



**2018**

Safe on Social Guide to

**Instagram**



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# Your Guide to being Safe on Social



Search



## What is Instagram?

Instagram is an app that allows users to take photos, add a fun photo filter and then quickly and easily share it on their Instagram “feed” with their friends and followers.

Instagram attracted 15 million users in its first year. In 2012 and after less than two years in business, Instagram was acquired by Facebook for over one billion dollars.

Instagram now has over 400 million users from around the world use the app every month, and this number is steadily increasing.

Instagram is very easy to use. You can take a picture or up to 15 seconds of video and customise your media with filters and other enhancement tools. You can also upload photos and video stored in your photo library.

You add a caption and then you tap “next” (Android users, tap the green arrow) you can then choose how you want to share, just to your Instagram followers or outside the Instagram app, via email, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media services.

There are three ways to share on Instagram: privately, publicly and directly.

With Instagram Direct, you have the option to share a particular photo privately to a limited number of people (15 max), whether or not you follow them, or they follow you.

## Why do people use Instagram?

Instagram has been labeled the fastest growing social media site in the world. It has a huge audience and attract at least 2 million new users a month.

People of all ages use it to capture special moments, but also to carry on conversations and use photos, filters, comments, captions, emoticons, hashtags and links elsewhere to talk about things and share interests.

It runs on the Apple iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch as well as Android phones.

When you post your photos friends can then comment, like or “re-gram or re-post” (share) the photo.



## Why age restrictions matter

Age restrictions are extremely important on apps such as Instagram and should not be ignored. Letting a child under the recommended age of 13 years use Instagram (even if set to private) is both naïve and potentially dangerous.

You are exposing your child to things they are not emotionally capable of dealing with. Like Twitter, Hashtags are very popular on Instagram and can be used to search for images that are about a certain topic.

Never forget that Instagram can act as a search engine with billions of images just a hashtag away from being seen. Your child can search for or be accidentally exposed to anything. It is dangerous for children to be exposed to this world at too young an age. You are supporting them in breaking a rule about lying about their age to join in the first place, and therefore, you are setting up a digital history for them that can never be erased. It is not just about locking down their privacy about who can see them – but you need to understand that they can search for anything #pussy #chicks and so on can be perfectly innocent to a little one looking for pictures of kittens and baby chickens, but the images they will see could be totally inappropriate.

Instagram bypasses all adult content filters, and there is no way you can stop your child from being exposed to the violent, pornographic or drug-related content. There are gun sales, anorexia, cutting and other self-harm cultures that encourage children to participate. It is important to understand that children do not use or have the same understanding of social media risk management as we do.

They explore more, share more, rely upon it as a source of truth more. Do not base your experience on Instagram as the reason you let your child use Instagram. We are from two different worlds.

Instagram seems like a fun and fairly harmless app when in the context of the 1000's of apps available. But like most it has a dark side.

Following are security and privacy tips and recommendations to secure your online life and keep you safe on social when you are using Instagram.



## **Bullying and harassment on Instagram, what to do.**

Cyberbullying is rife on Instagram and if it is not happening to your child, how do you know what they are commenting on or if they are the ones instigating the bullying?

Do you know what they are saying to other children?

Do you monitor the comments made on every single photo that your child posts?

Everyday?

Every comment?

Comments can be made weeks after you "check" an image. Think before you say yes. It is not just a fun little photo-sharing app.

Here are the first steps of what to do if you or someone you know is being bullied on Instagram.

- Take screen shots of the bullying and harassing comments and/images that have been shared on Instagram. It is always good to have a record and make sure you share with someone you trust.
- Don't retaliate as bullies are always looking for a reaction so don't give them the satisfaction, always remember that silence is the loudest scream.
- Unfriend and block the person (you will see tips on how to do this in the next section)
- Make sure you tell a trusted friend, parent, family member, teacher or someone else that can help you.
- If you feel that you are in immediate physical danger, call the police.

On Instagram, we have witnessed particularly cowardly bullies hiding behind hashtags. They use a hashtag #nastynameofsomedescription to bully you or make threats.

It is hard to prove that there is nasty name calling or threats going on this way but often they will slip up, and there will be a comment made on a social platform that identifies you.

We recommend in this case that you block them but let someone you trust know what is happening so that they can watch them and take screen shots when they do inevitably slip up.

Bullying on Instagram may be a crime under Australian Law when it involves using the Internet in a threatening or harassing way, stalking, encouraging suicide or encouraging violence.

### **If the victim of bullying and harassment is a child:**

In Australia, we are very lucky to have The Office of The Children's e-Safety Commissioner. The Office provides Australians access to a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyber-bullying.



## Quick guide to the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner

### What we do

At the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (the Office) we:

- deal with complaints about serious cyberbullying material affecting Australian children (under the age of 18)
- investigate offensive or illegal online content, such as child sexual abuse material
- provide online safety education and training, and undertake research.

### How we handle complaints

The Office works with social media services to quickly remove serious cyberbullying material.

The material generally needs to have been reported to the social media service first. The social media service has 48 hours to remove the material. If the material is not removed, it can be reported to the Office.

We also work with schools, parents and others (such as police and the person responsible for the material) to address the underlying behaviour and any ongoing bullying.

### What type of complaints can we act on

The Office can act on complaints about cyberbullying material that seriously threatens, intimidates, harasses or humiliates an Australian child.

We assess seriousness by looking at the circumstances of the child and the material itself.

We take into account any vulnerabilities of the child, and their relationship with the person posting the material.

We also look at the language used, the number of potential views and the sensitivity of the material.

### What types of complaints have we acted on

- Serious name calling and nasty comments—for example, comments that incite suicide, outing, or sexually threatening language.
- Fake accounts or impersonations.
- Offensive or upsetting pictures or videos.
- Hacking of social media accounts (potentially due to password sharing).
- Hate pages.

### Who can complain

Complaints can be made by a child, their parent or another responsible person the child has authorised to make the complaint for them.

**How to report cyberbullying material**

- 1 Report the cyberbullying material to the social media service
- 2 Collect evidence — copy URLs or take screenshots of the material  
If the content is not removed within 48 hours...
- 3 Report it to [www.esafety.gov.au/cyberbullying-complaint](http://www.esafety.gov.au/cyberbullying-complaint)
- 4 Block the person and talk to someone you trust

If you are in immediate danger, call Triple Zero (000).  
If you need to talk to someone, visit Kids Helpline online or call them on 1800 55 1800, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A cyberbullying complaint can be made at [www.esafety.gov.au/reportcyberbullying](http://www.esafety.gov.au/reportcyberbullying)

## If the victim of bullying and harassment is an adult:

If someone is threatening you, stalking, intimidating, or harassing you, you may be able to apply to your local court for an intervention order to keep them from contacting you any further.

