

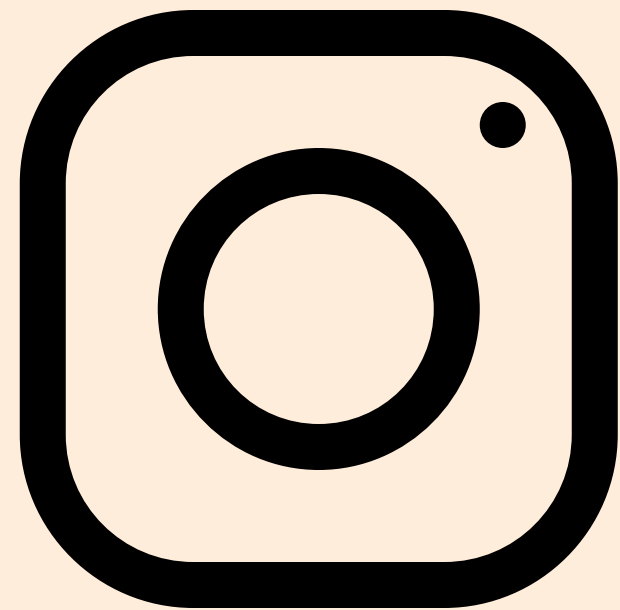


USING INSTAGRAM FOR YOUR BUSINESS

A GUIDE ON GENERAL BEST PRACTICES FOR INSTAGRAM CONTENT



INSTAGRAM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW



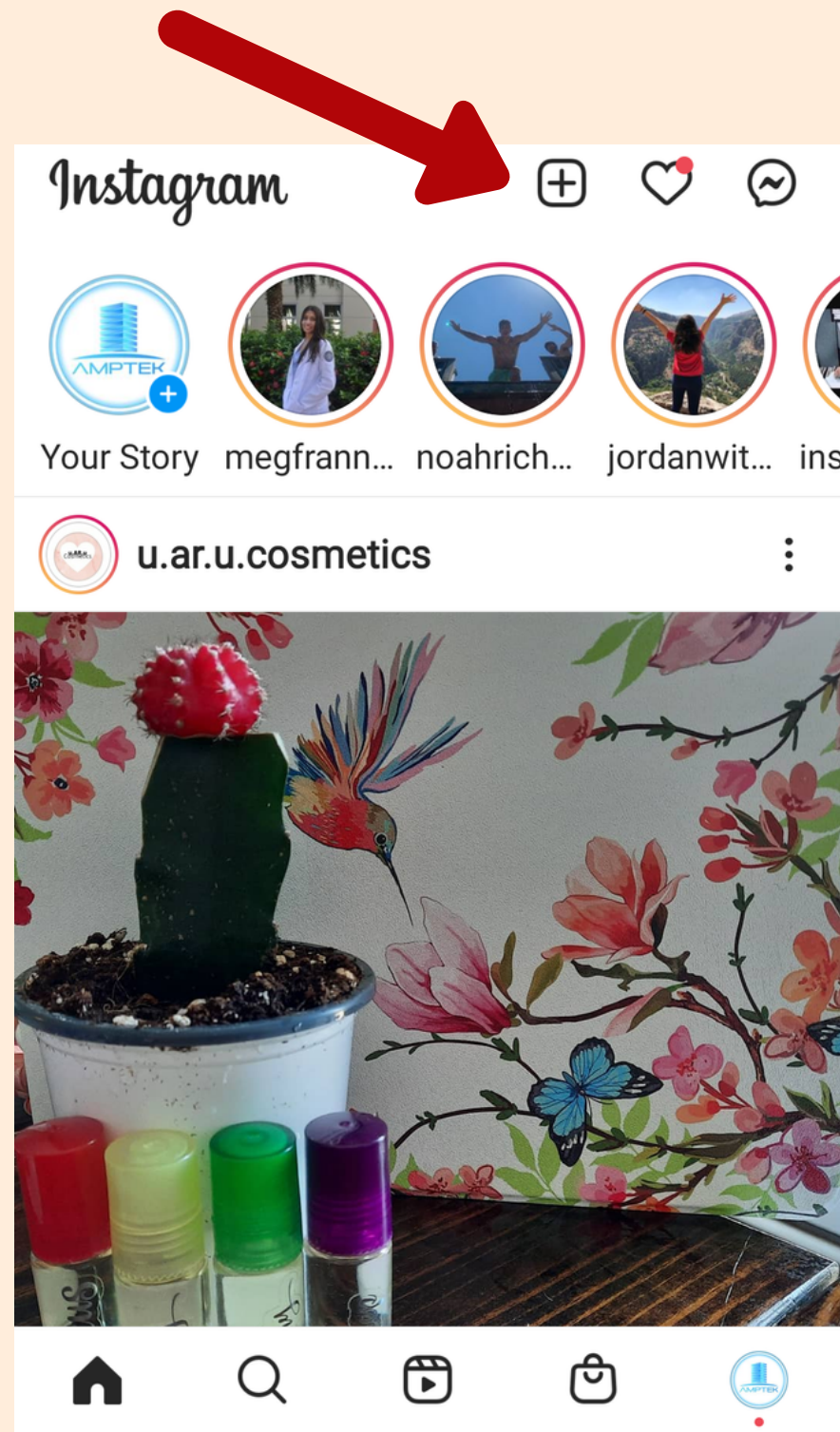
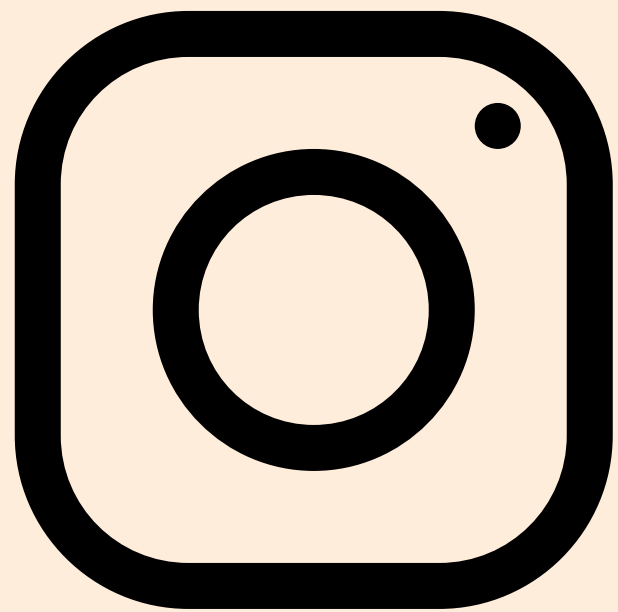
Instagram is known as the most visual Social Media platform. It is jam-packed with content sharing capabilities.

General rule of thumb, there are no "links" allowed on Instagram.

It is a platform where organically, there's a lot of room for growth in getting a target audience to view the content an account shares which leaves a lot of benefit to be had for businesses.

Content should be appealing and engaging ideally to create connection with target audiences.

POSTING ON YOUR INSTAGRAM BUSINESS ACCOUNT



Doing "posts" regularly and consistently is important to gain traction and interaction with your audience.

Commit to what is comfortable for you/your staff to devote time to weekly.

Add a post via the phone app by clicking the + sign at the top of the home screen.



