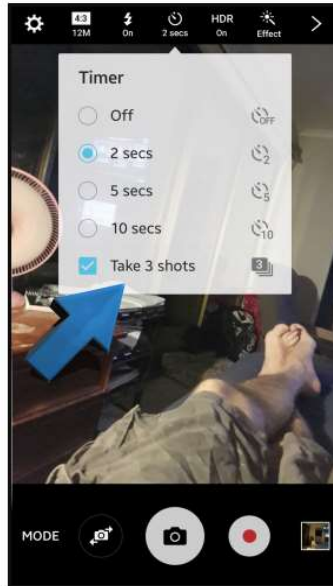

Tips and Tricks

Collages and Stories. Both Android and iOS photo applications can and will automatically create stories, collages, and animations for you. Below, we illustrate this using the Android **Gallery** app, by selecting the **Gallery** button.

In the first image, below, the **Gallery** button indicates some gallery items are available. Select that button, and you see a list of gallery items that have been auto created for you. Finally, select one of the items, as we have in then third image, and you can choose to save or discard the auto created item.

Tips and Tricks

Multiple Shot Auto Timer. The Android camera app not only allows you set a timer before a photo is taken (as the iOS camera app can do as well), but there is a handy option available - you can tell the camera to take three photos at the specified time.

Tips and Tricks

Clean Your Lens. Phone cameras don't normally have any lens protection in place. They can easily get dirty, or collect fingerprints. Ensure the lens is cleaned regularly, because smudges and fingerprints can really affect how photos turn out.
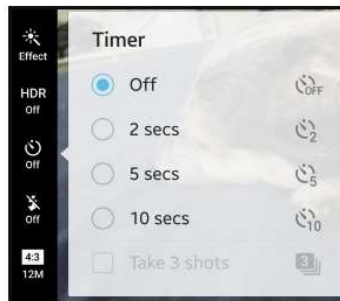
Tips and Tricks

Keep the Phone Still. This is one tip that can really improve your photos. Keep the camera as still as you can. A moving camera will mean a moving image, even if it is only moving slightly. Use two hands. Steady yourself on a pole or wall. Take a deep breath - it will help.

There are camera apps that will allow you to use the camera volume keys as the shutter control. This allows you to keep both hands on the camera itself, with less chance of camera movement.

Your camera may also allow voice control - for example, saying 'shoot' to take a photo. Again, this really helps camera shake.

Finally, you can also use the timer photo option found in all camera apps. Set the delay to two seconds or so, take the photo, and you then have two seconds to steady yourself for when the photo is actually taken.

Tips and Tricks

Use the Flash. Most recommend that a flash on a camera phone only be used sparingly. The flashes available on camera phones these days are brilliant, and certainly worth a try - at night time, of course, but also during the day.

Using a flash is an old photography trick to front light a subject who may otherwise be in shade, or appear against a much brighter object, like the sky.
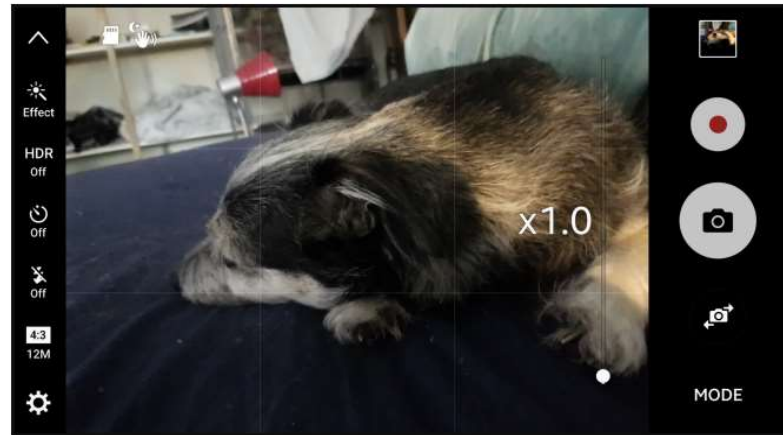
Tips and Tricks

Set Exposure With a Touch. When composing a photo on your phone, you'll see a good representation of how it will turn out. What areas are dark, which are light.

