



3 Non-Technical Tips To Improve Your Landscape Photography

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1. Follow a Shooting Regime





Follow a shooting regime

With landscape photography, you normally have a bit of time to play with. In other words, you're not photographing a wedding where you only have once chance to capture the bride walking down the aisle.

That said, events can sometimes unfold pretty quickly and you need to be able to respond. A rainbow might be fading, the sun might be just about to set, or maybe there's a bank of cloud threatening to ruin the light.

In order to be responsive and act quickly, I always follow the same shooting regime. Imagine two pilots in the cockpit of an aircraft preparing for take-off under time pressure. They work through a checklist in the same order every time, so that nothing gets missed out. The same concept applies here.

Here's another analogy. Remember learning to drive? To start with, you were probably like me; focused on the pedals and the gearbox. After a lot of practice, I was able to shift my attention to reading the road ahead.

Once your camera settings and your shooting regime are 'second nature' to you, you can 100% focus your attention on the landscape around you.

Nail the tech.

Establish a shooting regime.

Become the landscape photographer you aspire to be.





What's my shooting regime? Here goes...

- 🌿 Plan the trip.
- 🌿 Arrive with time to spare.
- 🌿 Roughly compose the image in my viewfinder.
- 🌿 Set up the tripod.
- 🌿 Attach my spirit level and refine the composition.
- 🌿 Select my camera settings (everything from metering to white balance and exposure).
- 🌿 Focus the lens.
- 🌿 Wait for the right moment.
- 🌿 Capture the image, review it and check the histogram.
- 🌿 Consider how I could improve the image before packing up and moving on.

Feeling overwhelmed?

I can help you with all of this, and more, on one of my landscape photography workshops.

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2. Use a Tripod as a Compositional Aid





Use a Tripod as a Compositional Aid

Even if you only have a small amount of landscape photography experience under your belt, you'll probably know that you need to use a tripod to hold your camera steady in certain circumstances.

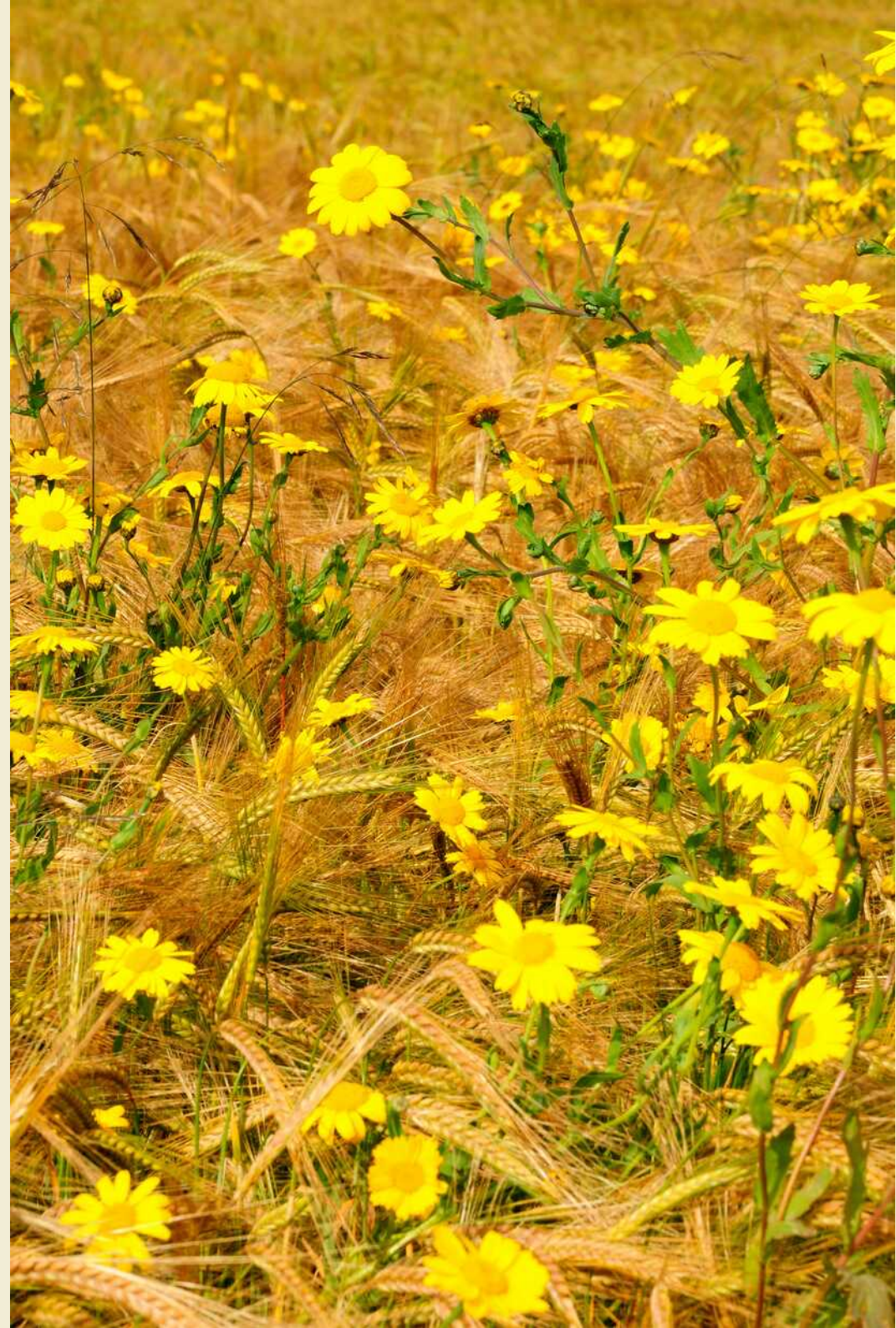
For instance, you might want to use a slow shutter speed to capture the motion in a waterfall, or maybe the light levels are really low when you're shooting at dawn or dusk.

