

## **Thanks to Nat for this easy to follow *Instagram for beginners***

Instagram is a mobile app with over 300 million monthly users globally. What started as a mobile phone photo sharing site connecting people in towns and cities has turned into a global brand marketing machine. But within all the noise of celebrity and large brands, are thousands of dedicated photography communities linked through a shared passion. And on Instagram the hashtag and commenting on content are key.

Searching the popular tags or looking for keywords that interest you mean that by posting an image to a dedicated hashtag, your work will reach like-minded people. And here's the thing, the people that see your photos will often recommend other tags that you should tag to. And through commenting, communities and friendships are born.

So for instance if I've taken a black and white street photo of a woman on a pushbike in London I might post it with the simply hashtag #london. But I could also tag it with other hashtags such as **#bicycle #bnw**. The more you use Instagram, the more you will become aware of particular communities - whether they love bicycles (**#ihavethisthingwithbicycles**), people walking passed walls (**#peoplewalkingpassedwalls**) London centric feeds (**#igerslondon #london\_only #shutup\_london #lovelondon #bnw\_london #visitlondonofficial #streetshot\_london etc**). And many of these communities run themes, competitions and even host meet-ups, so that like-minded people from a specific town or area can meet in person. These people are known as Instagramers or Igers and there are communities all over the world. There are Igers who love architecture, nature, food, sports, fashion, art, books - you name it, there will be a community on Instagram for it. Some apps are so popular that communities are dedicated to them as well - like the app hipstamatic and VSCOcam.

Mobile phone photography used to rule Instagram, but with wifi capability on many SLR cameras, many photographers on Instagram are diversifying and switching to higher quality SLR images, mixing up editing through mobile apps. Although - there are many mobile phone purists still active on Instagram (**#iphoneonly**).

## **Using Instagram**

When you log in, your feed will automatically open to your HOME screen (the button with the house). The thing to remember is that the five symbols at the bottom of the screen are your master control panel.

Now if you click on the house button - this is the feed that shows the images being posted by the people you are FOLLOWING. You scroll this feed by swiping up. If like any images you can double tap it - and a love heart will show - this indicates that you like the image and the person who posted it will get a notification saying that you liked the image. If you are so impressed by the image that you want to comment, click the speech bubble symbol within the image and you

can comment to the person who posted it. There are no great character limits - but best to keep it short.

Like Twitter, Instagram users are identified by using a handle (@tpro\_ldn). You can follow who you like. Some profiles might be private. You can make a request to follow them if you choose to.

If you want to search for someone to follow, or search out hashtag, use the magnifying glass key next to the house button.

When you hit search - the “discover” page will show up. This basically is a screen showing images that Instagram thinks you might like by working on algorithms of what you have liked and commented on.

If you want to post an image - use the square button the centre, select an image from your camera album, write a blurb, ensure it has a few relevant hashtags and post. You can type the # key and relevant work and Instagram will often suggest feeds you might like to tag to. The app contains inbuilt filters, but many Igers will use apps outside of the native app to edit before posting using just the “normal” filter.

Also - when you post - the app allows you to also post to third-party platforms - including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr. (Be aware if posting to Twitter that you need to consider the 140 character limit if the post is to be of benefit for that platform).

If you want to see the engagement of an image you have posted - click on the heart button in the speech bubble. This shows all your interactions. Again like twitter, if you want to respond to someone on Instagram, you need to @ the person you want to talk to so they get the notification.

If you want to see your own gallery - hit the people person on the master control panel and it will show a grid of the images You can click on an individual image or you can scroll through individual images by clicking on the button with the three lines.

**ENDS**