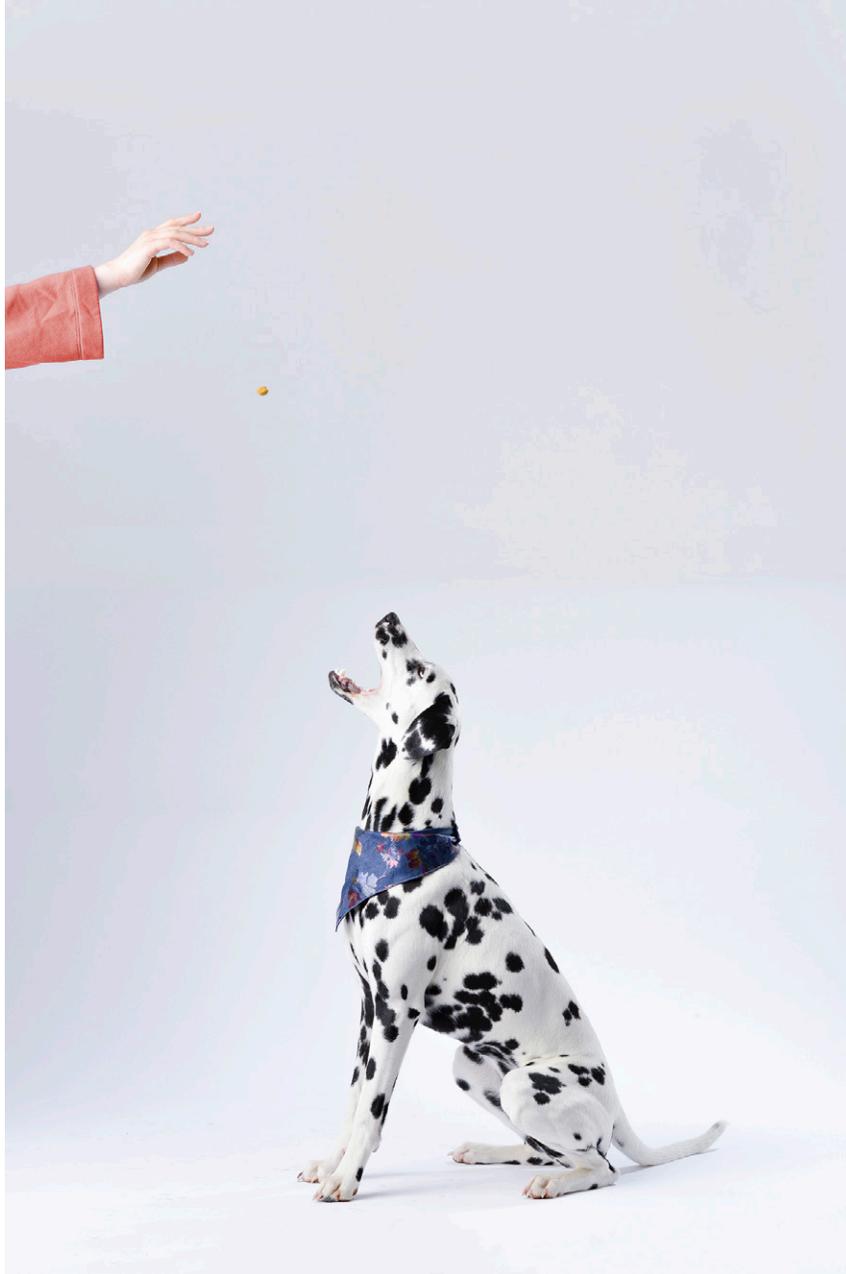


FEEDING & TREATS (THE GOLDEN HOUR OF PET PHOTOGRAPHY!)

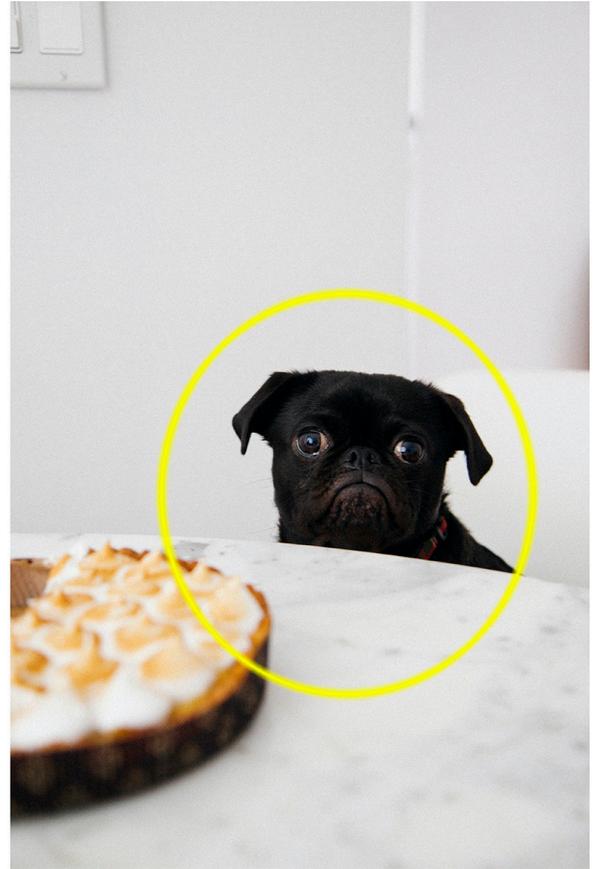
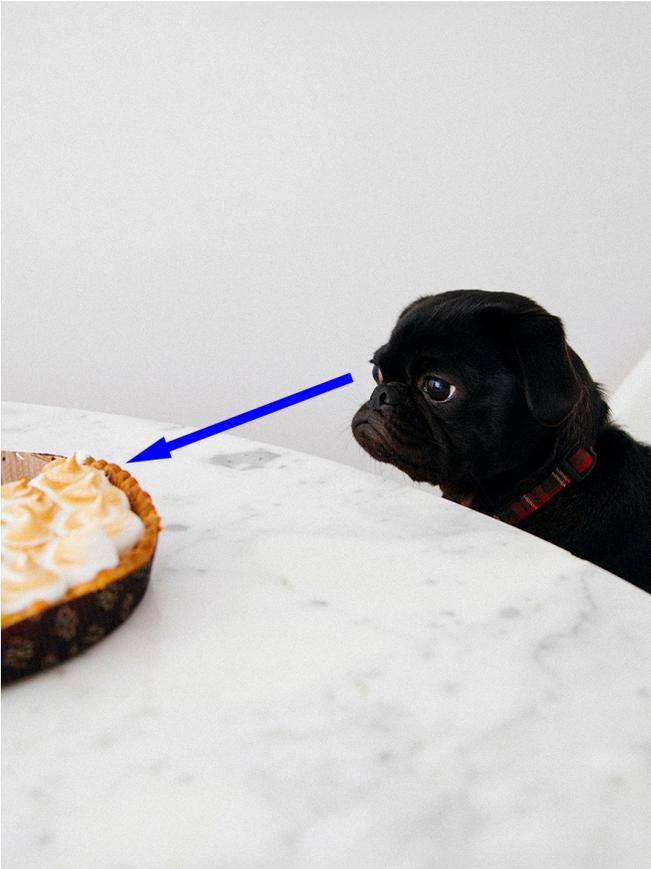
By Kent DuFault