In most camera apps, you can touch different parts of the screen to not only adjust focus, but also exposure. Touch a dark part of the screen, and the camera software will adjust, and increase the exposure to match the subject. The reverse is also true - touch a light part of the screen, and the exposure will be lowered.

Tips and Tricks

Check the Focus On Screen. When you are out and about taking photos, it's easy to take a quick look at a photo, and decide it is fine.

To be really sure your shot is fine, have a look on the phone. Zoom in. Sometimes a shot that looks in focus when viewing the whole shot can sometimes fail to focus on the area you were aiming for. Or perhaps there was a little camera movement. In any event, give it a quick look to make sure.
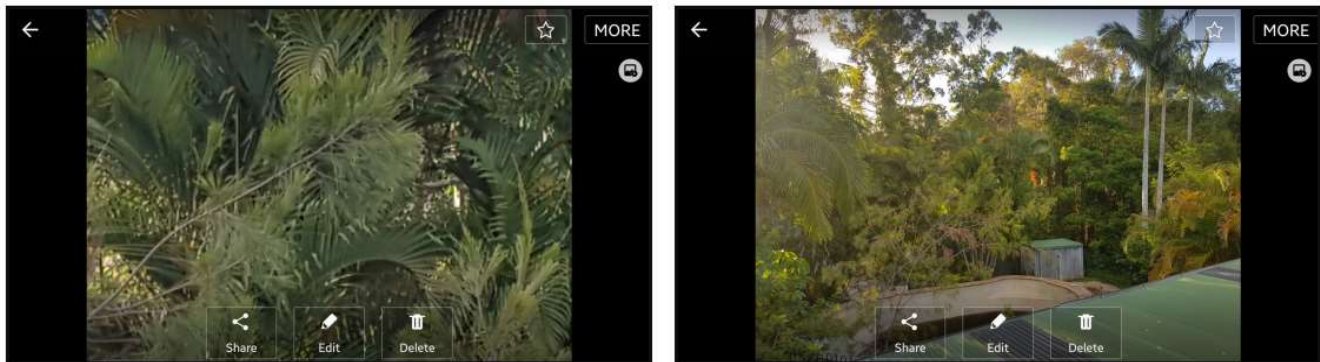
Tips and Tricks

Digital Zoom. All camera phones have digital zoom. This is normally activated when you reverse pinch the camera screen. On almost all cameras, this activates digital zoom.

Digital zoom is bad. Don't use it. You will get much better results not zooming in, and cropping the image later to provide the same effect.
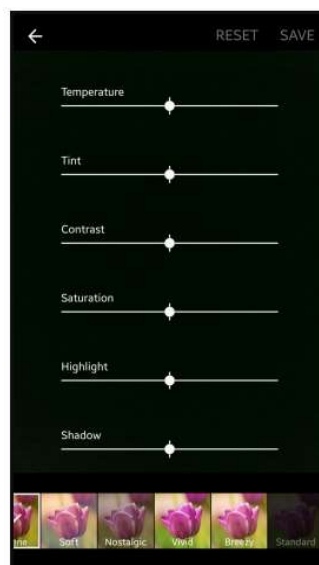
The latest iPhones can use optical zoom - which is great. Just be careful - the more you zoom in, on any camera, the more still you must keep the camera, as any camera shake will also be magnified.

On the left - digital zoom. On the right, the same photo without any zoom. A better result would be to crop the photo on the right to match the size on the left.