There's another brilliant reason to invest in a tripod.

Your tripod is a fantastic compositional tool. I use mine 99% of the time in landscape photography, even if I'm shooting at fast shutter speeds, as was the case with these lovely corn marigolds on a breezy day. In theory, I could have shot this image handheld but, in reality, the tripod enabled me to refine my composition, with numerous tiny adjustments, until I was completely satisfied with the positions of the flowers.

In landscape photography, the chances are you're not going to get the image right first time, and a bit of tweaking will be needed. If you're shooting handheld then tilting the camera downwards to review the image on the LCD screen, you're not going to be able to make these slight adjustments when you lift it back up to eye level.

Also, maybe you need to shoot in a really awkward position. Crouching down for extended periods is definitely getting harder the older I get! With my tripod set up, I can leave the camera in position while I stand up and stretch my back out, then return to it with a fresh pair of eyes.



While we're on the subject of tripods, I want to sound a note of caution...

When you arrive at your chosen location, don't be too quick to set up your tripod.

While shooting a spectacular sunset on Eigg a number of years ago, I saw another photographer set up his tripod without once looking through his camera's viewfinder beforehand. If he was happy with his work, then great, but I can only imagine that he could have improved on his image if he'd put some more thought into his composition.

Make sure you roughly compose your image using your camera's viewfinder or LCD screen *before* you set up your tripod. Once you've found exactly the right spot (which won't necessarily be at eye level), then mount your camera on the tripod and go about refining your composition.

I find that once my tripod is set up, my camera is mounted and I've attached a filter or two, it takes a significant mental effort to move everything, even just by a few metres.



3. Plan, plan, plan!





Plan, plan, plan!