Photograph by Kasuma

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/dalmatian-sitting-white-surface-933498/>

The short story is, if you want a pet to cooperate, feed them something they love. You can use this to leverage your situation. Food and treats are a staple in the professional pet photographer's toolbox.



Photographs by Charles Deluvio

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

These two photographs, independently, miss the mark.

The left version has the necessary interaction that tells us he is craving the pie. The right version provides the facial expression that brings home some emotional context of the situation.

I think the best option was somewhere between these two.

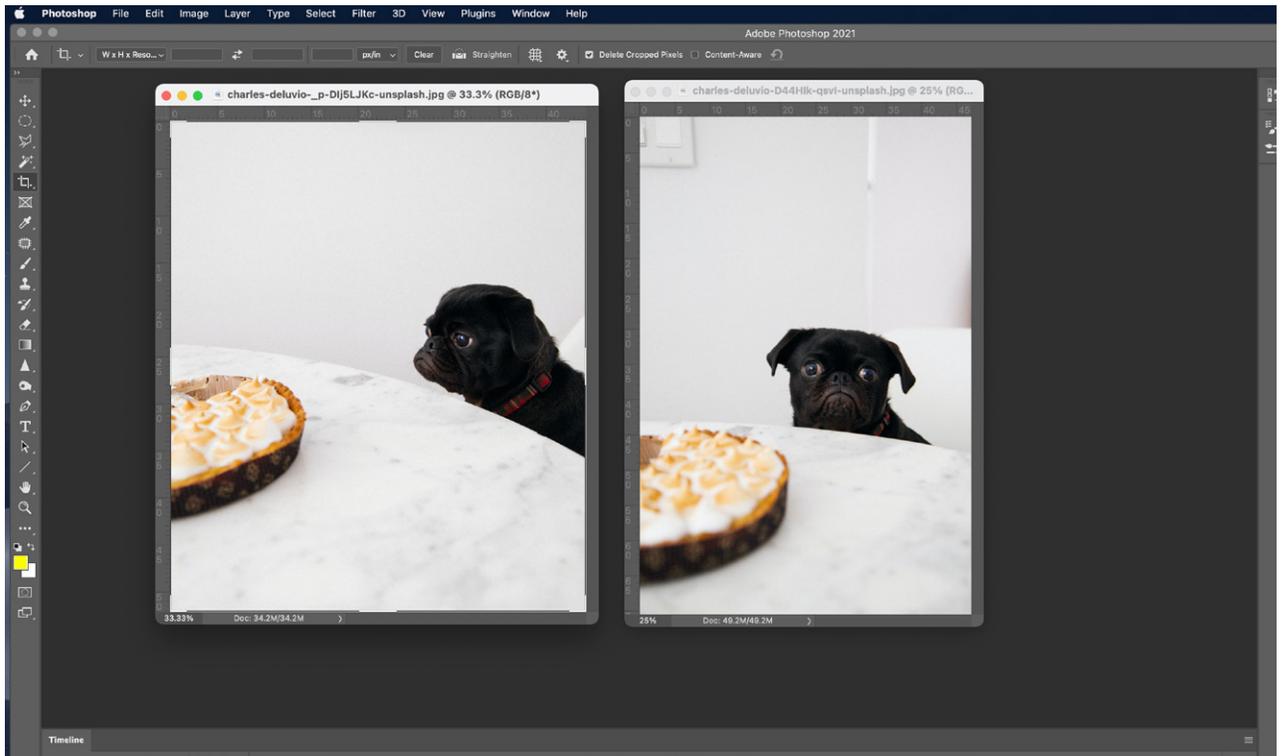
However, this is a golden opportunity for a diptych. Are you familiar with this art term? In a diptych, you present two images together to complete a story or composition. They can be combined in software or in the framing of the photos to place in the home. If you put three images together, it is called a triptych. I don't recommend combining more than three.

These two photos make a great diptych!



Assignment Part One:

Using food as your prop, shoot photos of a pet with the intention of combining them into a diptych or triptych. I prefer framing the pictures and putting them somewhere in my home. But in case you would like to try it electronically, let me show you how. You will need some type of layering software. I'm going to show you in Photoshop CC 2021 and a smartphone app called LiveCollage.

