



A STARTER GUIDE TO USING INSTAGRAM FOR YOUR ART BUSINESS

SEOS ARTIST EDITION



THE BASICS

WHAT IS INSTAGRAM?



Instagram (www.instagram.com) is a free photo and video sharing app that is available on Apple iOS, Android and Windows Phone. People can upload photos or videos and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends. You can also view, comment and like posts shared by others on Instagram.



You can register for an Instagram account using your phone or on a computer. You'll need your email address to register for an account - you can also log in via Facebook, if you already have a Facebook account.



Although you can use a computer to register your account, browse other people's images, like, share and use Instagram's direct messaging system, you cannot upload photographs to your Instagram page via the Instagram website, when using a computer. If you do not want to use your phone to upload your photos, there are ways around this, which we will cover later on!

WHY USE INSTAGRAM?

As artists, we rely on our imagery - our work is all about the visual impact. This works particularly well on Instagram, as the platform is almost entirely image-based. Think of Instagram as a huge, online art gallery, where each profile is a curated exhibition.

- Instagram currently has around 1 billion users around the world.
- Of those, 25 million are businesses.
- Consumers trust brands more because they saw them on Instagram.

GETTING SET UP

For a full how to guide for Instagram, visit:
<https://help.instagram.com>



CHOOSING YOUR USERNAME

A username (or handle) is how you're identified on Instagram, and is always preceded immediately by the @ symbol. It will appear on your profile and above every post you make. You can tag someone in your post by typing @ and then their username. For example, *'I've just created this artwork for @seopenstudios!'*

Pick a username that is relevant to your business. If possible, keep it consistent with your website and your other social media, for example, if your website is www.reallygreatartist.com, choose a username such as @reallygreatartist.



COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

To update your Instagram profile information, such as your profile photo, username, name, website and bio, head to your profile page. Once you're on your page, click the **'Edit Profile'** button,

Make sure to upload an icon photo as soon as possible. To get the best results, use a square image (it will be shown as a circle on your profile, so try to make sure the bulk of your image is contained within the circle). Choose an image that is recognisable as your work, and keep it consistent with the imagery on your website or other social media platforms - the more recognisable your icon image is, the easier it will be for visitors find you. Ideal dimensions for images on Instagram can be found later in this guide.



COMPLETE YOUR BIO

Your 'bio' is a short blurb about who you are and what you do. It will display at the top of your profile and will be a visitor's first introduction to who you are and the work you do. You can tag others (*@username*) in your bio, and use hashtags (*#keyword*) in your bio too.

ADD YOUR WEBSITE LINK

When editing your profile, Instagram allows you to add **one website address**. You cannot post 'live' links in your Instagram posts, so make sure you take advantage of this opportunity to post a link to your website.



If you have more than one online presence, i.e., a website, a Facebook page, a blog, an ETSY shop etc, and you want to direct your visitors to different places, you could use a website called Linktree (<https://linktr.ee/>) to put all your links in one place - this one link can then be added to your Instagram bio. If in doubt, it's best to link to your main website, if you have one.

MAKE YOUR FIRST POST



You're ready to go!

To add your first photo, you can use your phone's camera directly, or you can upload a photograph that is already in your phone's library. Instagram offers a selection of filters, or manual 'adjustment' settings, which you can use to enhance your photograph. Be careful not to over edit your photographs - as artists, it's important to show a real representation of our work so potential buyers know what to expect. **Note: Instagram is designed to show your photo in a square format - your work will look it's best if you post square images.**

To upload a photo from your phone's library:

1. Tap the plus sign at the bottom of your screen.
2. Tap Library (iOS) or Gallery (Android) at the bottom of the screen.
3. Select the photo you'd like to share.

To take a new photo:

1. Tap the plus sign at the bottom of your screen.
2. Tap 'Photo' at the bottom of the screen then take a photograph as you normally would using your phone.

Once you've taken or uploaded a photo, you can add effects or filters, a caption and your location (if you wish) before posting. You can also post a video in the same way. You can upload portrait or landscape images, but they will show as square in the grid on your profile page.

RECOMMENDED DIMENSIONS CHECKLIST:

Icon:
180 x 180
pixels

Square Image
(Recommended):
h: 1080 x w: 1080
pixels

Portrait
Image:
h: 1080 x w:
1350 pixels

Landscape
Image:
h: 566 x w:
1080 pixels

Useful Link: www.mainstreethost.com/blog/social-media-image-size-cheat-sheet/

SHOULD I HAVE A BUSINESS PROFILE?