If you want to talk to someone in confidence please contact:

**Beyond Blue** - [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) - Phone: 1300 22 46 36

**Lifeline** - [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) - Phone: 13 11 14

## What to do if you are being harassed, bullied or threatened through Instagram:

### 1. Take screenshots

Always remember to take screenshots in case you need them to prove that they were harassing or bullying you before you block them in case you need the proof for legal purposes.

## **2. Untag yourself immediately**

Only the person who posts an image can tag people in it. However, if that user has a public profile anyone tagged by them can untag themselves. You can untag yourself by tapping on your username in a post, but only if the post is public or if you follow the person who tagged you.

## **3. Block Them**

If someone's harassing, bullying or threatening you, such as repeatedly tagging you in photos you don't like or sending you a lot of direct messages or trying to engage you in a creepy conversation, block them. This way they will not be able to tag you, contact you or mention you in comments.

If you block them, they also won't be able to see your profile or search for your account on Instagram only if your account is set to private. When your account is public, always remember that if you block someone, it is easy for them to set up another account to look at yours and start the whole process again. Or they can simply type your @username into any search engine, and it will bypass the block unless you account set to private.

### **To block a user:**

1. Go to his or her profile and select the Menu button on the top right side of the screen
2. Select Block User
3. On an Android go to the profile you want to block and tap the three small squares and select block user.

## **4. Report Inappropriate Posts**

You can report other people's inappropriate photos, videos or offensive posts. Just click on the down arrow in the top right-hand corner of the post.. Click on Report.

### **When in doubt delete**

If you ever want to delete one of your pictures or videos that might be offensive to someone or you have just changed your mind:

1. Click on the image
2. Click on the down arrow icon in the top right-hand corner
3. Select Delete.

This option also lets you share, edit or email your post. If you have shared media on Facebook, Twitter or other services, deleting from Instagram doesn't delete them elsewhere.

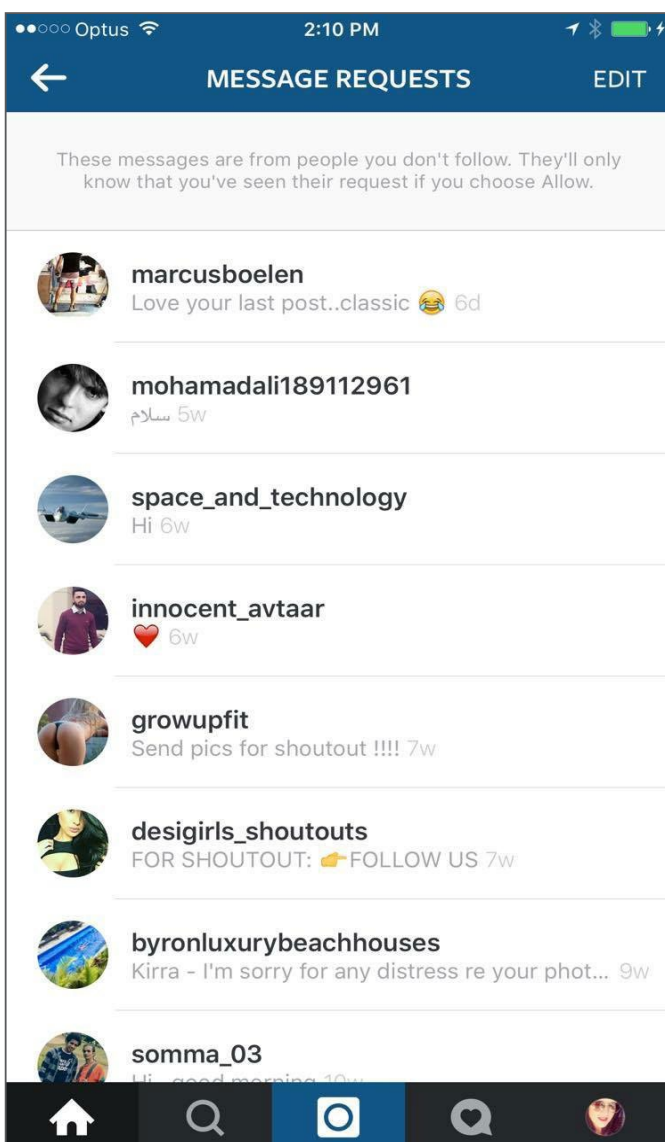
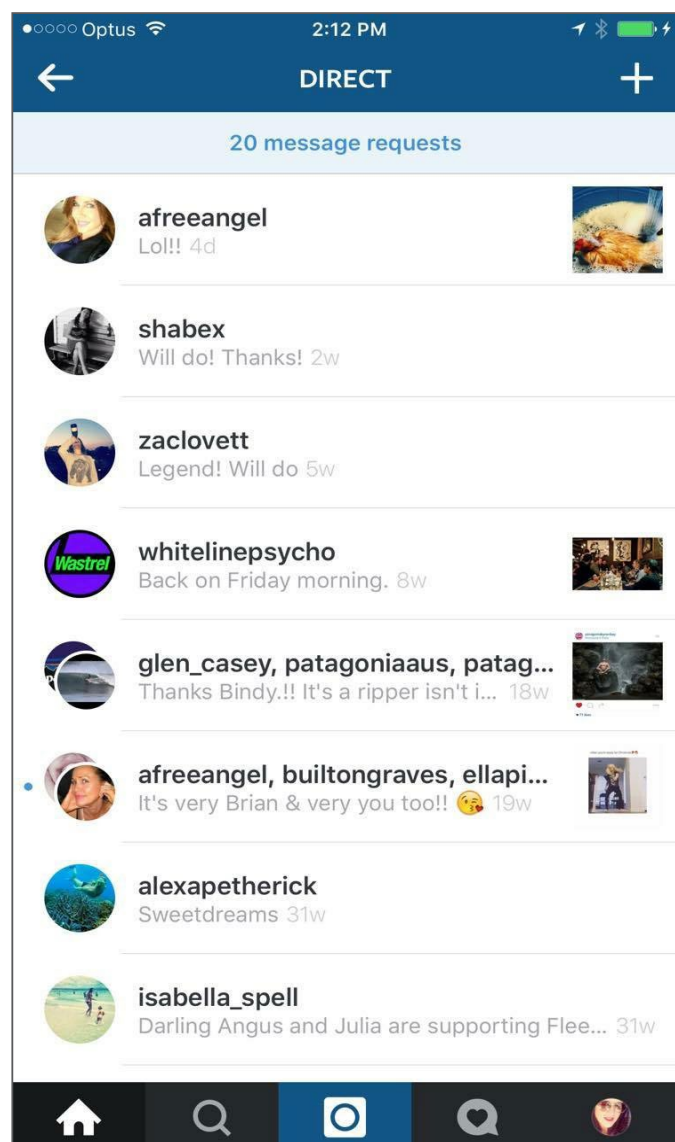
If it's urgent, email Instagram from the Help Center. You can find the Help Center by tapping Profile, then the gear button. (Android users, tap Profile, then the three small squares.) That takes you to a screen where you can click Support.