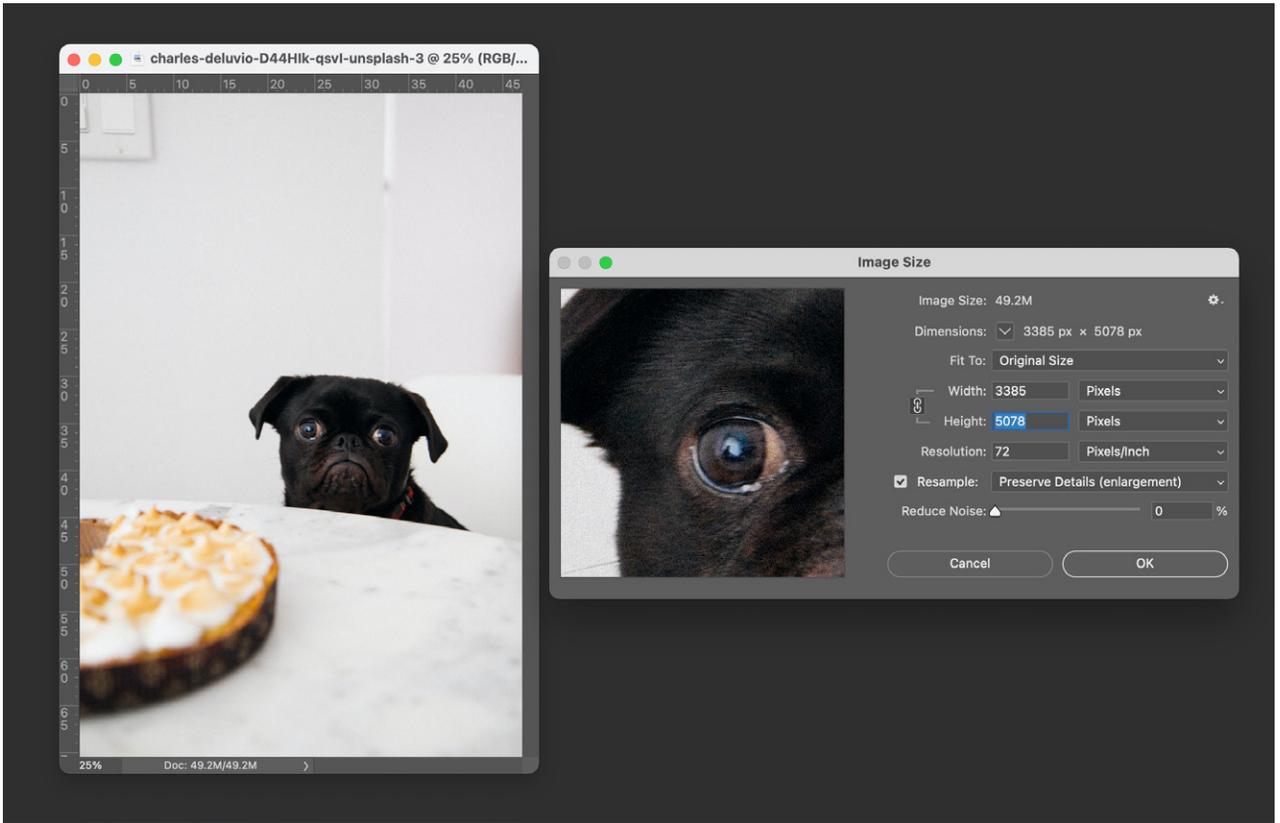


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-DIj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44Hik-qsvI>

Step One: Open your two or three frames in your layering program (in this case, Photoshop CC 2021).

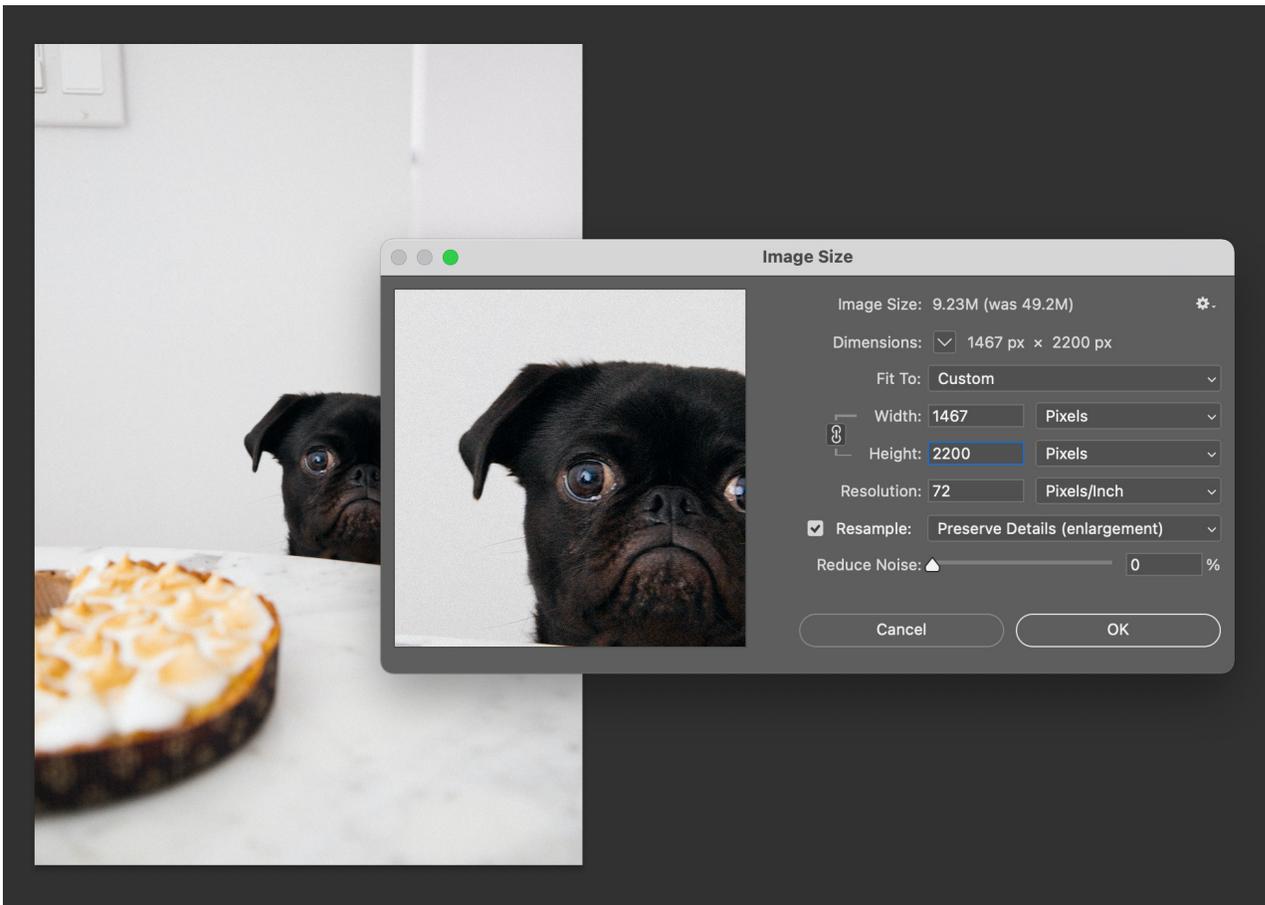


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44Hlk-qsvI>

Step Two: Determine your format. Will you be combining the frames horizontally or vertically? I'm going horizontally. I need to match the file size of the two pictures. I'm going to do that by resizing the vertical pixel count.

