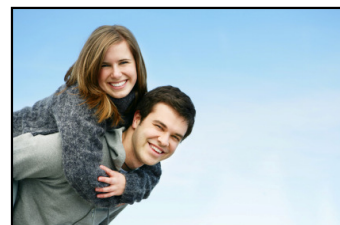


POSING TIPS

How you pose your subjects for a portrait will have a tremendous impact on the outcome. Do they look natural? Is the pose flattering for their figure? Does the pose reflect their personality? Here are a few tips to help ensure the subject's satisfaction with the end result.



TWO ESSENTIAL RULES

The most important rule of posing is to be confident and in control. Subjects will feel more comfortable if they believe they're in good hands. You may not always be confident of your skills – but fake it 'till you make it! Assert yourself confidently while posing your subjects and you will increase their confidence in you as a portrait photographer. As a side note, sometimes it is helpful to demonstrate poses. Don't be afraid to show them exactly what you're looking for. Some subjects may respond to this better than instructions.

If you lack confidence in your ability to pose subjects in a variety of positions or settings, or if you simply would like to have more ideas to work with, then The Ultimate Posing Guide is just for you! This book is full of hundreds of pictures of poses for a wide array of subjects. It will become one of your most valuable tools! Find it at www.PortraitTutor.com.

The second most important rule of posing is to be in constant interaction with the subjects. Talk to them, joke with them, ask questions – do whatever it takes to help them feel comfortable. The more comfortable they feel, the better the portraits will turn out!

THE BASICS

There are three basic face positions to always keep in mind when posing:



Full Face



3/4 Face



Profile

Full face is when the subject is looking straight into the camera. Both ears are fully visible (unless hidden by hair.) It's a simple and direct position for the face. However there are a few potential downsides. For one thing, a full face pose can often look boring or uninteresting. Another problem is that it's not flattering for people with uneven faces (which is most of us). For those reasons, it's best to use full-face poses sparingly.

$\frac{3}{4}$ face poses are the most common. Generally the subject's shoulders will be at a 45 degree angle from the camera. The face will be turned slightly away from the camera so that one ear will not be visible. Different faces will look better at different angles, so have your subject turn their head slowly one way or the other until you find the angle that is most flattering for them.

Profiles are when the subject's face is turned completely to one side or the other, with only one eye and one ear visible. Shoulders are often at a 45 degree angle again. Profiles can often have a dramatic look to them.

Basic portrait lengths include head shots, half-length, $\frac{3}{4}$ length and full length portraits. It is important to know what the subject is looking for since this will have an impact on which poses you choose to utilize.



DEALING WITH IMPERFECTION

Imperfections – we all have them! And most of us like to have them minimized as much as possible for portraits. Here are a few tips to help you deal with some of the most common issues you'll run into.

Wide or Round Face – Raise the camera angle slightly, and pose the subject with a $\frac{3}{4}$ face.

Thin face – Have the subject face the camera directly (full face).

Large Nose – Point the nose straight into the camera to help minimize its size.

Small Nose – Point the nose slightly away from the camera. ($\frac{3}{4}$ face)

Deep-Set Eyes – Point light into their eyes. Light coming too far from the sides will accentuate the depth.

Glasses – Bounce the light off the ceiling where possible. If not, position the subject so that glasses are pointed away from the lights.

Dark Hair – Make sure that the background provides enough contrast so hair doesn't just blend into it. Hair lights or a light on the backdrop are extremely helpful.

Also make sure the background doesn't show through hair.

Double Chin – A slightly higher camera angle will be more flattering than straight on. It also helps to have the subject leaning forward.

Large ears – Use a $\frac{3}{4}$ face pose or a profile.

FLATTERING YOUR SUBJECT

Your subjects will always be grateful when you flatter them – their figures, that is. For the large majority of the population that wish they were a few pounds lighter, here are a few tricks with pleasing results. Use poses that turn the hips at an angle from the camera, creating the illusion of smaller hips and a smaller waistline. Use more standing poses rather than sitting poses, since sitting seems to add the pounds visually. Have subjects stand with one leg slightly in front of the other, thus slimming their legs. And finally, always be sure your subject is sitting or standing up straight. Slouching will always add a few more pounds. Use these tricks and your subjects will look great!



POSING GROUPS

Group sessions are always going to be more complicated than individuals. There are a few things you can do to help things go more smoothly when posing them. First, if there are children involved, leave them till last. Pose the adults first, and then move on to the older children. They'll have a better ability to hold still while you continue posing. Then as soon as you get those little ones in place, start shooting! They may not hold still for long, so take advantage of every second. Also, remember that group portraits are about unity and togetherness. There are a number of ways to express that visually: You can have everyone touching in some way or another. You can pose the group so that everyone is visually overlapping. You can have all the members of the group looking at the same off-camera point. Whatever you do, be sure to create that visual sense of unity in your group portraits.

HELPING YOUR SUBJECTS RELAX

A common problem in portraits is that subjects often look unnatural or awkward. Sometimes this is due to pose choice. However, sometimes it simply has to do with the comfort level of the subject. So while you are posing your subject, there are things you can do to help them relax and look more natural. One idea is to play music. You can invite subjects to bring a favorite CD or you can have a collection they can choose from. Allowing the subject to choose the music helps ensure that it's something they will feel comfortable with. So be sure you have a wide variety of genres in your collection. Another useful trick is the use of props and accessories. Sometimes if people have something to focus on they can relax and forget about the camera. A few ideas that work for all ages would be hats (of all shapes, sizes, colors and styles) or books. Flowers, individually or bunched, are great for girls and women. Toys of any variety are good for kids. You can also incorporate seasonal props – such as a bushel of apples or mittens and scarves. Get creative and help the subjects relax!

CREATING UNIQUE POSES

Be creative and think outside of the box! It's becoming increasingly popular to have portraits that "break the rules" of tradition. Gone are the days when all portraits are taken in Sunday best in front of a plain dark backdrop. The stiff and formal poses of yesterday are headed out the back door. More and more people are interested in something different, something fresh and original. They want portraits that show creativity and personality. Look around at other photographers' work and see if you can't start coming up with some creative ideas of your own. And the most important rule of creativity is to be in the moment. If a subject is doing something that looks great – capture it! Don't feel restricted by "rules" and tradition. Have fun, come up with creative poses, and your subjects will keep coming back to you!

