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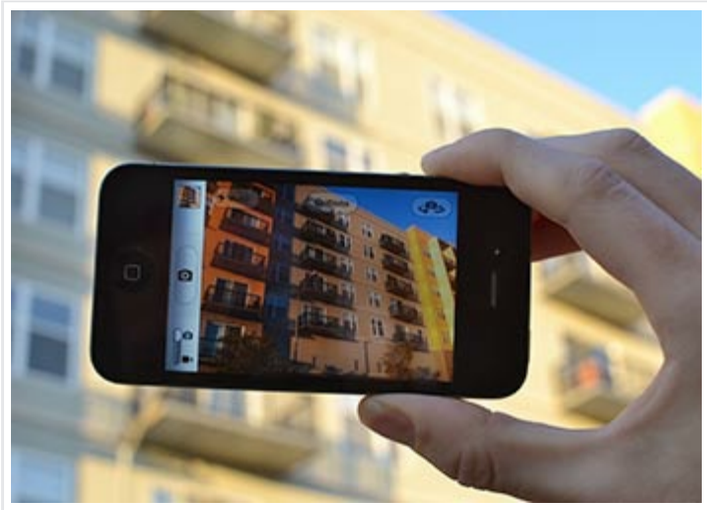
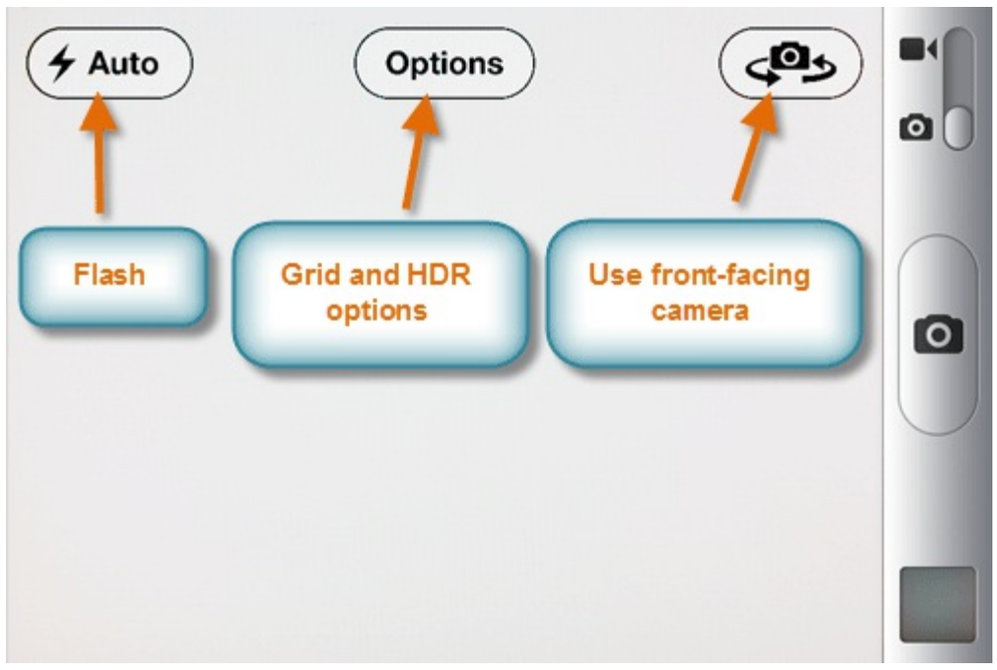
# Digital Photography
## Taking Photos with a Smartphone