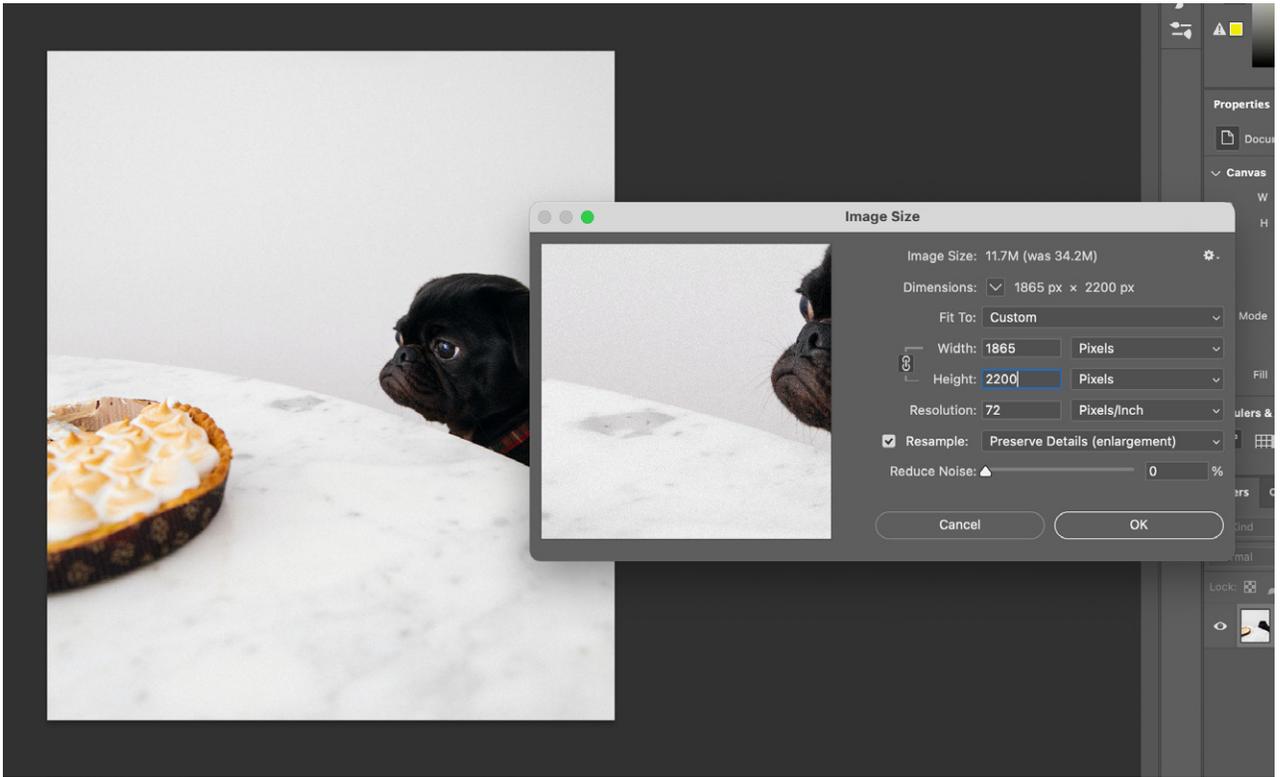


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44H1k-qsvI>

Step Three: I have set the vertical pixel count to 2200 pixels. The original file size was much larger than I needed. My image size went from 49.2M to 9.23M. Click OK.

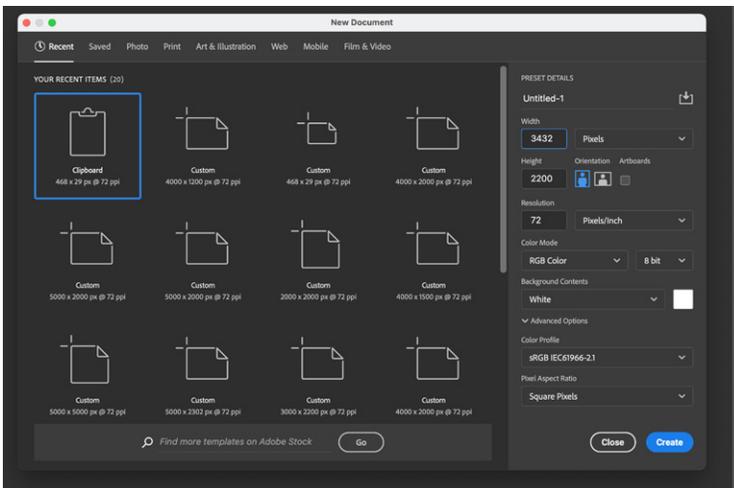


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

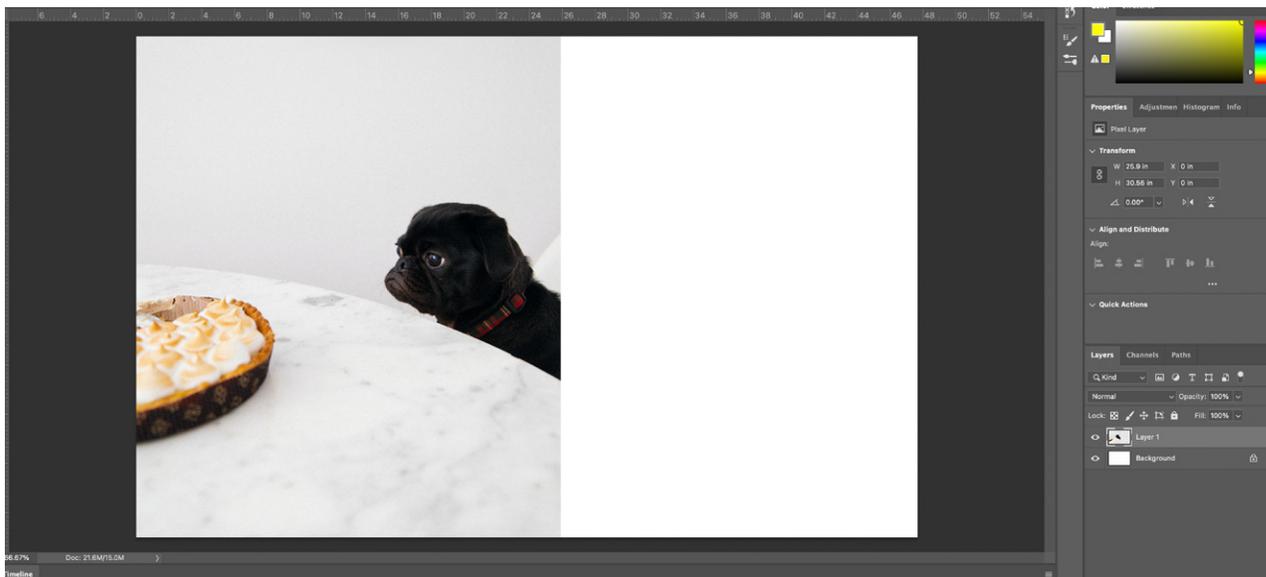
<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44Hlk-qsvI>

