



How to Pose People on a Photo Shoot: Tips and Best Practices

When you're working with models, think of yourself as a director. Just as a director has to communicate their vision for a scene to the actors playing in it, to get the photo you want, you have to be able to communicate your ideas to your model.

A general principle for shoots involving models: give specific and positive directions. Put yourself in your model's shoes and keep the shoot upbeat and fun. It's also a good idea to learn a couple of basic poses (more on this later) so you can show what you have in mind—visual cues are often easier to follow than verbal— but keep in mind that you want images that look natural and not staged.

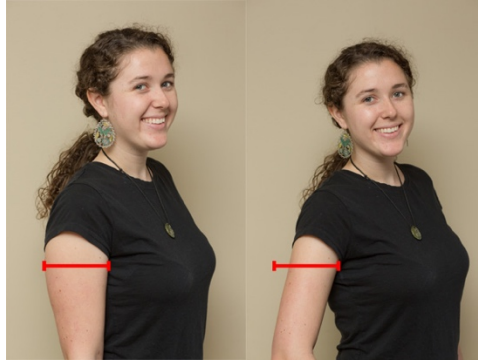
Here are some basic portrait photography techniques you can use when working with models:



Move the Ears Forward

-This helps elongate the neck and make the jawline appear stronger.

-Take care that your model is not lifting or pointing their chin too much, causing you to shoot up their nostrils.



Lift the Arm

-When your model stands with arms flat at their sides, as people naturally tend to, it looks uncomfortable and a bit awkward. It also flattens the upper arm, making it appear larger than it really is.

-The quick fix is to lift the arm an inch or two away from the body. You can also have the model put their hand on their hip or in any other position where there is space between the arm and side.



Turn the Shoulders

-If your subject is facing the camera head-on, they will look bigger.

-Have your subject turn slightly to present a slimmer profile.



Don't Show the Whites of the Eyes

- When you're going for the thoughtful, dreamy look, you need to give your subject a more specific instruction than "look off camera" or "look over there."
- To control their eyeline, ask them to focus on an object behind you.
- If you're seeing too much of the whites of their eyes, ask your subject to look at a different object until you see their iris, the colored part of the eye.

More Tips:



Tell Them What to do With Their Hands

-This is where learning a few basic poses that you can act out for your subject will come in handy. (Think hands on hips, "The Thinker," etc.). Here are some standard poses for [women](#), [men](#) and [groups of people](#).

-Tell them to relax their hands, spreading the fingers a bit and breaking slightly at the joints. If you can visualize how your hand looks when you're using a mouse, then open it a bit more—it's something like that.

Some examples of hand placements: on the hips, under the chin, over the shoulder, to the side or running through the hair.

-Use props. If the model has something to hold or otherwise interact with, it gives them something to do with their hands. It's also fun, and if your model is having fun, you are more likely to get a great, spontaneous expression.

Some examples of props: holding onto a jacket or sides of a button-down shirt, books, a backpack.



When you're out on a shoot, keep in mind:

-Be patient and put yourself in your subject's shoes.

Try telling them about a persona they can convey. While you can demonstrate an exact pose every now and then, your job is to make the images you and your subject produce look natural and not staged.

-Look for natural expression

As you talk with your subject, you will pick up on their natural expressions and mannerisms. Give them positive feedback. If you can make them laugh, so much the better. Try to capture these expressions in your images.

-Movement

Movement helps models loosen up both physically and mentally. Capturing movement in your photos gives a sense of fluidity and naturalism. If you are working in windy conditions, think about how you can make the wind work in your favor.

-Get low

When shooting a three-quarter or full-body photo, try getting low to the ground and shooting high. This makes the subject look taller and adds an element of drama to your image.