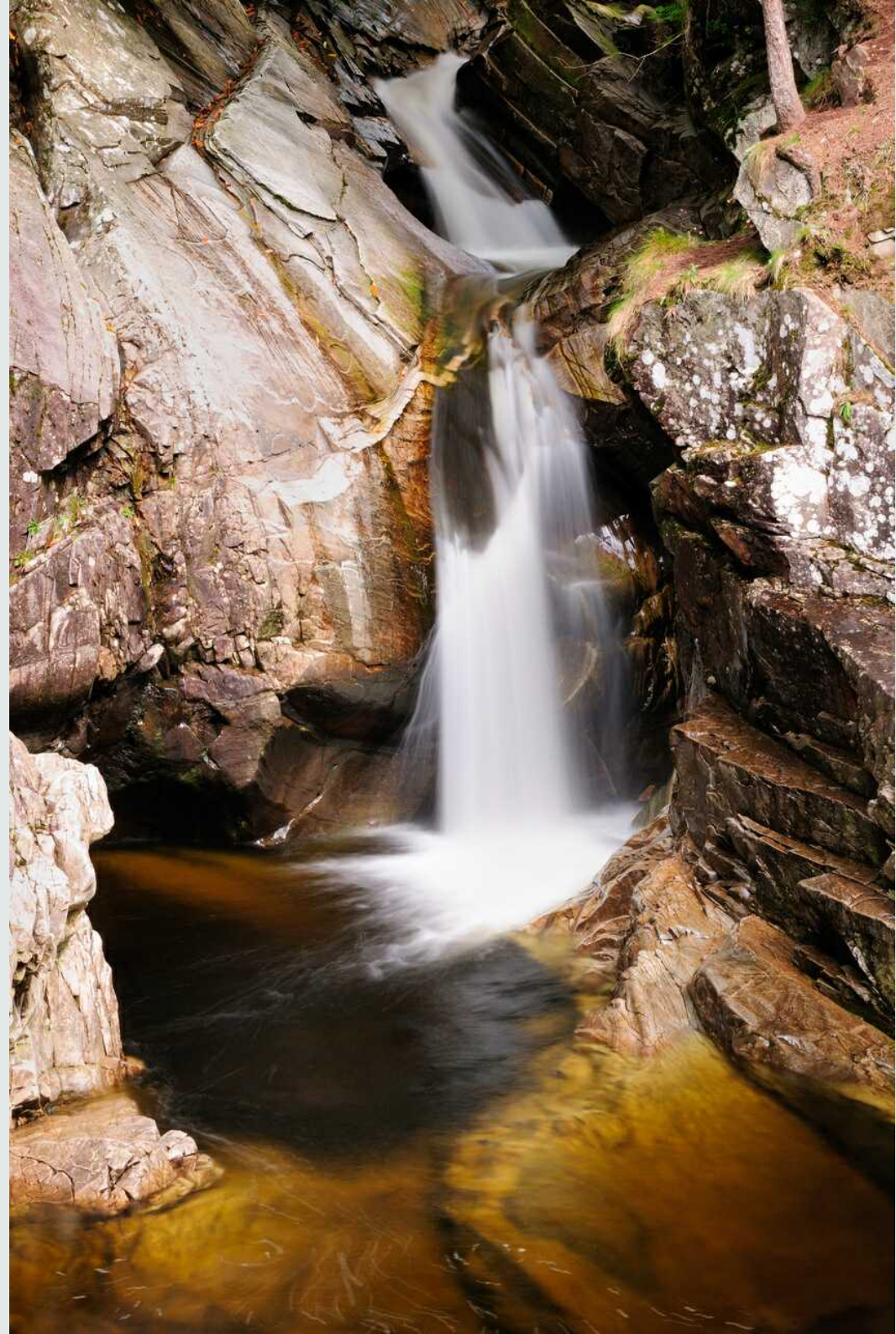
In my experience, the best photographs tend not to happen by accident. I always have an image in my mind's eye every time I head out with my camera and I adjust my expectations in response to the weather conditions and the quality of the light on the day.

Forward planning can reap huge rewards. I moved to the Black Isle in 2013 and spent my first few years here immersing myself in the landscape before embarking on growing my photography portfolio.

I marked the area's minor roads and paths on a 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map with a highlighter pen; jumped over gates and walked through harvested barley fields with binoculars around my neck; cycled along country roads on quiet Sunday afternoons; and scoped out hidden locations off the tourist trail.

Far from wasting time that could have been spent doing photography, I got to know my adopted home at an intimate level, establishing a connection that I hope to convey in my images as my portfolio grows.

Once you've established what you want to photograph, consider the direction of the sun in relation to your subject, particularly around sunrise and sunset, as this varies dramatically throughout the Scottish seasons. Check the weather forecast and tide times and don't forget to think about logistics, such as where you can safely leave your car. Don't forget to set the alarm clock super early if heading out for dawn. There's nothing more frustrating than knowing that an extra five minutes in bed cost you a cracking photograph!



Of course, you can plan everything in great detail but end up disappointed on the day. Maybe the weather forecasters got it wrong, or the farmer ploughed that field last night. It happens.

Don't just give up and go home!

Perhaps record some details around you, such as the pebbles and plants at your feet; original compositions that most photographers will overlook on their way to shoot 'the big picture'.

Capturing details is a great way to hone your skills and occupy your time when the light is too flat for meaningful landscape photography.