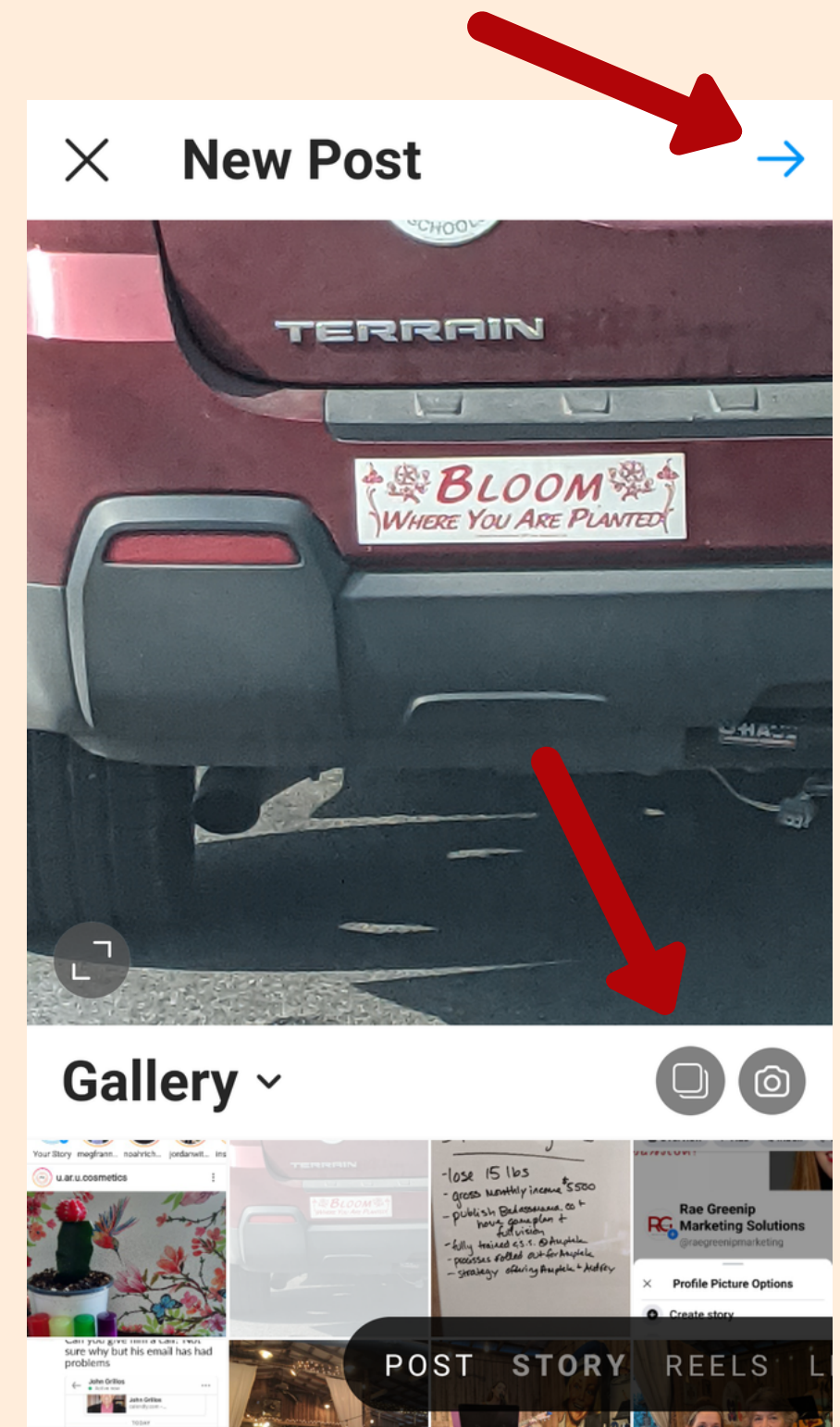
It may default to open your camera. Click the bottom left image to pull images from your gallery on your phone.

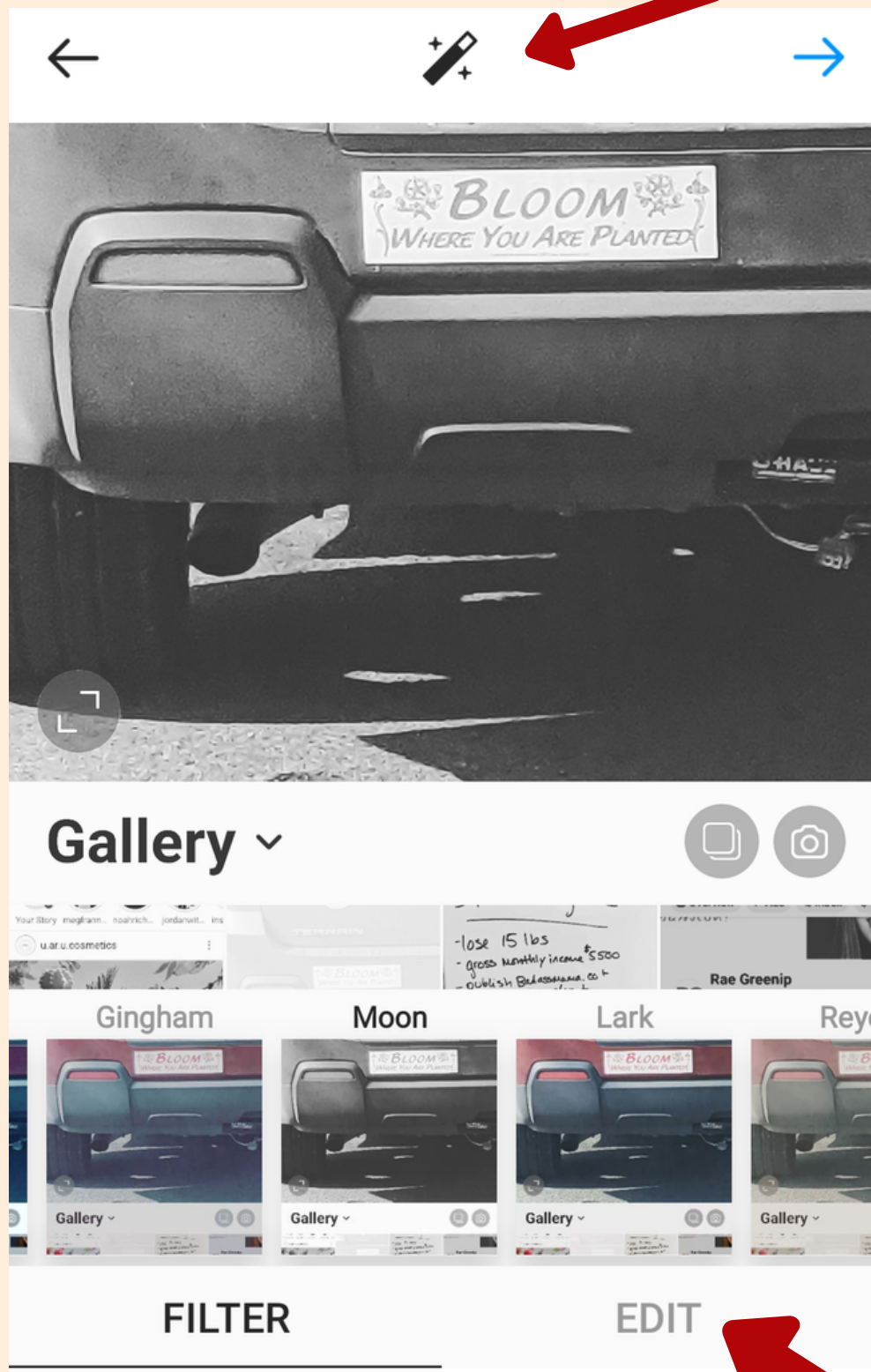
Make sure you stay on "POST" as you can select various types of content sharing (explained later).

Select the image (or images) you want to share in the post.

If you do more than one image, that is called a "carousel." This means that the first image will appear as the post however, there will be an indicator to viewers that they can "slide" through more images on the post. To select more than one image, hit the little gray icon with the multiple white boxes in it on the right.