## Messages in your “Request” list

Not many people ever check their request list. When photos or videos are sent to you, only those of people you follow go to your Direct folder. Photos from anyone else go into your Requests folder.

So if you don't want to receive an Instagram from anyone you don't know, ignore any images in your Request folder. If you ignore them for two weeks, the content will just go away. If you want to see images only from people you know, limit who you follow.



## Passwords

Setting a strong password on your Instagram profile is the very first thing you should do. You are the first line of defense when it comes to securing your online life and strong passwords are your best friend.

Here are our top tips when it comes to passwords:

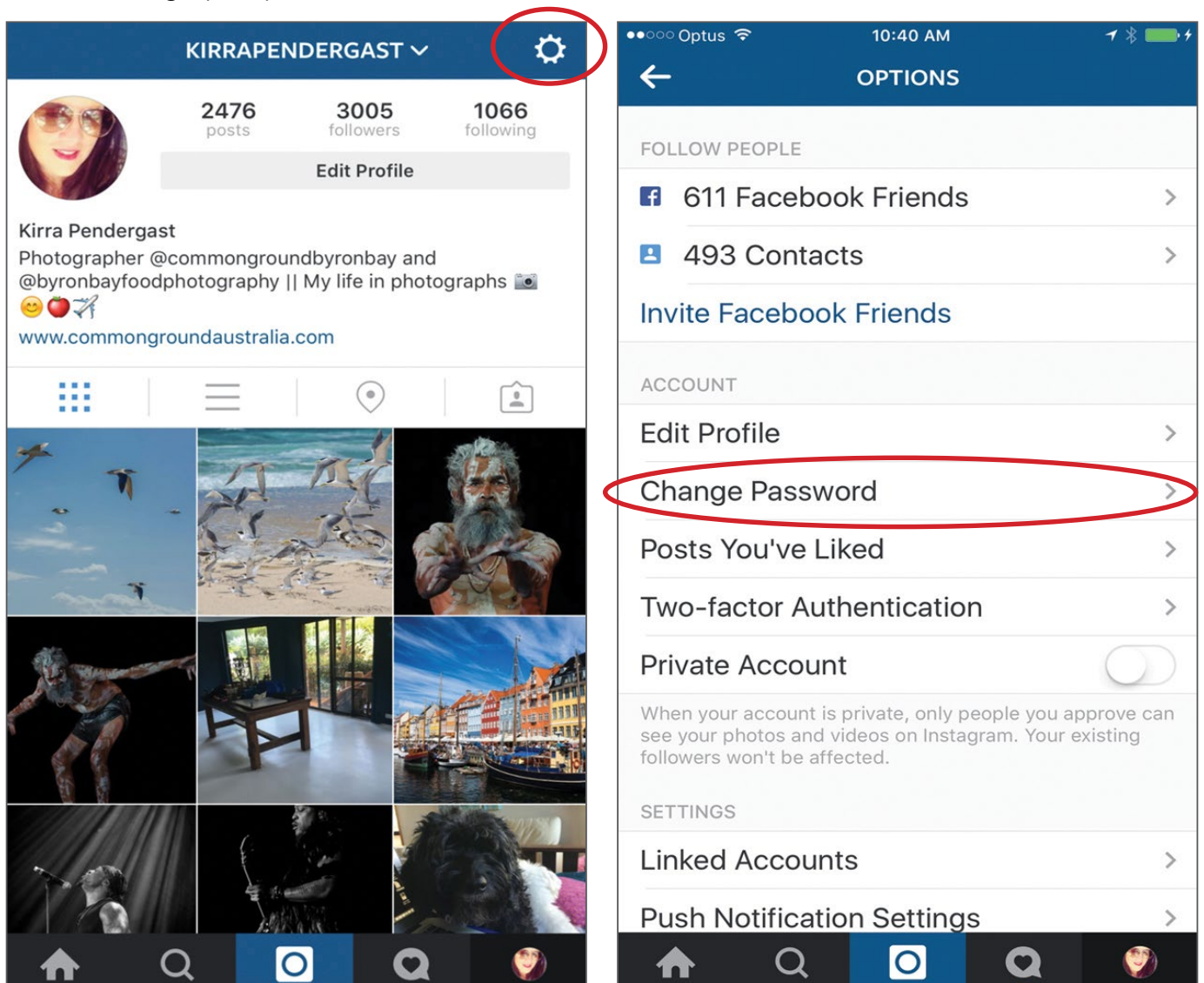
Always use a strong alphanumeric password using upper and lower case letters and numbers for example: lI0v3D0g2 instead of ilovedogs. Do not use the same password for your Instagram account as you use for your bank account.

Never share your password with anyone. Change your password regularly and always change it immediately if one of your friends is hacked, as that makes you immediately vulnerable.

We recommend that you change your password right now! And at least, every three months from now on.

