



Tips for Taking Great Animal Photos

Thank you so much for taking them time to get some great photographs of your ARF animal! If you're a foster volunteer, these pictures could go a long way in helping your pet find a forever home or could be integral in raising lifesaving funds for ARF! If you're just looking for some nice Instagram photos of your pet, that's great, too! Every dog and cat has a gorgeous side and we want to help you find it.

What Camera to Use

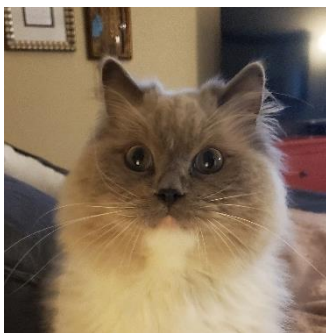
If you consider yourself an experienced photographer and have a nice DSLR camera, you probably already know what you're doing. But for the layperson, there is good news! Your phone's camera works perfectly for animal photography – especially if you use some of these helpful tips.

Lighting, Lighting, Lighting

Lighting is one of the most important (and most overlooked) aspects of animal photography. Just because a room looks bright enough for your eyes, doesn't mean it's bright enough for your camera. While many cameras and camera phones have a flash option available, pets may find this frightening, so it's recommended to turn it off.

Natural light is almost always going to be your best source of lighting, so taking pictures outdoors or near a window is usually the best option. Whether you're using natural light or taking pictures indoors, make sure the light source (the Sun, lightbulbs, etc.) is behind you, with the animal facing toward it. If the light is behind the dog or cat you're photographing, the picture will come out backlit. Try to strategically position yourself so your shadow isn't on the animal's face!

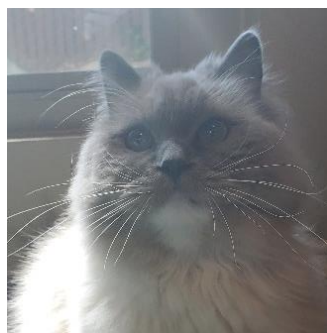
Here are some examples of the same ARF foster cat photographed in different lighting situations:



Standard indoor lighting



Indoor lighting, facing source



Natural lighting, backlit



Natural lighting, facing source

Animal Rescue Foundation

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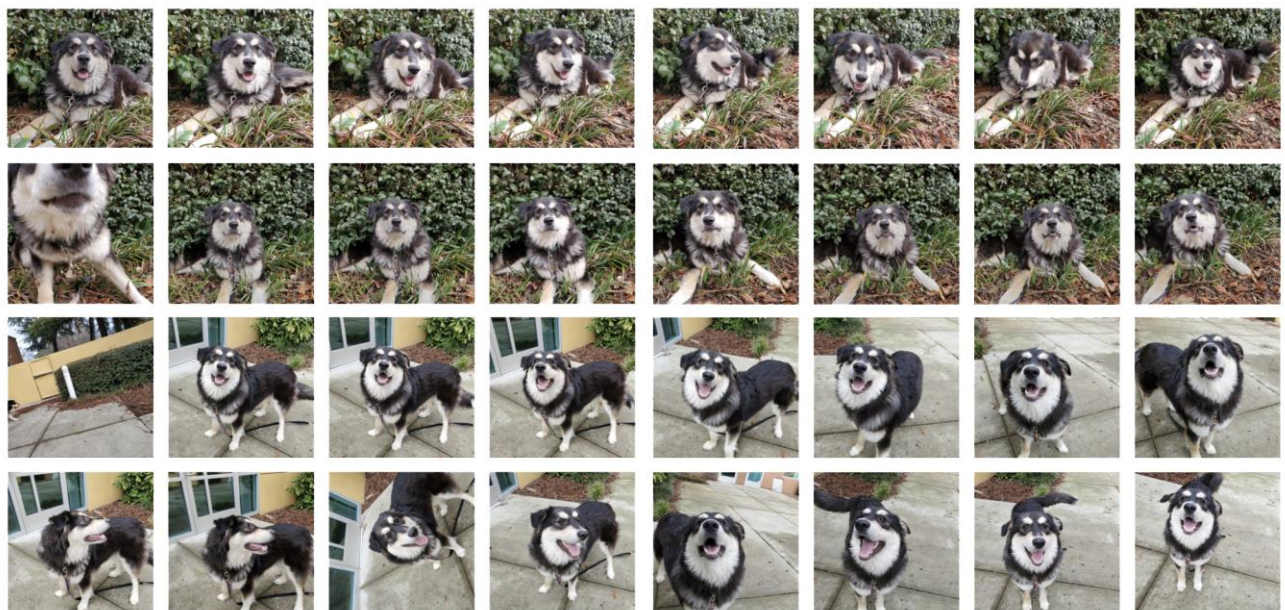
Getting Your Pet to Look at the Camera

For most animal photographs, you're going to want to have your pet looking directly at the camera. Eye contact is important and helps potential adopters connect with an animal before ever meeting them face to face. Depending on your mobility, you can hold the camera down on their level, have them look up at it, or lay flat on your belly and take yourself to their level!

But how do you convince an aloof or easy-distracted animal to look at a strange, weird box? By bribing them! If they're food-motivated, hold a tasty treat just on top of the camera (if you're dealing with a dog that already knows "sit," this should be easy!). If they prefer toys, hold that prized stuffy or wiggle a wand toy over it instead. Maybe they just want you! In which case, wave a hand or put your face right above the camera and you could capture the perfect shot. You likely know the dog or cat better than anyone, so use your best judgement on what would catch their eye. Sound effects can help, too. Do your best R2-D2 impression, spout a little gibberish baby talk, or try squeezing a squeaky toy – your dog or cat won't be able to resist giving you a cute look.

There's No Such Thing as Too Many Photos

One nice thing about modern camera phones is that you can take many photos in a very short period of time. Just tap away at that circular button and look at the results later! When photographing shelter animals for social media, ARF's marketing team oftentimes walks away with *hundreds* of pictures from a short photoshoot, all in hopes of capturing the perfect shot. Once you select and send your favorites, it should be easy to delete the batch from your phone!



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Misc. Tips

- Overcast afternoons can be the BEST for photography – plenty of light, but no shadows to cover your pet's face.
- Looking for that open-mouth dog smile? Try to get them panting! A quick run around the yard or strenuous game of tug should give you what you're looking for.
- Don't be shy about getting a close up. If your pet is okay with it, keeping a camera close to their face can bring out some magical colors in their eyes *and* also help crop out distracting elements in the background.
- Dogs look very cute with their ears up and alert. Incorporating those aforementioned sound effects can help keep ears perky.
- If you're dealing with a shy animal, let them set the pace. Sometimes they want to sniff the camera to get used to it. Don't force a photo session on a pet who isn't interested!
- Dark animals can be extra tricky. Again, it's all about the lighting. Try a few areas until you find the one that works best for their coloring. Against what you'd expect, sometimes a shady area can do them wonders (just try not to have any bright spots in the background to throw off the white balance).

Taking photos of a dog or a cat shouldn't be a chore. After a little photo session, you should have a smile on your face and the animal should be equally happy! Plus, the animal may notice your positive energy get extra-cute for you.

Don't forget, these are very basic tips. You might find a completely different method results in better photographs of your pet and that's perfectly okay!