When you sign up to Instagram, you will automatically sign up as a personal profile. You have the option of converting your personal profile to a 'business' account, or 'creator' account for free, which will give you access to features that can help you grow your business. With a business account, you'll be able to access Instagram Insights. These tools can help you understand who is engaging with your business on Instagram.

To switch your profile to a business account:

1. Go to your profile and tap the three horizontal lines in the upper right corner.
2. Tap 'Settings'.
3. Tap 'Account'.
4. Tap the '[Switch to Professional Account](#)' link at the bottom.
5. Tap 'Business' or 'Creator' and follow the guided steps.



If you'd like, you can follow the steps to connect your business account to a Facebook Page associated with your business. This step is optional, and will make it easier to use all of the features available for businesses across the Facebook family of apps. At this time, only one Facebook Page can be connected to your business account. Finally, add details, like your business category and contact information, and then tap 'Done'.

What's the difference between a 'business account' and a 'creator account'?

The differences between the two options are not significant, but the creator profile is designed for an individual user, whether it be an actor, athlete, or artist, while the business profile is designed for accounts that represent larger companies that are selling products or services. The 'creator account' also allows you to have an additional, separate inbox tabs for 'Primary' and 'General' direct messages.

FIND INSTAGRAM USERS TO FOLLOW

Your Instagram feed (access by tapping the icon that looks like a house: ) will show posts made by the people you follow - you can search for people and hashtags by tapping the magnifying glass at the bottom of your screen. When you find someone you'd like to 'follow', hit the follow button next to their username, or on their profile. You'll now see their posts appear on your feed. People who follow your profile are known as your 'followers' and will see your posts in their feeds.

TOP TIP

Engage, engage, engage - the more you put into engaging on social media, the more you'll get out. Try liking and/or commenting on 10 other posts for every new post that you make.





Here are a few SEOS Instagramers to follow to get you started:

@seopenstudios (www.instagram.com/seopenstudios) - The official South East Open Studios Instagram account

SEOS Area Coordinators:

Victoria Wainwright - WestMalling, Meopham & Gravesend and ACO Officer: @viksilverythings (www.instagram.com/viksilverythings)

Polly Hosp - Sevenoaks, Edenbridge, Westerham, Bromley: @pollyhosp_works (www.instagram.com/pollyhosp_works)

Claudia Wiegand - Tunbridge Wells: @claudiawiegandglass (www.instagram.com/claudiawiegandglass)

Sarah de Mattos - Tonbridge, Hadlow: @sarahdemattosart (www.instagram.com/sarahdemattosart)

Janet Aldis - Rochester, Sittingbourne, Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay: @janetaldis (www.instagram.com/janetaldis)

Felicity Flutter - Cranbrook: @flicflutter (www.instagram.com/flicflutter)

Rowena McWilliams - Tenterden & Headcorn: @smallhythestudio (www.instagram.com/smallhythestudio)

Gabrielle Argent - Hythe, Folkestone, Rye, Hastings & HaywoodsHeath: @gabyargent (www.instagram.com/gabyargent)

Carole Robson - Maidstone: @carolerobson.art (www.instagram.com/carolerobson.art)

Alison Olorunsola - Ashford: @alisonolorunsola (www.instagram.com/alisonolorunsola)

You'll find that a majority of your favourite artists, galleries and places are also on Instagram - use the search feature to find them!

ENGAGEMENT - LIKING, COMMENTING, SHARING AND TAGGING

Tagging - You can 'tag' other Instagram users in your posts and stories, and you can be 'tagged' by other users in their posts and stories.

- You can tag someone by typing an '@' followed by their Instagram username (e.g. @seopenstudios). The tagged person will get a notification to let them know.
- Be careful not to over tag someone - twice monthly for any one person/organisation is enough, unless it is someone with whom you are regularly collaborating, or promoting.
- Be strategic about your tagging - if you are not sure if someone would like to be tagged in your post, it's best to ask first.

Liking - You can 'like' other posts.

- Double tap on the post, or tap the heart below the image to 'like' a post.
- The poster will receive a notification to say you 'liked' their work.
- As well as showing support and engaging with other users, it's a great way to get yourself noticed too!