### To change your password follow these steps:

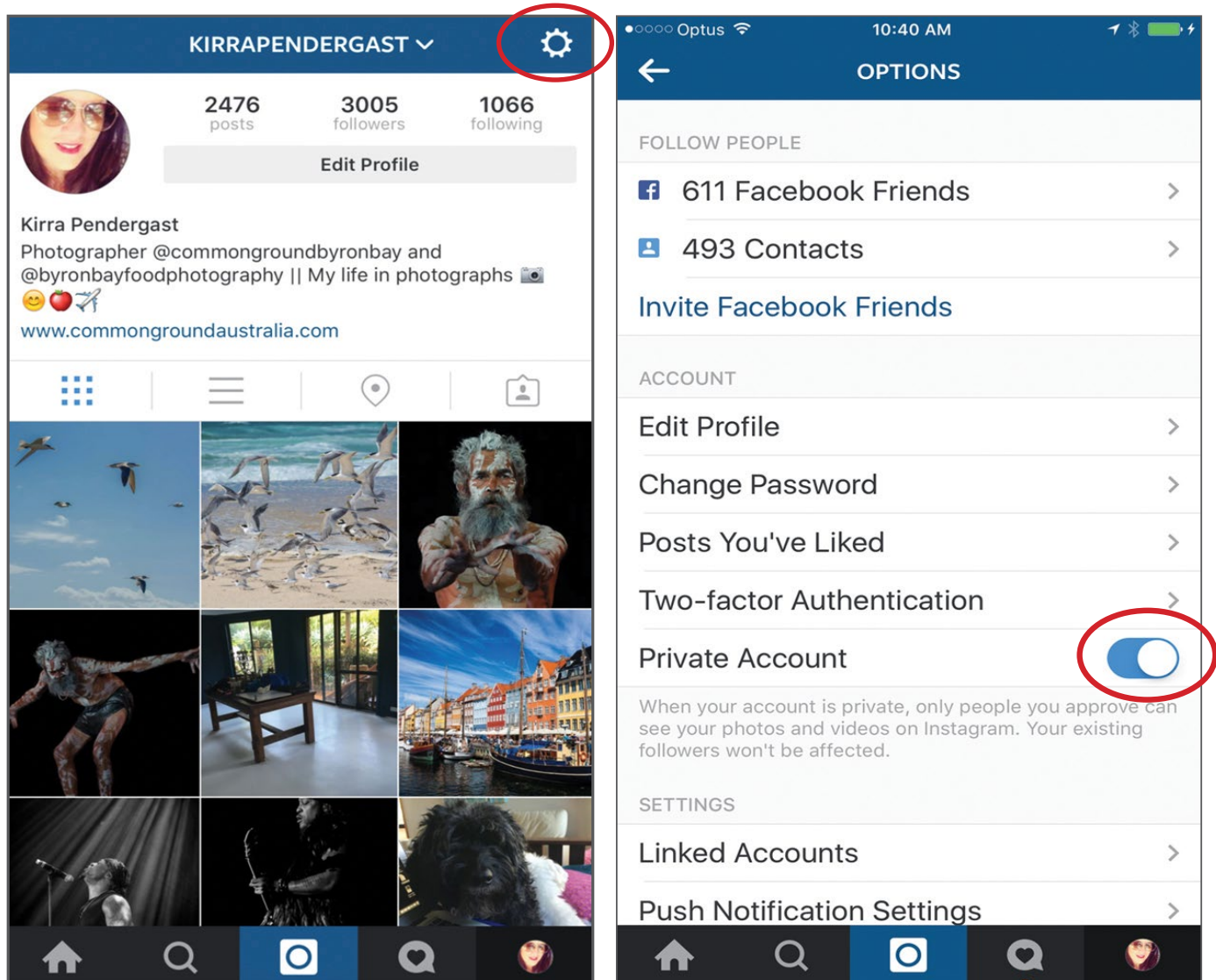
1. Go to your home page on Instagram
2. Tap on the wheel in the top right-hand corner
3. Scroll down to Change Password and tap
4. Change your password



## Privacy settings

Instagram allows you to determine who follows you. If an account is set to private in Instagram's privacy settings, sending a request is the only way to become a follower of someone or by accepting a request, you are allowing people to follow you. By default, photos and videos you share in Instagram can be seen by anyone (unless you share them directly) but you can easily make your account private, so you get to approve anyone who wants to follow you.

1. Go to your home screen
2. Tap on the wheel in the top right-hand corner.
3. Scroll down to "Private Account" and check that it is turned on.
4. If turned off, you can make your photos private by toggling the switch to on.



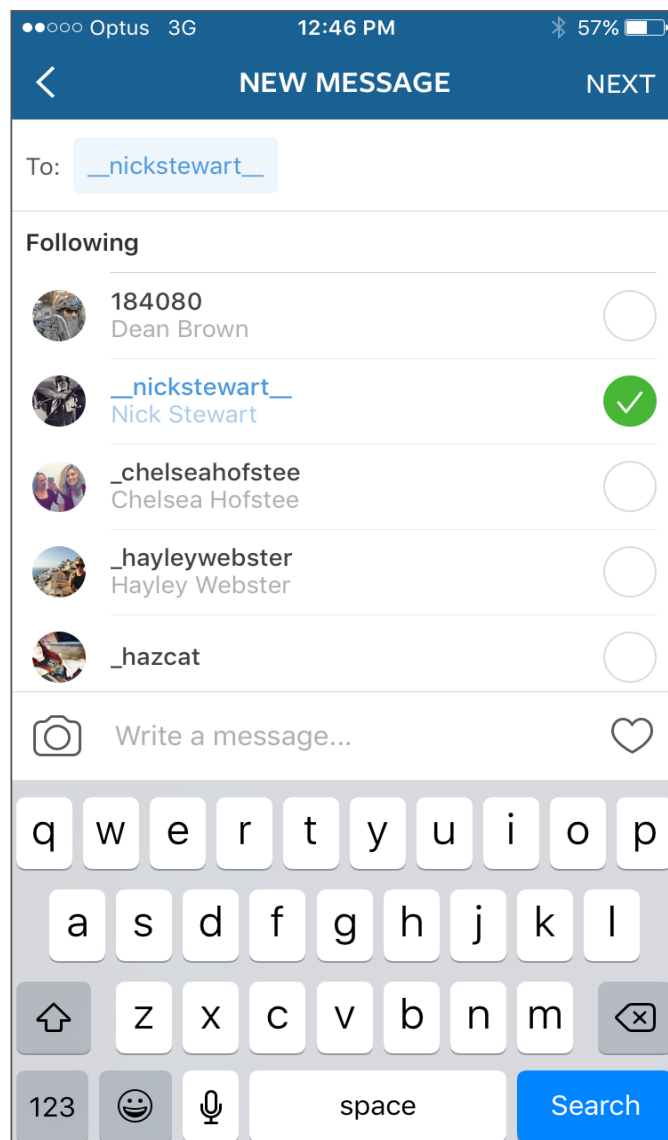
Android users, tap profile and edit your profile. Be sure "Posts are Private" is checked. \*If you update or reinstall the app, on a new device always make sure your settings are still the way you want them. This way is a lot safer than having a public profile because only those who you approve to follow you are able to see your pictures. However, always assume that everything you post on Instagram can be seen by everyone as there are easy workarounds available and people that are following you may screen shot and share anything you post without your permission.

Remember you can add text about yourself in your bio, so parents and kids may want to talk about what's appropriate to say on their Instagram bio as even if your account is private – everyone can see your bio. Never post your username for other social media accounts in your bio's (unless you are a business) or all you are doing is inviting people to check out your other social media accounts. Privacy settings never foolproof, but they can be helpful.

## Instagram Direct Messages

Instagram Direct messages are private. However, anyone, including people you don't follow, can send you an image or video that only you and up to 14 other people can see or comment on. If you follow that person, the image will be sent to your Direct folder.

If you don't follow the person, it'll arrive in a Request folder, and that person's Instagram will keep going to your Requests folder until you approve that person.





## Be respectful and kind

If someone else is in a photo you post, make sure that person's OK with your sharing or tagging them in it. Always think about how your posts may affect others.

Sometimes your friends that are not in the photo might feel hurt as they were not included.

If the image you are sharing is not yours, always tag or add "program or repost" and acknowledge the photographer or the person who first posted the image to the best of your ability.