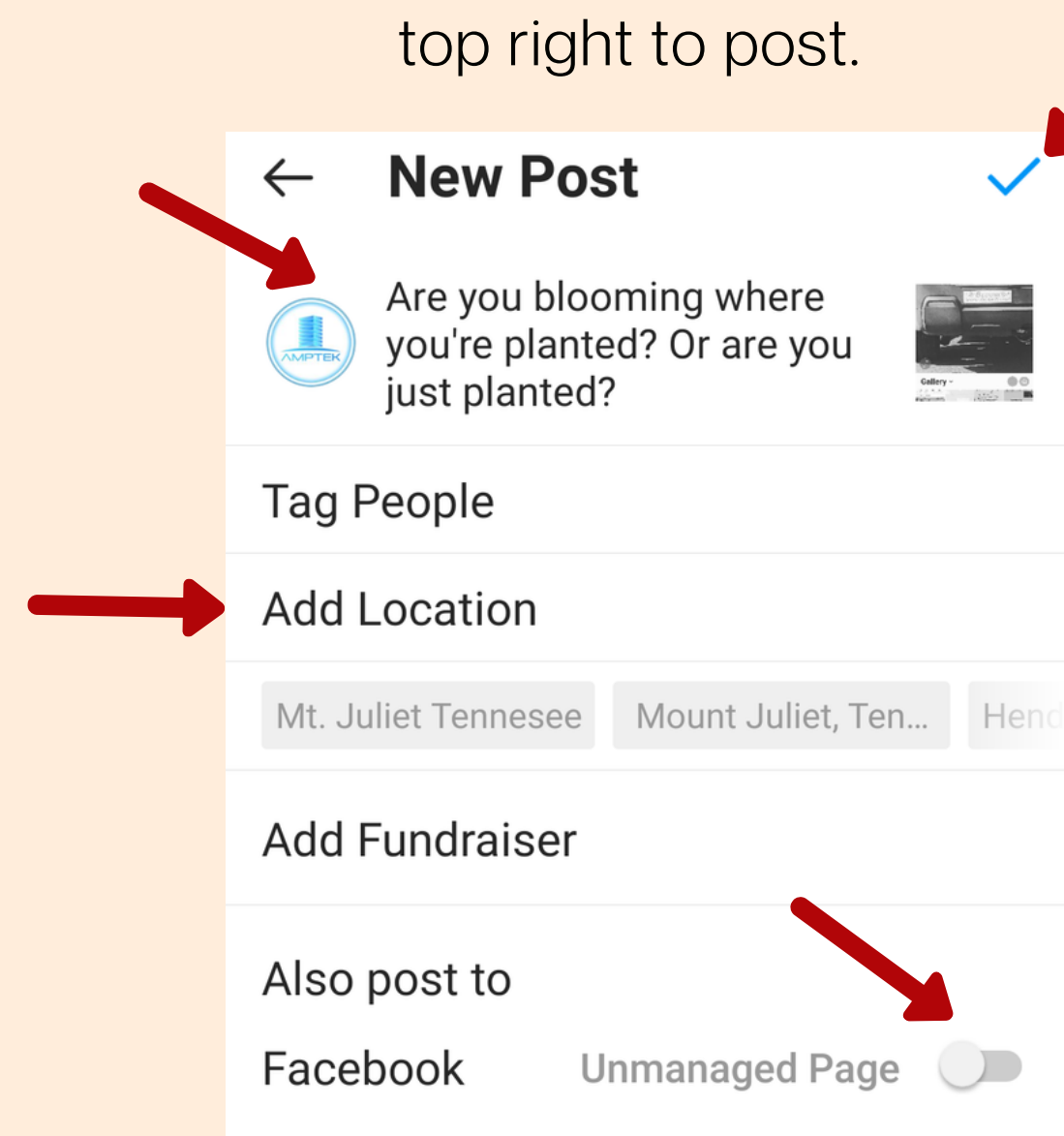
When you are finished selecting your images, hit the blue arrow on the top right.



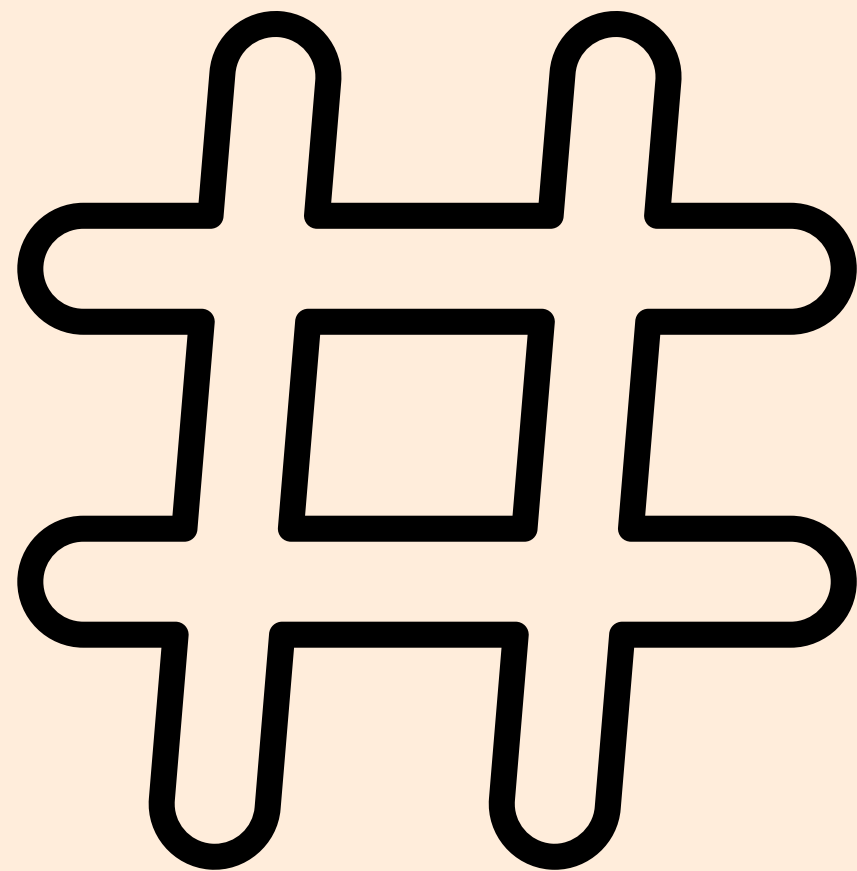


Add a filter to your image to change the look of it. You can use the Lux tool and adjust the saturation with the magic wand button at the top and make other adjustments like brightness and contrast to the image via the edit button. When finished editing, hit the blue arrow at the top.

Write your caption, "geotag" your post by adding location and then you can also post to other platforms that you have connected your IG account to. (Linking FB Business Page instructions in the setting up an IG account guide.) When ready, click the blue arrow at the top right to post.



WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH HASHTAGS ON IG?



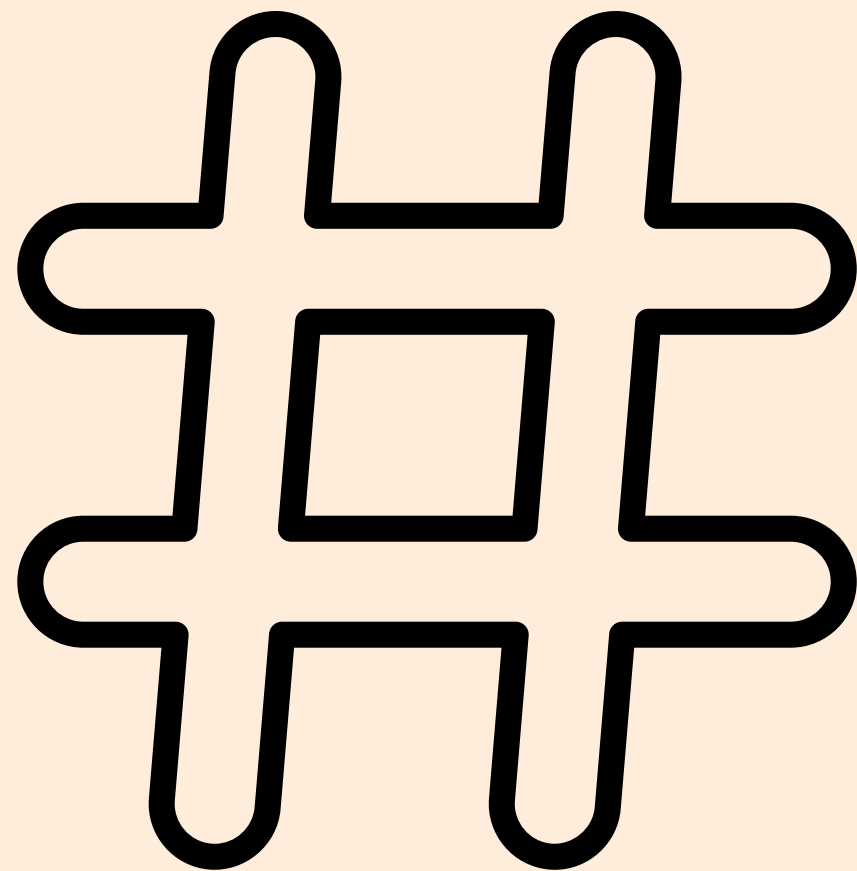
For posts on Instagram, you can use up to 30 hashtags. This is the major way you can get your business in front of new people i.e. new potential customers (not followers of your account). The idea is to use as many as are relevant to the particular post as possible.