Tips and Tricks

Pre-photo Options. We've discussed in several lessons about editing photos after they have been taken. Some photo apps, including the native camera app on the Samsung, allow you to preset things like saturation, or tint, and more. These settings, normally set in Pro mode (or something similar) allow you to take photos with these settings applied automatically.
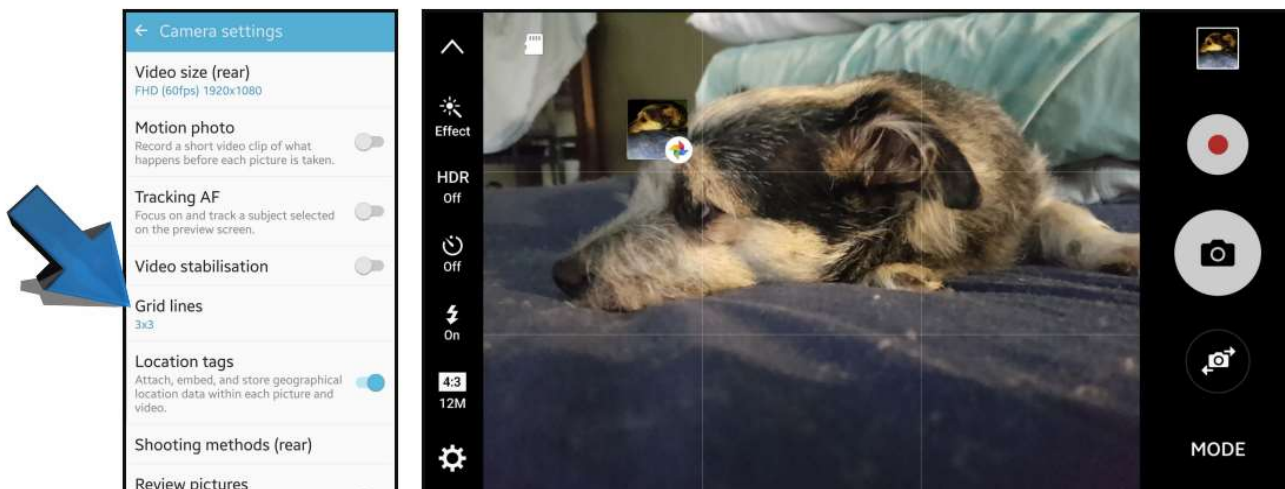
Tips and Tricks

Take Candid Shots. We mentioned earlier that the best camera you have is the one you have on you. And because the phone camera is almost always on you, use it. Take candid shots when least expected. Whip the camera out, and take some shots.

Tips and Tricks

Rule of Thirds. Most camera apps allow you overlay a grid over the camera screen. Not only can this help keep things like the horizon straight, it also helps with the old photography rule, the **rule of thirds.**

The **rule of thirds** posits that the important parts of a photograph - the eye, the head, the area of focus, should appear on imaginary lines that split the screen in thirds, both horizontally and vertically. It does not matter which third your subject appears on, as long as it is on one...

Tips and Tricks

Get Down Low. Try taking some shots from a low perspective. In fact, take shots from any perspective that is different to the one people expect.

Tips and Tricks

Get in Close. There is an old adage - if you are think you are in close enough for a photo, get in closer. Not only can it result in more interesting photos, but the clarity is better, often the color is better, and the decreased depth of field can also yield interesting results, like the blurry background effect.

Tips and Tricks

External Lenses. A wide range of lenses are available for phone camera. Macro, telephoto, wide angle, fisheye, and more. They can attach to your phone via a clip, a case, magnets, or even stickers.

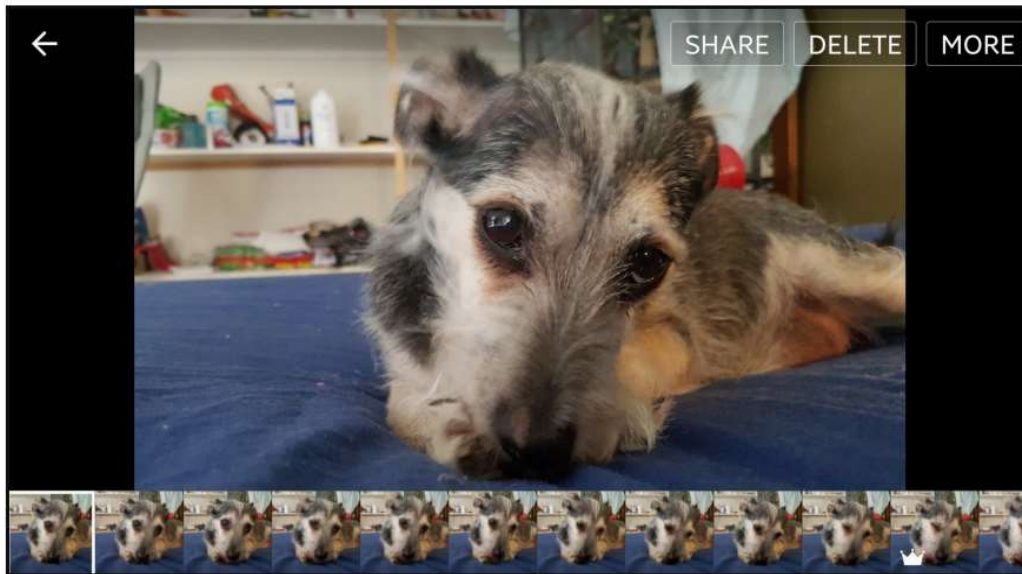These lenses provide extra capability for your camera.