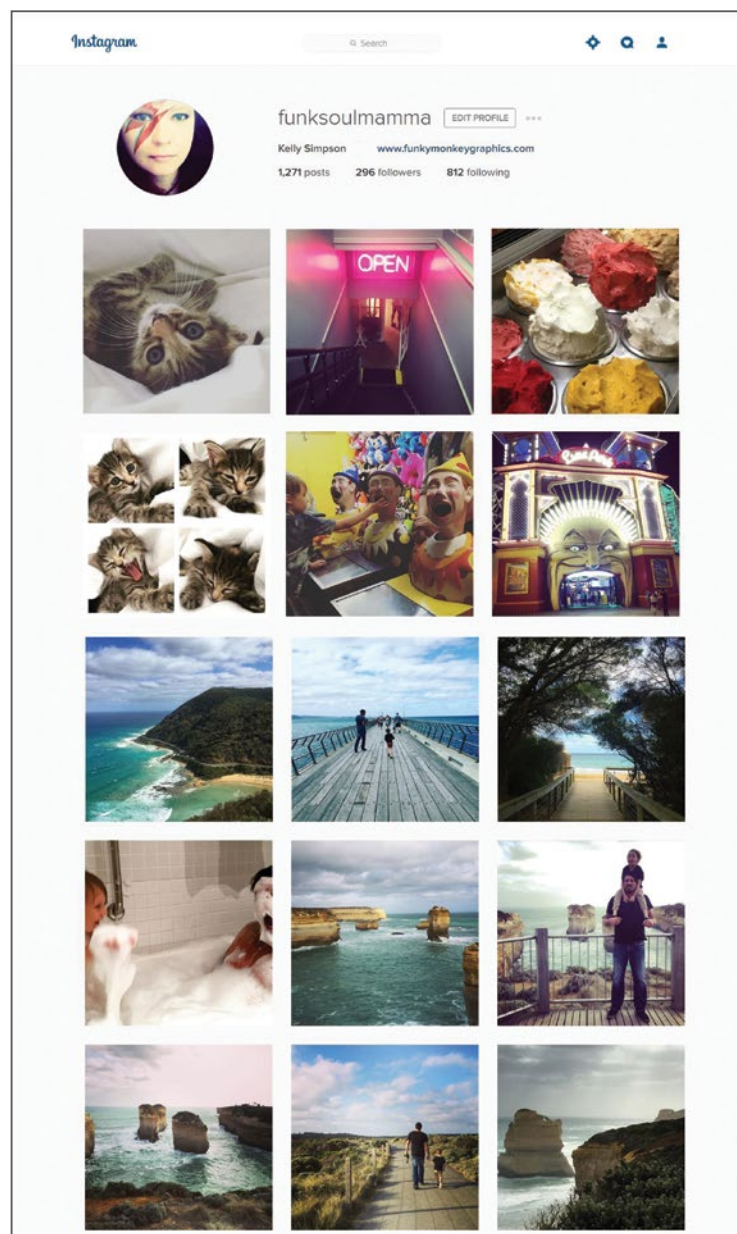
## The collective total of your posts and what they say about you

It is easy for people to look through your Instagram and be able to piece together information and work out places that you frequent, when you are there, where you work, where you go to school and so on.

Patterns of how you go about your daily life can easily start to become very clear in your Instagram feed, and so you need to be very aware of what you are posting and how that pieces together to tell a bigger story. Through Instagram posts, it is very easy to find information about people. Sometimes a momentary lapse of thinking could leave you and your personal privacy very exposed.

Never post photos of letters, Drivers License, Passport or any document that may have your home address on it. This is a major risk for teenagers who may be excited about getting their learner drivers license and in a moment of excitement post a photo of the license to their Instagram account.

Never post photos of yourself in uniform whether it be a school uniform or work uniform, both of these will identify where you spend a lot of your time. In the case of a work uniform, you need to check with your employer and see what their social media policy stipulates.



## Photo map

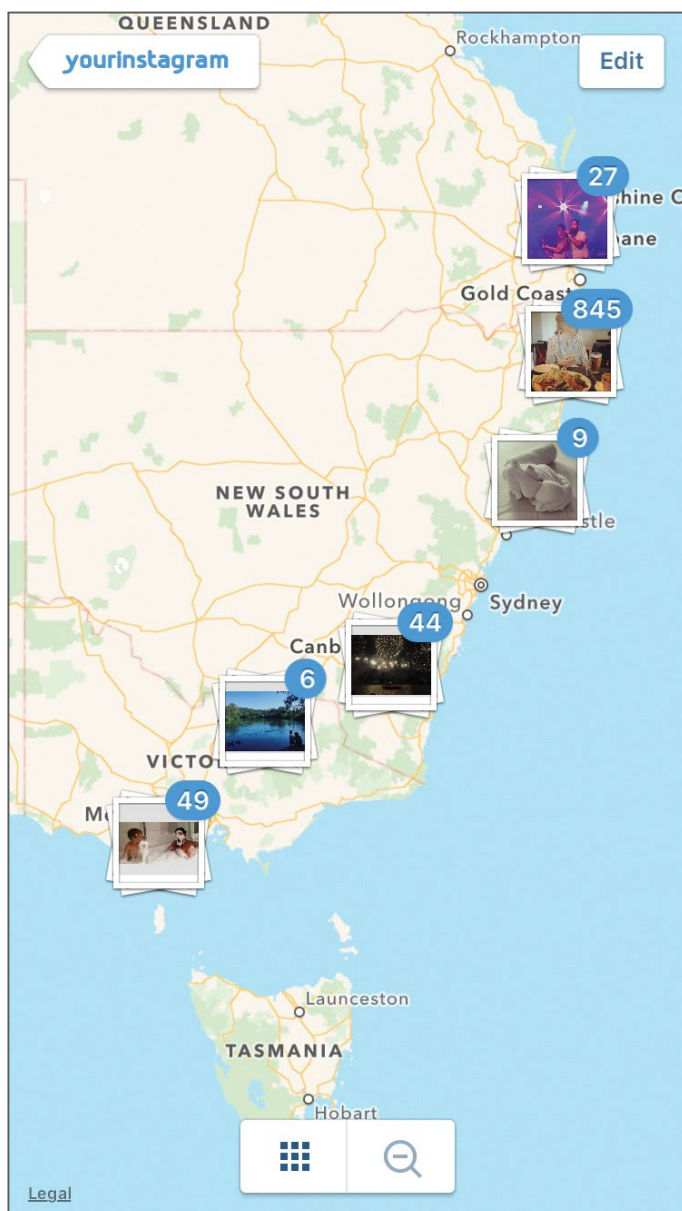
Whenever you post a new photo to Instagram, the final screen in the process offers an “Add to Your Photo Map” option. This is switched off by default, so unless you specifically turn it on, the content won’t appear on your map. If you do enable the feature, you have the option to name the location where the photo was taken.

When you consider our previous point about the collective total of your posts, we always recommend that you do not use this feature. No matter how excited you are about where you are.

