

How to take good Dermatology/Dermoscopy Photos TOP TIPS

Optimising the quality of the clinical images that are taken is very important to support clinical decision making. Follow these top tips to increase the quality of images taken.

1. Take a **distant image with an anatomical marker** to establish the location of the lesion
2. Take **at least one close-up (macro) image of the lesion**. Additional images with side lighting e.g. at an oblique angle will supplement and allow the viewer to more accurately assess the shape, size, and edge of the lesion.
3. Use a **measuring scale with the close-up image**
4. Use a **background** e.g. disposable tissue roll, neutral wall, which should be placed in contact with the patient to reduce shadows
5. **Remove any surface crust or scale on lesions** and use micropore tape or equivalent to remove small surface scales on pigmented lesions or dry skin (tape stripping).
6. **Flash should always be ON except with dermoscopy images** as this enables reliable reproducible illumination and sharper images. In **SLR cameras ensure the 'macro' setting is ON**.
7. **Do not go beyond the autofocus of the camera** to avoid image blurring. Autofocus on the lesion and then use the zoom to get closer to the lesion of interest rather than moving the camera closer, to enable even lighting from the flash. If the lesion is small the camera may not focus that close. Move back and try to focus again rather than moving the camera closer to the lesion.
8. There are a variety of **smartphone and SLR camera dermoscopic attachments** which facilitates taking dermoscopy photos
9. When taking **dermoscopic photos use a liquid interface** e.g. alcohol gel, KY jelly, ultrasound Gel to prevent surface reflections. Wipe the skin and dermoscope face plate clean before applying the liquid gel to try and avoid bubbles.
10. **Do not apply too much pressure with the dermoscope** as this can squash the vessels
11. Take **non-polarised and polarised images** with dermoscope
12. **Replay the image** and if not clear take another image.

13. For monitoring photos take an image on the patient's mobile device so they have a copy too.

14. Smaller file sizes are needed when uploading images to the patient record.

File sizes of images taken on mobile devices can be resized during the process of secure image transfer using an NHS.net account, * or using specific software programmes if the image is taken with a digital camera.

The Teledermatology service in Bristol and North Somerset have developed a [guide to taking better photographs](#)

* Refer to **Top Tips: Using personal mobile devices to take photos** for instructions on how to resize files using NHS.net e-mail transfer of images.