Don't use the same hashtags over and over again for every post (the IG algorithm penalizes accounts as it is seen as "spammy" behavior).

Rule of thumb is to have at least three completely different sets of hashtags to alternate on posts.

Note: if you are cross posting from Instagram to your Facebook page, put the Instagram hashtags in a comment below the post. The Facebook algorithm will penalize posts with too many hashtags. If you do this, it's important to post the comment with the hashtags ASAP. If there is a delay, the hashtags don't really do much good as the algorithm is always looking for the newest content.

MORE ON INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS







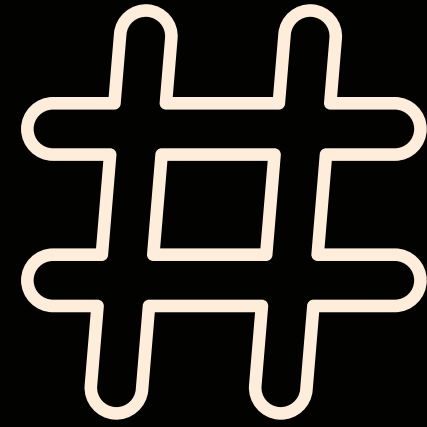
In addition to creating hashtag lists that work well for different posts, there are particular ones that are preferable to use over others.

Don't use the hashtags that have been used on millions of posts.

In the example, "#quotes" has almost 130 million posts but "#coolquotes" only has 57,000. Therefore, #coolquotes be used and NOT #quotes.

This allows much more of a chance that the post would be seen by more people and featured in that hashtag feed for much longer where the post would be "buried" in the "#quotes" feed.

	#quotes	
#quotes	129,842,995 public posts	
	#coolquotes	
#coolquotes	56,290 public posts	



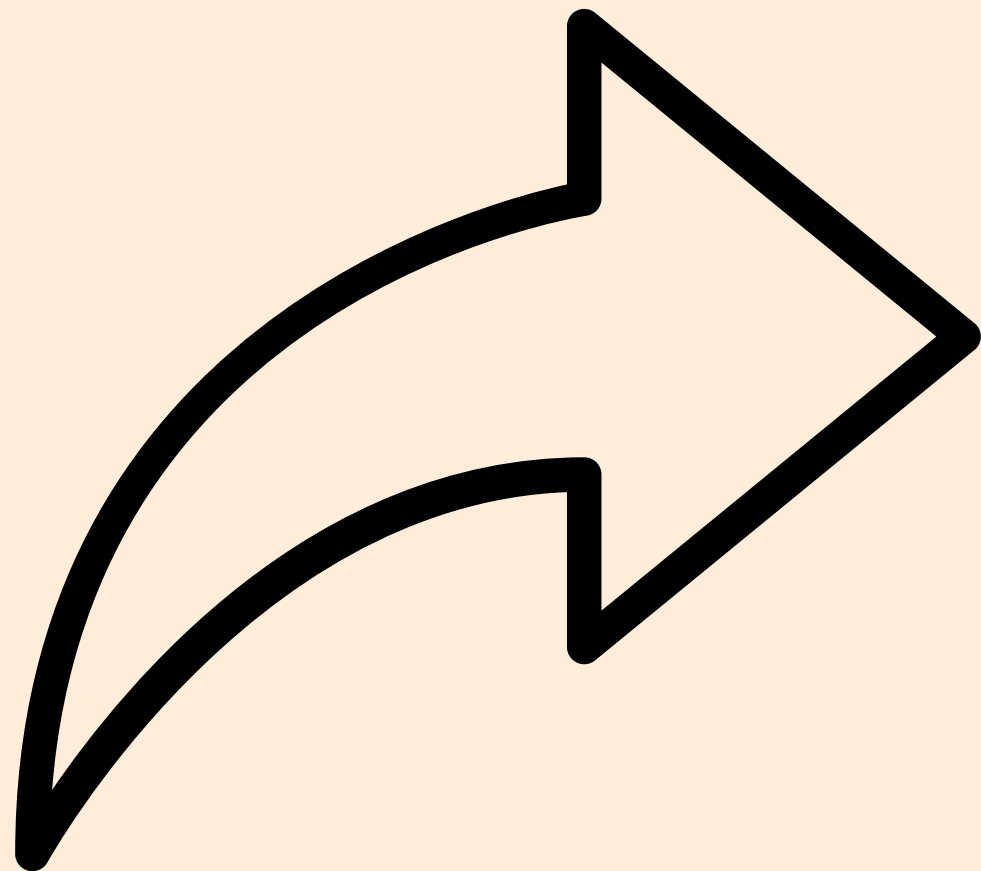
CONCLUSION ON HASHTAGS FOR IG POSTS

Ideally, use hashtags for your posts that have at least 1000 to 1,000,000 posts that use them.

Experiment with various phrases that are relevant to your posts and see what is available. Keep lists on hand that fit with the various types of content you post for an easy go-to.

Side note: If you're a local business looking for local traffic, use hashtags that indicate location.

SHARING IS CARING!



Follow accounts on IG that are good referral sources for your business (i.e. businesses whose target audience is the same.) Engage with their posts. When appropriate, tag those accounts on your posts.

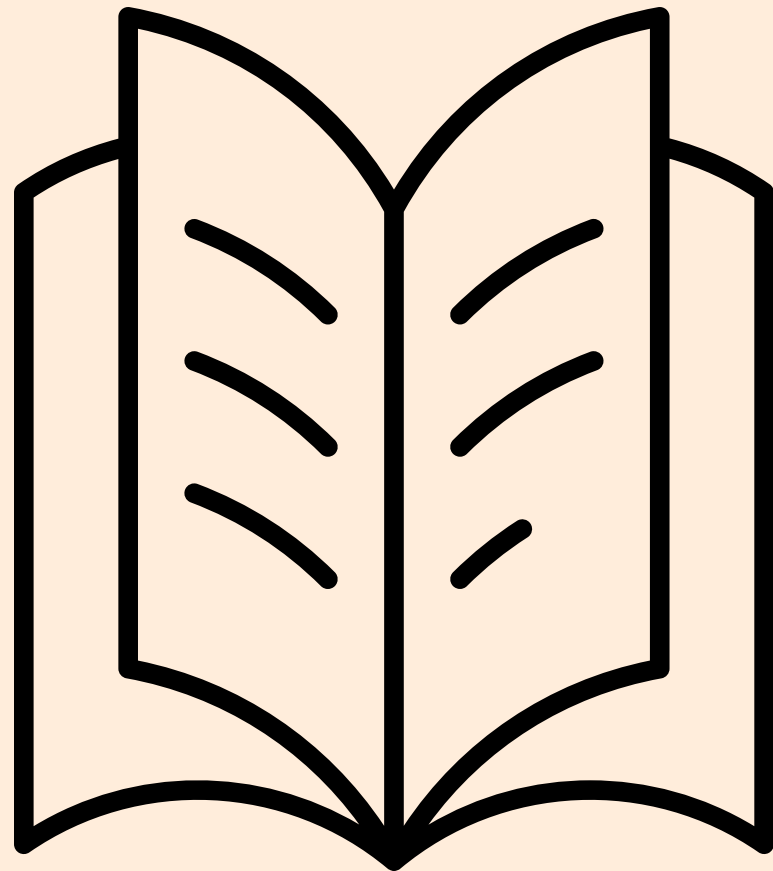


Encourage your employees to like and comment on posts.



