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Etsy Product Photography Checklist

Take Better Photos, Get More Clicks,
and Increase Etsy Sales

Designed for:

- ✓ New Etsy sellers setting up their first listings
- ✓ Sellers getting views but low click-through rates
- ✓ Anyone who wants better photos — without expensive gear

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Free Resource · Print-Friendly · No Equipment Required

Photography Setup Checklist

Get your shooting environment right once — then repeat it every time.

■ Use Natural Light Whenever Possible

Shoot near a large window on an overcast day.
Soft, diffused light beats harsh sunlight.

■ Avoid Mixed Lighting

Turn off indoor lamps while shooting near a window. Mixing light sources creates odd color casts.

■ Create a Clean, Consistent Background

White poster board, foam core, or a plain fabric sweep costs under \$5 and works perfectly.

■ Set Up a Dedicated Shooting Spot

Find one spot with reliable light. Same location = consistent look across all your listings.

■ Shoot in Burst Mode (Phone OK)

Take 10+ shots per setup. Pick the sharpest one.
Phone cameras in 2024 are more than enough.

■ Turn Off Digital Zoom

Move closer instead of zooming. Digital zoom reduces sharpness significantly.

■ Use a Tripod or Prop Your Phone

Even slight hand movement blurs fine details. A \$10 tripod or a stack of books works fine.

■ Shoot at the Same Time Each Day

Light changes throughout the day. Consistent timing = consistent results.

■ Quick Win

- Hang a white bedsheet over a sunny window to diffuse harsh light instantly.
- This creates a soft, professional look with zero extra cost.
- Overcast days outdoors are free professional lighting — use them.

■ Common Mistake

- Shooting with the window behind the product — this silhouettes it.
- Using a busy background that competes with the product.
- Using the front-facing (selfie) camera — always use the rear camera.

Product Photo Checklist

Every listing needs these shots — together they answer every buyer question visually.

■ Hero Image

Clean product on white or neutral background. This is your thumbnail. Make it count.

■ Close-Up Detail Shot

Show texture, stitching, engraving, grain, or finish. Buyers want to feel quality through the screen.

■ Scale / Size Reference Shot

Place product next to a common object (hand, coin, ruler) or model. Eliminate size confusion.

■ Lifestyle / In-Use Shot

Show the product being used in a real setting. Helps buyers visualize owning it.

■ Packaging Shot

Show how it arrives — gift-ready packaging sells the full experience, not just the product.

■ Multiple Angles

Front, back, side, inside. Never make a buyer wonder what the other side looks like.

■ Real Example: Handmade Ceramic Mug

- **Photo 1 (Hero):** Mug centered on white background, well-lit, no shadows.
- **Photo 2 (Detail):** Tight shot of the glaze texture and hand-thrown rim.
- **Photo 3 (Scale):** Hand holding the mug to show true size.
- **Photo 4 (Lifestyle):** Mug on a wooden table with morning coffee steam — cozy setting.
- **Photo 5 (Packaging):** Mug wrapped in kraft paper inside a branded box.
- **Photo 6 (Angles):** Side profile showing the handle shape and bottom mark.

Thumbnail Optimization Checklist

Your first photo is your storefront — optimize it for the scroll.

■ First Image = Your Most Important Asset

Etsy shows only this image in search results. If it doesn't stop the scroll, nothing else matters.

■ Check Your Thumbnail on a Phone Screen

Shrink your image to 150×150px mentally. Can you still clearly see the product? If not, reframe it.

■ Fill the Frame With the Product

Product should take up 80–90% of the frame. Excessive white space shrinks your product visually.

■ Use High Contrast Against Background

Dark product? Use a light background. Light product? Use a slightly warm or textured neutral.

■ Avoid Text Overlays on Thumbnails

Small text becomes unreadable at thumbnail size. Let the image do the talking.

■ Test Clickability Against Competitor Listings

Search your product keyword. Does your thumbnail stand out? If not, adjust lighting or composition.

✗ Before (Weak Thumbnail)

✗ Product photographed far away — too small in frame

✗ Cluttered background with props competing for attention

✗ Shot indoors under yellow lighting — product looks dingy

✗ Horizontal crop — hard to view on mobile in portrait mode

✗ Multiple products shown — buyer unsure what they're buying

✓ After (Strong Thumbnail)

✓ Product fills 85% of frame — clearly visible at thumbnail size

✓ Clean white background — product is the only focal point

✓ Natural window light — accurate, bright, true-to-life color

✓ Square crop — works perfectly on all devices and in search

✓ Single hero product — buyer immediately knows what's for sale

Final Photography Audit

Review every listing against these items before publishing — or during your next shop refresh.

- Does your hero image clearly show the product at a glance?
- Does every listing have at least 5 photos?
- Is lighting consistent across all photos in the listing?
- Have you included a scale or size reference photo?
- Does your thumbnail work at small screen / mobile sizes?
- Are all images sharp — no blurring, no motion artifacts?
- Is the background clean and not distracting?
- Have you shown the product from all relevant angles?
- Does your packaging photo show the buyer what to expect on delivery?
- Have you compared your thumbnails to competitors in search results?

■ Top 10 Etsy Photo Mistakes

1. Using blurry or out-of-focus images as the main photo.
2. Dark or shadowy lighting that hides product color and detail.
3. Shooting with a cluttered or distracting background.
4. Hero image cropped too wide — product looks tiny in search.
5. Only one or two photos when buyers expect 5–10.
6. Inconsistent lighting across photos in the same listing.
7. Ignoring how photos look on mobile — most buyers shop on phones.
8. No size reference — buyers fear getting the wrong size and skip it.
9. Using digital zoom — always move closer instead.
10. Never revisiting old photos — improving them boosts existing listings.

■ Final Quick Reference

- Natural light or diffused window light used
- Clean, consistent background throughout
- Phone mounted (tripod or propped) for stability
- Hero image fills the frame — product is primary focus
- Close-up detail shot included
- Scale / size reference photo included
- Lifestyle or in-use shot included
- Packaging photo included
- Multiple angles covered
- Thumbnail tested at small / mobile size
- All images sharp and well-exposed
- Listing ready to publish