

# Shake it like a Polaroid picture

... *ACTUALLY, DON'T. READ ON FOR THIS INSTANT CAMERA SECRET AND MORE SO YOU CAN BE A POLAROID PRO IN NO TIME.*

BY MICHAELA SATTERFIELD

Polaroid cameras are making a comeback. In today's Instagram world, we're so busy trying to capture every moment to relive them later, we often forget to live them the first time. Our filtered and photoshopped images designed to rack up the likes can take us out of the present. These old-school cameras are here to bring us back. Instant cameras mean you get one shot. Sometimes, one shot is all it takes. Capture the moment and get right back to living in it. Get the picture?

## *The development of the Polaroid*

The lightbulb first went off in Edwin Land's brain when his three-year-old daughter asked why she had to wait to see the photo he had just taken. It was a valid question, so Land created the instant camera in order to bypass the time it took to develop photos. His invention of the polarizer, an optical filter first used in goggles for World War II pilots and now used in polarized sunglasses, made the technology possible. The Polaroid Land camera hit department store shelves in 1948, making \$5 million in sales the first year alone. The birth of the smartphone in the early 2000s threatened to make the instant camera obsolete. After the company struggled financially for years, Polaroids are back and better than ever. Their "cool retro" image and white-framed prints are icons modern technology could never replace.

## *In an instant*

How do instant cameras work? They copy the darkroom process. The bottom strip on the prints isn't just for labeling them. It's filled with chemicals needed to develop the photos. When you press the button to take a photo, two rollers in the camera squeeze the chemicals out and roll them onto the photo right before it prints out. Once the chemicals dry, you're good to go. *LL*





## Our top three Polaroid camera picks:



### 1. Polaroid OneStep 2 i-Type Instant Camera:

This analog instant camera has a super cool retro design and comes in several different colors. It's powered by a rechargeable battery and uses i-Type film or 600 film. When this camera came out in 1977, it was labeled "the world's simplest camera." \$89.99. [us.polaroid.com](http://us.polaroid.com)



### 2. Polaroid OneStep+ i-Type Instant Camera:

This camera is like the OneStep 2, only better. It uses the same type of film but can connect to an app on your phone via Bluetooth that unlocks photography settings like you would find on a digital camera. \$139.99. [us.polaroid.com](http://us.polaroid.com)



**3. Fujifilm instax mini 70:** These instant cameras produce smaller prints and use cheaper film simply called instax mini color film. They come in many different colors and feature a selfie mirror on the front to help frame selfies. \$69.97. [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



## Snapshot secrets

Instant cameras are designed to be easy to use but keep these **POLAROID PHOTOGRAPHY** tips in your back pocket. After all, you only get one shot.

### 1. You don't have to shake it.

We know this isn't easy to hear since the song "Hey Ya!" by OutKast probably got stuck in your head as soon as you read the title of this article. As it turns out, older Polaroid prints required shaking to dry the wet chemicals used to develop them. These days, the chemicals are trapped behind a clear plastic window on the film. Shaking has no effect, unless you get a little too excited and damage the photo.

**2. Once you insert the film, the first photo you take will be blank.** Don't worry, it's all part of the process. Get this out of the way right after you insert the film so you don't accidentally miss an award-winning shot.

**3. Once it's in, don't take the film out.** Taking out the film cartridge before you use it up will expose one photo and waste it. Trust us, we learned the hard way.

**4. Natural light is ideal.** Make sure the sun is behind you when you take the photo, or the subject will be dark. If you're inside, use the flash.

**5. Framing requires trial and error.** Take a few practice shots to get the hang of it so you're good to go when the perfect photo op comes up.

**6. Shield the print from light as it develops.** Ideally, you don't want light to hit the photo until all the chemicals are spread out.

**7. For a snappy Instagram photo, hold the Polaroid print in front of the thing you just took the photo of.** We're not sure why, but this seems to be the trendy thing to do.