Always "Reply" to comments that are left on your posts. (Do NOT just "like.")

STORIES

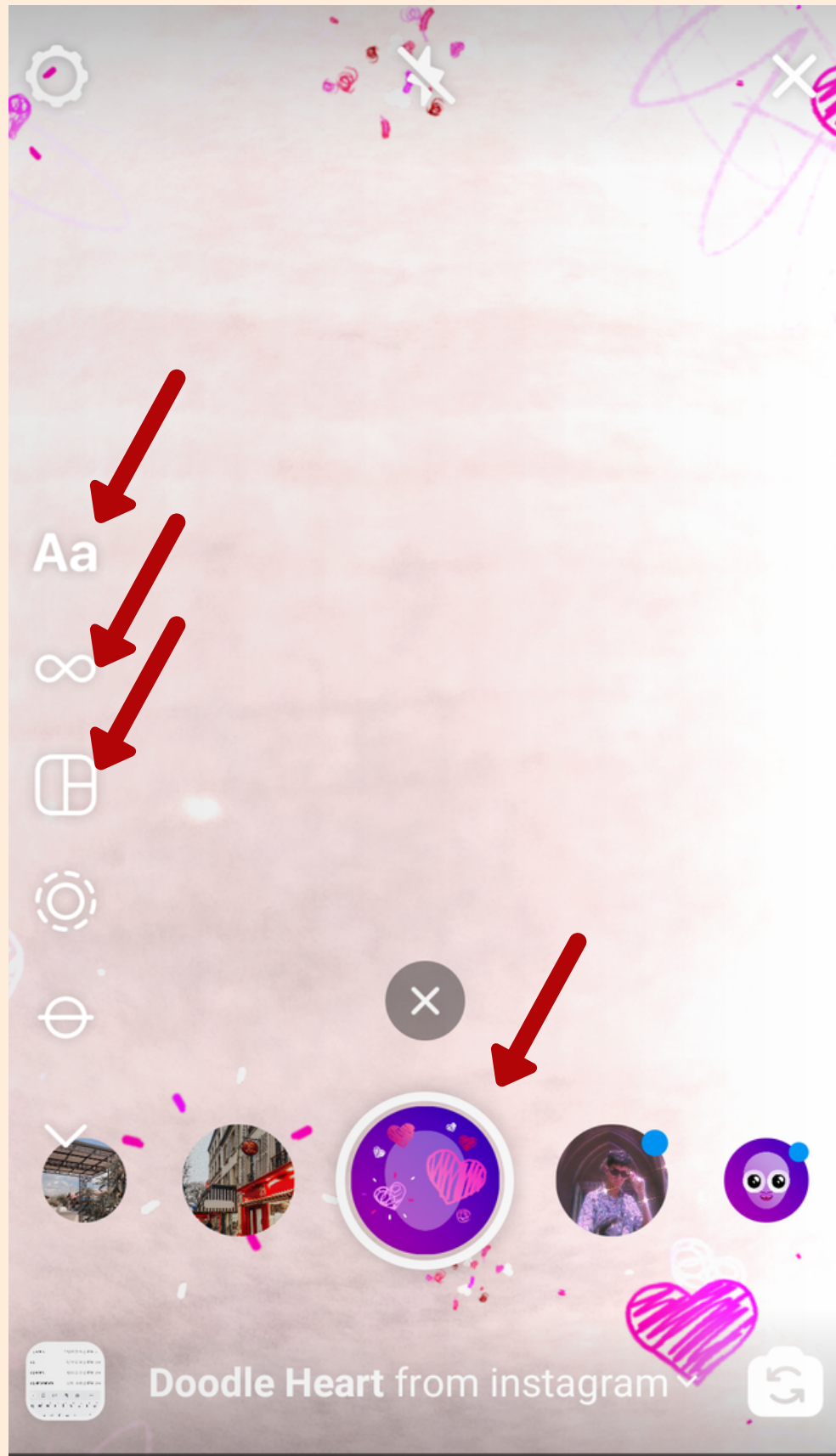


Stories are a place where you can post additional content. Instead of being in a “feed,” stories appear at the top of the feed and user home page.

Note: they disappear in 24 hours.

Stories are a good place to do exactly what they are called – tell a story. This means that for people to engage, it should have a beginning, middle and an end.


Using images, stickers, gifs and text, this is a fun way to entertain, inspire or educate your audience.



Stories are designed to be created and viewed on the mobile app and are displayed vertically.

To add a story, you can hit the + on the top of the home page and select "STORY" or simply swipe the home screen right. You can take an image from your gallery on the bottom left or use your camera and apply fun filters on the bottom by swiping right and going through them.

Use the menu icons on the left side to add things like text or additional images to the story panel and adjust your camera settings.

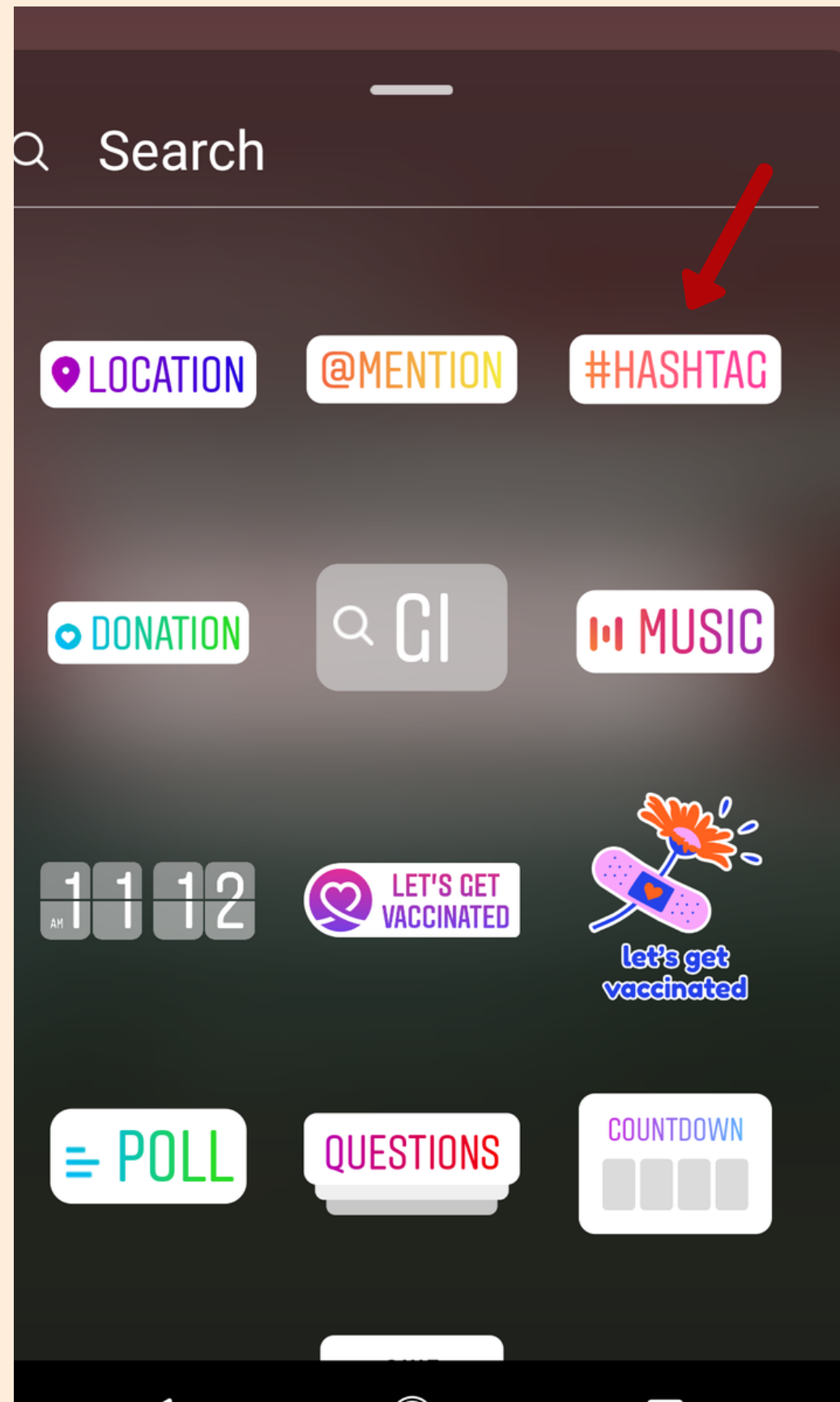
There is also a "boomerang" tool that looks like:  that can be used to create a quick boomerang-like moving image. (FYI- IG originally created this.)



