

## The Lazy Rule of Thirds

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### The Tremendously Lazy

#### Rule of Thirds

“Rules are made to be broken.” -My favorite paradox.

I can count on one hand the number of rules I will obey without question, based solely on fear of catastrophic consequences: I turn off personal electronics during landing and take-off, I keep my hands inside the ride at all times, I don't rock vending machines, I resist the urge to climb over zoo fences and I no longer lunge for a police officer's holstered gun on April Fools Day. Pretty much everything else is up for debate.

That brings me to the Rule of Thirds. After a tremendous amount of research (I read a book) I learned that the rule of thirds may actually be just a lazy man's sham. That's right, I said it... a lazy sham! On the surface the rule of thirds doesn't really make a ton of sense, I mean why would a composition broken up into three equal parts be innately more appealing than any other random spattering in a composition? Well what if I told you that nature actually does instinctively, and inexplicably seem to have a naturally occurring preference towards a specific ratio, a peculiar number, a divine ratio if you will?

To find the real story behind the “rule of thirds” we need to go back in time, not to the renaissance, not to the Greeks, and not even to Adam nor Eve... even further. We need to go to the creation of the universe, why is that? Well I'll tell you why. There is a number that determines how a sunflower's seeds grow, it determines the path a hawk takes when diving at it's prey, it is echoed in the breeding habits of rabbits and it even determines how the spirals in a spiral galaxy are laid out. It's all very simple in it's beauty and best of all, it's all true. If you want to wrap your head around it further then I highly recommend the book *The Golden Ratio* by Mario Livio (Check it out here [The Golden Ratio: The Story of PHI, the World's Most Astonishing Number](#)).

Interestingly enough this mathematical principle has been seen in artwork as early as 400 B.C., today we refer to this line by several names: the Golden Ratio, the Golden Mean, The Divine Proportion, but whatever you call it you should notice that it does not line up with the rule of thirds. Almost but not quite...

In other words, if you want to construct a composition where the main points fall on lines used by nature in absolutely mind-blowingly different ways then follow the Golden Mean. However, if you want to fold up the paper into thirds and have your composition line up with that then by all means, follow the rule of thirds.

Of course I'm not recommending that you get out your protractor and start measuring your images to make sure they follow these naturally occurring principles, but what I am recommending that you do is to start seeing the world in a way that Mother Nature tends to see the world, and that is in a proportion that is absolutely elegant in it's mathematical beauty. If you do then your images may start to be just a bit stronger in their appeal.

The following images are all happy accidents... meaning the alignment of this spiral (called a Fibonacci spiral) was not pre-planned, it just happens that major parts of the composition fall along major intersections or lines within the spiral. I suppose that's just one more thing my images and breeding patterns of rabbits have in common.