

# How to Take a Good Selfie: 7 Model-Worthy Tips to Know

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Never get the results you want when you take a selfie? These are the tips you need to know | [iStock.com/oneinchpunch](https://iStock.com/oneinchpunch)

Everybody takes a selfie at least occasionally, though some of us are more surreptitious than others. We all worry about how to look better in photos. And each time we take a selfie, we wonder which selfie poses are the most flattering and the least pretentious. We also know there are situations when it's never a good idea to take and post a selfie. But otherwise, we're mostly concerned with figuring out how to take a good selfie.

Fortunately, it's not as difficult as you think. Mere mortals like us might never look as effortlessly cool as models and movie stars when they take a photo. We probably can't pull off the same selfie poses that look great when you have impeccable lighting (and the looks to match). But you can pretty easily learn how to take a good selfie — especially if you're willing to have fun in the process. Read on to check out our best selfie-taking tips. We promise they'll make a difference, whether you're snapping a photo to send to your closest friend or to post for all your Instagram followers to see.

## 1. Choose the perfect selfie poses



Choosing the perfect selfie poses ups your odds of taking a great photo, whether you're on your own or posing with friends | [iStock.com/oneinchpunch](https://iStock.com/oneinchpunch)

Selfie poses are a pretty important part of taking the right photo. You can't just point your smartphone camera at your face and capture a great photo without thinking things through. We could give you a list of selfie poses to try, but the most promising strategy is to experiment with angles and vantage points to find the poses that are the most flattering for you. Try turning the right side of your face toward your camera, and then try the left. Check out what happens if you hold your phone slightly higher or lower than usual.

Once you know which is your good side or which angles you prefer, you can figure out what to do with your arms, hands, and posture. You can't go wrong by taking some inspiration from supermodels. They often know exactly what looks good and do the same thing each time they take a selfie. You might want to refer to Leeann Duggan's "[supermodel guide to selfie poses](#)" for Refinery29. It's the perfect illustration that models not only know how to take a good selfie but also are unafraid to do what works for them each time they hit the shutter button. Or check out the tips that Tess Holliday [shared with BuzzFeed staffers](#) or the [advice Marie Claire learned from Kim Kardashian](#).

## 2. Try to keep things looking natural

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One of the most important lessons on how to take a good selfie is to try to keep things looking natural | [iStock.com/monkeybusinessimages](https://iStock.com/monkeybusinessimages)

No matter your favorite selfie poses, you'll want to keep things looking natural. We've all seen people twisting themselves into unflattering, unnatural poses to take a selfie. (And to keep the camera far away from their faces. More on that on the next page.) But if you're straining to sustain the pose or hold your phone, you're doing something wrong. And it doesn't necessarily mean you should run out and buy a selfie stick.

The beauty of experimenting with selfie poses is you'll probably find one or two you like best. As you use those poses repeatedly, they'll feel more familiar and natural. It's a great idea to keep things simple and to pick a pose that's comfortable and flattering, whether you're sitting, standing, or even relaxing on the couch. If you feel a little silly taking a selfie, that's a sign you're taking yourself too seriously. Focusing too much on looking your best can get in the way of taking a fun selfie.

### **3. Make sure your face isn't too close to the camera**

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An important rule to remember each time you take a selfie is to keep the camera at a flattering distance from your face | [iStock.com/shironosov](https://www.iStock.com/shironosov)

You can't take a flattering selfie with your face too close to the camera — at least not if you don't want your nose to look too big or eyebrows to look weird. But few of us know why. Daniel Baker of the University of York writes that people incorrectly assume that selfies exaggerate specific facial features thanks to lens distortion, but it's simple geometry that's to blame. The parts of your face that are closer to the camera look larger than the features on the rest of your face. That explains why it's your nose, not your ears, that might look too big.

“The crazy thing about this is that it happens in real life, too, we just don't often notice it,” Baker explains. “If you look at yourself in the mirror from very close up (or get close to someone you're intimate with), you get exactly the same distortions (closing one eye helps with this, as most people can't maintain vergence that close).” The upshot? Just don't get too close to the camera the next time you take a selfie.

#### **4. Look for bright lighting**

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You don't have to know everything about how to take a good selfie to realize that bright lighting is important | [iStock.com/SanneBerg](https://iStock.com/SanneBerg)

When you're first figuring out how to take a good selfie, lighting doesn't seem like the most important thing. But trust us: Great lighting is just as important as good selfie poses. All photographers, no matter their subject matter, know natural light is almost always best. You should look for the kind of bright light you'll get by standing right next to a window. Another useful tip? Look straight toward the light source to avoid weird or unflattering shadows.

When you look for the right lighting to take a selfie, you also should pay attention to the background. The right background will add interest without being too busy. Usually, the best background will either be super simple or very interesting. When you scout out the right selfie-taking spot, choose a location with bright, flattering light. And look for a background that offers visual interest and also communicates why you chose to take a selfie.

## **5. Troubleshoot selfies that don't look the way you want**

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If a selfie doesn't turn out the way you wanted, learn from it. Troubleshooting will help you the next time you take a selfie | [iStock.com/zhudifeng](https://iStock.com/zhudifeng)

If all your selfies end up looking weird there's probably a reason, and it doesn't have anything to do with the shape of your nose or the way you smile. Nolan Feeney reports for The Atlantic that if all of your earnest selfies look “accidentally ugly,” you should blame your brain instead of your face. Our faces are asymmetrical, so if you're using a camera app that doesn't reverse your selfies to make your face look like it does in the mirror, then it'll probably look a little strange to you. You either can get used to the way you look when the image isn't reversed or just flip the image horizontally.

Another reason you don't always get the results you want when you take a selfie: You might not know what you look like. Hear us out. The image you have in your mind often isn't a perfect match for your real face. In fact, most of us think we're more attractive than we actually are. Sounds like a bummer, but it's pretty normal. And once you learn how to take a good selfie, you probably won't even notice that effect anymore.

## **6. Make your photos look great — just don't add too many filters**

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If your lighting is great and your selfie poses are on point, don't ruin the photo by layering on too many filters | [iStock.com/monkeybusinessimages](https://iStock.com/monkeybusinessimages)

Whether you're looking in the iOS App Store or Google Play Store, there's a practically endless array of apps that can make your Instagram photos look great. You can download apps that offer great color filters, or pick one that helps you create great black-and-white photos. Alternately, you can pick a versatile editing app, or choose one that's designed to make your selfies look perfect.

Whatever app you choose, we have an important piece of advice: Don't add too many filters. Even if you're just comparing the filters built in to Instagram, you have plenty of options. (We suggest InStyle's [guide to the best filters](#) for every beauty complaint for anyone feeling overwhelmed.) There's nothing wrong with making some light edits to your photo or adding a filter. Just don't pile on every filter that's available. You still want the photo to look at least a little bit natural.

## 7. Keep taking selfies

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The best way to learn how to take a good selfie is to keep taking selfies | iStock.com

Even if you learn everything there is to know about how to take a good selfie, you might not get a perfect photo every time. That's OK. There's a pretty easy solution: Just take more selfies. People who routinely photograph themselves end up being more comfortable with the way they look in photos. They also gradually learn to make their photos turn out the way they want.

As you get more used to seeing photos you've taken of yourself, you'll likely find that they look more natural over time. You'll get more comfortable with the way you look in those photos, and you'll probably find it's easier to have fun when you're taking a photo. If that's not the point of taking a selfie, then we don't know what is. Have fun, and be yourself. That's always a better look than doing something cliched just to feel like you're part of a trend.