Using images from your phone gallery, you can also add a variety of items to the story panel. Sliding right in this screen applies various filters to the entire story panel. Adjust how large you want the image to appear in the story by zooming in and out with your fingers on the image.

Add text and/or draw. Click the smiley face and add things like music and gifs to your story panel.

When you're finished editing the panel, click the "Your Stories" button on the bottom left to add the panel to your story. By having your FB Business Page, you can add the story panel to both accounts at the same time. You can also download the story by clicking the down arrow icon at the top of the screen.

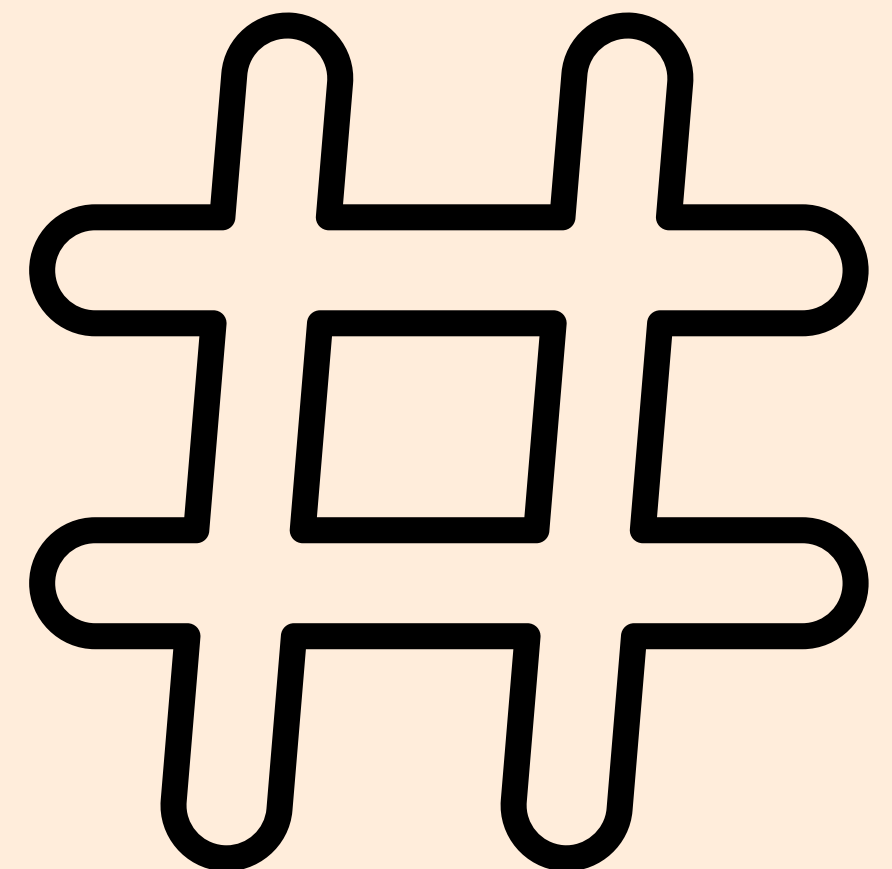


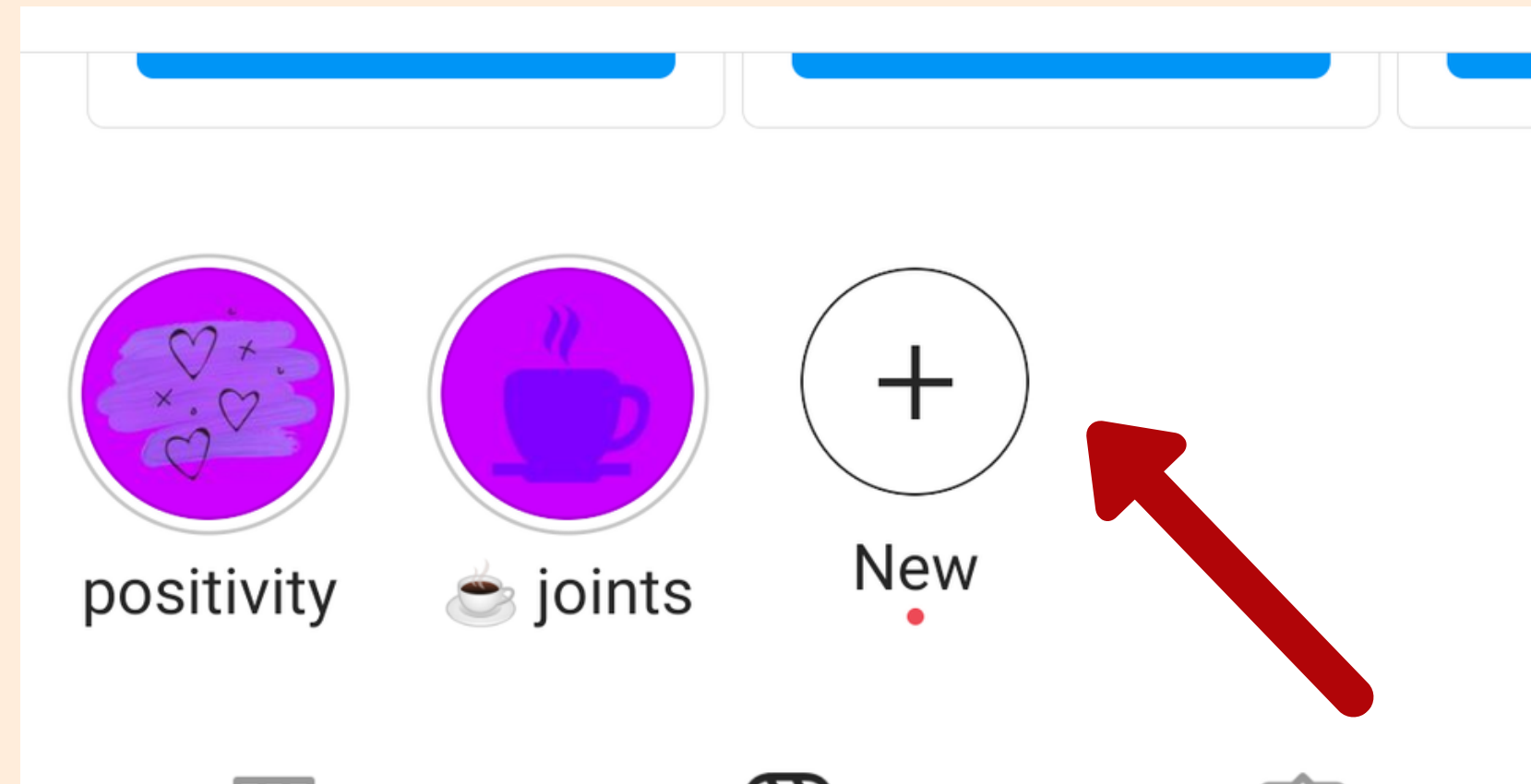
Hashtag strategy for stories is very different than posts.
Add a hashtag by using the hashtag sticker.