Tips and Tricks

Experiment. Try using a magnifying glass, a microscope, a telescope, or other optical devices. A camera phone camera lens is small, so it's easy to get in front of these devices for some interesting shots.
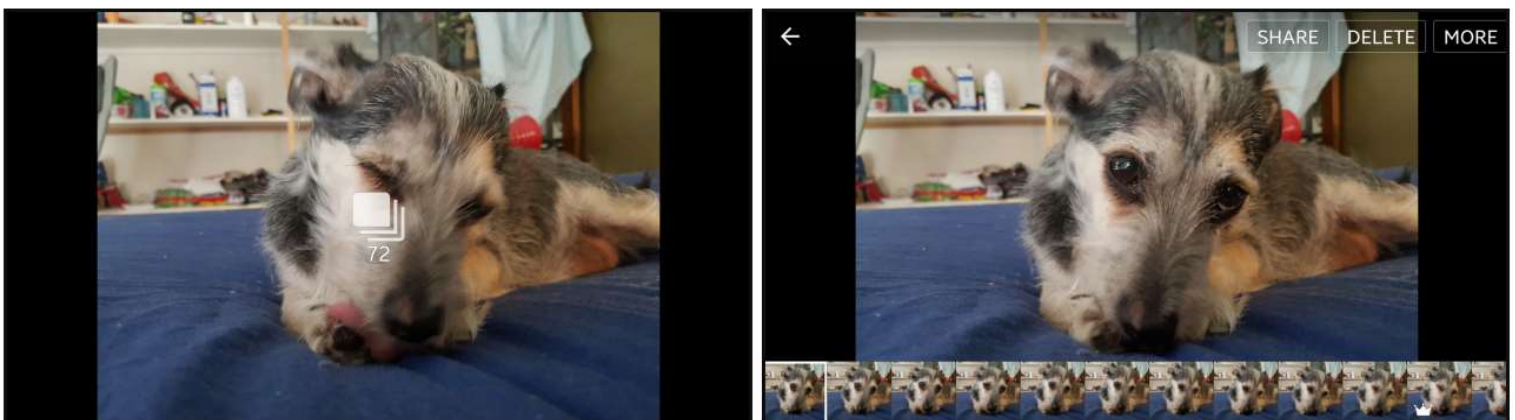
Tips and Tricks

Take Lots of Photos. Taking photos on your phone is free. There is nothing to lose, and everything to gain by taking as many photos as your storage will allow. Any professional photographer takes many more photos than they need - knowing that some will fail - and others will just snap.

Tips and Tricks

Burst Photography. Your camera will also allow burst photography. It may be an option, but it will be there.

Burst photography will take a series of shots for as long as you press the camera shutter. Or for around 50 photos or so, depending on the camera or software being used. Just imagine taking a photo of a child blowing out a birthday cake - and being able to choose from 50 or so the best one.

Here, 72 photos have been taken in burst mode, at full resolution, in less than 3 seconds. The camera software on the Samsung S7 identifies what it thinks is the best photo, but you can manually search through and save whichever photos you like.

Tips and Tricks

Patterns. Try searching for patterns in nature, architecture, or any landscape. You'll get some really interesting results.

Tips and Tricks

Reflections. As with patterns, try searching for reflections - in water, in windows, in puddles, in glasses. Again, you can get some really interesting and different results.

Tips and Tricks

Framing. Framing a subject can help draw attention to that subject, but also add some interest, depth of field, or color to a photo.

Tips and Tricks

Well done. You've now completed this lesson.

In this lesson, we took a look at **Tips and Tricks.**