Sharing - You can share other posts.

- Tap on the arrow / paper plane icon below the post to see your different sharing options.
- If you share the post to your stories, the original poster will get a notification to let them know.
- Don't make too much of a habit of showing other people's work on your page and don't share more than 1 post for every 4 posts of your own work.

Commenting - You can comment on other people's posts.

- Click the speech bubble below the post to comment - try to keep your comments genuine and say something meaningful about the content.
- The poster will receive a notification to say you 'liked' their work and be able to respond to your comment.

WHY USE HASHTAGS?

Hashtags are paramount on Instagram - they will be responsible for how most people will find your work!

A hashtag comprises two parts: the hash symbol - **#** - and a relevant **keyword** or **phrase**. The keywords or phrases must not have any spaces or punctuation, for example, 'South East Open Studios' would become:

#SouthEastOpenStudios

When your post is published, the hashtag would become 'clickable' and when clicked, all other tweets that include the same hashtag will appear. Instagram also offers the option for users to follow a hashtag, in the same way that they would follow an account. If you follow a hashtag, some of the posts made including the followed hashtag will appear on your feed.

Using hashtags encourages engagement as it makes your post much easier to find by people who are interested in what you're posting.

Here are a few examples of art hashtags you could try - make sure the hashtags you use are relevant to your work - i.e. if you're a watercolour painter, try **#WatercolourArtist**.

Make a note of what works for you and where possible use existing / frequently used hash tags - look at what other people in your sector/area are using and tap into those (this is a good exercise to do early).



#ArtInSussex
#InstaArt
#SEOSArtist #ArtGallery
#ArtExhibition #ArtInKent
#ArtistsonInstagram
#Sketchbook #WatercolourArtist
#SouthEastOpenStudios
#JewelleryDesign #Printmaker
#ArtInSurrey #SEOS2020
#ArtNews #TextileDesigner
#NewArtwork
#ArtLover

TOP TIP

Try and avoid using highly popular generic tags, such as **#Art** - your tweet will most likely be lost in the flood of tweets also tagged with **#Art!**

SEOS HASHTAGS

#SEOSArtist #SEOSArt
#SouthEastOpenStudios
#SEOpenStudios #SEOS2020
#SouthEastArt
#SouthEastOpenStudios2020

TIPS FOR USING HASHTAGS

- You cannot add spaces or punctuation in a hashtag, or it will not work properly.
- You can use **up to 30 hashtags** per post - note that you do not HAVE to use this many. If you add more than 30, Instagram will post your photo, but automatically delete the caption. *Keep your hashtags broad but relevant to your artwork.*
- Type a #keyword in the Instagram search to discover content and accounts based on your interests.
- Tag your posts with **#SEOSArtist** so that the official SEOS page can find, like and share them!

GENERATING CONTENT FOR YOUR INSTAGRAM FEED

Instagram posts are primarily about the image, however the caption can be up to **2200 characters long**. Characters include letters, numbers, punctuation, spaces and emojis. You can put hashtags and tags in your captions, but any links you include will not be live (i.e. they will not be clickable and direct to the webpage).

Tips for creating Instagram content:

- If it fits your feed, share some 'behind the scenes', people respond to finished products better when they have seen how it is made.
- Share your finished works, try and get good quality photographs that are in focus, show your work clearly without reflections or distractions.
- Feature people who do buy work from you. If you don't want to put these in your feed, your stories or highlights would be a great place to put the features instead.
- Don't try to be everything to everyone. The people who love your work will find you, and remember that there will always be people who don't love it!
- Process videos - video content is eye-catching and will encourage people to stop scrolling and spend some time on your page - and what better way to show how you create your art!

TOP TIP

Think of your Instagram feed as a curated gallery - often the most successful Instagram profiles are consistent and have a clear 'brand'. Whether this is achieved through colour, content or style, having consistency in your feed is an advantage!

WHEN SHOULD I POST?

Sprout Social (link below) have carried out global research on the best times to post on Instagram, and summarise their findings as follows:

• **Best times to post on Instagram:**

Wednesday at 11 am and Friday, between 10 am and 11 am.

