

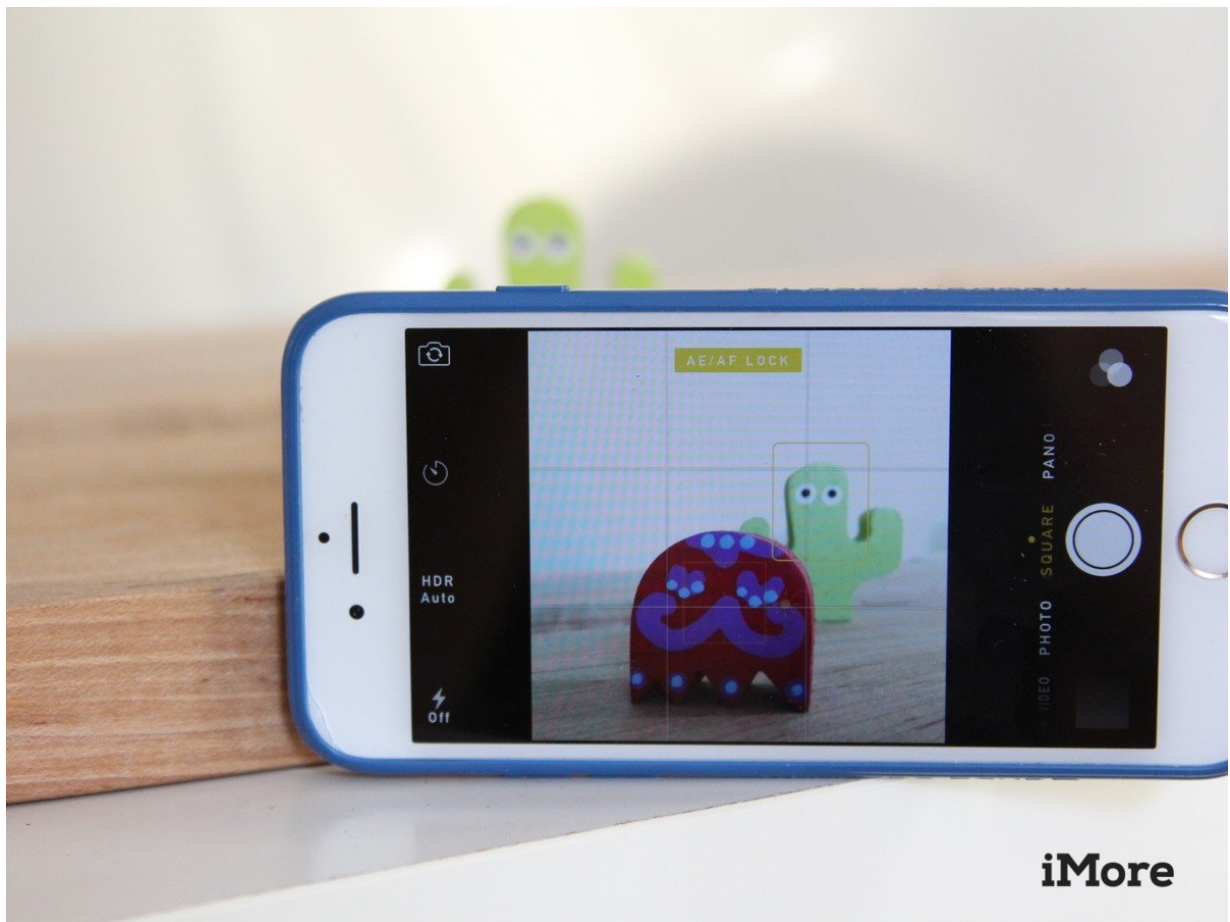
THROUGH THE LENS

Here's how to take fantastic macro shots on your iPhone

Macro photography allows you to see the world from a different perspective.

SERENITY CALDWELL

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Whether you're shooting giant cereal pieces a la "Honey I Shrunk the Kids" or the petals of a flower, you can create fantastic scenes from otherwise ordinary objects. iPhone macro

photography is especially exciting: Because your phone is so small, you can get close to objects you might otherwise have a harder time shooting with a DSLR. Here are some of my favorite tips for shooting macro photography on the iPhone!

Find your light

As the old theater saying goes: "Find your light!" Without decent lighting, your macro subject will come out too dark and blurry; with too much direct lighting, the subject will end up blown out you'll lose all that great detail.



Instead, shoot for the perfect balance of light and dark: indirect sunlight. The picture above (an Apollo 11 medal given to TRW employees who worked on the launch) is taken next to a sun-drenched window, but out of the way of direct sunbeams.