Remember this is totally your ego doing the talking; do you really want complete strangers knowing exactly where you are and what you are doing, just for the sake of a ‘like’?

People can keep clicking down to street level on a photo map icon and see exactly where you are. If you are a parent, please ensure that your children have this function disabled.

We have all seen young girls taking selfies in the mirror, but think about what can happen if they publish one of these posts with the caption: “Mum and Dad are out – I am home alone and bored” and their photo map is on.



If you have a public account, anyone on Instagram can view your Photo Map by tapping the map pin icon on your profile.

If you have a private account, any of your approved followers can view the map.

If you don't have any photos on your map, the icon is disabled and doesn't lead anywhere.

To remove the photo map completely, you must deselect all the images that are currently on it.

You can remove images from the map on the Photo Map page itself.

Tap the menu button in the top right corner of the Photo Map screen and choose “Edit.”

Deselect any pictures that you don't want to appear on the map.

Any images you remove remain in your Instagram feed, but the geolocation information associated with them is deleted permanently.

If you want to restore a picture to the map, you must upload the image again.



## Sharing outside of Instagram

If you do share elsewhere, be aware of the privacy settings on that service. By default, you're sharing your media only on Instagram, but you do have the option to share on other social media sites by clicking on Facebook, Twitter, Email, Tumblr and others and then share.

For example, unless your profile is private, Twitter shares to everyone by default. Facebook, by default, will share media posted from Instagram to friends only.

But after you share on Facebook, you can change that setting in Facebook by selecting the audience settings.



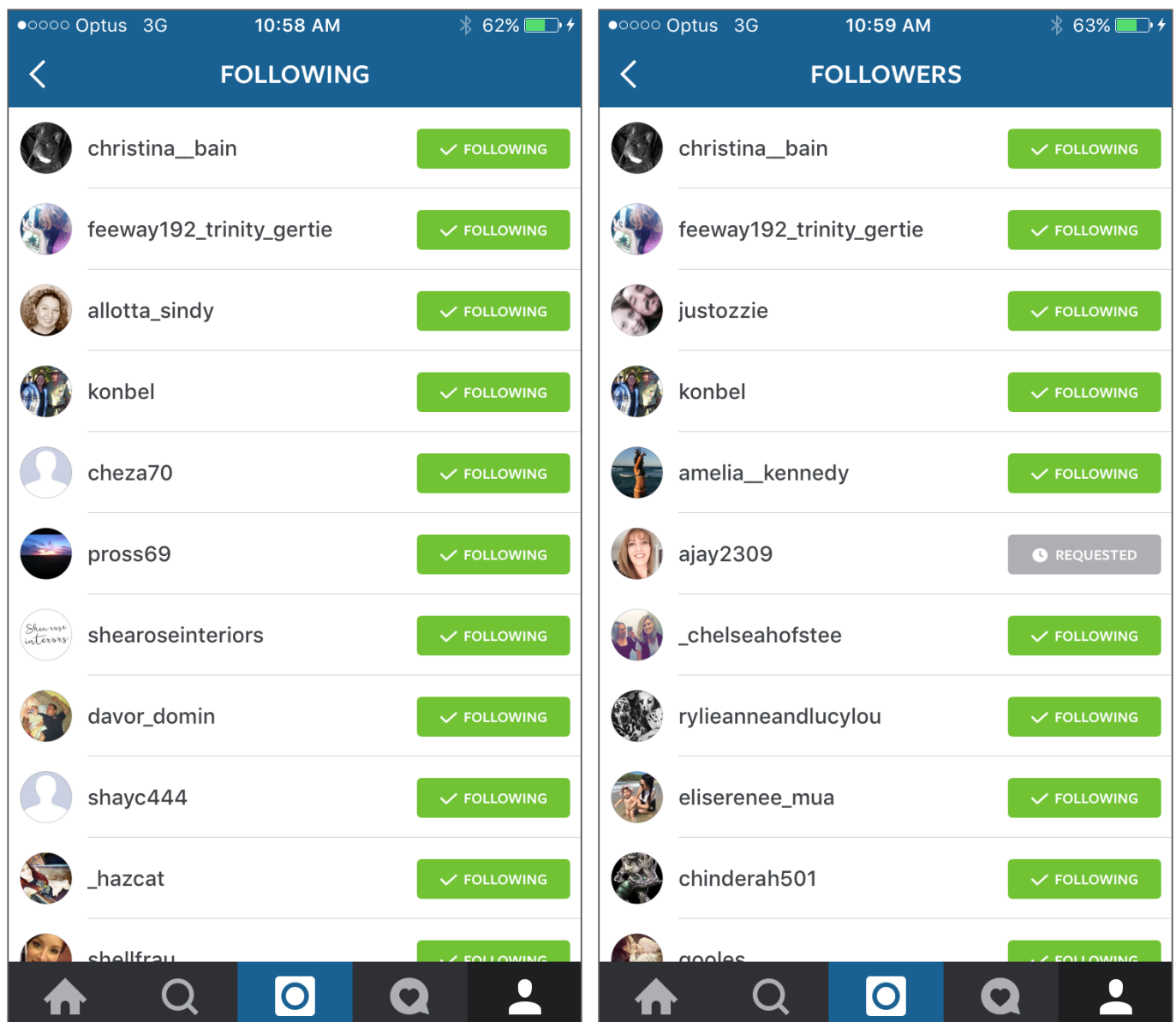


## Following and Followers

As we mentioned in our first tip, people can follow you without having to be approved. If you do an excess amount of "Following" it can be significantly detrimental. You are putting yourself on someone else's radar by following them.

More following leads to more followers. This can lead to more people seeing pictures of you, your friends and loved ones and anything else you post – potentially great for businesses, but extremely volatile for the individual.