Step Four: Now, I must adjust the other image to match the vertical pixel count. Click OK.



Screenshot by Kent DuFault

Step Five: Now, I will create a New Document with a vertical pixel count that matches my two photographs (2200 pixels). I used a calculator to add the horizontal pixel count of both my diptych images; it came to 3332 pixels. I'm adding 100 extra pixels to that count because I want a little space between them. Press Create.

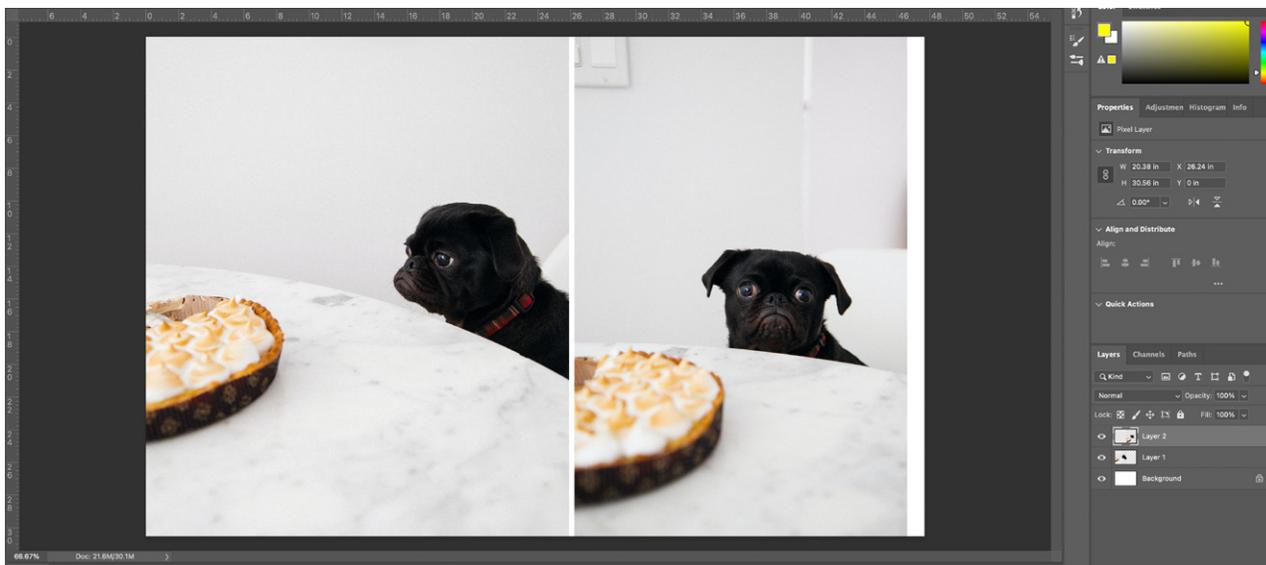


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

Step Six: I chose the image that I wanted to be on the left of the diptych. With that image selected, I select all function and copy the photo. I then move over to my new file and do a paste. Once the image is pasted, I reposition it to my liking.

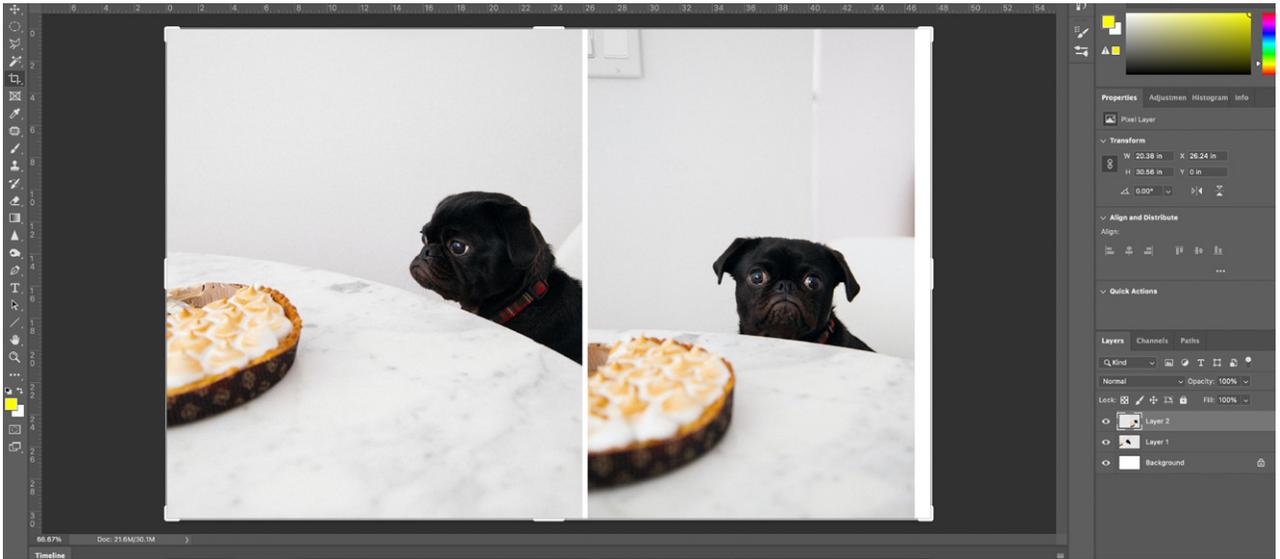


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

Step Seven: I repeat the process with the other image. Notice the space left between the two pictures. This is optional, as well as the color. I always use white or black. Also, notice the white bar on the right. I'm going to crop that from the image.

