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## Basic Gear: Using a Tripod and Other Accessories

One promise of this course is that you don't need expensive gear – just your iPhone and maybe a basic accessory or two. The primary accessory we recommend is a tripod (and a phone holder to mount the iPhone, if the tripod doesn't come with one). Using a tripod greatly expands what you can do with photography, especially in low light and for certain techniques:

- **Why Tripod:** As mentioned earlier, a tripod stabilizes your phone, eliminating blur from shaky hands. This is crucial for night shots, long exposure effects, or even crisp landscape images in dim light. With a tripod, you can take sharp photos in situations where hand-holding would fail. For example, at twilight, the iPhone might need a 1/2 second exposure – hand-held that will likely be blurry, but on a tripod it will be sharp. A tripod also helps when composing shots carefully; you can set up the framing, then wait for the perfect moment (like a bird landing in frame or the sun emerging from clouds) without altering your composition.
- **Using the Tripod:** Mount your iPhone securely, and make sure the tripod is on stable ground. Use the iPhone self-timer or a remote to take the photo without touching the phone (to avoid introducing shake). If you're doing something like star photography or a group photo with yourself, the 10-second timer is useful. Many compact tripods or even GorillaPod-style flexible tripods are inexpensive and easy to carry – you can even wrap a flexible tripod around a tree branch or pole for a makeshift higher angle shot. Pro tip: If you don't have a tripod, you can stabilize the phone on a steady surface (rock, table, car hood) and use a folded paper or your wallet as a wedge to angle it – then use the timer. The idea is to eliminate hand movement.

Other Basic Accessories: While a tripod is the main one, a few other small accessories can help:

- **Remote Shutter:** A Bluetooth remote (often just a small fob with a button) can let you trigger the camera without touching it. This is handy for tripod work and also for being in the photo yourself. (Alternatively, headphones with volume buttons or an Apple Watch serve the same purpose).

- **Lens Attachments (Optional):** There are third-party clip-on or case-mounted lenses (wide, telephoto, macro) for iPhones. These can extend your capabilities – e.g., a telephoto attachment could help with wildlife, a macro lens can allow extreme close-ups. However, these are optional and not necessary to get great shots; they also add complexity. Since this course focuses on using minimal gear, we mention them only as a future exploration if you become very passionate about iPhone photography. You can achieve a lot without them but know they exist if you need a particular effect.
- **Portable Charger:** When doing a lot of photography (especially in cold weather or using features like Live Photos, video, or long outings), your battery can drain. A small portable power bank can be a lifesaver on a day of heavy shooting, ensuring your phone stays powered until you get all the shots you want. It's not about image quality, but it's a practical accessory for outdoor photography sessions.
- **Cleaning Kit:** A microfiber cloth or lens wipes (like the ones for glasses) are good to have in your bag to keep that lens sparkling. As we stressed, a clean lens is fundamental for sharp images.

In summary, a tripod is the one “basic” accessory that can most elevate your photography (especially for low-light and composed shots), and it aligns with our recommendation of only basic accessories. Everything else is optional. Many of the sample professional-looking iPhone shots you see online are achieved with just smart technique and sometimes a tripod – not a whole suite of gadgets.