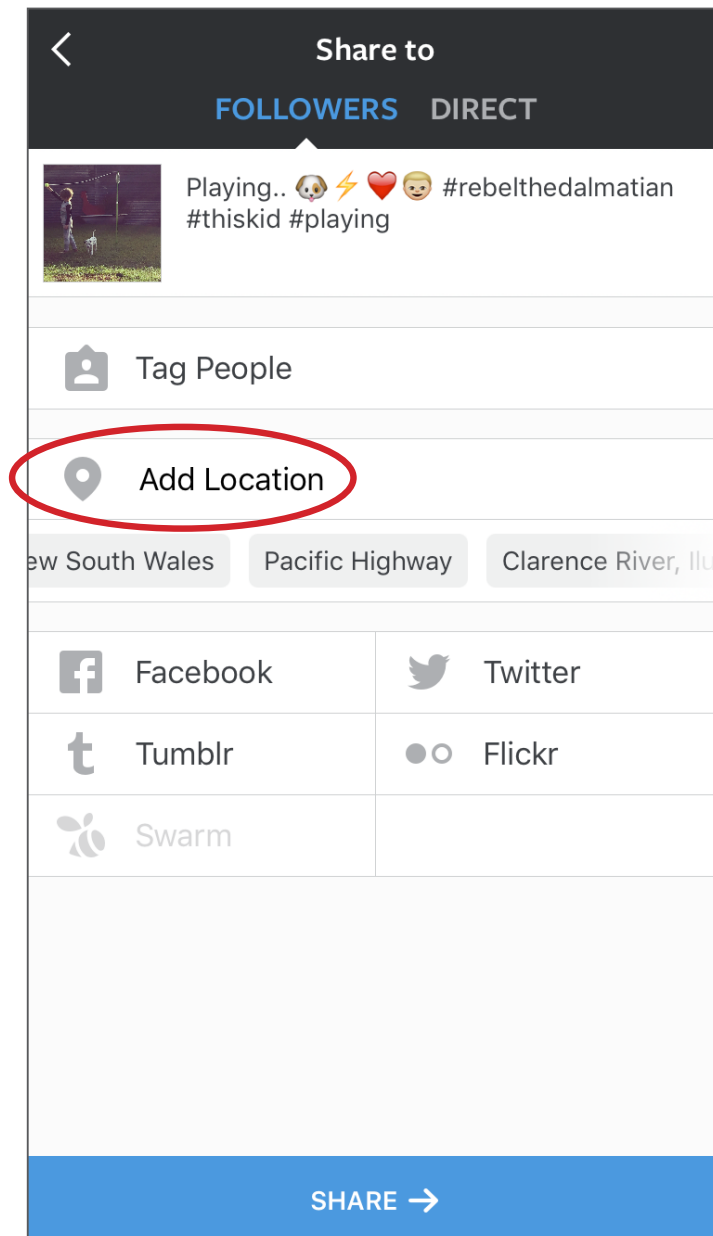
The worst part is that it is very easy for someone on Instagram to establish a false identity, appearing innocent and benign but hiding a much darker reality. You can never truly tell on the Internet.



## NEVER post your home address

Keep private information private. Don't share your home address or other sensitive information online.

Do not share photos of passports; driver's licenses or any other form identification. Always remember that Instagram is a public forum and whatever you share is just a screenshot and a crop tool away from being shared as someone else's image.

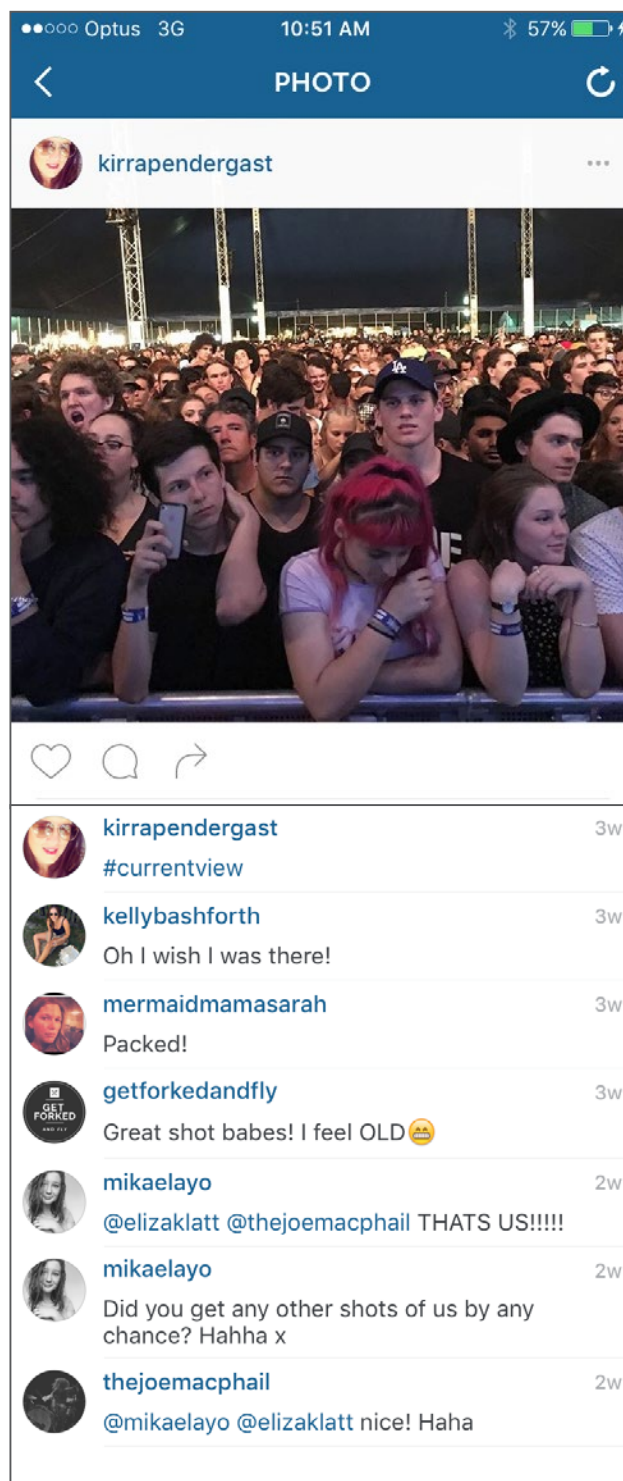


## Be careful of what you are sharing in the comments section

Yes, people read the comments section. A well-known case of this happened on Valentines Day in 2014 when a young male pop star from the Gold Coast posted to his 2.1mil Instagram followers.

His post comments said that he does not believe in Valentines Day "but if you are feeling lonely, please post your phone number and maybe I will give you a call".

Within a few minutes, there were over 17,000 young girls that had posted their phone numbers in a very public forum.