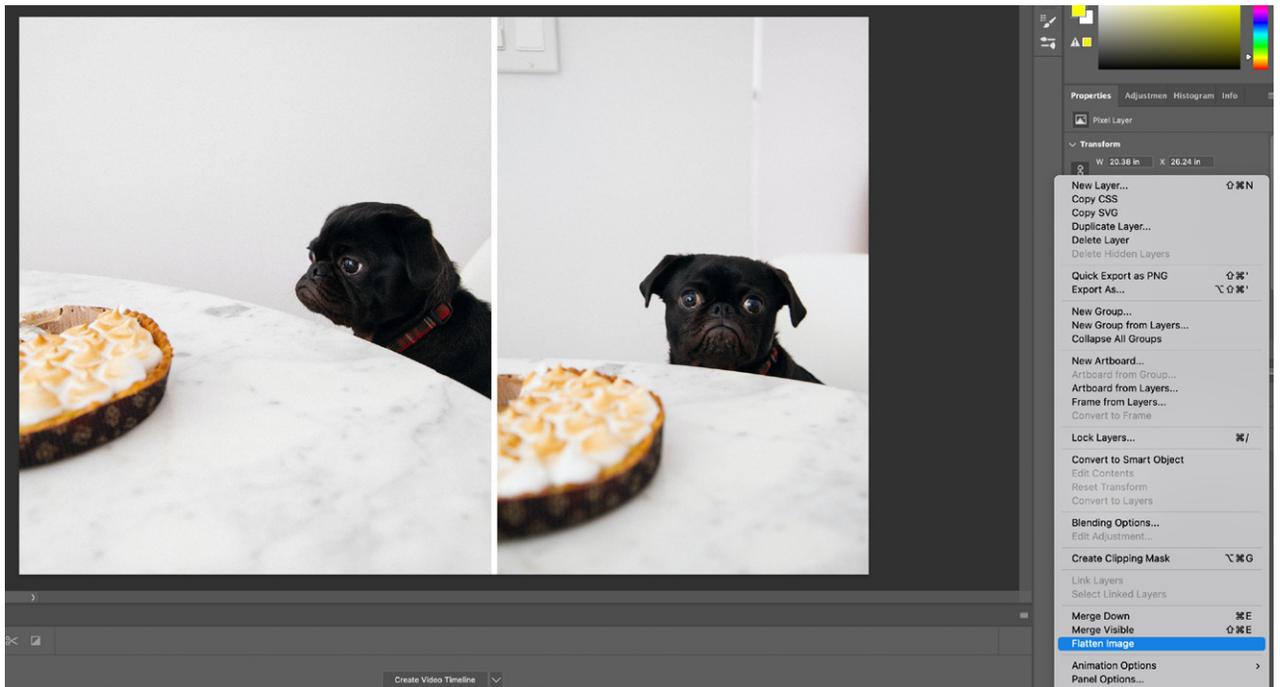


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

Here you can see the Crop Tool is selected, and the image shows three layers.

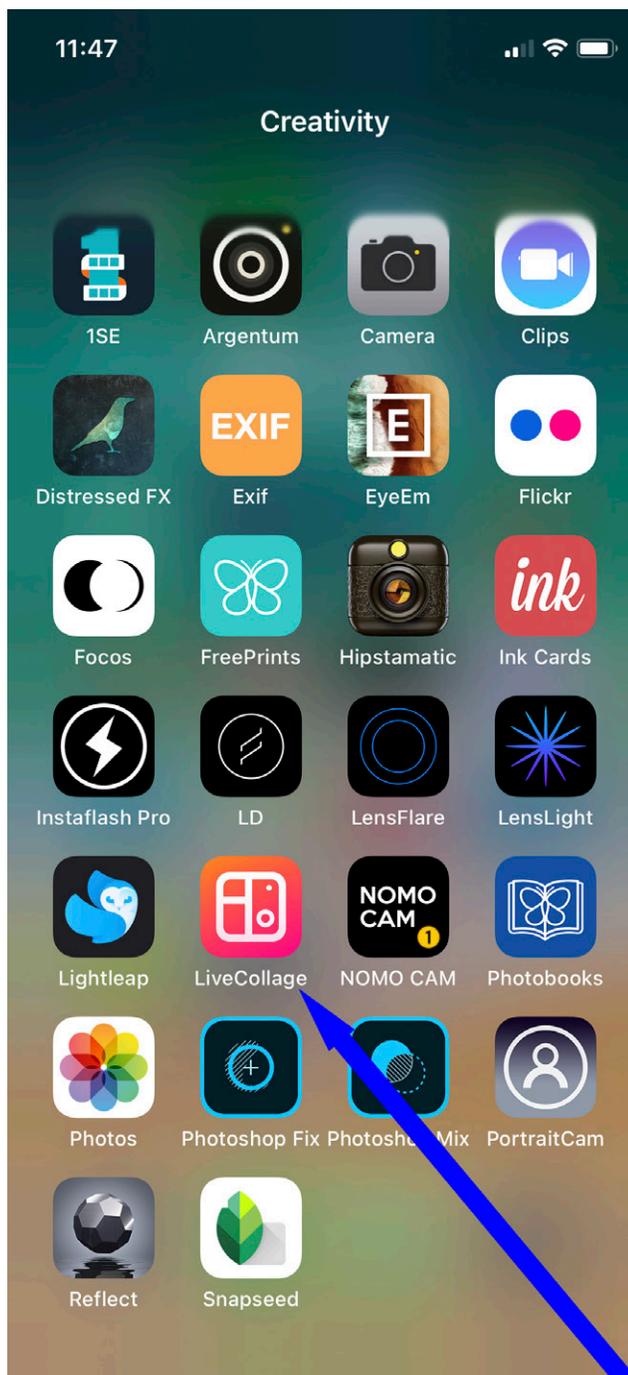


Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

Step Eight: I've completed the crop, and I flatten the image to create my diptych.