• **Best days:**

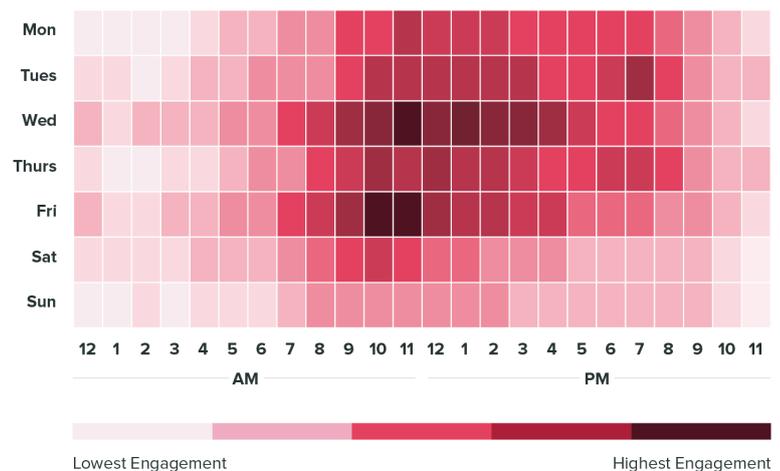
Wednesday is the best day to post on Instagram.

• **Most consistent engagement:**

Monday through Friday, between 9 am and 4 pm.

Instagram Global Engagement

sproutsocial



<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-social-media/#ig-times>

Note: Every Instagram page will have different levels of engagement, and the more you put into social media, the more you will get out. If you have a Business or Creator Instagram account, you can see the insights for each post you make - this will be the best way to determine your best performing posts and use this information to your advantage!

USING A COMPUTER TO UPLOAD TO INSTAGRAM:

Although Instagram is designed to be primarily used on your mobile phone, it is possible to make Instagram posts using a computer. There are some limitations, however.

Using Hootsuite, Buffer or another scheduling site:

- Some scheduling websites or apps will allow you to connect your Instagram profile. If you have a Business Instagram account, for example, Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com) will allow you to create and schedule your Instagram posts using a computer.
- You can add a single image to your pre-scheduled post from your computer's library. You will not be able to post multiple images and use the 'swipe' feature, like you can when posting using a mobile phone.
- You will not be able to use Instagram's filters and adjustment options when scheduling a post using a computer. Hootsuite does however offers its own basic editing options.
- You may find it easier to type captions and hashtags using a keyboard, rather than a mobile phone - this is a benefit of using a scheduling app over a mobile. You can also save a list of your regularly used hashtags for quick reference in your notes, so that you can copy and paste them as desired.

You can browse and engage with other posts on Instagram using your web browser, however to utilise Instagram's full capabilities and get the most out of it, it is recommended that you also use the mobile app on your phone.

TRANSFERRING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS FROM YOUR COMPUTER TO YOUR PHONE:

If you want to use the Instagram app on your mobile phone, but your pictures are on your computer you can use a service such as Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) to easily transfer and sync your photos across both your computer and mobile device.

A basic dropbox account is free and gives you 2GB of storage space. Your files will be privately stored, unless you choose to share them with anyone via an email link or invitation to join a folder.

If you add your images to your Dropbox folder using your computer, and also have the Dropbox app installed on your phone, your images will instantly appear in the Dropbox app on both devices. From here, you can save your photographs to your phone's library, and upload them to Instagram.

TOP TIP

Explore the hashtags you're using regularly and engage with others using the same hashtags. Try to diversify the hashtags you use - whilst you will be using some of the same hashtags for each post you make, ensure that you are using some different hashtags that are relevant to the post you are making.

Don't forget to tag us @seopenstudios and use the hashtag #SEOSArtist in your posts so that we can find you and share your work!

Instagram Help Center - everything you need to know to get started on Instagram: <https://help.instagram.com/>

Hashtagify - find Hashtags that other people are using that are similar to yours: <https://hashtagify.me/>

Canva - Free Tool for creating social media graphics (and has pre-sized templates!): <https://www.canva.com/>

Buffer (free or paid) - Social Media scheduling tool: <https://buffer.com/>

Hootsuite (free or paid) - Social Media scheduling tool: <https://hootsuite.com/en-gb/>

Linktree - Free landing page to consolidate all your links to one place: www.linktr.ee/

Dropbox - Free basic account to sync your files between devices: www.dropbox.com/

USEFUL LINKS