



Photo Session Tips

The goal of a traditional portrait, in either a studio or outdoor setting, is to draw attention to the face or faces of the people in the photograph. Much of the training and experience that helps a photographer make great portraits is centered around keeping a portrait interesting, while still calling attention to the people we are photographing rather than the things that surround them, including what they are wearing. Here are a few tips that will help us give you the best, most memorable portraits that will last you for years to come!

Clothing

Keep clothing simple, without prints or patterns.

Adults and Teens should wear long sleeved clothing as bare arms can be very distracting.

Avoid trendy fashions, this will make your portraits age less gracefully.

Avoid very wide/ low V-necks or bulky sweaters

If you are being photographed full length, avoid shorts or short skirts. Legs can easily distract a viewer in a portrait. For casual portraits, it is equally important to wear long pants instead of shorts. Blue jeans always photograph nicely.

Bold colors can be fun, but can also distract from your face and tend to add weight. Try to stay away from bright colors for traditional portraits. Darker colors are slimming and draw the viewer to look at the subject of the photograph.

Clothing below the waistline should be somewhat darker than above if possible. Otherwise, even light jeans worn with a darker shirt or blouse could easily attract attention to the lower part of the body and away from the face. White shirt or blouse under a dark jacket works well.

So, after reading all these rules, we don't want to take the fun out of your experience! If you are going for a specific look, let's discuss it! Sometimes breaking a rule in photography can bring some fun results!

Necklines

A wide-open neckline tends to thicken the neck in a photograph. On the other hand, a neckline that comes up to the base of the neck—like a turtleneck or v-neck top—will thin the neckline and frame the face beautifully. With a collarless blouse or sweater, a scarf loosely tied around the neck also helps to frame the face nicely.

Hair

Do not make any major hair style changes right before a portrait session. This could result in your bad hair week lasting a life time!

Men should not get a hair cut within a few days of the portrait session. About a week before is a good time frame to get a hair cut.

Eyeglasses

Eyeglass lenses can pick up light from almost any angle, and can cause some disturbing optical illusions when photographed. If you would like to have a portrait with your glasses, many optometrists will loan you a similar set of frames without lenses in them.

Jewelry

Simple jewelry can add a touch of elegance, but keep only the jewelry that you wear all the time, or that has special significance to you. The part accessories play is to complement, but in a photograph anything but the simplest jewelry can grab attention quickly.

Unless we are taking pictures of your new line of signature watches, remove them before the portrait session. Watches are very distracting, and can date a photograph as well!

Makeup

◆Men: We know you want to skip over this, but photographic lighting really makes your skin shine and can be distracting. A little dab of powder can go a long way to making a better picture. Just be thankful you aren't Arnold Schwarzenegger or Steven Segal, they have to wear much more than you!

◆Women: Apply your makeup as if you were going out for an evening ball. Probably just a touch more than a normal day, but do not over do it. Your mother may tell you to put on a lot, but with the digital cameras and lights we use today that is no longer a necessity.

Eye makeup should be blended—no sharp demarcation lines between colors.

Color on the lips helps to give them definition and keeps them from blending into your skin. Keep it natural looking trying to enhance and not make the lips the focus of the photo.

Avoid white above or below the eyes. Too much color above and/or below the eyes will attract attention to the make-up and away from the eyes.

Blend foundation makeup at the jaw-line so that there is no demarcation between the face and the neck.

Shimmery makeup tends to look funny, whereas makeup with sunscreen or wearing sunscreen in general reflects light and tends to make the wearer look washed out.

Families and Groups

In families and other groups clothing coordination is critical. Choose clothing that is in the same tones so that no one stands out. If everyone in your group comes dressed in darker tones, and one member of the group is in red, it will draw attention away from the group and to that person.