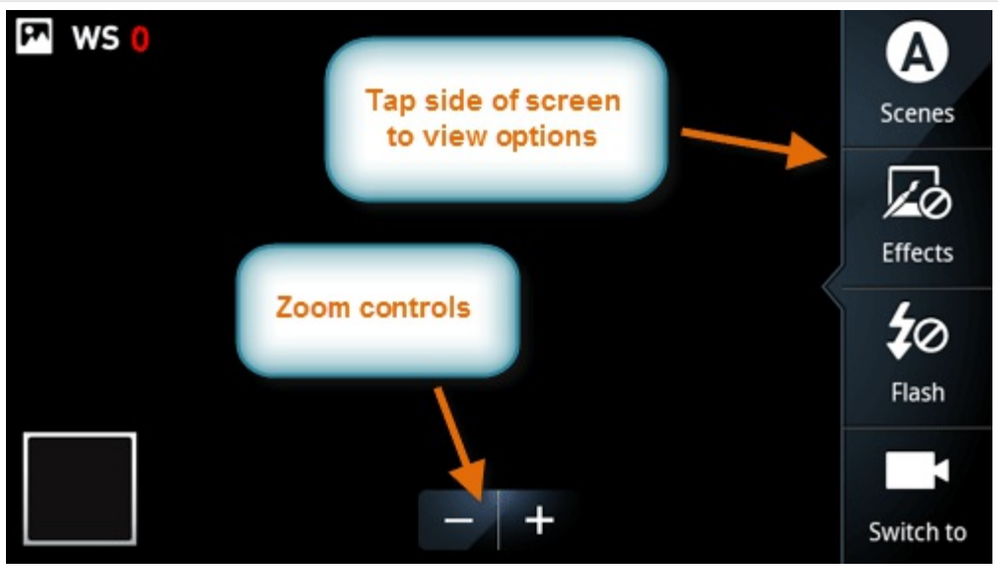
## Taking photos with a smartphone

A smartphone is probably the most convenient camera you can have. You'll always have it with you, it fits in your pocket, and it doesn't require any manual adjustments before you can take a photo. Even if you own a nicer camera, you'll probably still use your smartphone to capture unexpected photo moments. Therefore, it's a good idea to learn how your phone's camera works so you'll be ready when you want to take a photo.



As you can see in the photos below, each smartphone has different features and may put common features in different places.




### Focusing

Many phones have basic cameras that use a **focus-free system** (which means pretty much everything stays in focus all the time). However, more and more phones are starting to have **high-quality cameras** that require focusing.

As you learned in our lesson on **Getting to Know Your Camera**, most cameras use a **two-stage shutter button** to trigger the auto-focus. Some smartphones, such as the Motorola Droid, have a two-stage shutter button. To auto-focus the camera, you'll simply press the shutter button halfway down. Other phones, such as the iPhone, allow you to **touch a specific area of the screen** to focus the camera. When you do this, the iPhone will also adjust the exposure so the

focal point of your photo will always look good.

## Zooming

Many smartphones have a **digital zoom** you can use to capture small or distant objects. On the iPhone, you can bring up the zoom slider by using a pinch gesture, while on an Android phone you can tap the **plus (+)** and **minus (-)** buttons. It's important to keep in mind that this is a digital zoom, which is of a lower quality than an optical zoom.

## Scene modes

Scene modes are a great way to take better photos in specific situations. For example, the **Landscape**, **Sports**, **Night Portrait**, and **Closeup/Macro** modes are each tailored to different situations. Some smartphones allow you to select scene modes. For example, many Android phones allow you to tap the right side of the screen to access scene modes (as well as other options).

## Other features

Some smartphones have additional features you can use to take better photos. Here are a few features your phone may have:

- **Grid:** The iPhone can display a rule of thirds grid on the screen to help you compose your photo. You can access this by tapping the **Options** button at the top of the screen.
- **HDR (High Dynamic Range):** This mode helps you capture more detail in the shadows and highlights of your photos. Generally, it will only work when your subject isn't moving.
- **Flash:** Many smartphones have a flash to help you take low-light photos.
- **Effects:** Some smartphones allow you to apply effects to your photos, which can include **black-and-white**, **tinted**, or **vintage** filters. On Android phones, you can tap the right side of the screen to access the effects.
- **Front-facing camera:** The iPhone has a second camera just above the screen. This makes it easier to take a photo of yourself, since you can see the screen while you're taking the photo.

Previous: Capturing Close-up Shots

Next: 10 Everyday Uses for Your Phone's Ca…

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