

Preparing for your Portrait Session

Beautiful and memorable portraits do not just happen. They are carefully planned. Please take a few moments to look over the following suggestions to see how you may participate in the planning of your portrait. I am here to help. Feel free to call regarding any questions or ideas you may have before your session.

Before You Arrive

Be careful to avoid conditions that will cause problems during your session. Tan lines or sunburns can be difficult to correct when your clothing does not conceal them. If you are considering a bare shoulder look, you should avoid wearing anything that will leave strap lines or indentations on your shoulders. Socks may leave indentations on your legs that can take a long time to disappear. Knee-high nylons leave red indentation rings around your legs and should definitely be avoided.

Clothing Etc...

Carefully consider your outfits from head to toe (wear co-ordinating socks and shoes). This keeps your options open to create a variety of images ranging from full length to close-ups. Jeans and white casual shirts are terrific. Denim or leather jackets, and sweaters in subtle colours are great. Formal portraits are usually complimented by darker colours. The colour of your clothing will determine what kind of background will be most suitable. Medium to dark clothes are best for a darker background, while a light background is much more effective with lighter coloured clothing. Solid, more subdued colours are better, and long sleeves are usually more flattering (short sleeves may make arms look heavier). Wearing a dark top, and light pants or skirt will make your bottom half appear heavier, and the same is true reversed. Try to match your top and bottom half in both dark or both light to avoid this problem. For single or couples try to choose no more than 2 colours for your entire outfits. When preparing for a group portrait, it is especially important to have everyone dress in a similar theme or style (all casual or all formal). Colour coordination lends harmony to your family portrait (all dark or all light). Choose clothing that coordinates each family member's attire to each other, rather than distract from the group as a whole. Try to avoid patterned clothing, especially for children. For families of 4-8 select no more than 4 colours for a more unified look. Bring extra clothing changes if you wish. This will help me to assist you in selecting the most appropriate outfit.

Hair & Make-up

It is best to stay with a hair style and make-up that you are comfortable with, don't try anything new or drastically different right before your session. Translucent face powder is useful to reduce the amount of shine on faces, and the need for a lot of extra retouching. Make-up may also be used (even on men) to cover up blemishes.

Jewelry & Accessories

Jewelry and other accessories add that finishing touch to any outfit. Please make sure that the accessories that you choose are appropriate for the style of the clothing that you are going to wear.

Glasses

If you wear glasses regularly, please feel free to wear them during your portrait session. Be aware, however, that they do create some problems. The highly reflective nature of glass causes reflection and elimination of detail in the eye area of your portrait. The optics of the lenses cause refraction of light, resulting in distortion of the face. Tinted lenses cause discoloration of the eye and surrounding skin. The solution to all of these problems is the wearing of frames without lenses. You may either remove the lenses yourself, or borrow similar frames, without lenses, from an optician.

Props

Let your imagination go. From flowers to furniture; musical instruments to sporting goods; by incorporating items of your own, you help to express your personality and illustrate your lifestyle.

Pets & Children

I encourage you to include any pets in your portrait. They are part of the family too, and are most welcome. Do bring some animal treats and a grooming brush. Make sure children under 5 years old are well rested and fed before arriving. I want them to be in the very best of moods. Bring along a favorite toy or book to make them feel comfortable, and juice and snacks in case of emergency. Do not tell them ahead of time to "smile and be good" then it's like a chore. Just tell them that they are going to have fun at the session.