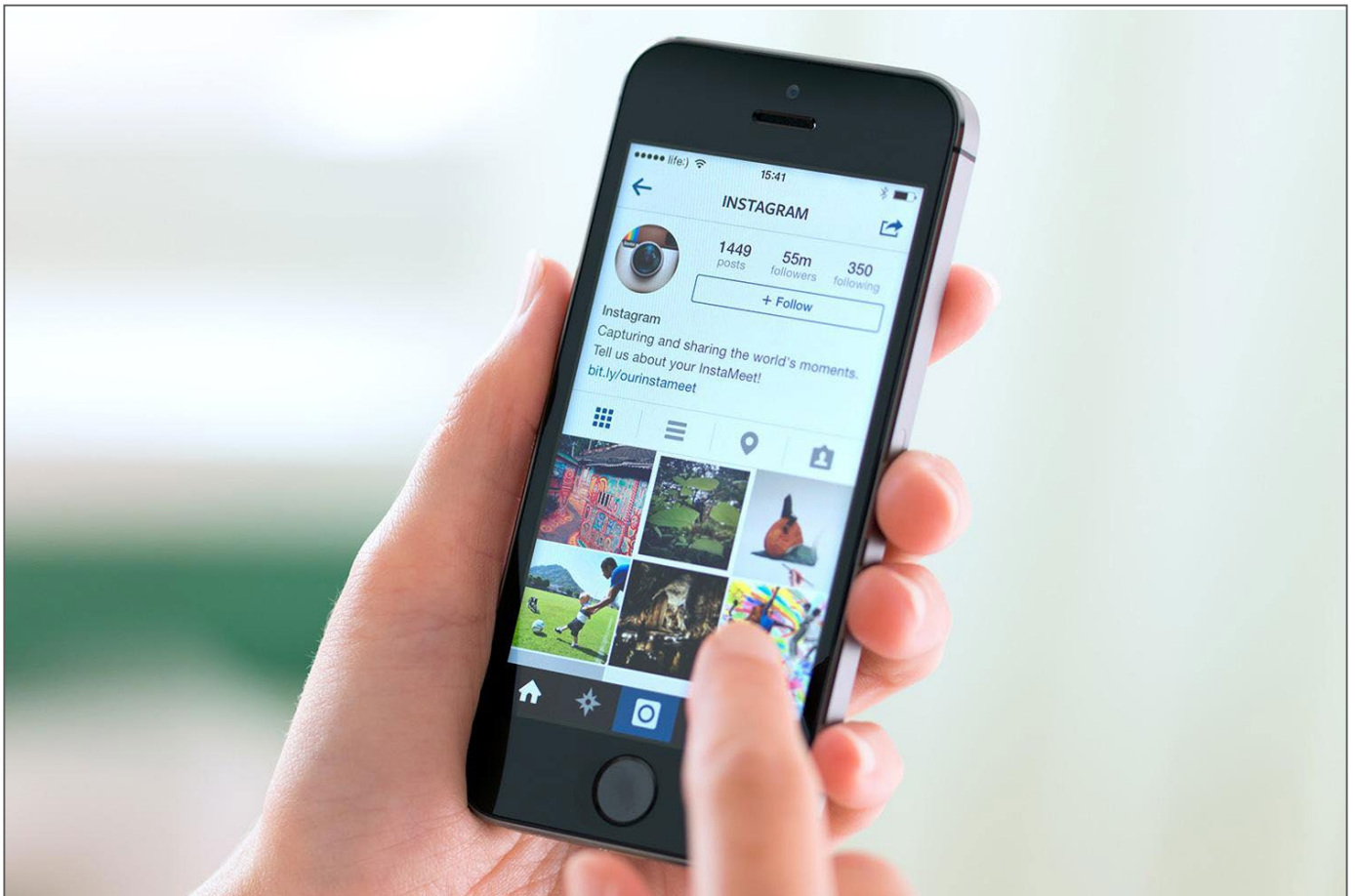


## Managing your personal brand

Always remember that your Instagram account represents you and may continue to serve you well into the future. Your digital footprint can never be fully erased.

Always consider that what you post now may affect your personal brand or your reputation at some stage in years to come.

If you think it might hurt your relationships, upset your grandmother or impact your ability to get or hold down a job don't post it.



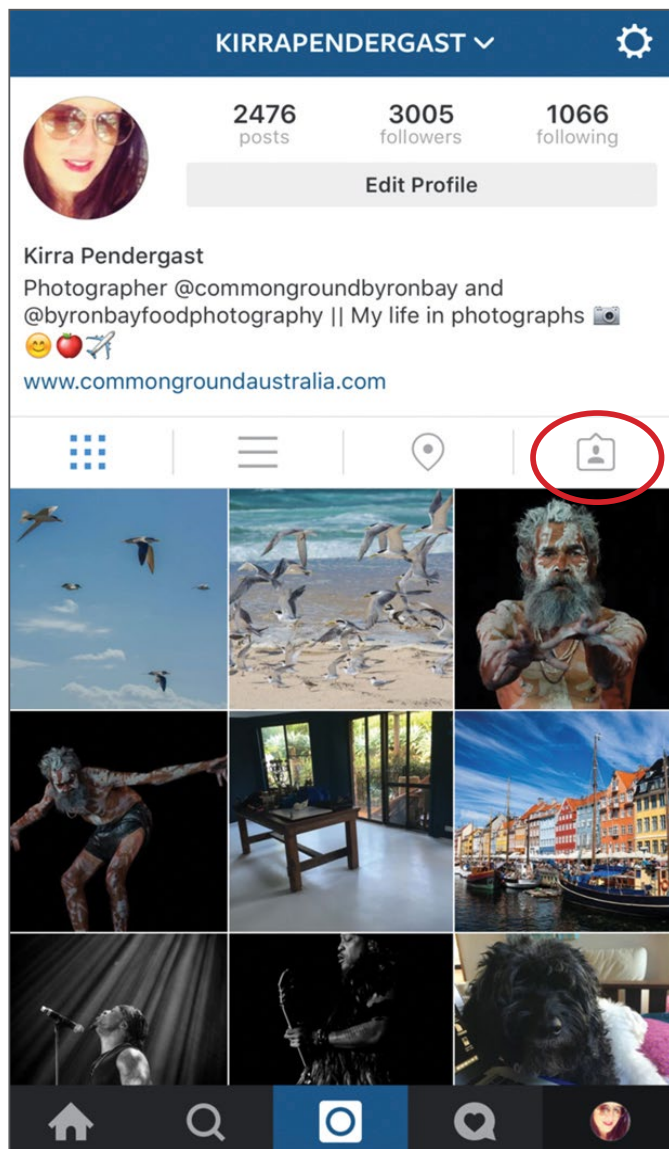


## Visibility

On Instagram, you can't be tagged in videos, but you can be tagged in photos. These appear in the "Photos of you" section of your profile. This section is accessible by clicking on the icon directly to the right of your photo map button on the bar of icons under your Instagram bio. These images are visible to anyone unless your account is set to private. Others can tag you in photos they post but, if you don't like the picture you can hide a picture from your profile or untag yourself. The image will still be visible on Instagram but not associated with your username and not in your profile. If you don't want certain photos to appear in Photos of You, you can choose which ones do and don't appear.

To do this you simply:

1. Go to your home page on Instagram
2. Click on the icon "photos of you."
3. Click on the three dots in the top right-hand corner
4. Click "hide photos" and select which images you don't want to show
5. Click "hide from profile"



Another point to consider is what is in the background of a photo or video. This could indicate where it was taken or what the people in it were doing at the time. And that may be information that you don't want to share. Instead of sharing a photo with all your followers, you can select who can see it. Click on the Instagram Direct icon in the top right corner and choose who to share it with.



[www.safeonsocial.com](http://www.safeonsocial.com)