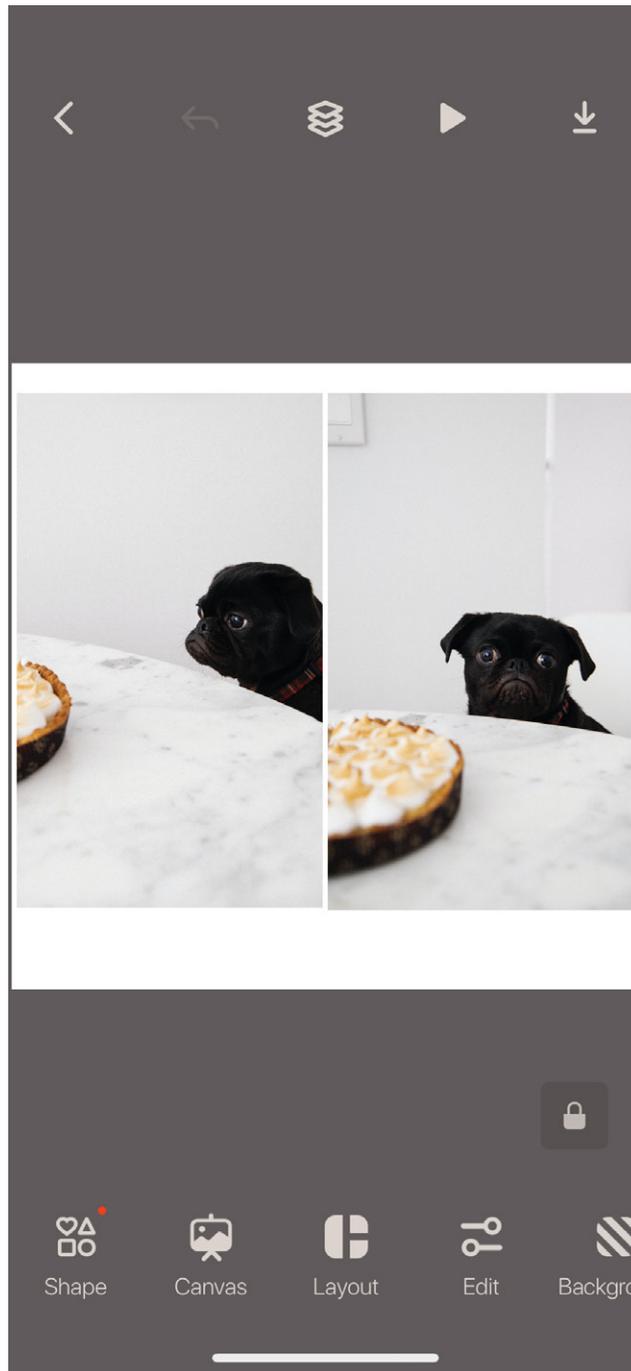


Screenshot by Kent DuFault

If you don't have a layering program (Lightroom is not a layering program) or feel that Photoshop is too much effort, you can use a collage app on your phone.

I use LiveCollage.

Note: When you save your image in LiveCollage, it attempts to have you sign up for a monthly or yearly subscription. You don't need to do that. Just 'X' out of that window and then the app will allow you to save the picture anyway. The subscription opens all the app features (you don't need these unless you're producing videos).



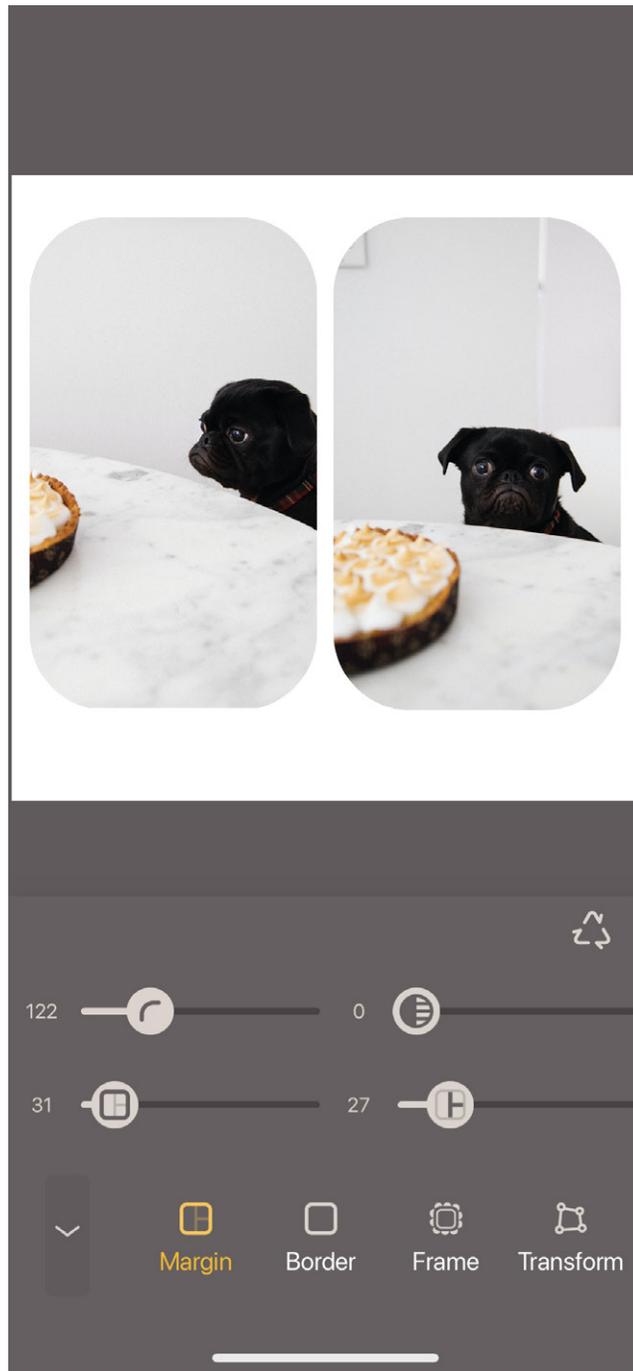
Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

Step One: Transfer your image files to your phone and open them in a collage app (in this case, LiveCollage). You can transfer the files through Bluetooth or by emailing them to your account. Since I'm on an iPhone, I use the Airdrop (Bluetooth).