Don't get too close

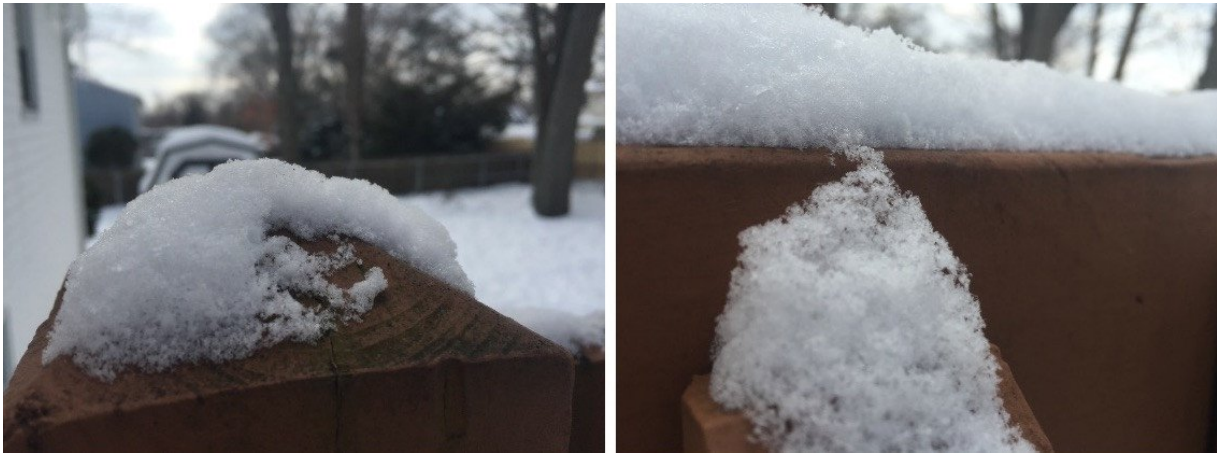
Your iPhone has a fixed lens focal length of 29mm, which means that you can only get so close to an object before it blurs. Ever held your finger up to your eye but couldn't focus on it because it was too close to your face? Same principle. You don't want to push your phone so close to the object that it starts to blur.



If it's your first time shooting macro photography, it might take a bit of trial and error to find the perfect distance for a close-but-not-blurry photograph; I've had the best success with keeping my iPhone around 2 inches or more away from the subject.

Avoid messy backgrounds

When you shoot macro, you're intentionally focusing on a foreground object close to you, which means objects in the background are going to be somewhat to heavily blurred. As such, busy backgrounds with multiple colors may still pull the focus away from the object you're taking a photo of, even though they're blurred.

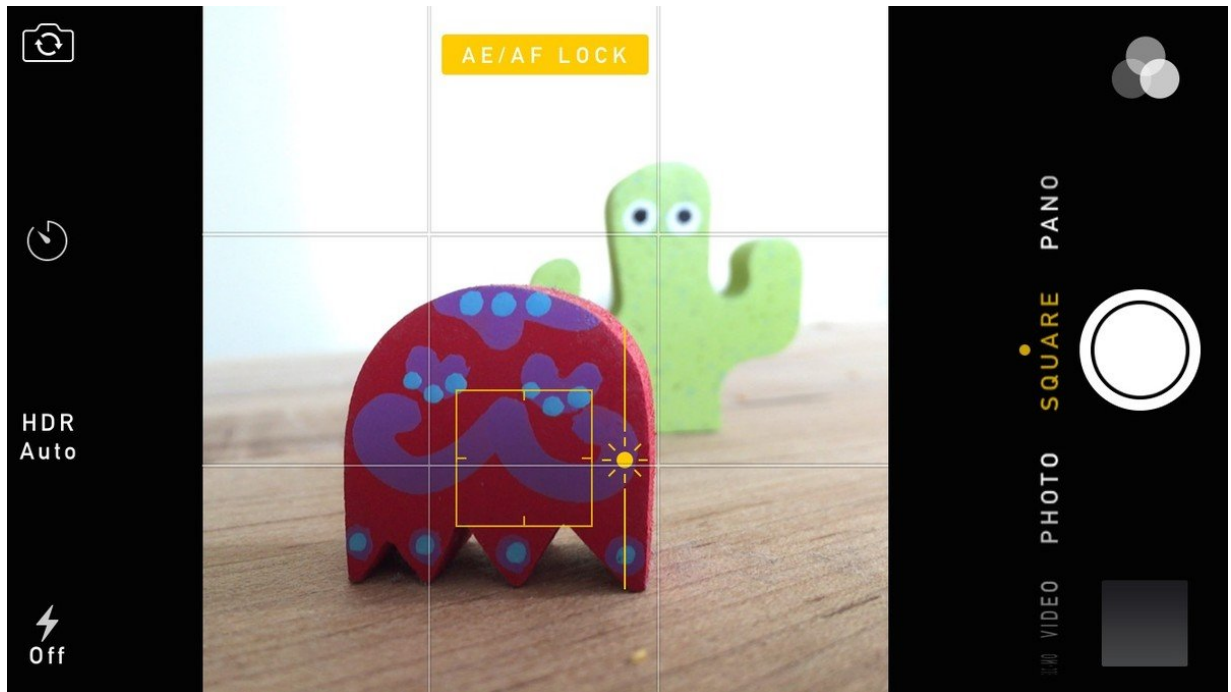


In the photo above, while I liked the general look of the blurred snow scene to the right, the tool shed and multiple trees were pulling focus from my actual goal: shooting individual snowflakes. The second picture I took, on the left, keeps the snow as the main focus and allowed me to highlight their crystalline structure.

Use AE/AF lock for a clear shot

When you get close to that 2-inch mark — especially if you have other items in the background — the iPhone will

occasionally try to snap its focus back from your macro image to whatever else is in frame.



To prevent that, tap and hold on your focus point until you see "AE/AF Lock" appear; until you tap the screen again, your iPhone will stay locked to your macro subject's focus point.

Invest in an Olloclip

On its own, the iPhone takes some pretty nice macro photos, but you can amplify those images by adding an Olloclip or similar lens system. The \$70 system lets you shoot at 7x, 14x, and 21x, and even includes a focus hood to make sure your images are

framed at the right distance and come out perfectly clear.



The images above, taken last year with an Olloclip 3-in-1 macro lens, show a container of sea salt at 7x, 14x, and 21x respectively. The lens kit is a fantastic little system if you plan to do macro photography often on your iPhone.