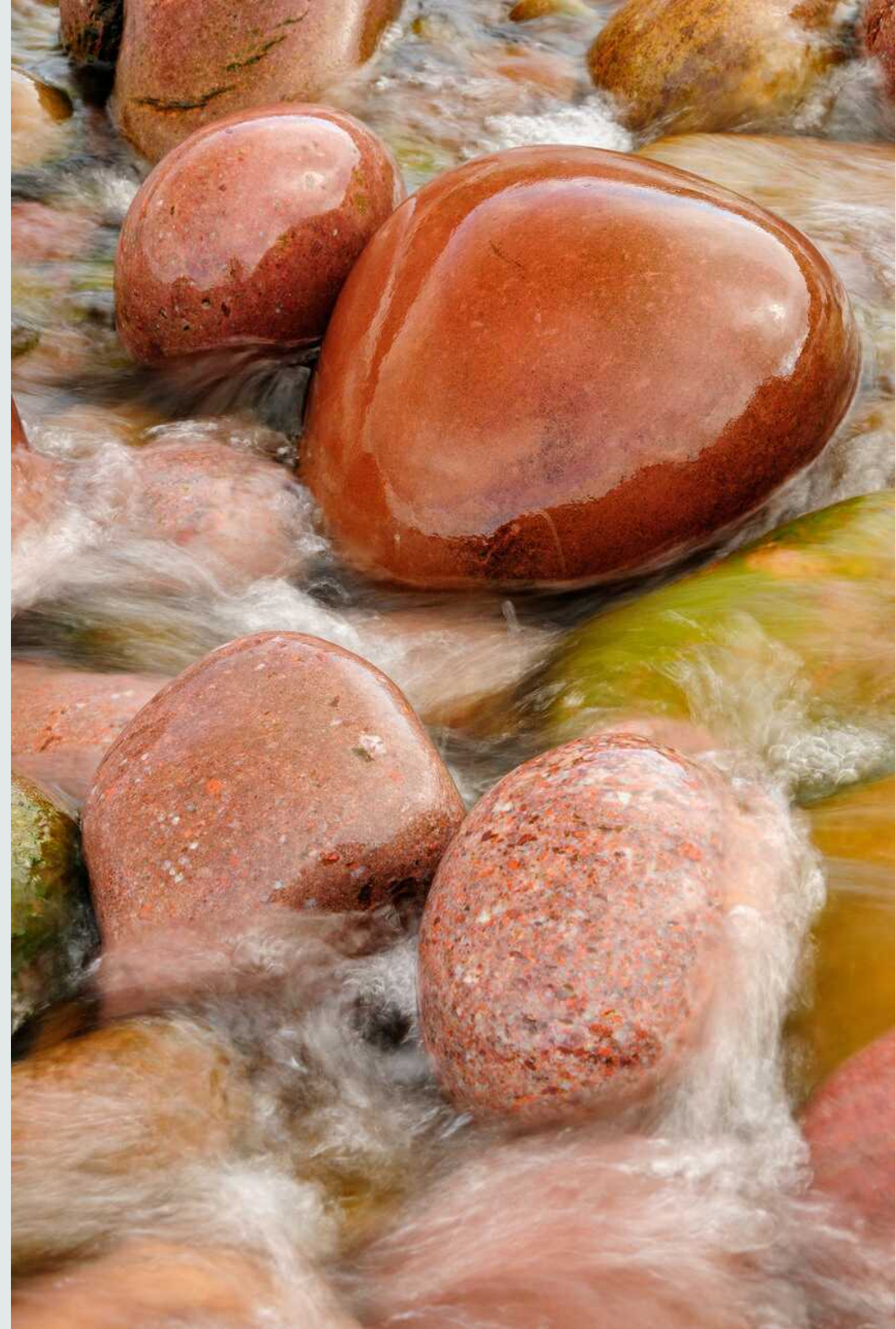
While nothing will ever be as fulfilling as capturing a beautiful or dramatic landscape during the golden hours around sunrise and sunset, I've found that shooting the individual elements that make up the landscape can also be hugely rewarding.

Not only will you capture unique images, you might find (like me), that photographing details within the landscape will inspire you to learn more about wildlife, trees, plants, fungi, shells and seaweed; knowledge that might not have been acquired if you'd had your sights set on the horizon.

Feeling inspired?

Why not join me on a landscape photography workshop?

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Hello! I'm Karen Thorburn.

If you're searching for landscape photography workshops in the Scottish Highlands, then look no further!

I'd love it if you'd join me in Scotland's great outdoors to develop your landscape photography skills.

You'll learn from one-to-one tuition in the field and feedback sessions.

All of this will be delivered in a positive way, with the intention of inspiring you! Unlike many professional photographers, I don't have a huge ego, and I won't dent your confidence!



Testimonial...

"I spent a delightful day in Karen's company. She took me through numerous aspects of landscape photography, pitching her input to the level of my (limited) expertise but building on her teaching as the day progressed.

I attended the workshop on my own but Karen is very easy to get along with and the day passed quickly and very comfortably.

It's also clear that she can 'up her game' with those who are much more experienced than me.

Karen has followed this up with her own eBook summarising much of the advice she gave, together with links to useful podcasts.

All in all, this was a very worthwhile and enjoyable day.

I thoroughly recommend it!"

GEOFF HULKS



How do I book?

If you've decided to go ahead and book your landscape photography workshop... brilliant! I'm really looking forward to getting to know you and helping you develop your photography skills!

All you need to do is arrange a date with me, complete an online booking form and transfer the payment.

BOOK NOW!

Not quite ready to book yet? No problem. Let me tell you more about my landscape photography workshops and answer some frequently asked questions.

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