Each method discussed here has its advantages and disadvantages. Photoshop is infinitely customizable. But LiveCollage offers many options as well, and it's fast and easy.



Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

Step Two: Adjust your settings. I decided to go with a larger border in an Instagram format and have rounded edges on the diptych images.



Photographs by Charles Deluvio and diptych processing by Kent DuFault

https://unsplash.com/photos/_p-Dlj5LJKc

<https://unsplash.com/photos/D44HIk-qsvI>

My diptych with the oh-so-cute pug puppy! The story of this moment is now infinitely clear to any viewer.



Assignment Part Two:

Using the pictures you created in Part One, combine them using your choice of software or app. As you can see from the two very different versions of this diptych, there is room for a lot of creativity!

Let's review some pet feeding photos and discuss what works and perhaps what doesn't.



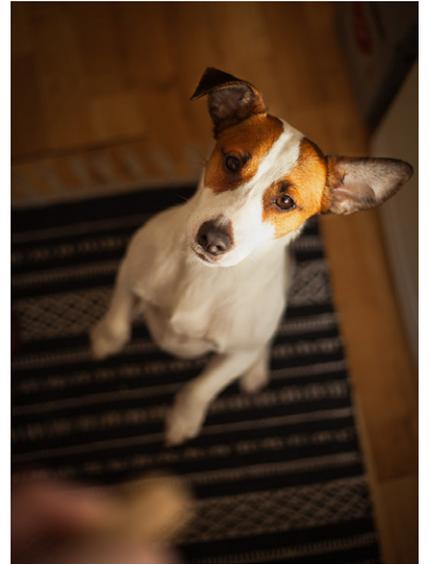
Photograph (l) by Bekky Bekks and Photograph (r) by Emrah AYVALI

https://unsplash.com/photos/e_IUvbU7Joo

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-photo-of-person-feeding-a-kitten-1981111/>

Feeding babies is always a winning photo opportunity.

Critical: A good opportunity can be wasted if you don't capture the expression. This makes the kitten photo more compelling than the puppy shot (in my opinion). A very slight change of camera position would have improved the puppy picture.



Photograph (l) by Amina Filkins and Photograph (r) by Duncan Kidd

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/crop-pregnant-lady-feeding-fluffy-dogs-in-kitchen-5427923/>

<https://unsplash.com/photos/sDBjk7XFV4>

Even the simple act of offering a treat can be compelling. Remember, it's your job as the photographer to create visual excitement.

The photo on the left doesn't tell us anything. We can't see the faces of the dogs, and we can't see the woman. There is no visual excitement here.

For the photo on the right, an anxious face combined with the energetic stance creates drama. We can feel the tension as the dog anticipates her treat.



Assignment:

Photograph your pets receiving treats. Give the images a storyline, like the right example photo. Don't simply snap a shot with no forethought, like the left example.



Photograph by Laura Chouette

<https://unsplash.com/photos/YpoczNsZYts>



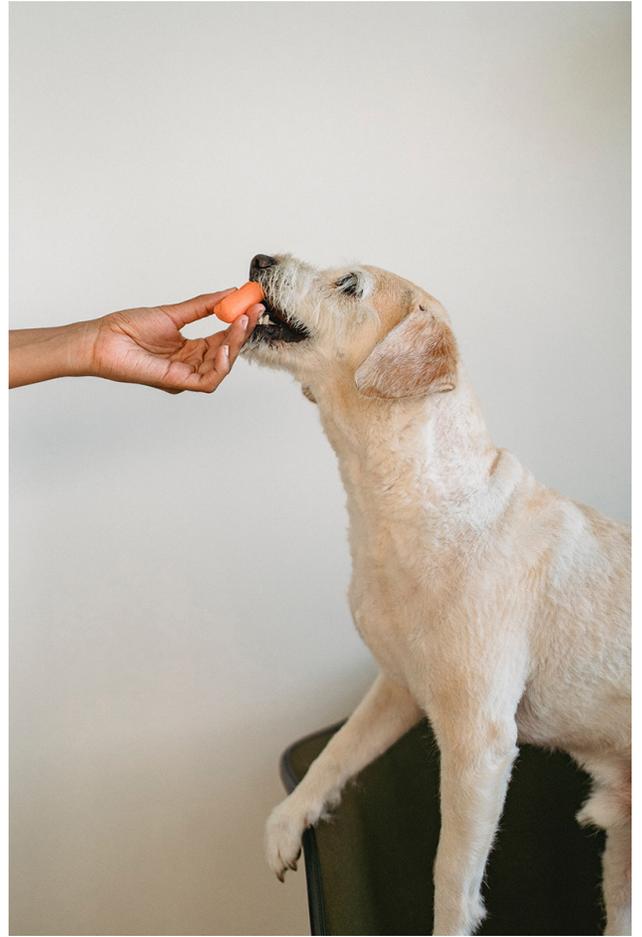
Pro Tip:

Give the pet some food, wait a minute, and then distract them. This will often lead to fantastic facial expressions. Be patient if you must try this a few times. It requires good timing on your part to capture the peak action.



Assignment:

Try the feed and distract technique.



Photograph (l) by Julissa Helmuth and Photograph (r) by Samson Katt

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/brown-horse-eating-orange-ice-cream-7627845/>

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/funny-dog-eating-carrot-from-hands-of-ethnic-owner-5255204/>

The pet donkey receives an orange ice cream bar in the left shot, and the dog gets a carrot, which apparently he loves!



Pro Tip:

Feeding a pet an **unexpected** treat can create amazing photos. This can be food they've never had or food they haven't had in a long time. Just make sure the food item is safe for the pet!



Assignment:

Try out some unusual or different foods for your pet photo session. Keep the choices safe and pet friendly!



Photograph by Olga Dudareva

https://unsplash.com/photos/Qh24ooe_3hE

Key Thought: A good photographer considers all the elements of their photos. When setting up a pet photo session, keep these elements in mind.

- How would you like the pet to be positioned?
- How are you going to get them to stay in that location and do as you wish?
- Will the lighting be pleasant on the pet or create problems?
- Are you going to need a helper?



Photograph by Ricky Kharawala

<https://unsplash.com/photos/adK3Vu70DEQ>

Remember, everyone loves to eat, and that is a major pet photo opportunity. Even the fish in my fish tank go nuts when they see me approaching to feed them!