



françois et moi

**EIGHT
FAST & FRIENDLY TIPS
TO GROW
YOUR INSTAGRAM**

how i went from
2k to 14k followers
in 12 months

Why Should I Give These Strategies a Try?

I, Erin [@francoisetmoiblog](#), started 2016 with somewhere around 2000 Instagram followers. I was posting 3+ times a week, and struggling to grow my following because as a blogger it's often how we quantify what to charge for sponsored posts, etc. On a good day, I was lucky to connect and gain about 5 friends. It was exhausting, frustrating and downright discouraging. I felt as though I was sprinting in place and getting nowhere.

There has to be a more effective way to grow my following, I thought to myself, so I started doing extensive research. I've read nearly every post on the inter-webs on the subject, polled my colleagues who were killing it on the platform, and implemented their strategies for myself. Below I've compiled everything that has worked for me, helping to grow my following from 2000 to over 14000 in the last 12 months.

1. Post Frequently:

If you're not on a daily posting schedule, this can be one of the toughest pieces to implement, but **seriously**, posting frequently is one of the major keys to growing your following. I try to post daily, and sometimes even twice daily, if possible. On the flip side of things, I also miss a day here and there if I just don't have a great photo or anything interesting to say. You've got to find a sustainable balance and schedule that works for you.

2. Get Social:

Afterall, this is SOCIAL media! Forge relationships with people in your niche with a similar style or a style you love by following them and commenting & liking their photos. Who knows, maybe they'll like and follow you back!

In a similar vein, make sure you respond to comments on your photos as soon as you can. The more engagement you get on a post early on, the more successful it will be in Instagram's algorithm.

2. Tag Hashtags to the Max:

Most of us are familiar with hashtags and how they help categorize/organize our posts within Instagram. But did you know you can tag up to 30 hashtags per photo? You can tag them right in your caption, or post them in your "Comments." I have a big, revolving list of 70+ hashtags that I store in my phone's "Notes" and rotate them by copy/pasting them on each of my posts so I'm reaching as many hashtags as I can.

3. Invent a Hashtag:

Once you start building your following, start a hashtag on your own or with friends. Encourage people to tag their photos and follow you for a chance to be featured. I started [#handmademodernhome](#) and tag it on every one of my personal photos too, not only as a branding piece, but also to keep it in front of people.

4. Join in On Hashtag Contests:

Enter your photos in weekly hashtag contests, which are usually groups of Instagrammers who host a specific hashtag and choose a weekly winner. The winner is then featured on all the hosts' accounts that week and some also ask you to guest host the following week which gets you in front of yet a larger audience. Some hashtag contests in the design niche are [#howyouhome](#) and [#myeclecticmix](#).

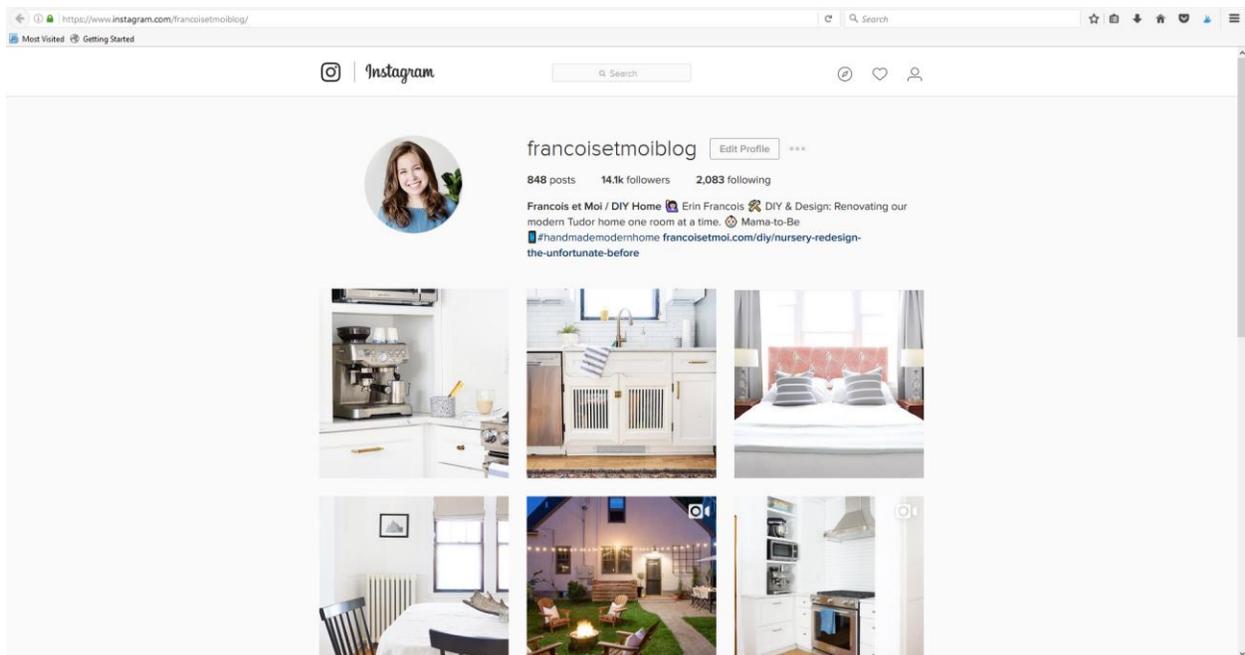
5. Tag Brands Pictured in Your Photos:

Brands are always looking to feature their products in action. I've had the best luck being reposted by small to medium size brands. However, the occasional repost by larger brands send lots of new eyes and hopefully followers your way. Many brands also have their own hashtags, so look for those in their bio or tagged on their recent posts.

6. Upgrade to a Free Business Account:

Upgrading to a business account allows you to view analytic information about your following such as their demographic, when they're most engaged on Instagram, etc. I've found this information most useful in determining the best time of day to post.

To upgrade go to your bio profile and click the 'Options' icon (looks like the shape of the sun) in the upper right corner. Scroll down and click on the 'Upgrade to Business Account' line item and upgrade your account following the instructions.



7. Instagram Bio: Get Personal

When a potential follower comes to your account, you want to make sure your bio has a clear, concise description of what you and your feed are all about.

- What do you post about most days?
- Name something personal about yourself.
- List your personal hashtag.
- Include a headshot of yourself. It doesn't have to be professional, but including a picture of you helps followers forge a stronger connection with you and your account.

8. Get the Most Bang for Your Post:

Because of the way Instagram's Algorithm is structured, videos rank higher than photos, meaning they'll pop up at the top of your followers' feeds for longer than standard photos will.

If you're creating videos—Awesome! If you're not, try using GIF's, which are basically a slideshow of photos in video format. I use these often for Before & After posts, like [this one](#) of our backyard which has garnered nearly 11k views. To create GIF's, I use gifmaker.me and save the files as videos.

Also pay attention to what types of photos attract the most likes and comments. As a DIY & design blogger, I've found that full room (vs. close-up) shots, high contrast, and photos with thoughtful, personal captions seem to get the most engagement.

I hope you've found a strategy or two in here that you'd like to try on your own Instagram account. If you have any questions please feel free to email me at francoisetmoiblog@gmail.com. Thank you for joining me here!