Add up to two additional hashtags in text.

When choosing hashtags for stories, more widely used ones are the key.

This is because stories disappear within 24 hours and don't stay on a particular hashtag's story for more than that.

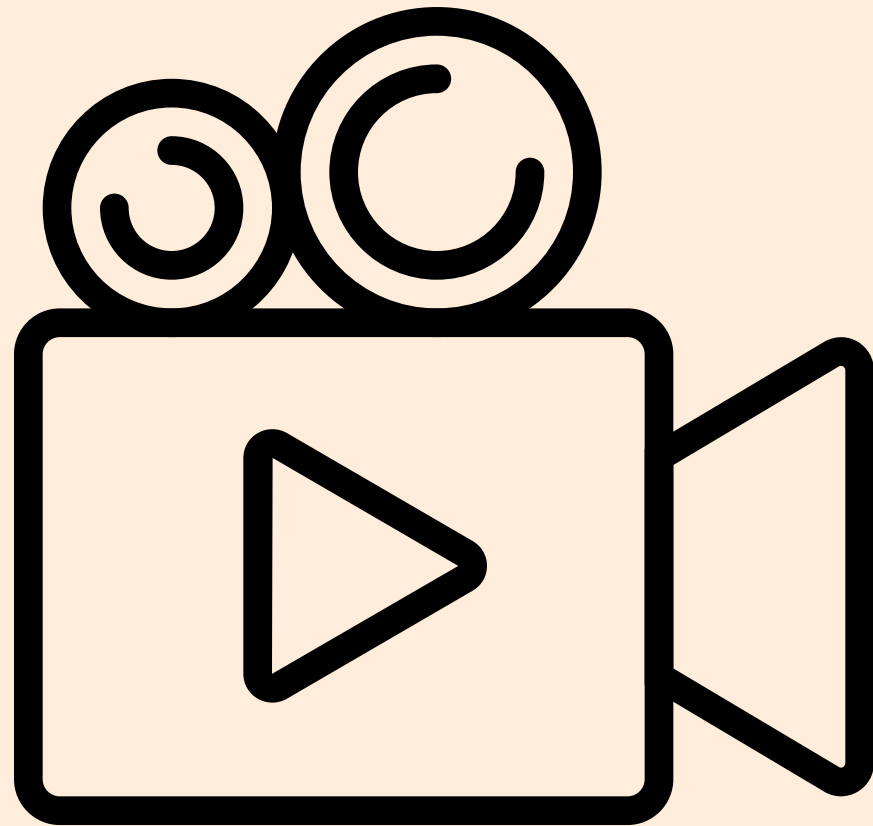




Add similar type stories to "Highlights" to feature them on your Instagram profile.

You can simply click on a story panel while it's playing and click "More/Add to Highlight."

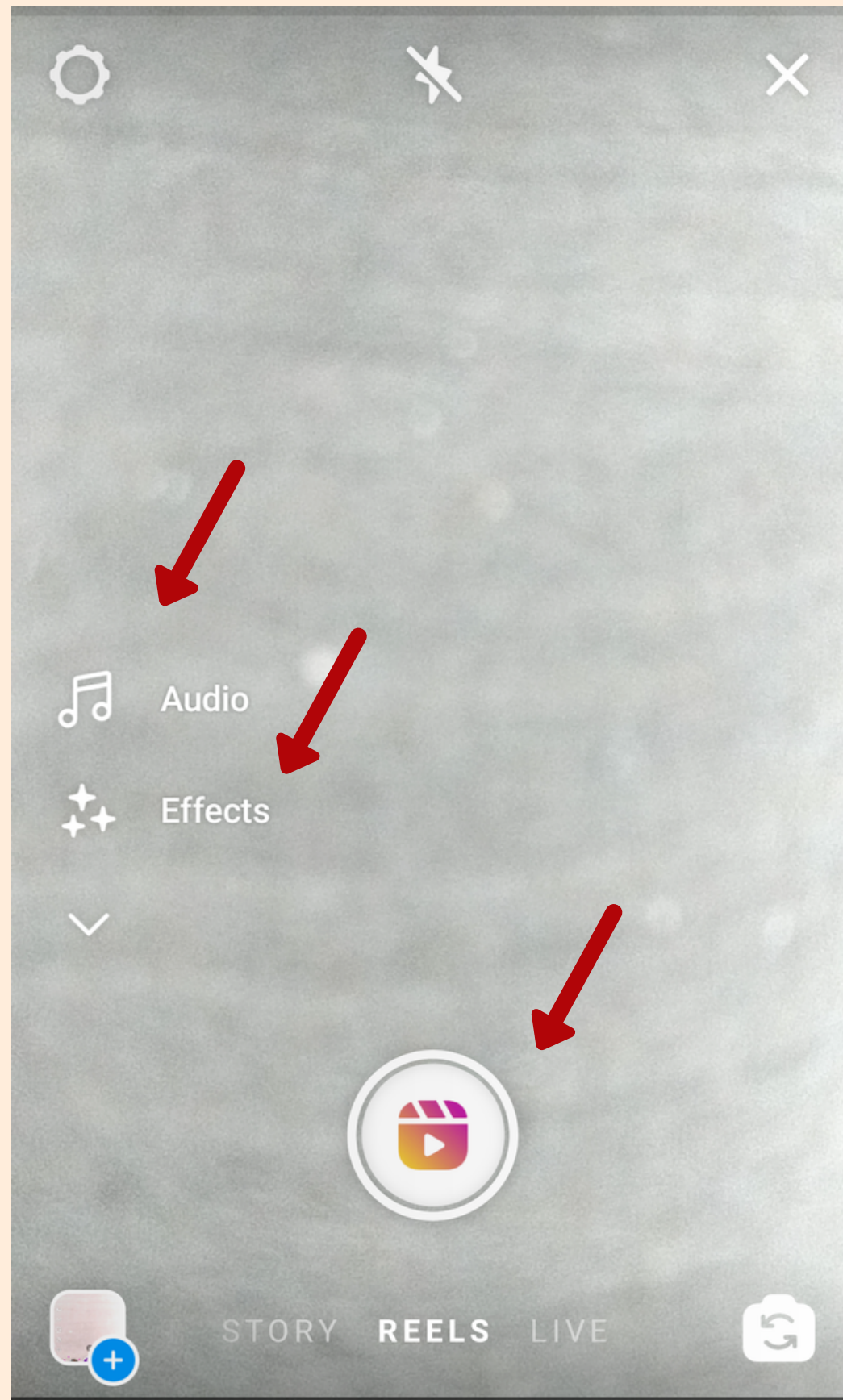
REELS



Reels are the latest content sharing avenue added to the Instagram App. This was developed in response to competitor short-form video social media platform Tik-Tok.

"Reels" are instant short-form video segment of 15 seconds or less.

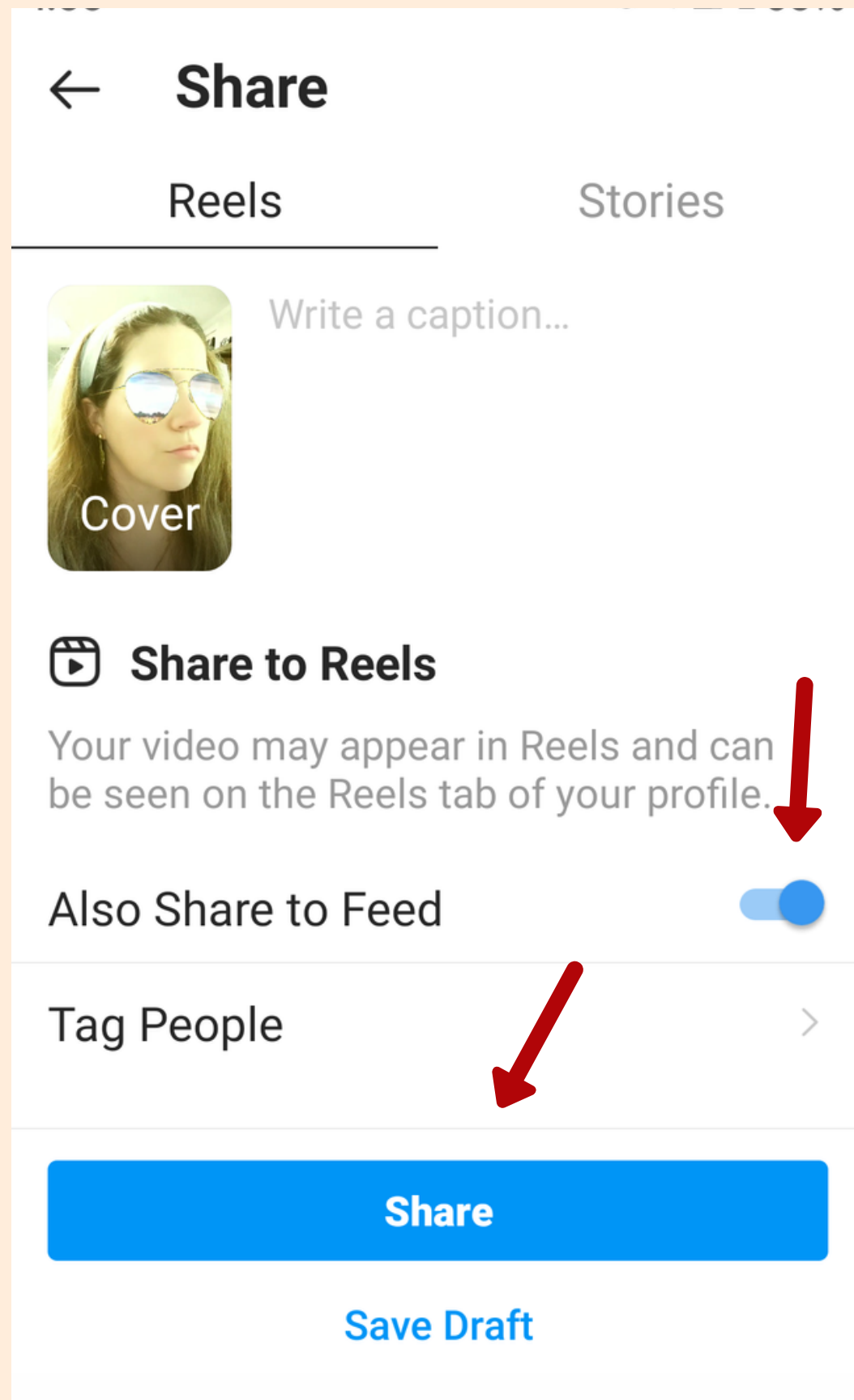
Add a "reel" by hitting the + icon at the top of the home page and scrolling over to "reels" as the type of content at the bottom of the screen.



Record video by hitting the main play button in the bottom middle of the screen. You can also add videos or photos from your phone's gallery by hitting the bottom left icon. Add music with the audio tool on the left and special video effects.

Note: if recording video within reels, the limit now goes up to 30 seconds per video.

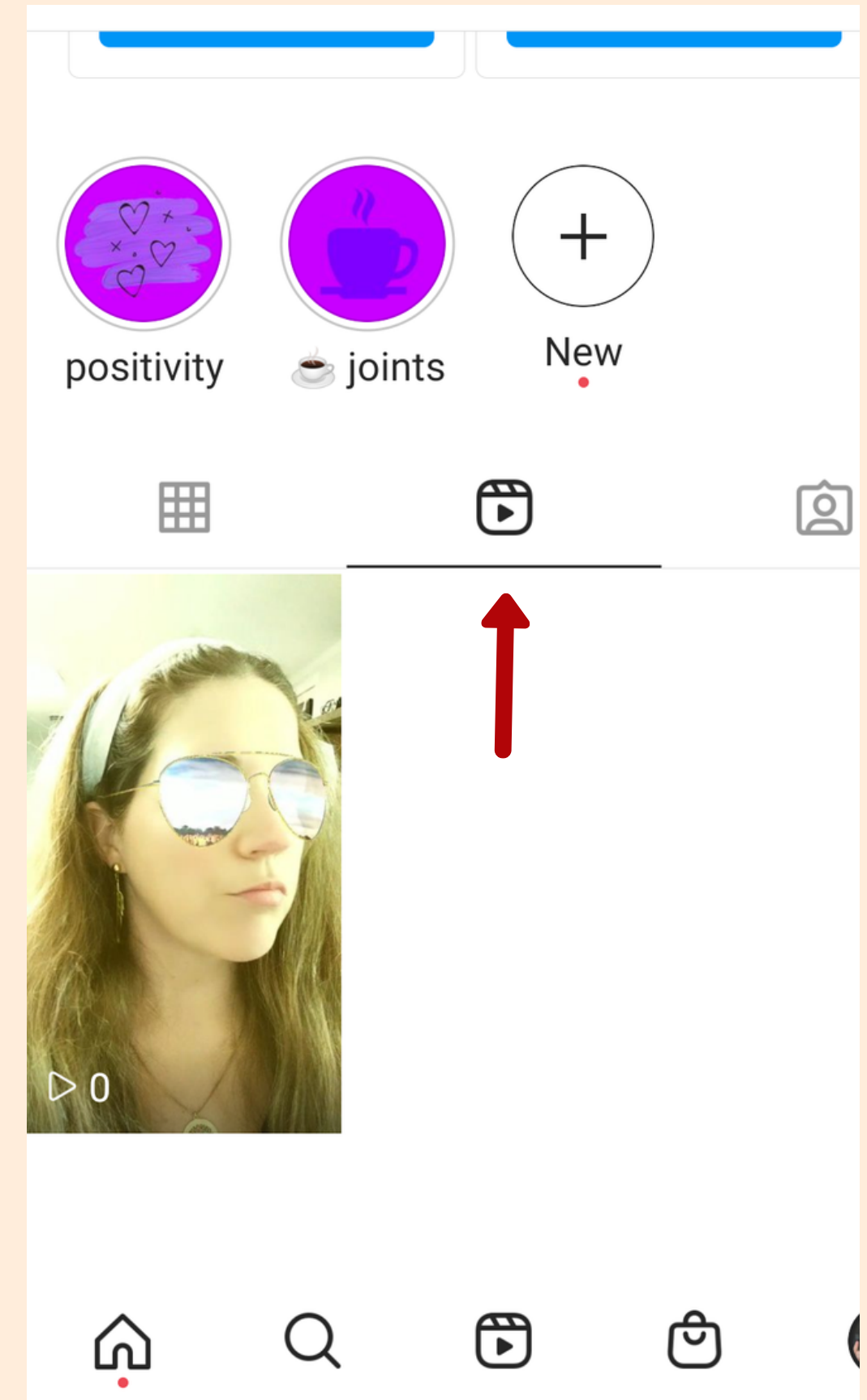
Once video is recorded, trim as needed and add media and effects similar to the tools used in "Story."



After previewing and when the video is ready, hit "Next" at the bottom right. Choose a cover image.

Click share in the blue on the bottom. You can also share to feed where people that follow your page will be able to see the reel in their feeds.

Once it processes, "reels" videos are featured on your profile in their own section.



THE BOTTOM LINE

VARIETY AND PURPOSE

Use a variety of content: images and carousel posts, video reels, stories, etc.

The purpose of of the content should be to either educate, entertain or inspire your audience.

Rule of thumb is 80/20. Only blatantly promote your business 20% of the time.

The purpose of being regularly present on social media is to engage your target market, stay top of mind for that audience and position your business to your ideal clients as one they know, like and trust.

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