

Our Cheat Sheet For A Successful Photography Session

Hair

If you're getting a hair cut for your shoot, do so about two weeks beforehand, just in case it goes wrong – you just never know. For men, a fresh cut a couple of days before the shoot is fine.

Hair accessories

If you're shooting outdoors, be ready to put your hair up and make it look nice in case of a windy day. Bring bobby pins, hair clips, headbands or any other favorite accessories.

Glasses

If folks wouldn't recognize you without glasses, you want to wear glasses in your shoot – however, the glare on glasses can detract from your eyes in photos. You can have your lenses removed from your frames for your shoot (don't worry, it's what Hollywood does to avoid glare in movies), ask your eye doctor to loan you a pair of similar frames, or you can also visit an inexpensive company online like Zenni Optical and buy a suitable pair of duplicate frames on the cheap.

Red eyes

Visine is your friend. Not drinking alcohol the evening before your shoot is the best idea.

Lips

You will probably wipe or lick your lips during your shoot, so bring fresh lip gloss or lipstick to do touch-up. *Use lip balm for a few days in advance of your shoot to make your smoochers look their best.*

Teeth

If you want to brighten your smile, start your treatments about two weeks before your shoot.

Breakouts

Don't cake on a lot of make-up to try to hide blemishes – it's almost always easier to Photoshop away pimples than to clean up overdone make-up.

Make-up

A subtle application of make-up can really soften your skin and accent your facial features. But make sure you know what you're doing, and make sure it matches your skin tone, or your face may look orange compared to the rest of your body.

Facial hair

Men, be freshly shaved with a new razor, shaving cream and a moisturizing after-shave lotion to avoid bumps and redness. Trim up your board, sideburns, moustache or goatee, especially looking for wiry stray hairs.

Ladies, even if you have some light facial hair (particularly around your lip or chin), indulge in a waxing in advance of your shoot – even barely-there light facial hair will be noticeable in your photos. **Men and women** both, pluck and clean up those eyebrows.

Moisturizer

Dry skin can really detract from a great photo shoot. Start moisturizing nightly a week in advance of your shoot. When you get out of the shower, dry off until lightly damp, and slather on moisturizer. Focus on your arms, shoulders, neck, face, hands, anywhere you'll be exposed to the camera. This includes your legs if you're shooting in shorts or a skirt. ProTip: For dry skin on your face, especially around your nose, use a sugar scrub. Mix a cup of sugar with about a quarter cup of olive oil, or just until it looks like wet sand. Scrub your face with it anywhere you have flaky skin, wash it off, then wash with soap to remove the oil. The sugar paste shouldn't

be oily, just wet enough to moisten the sugar. Also, be sure on your face to use a facial moisturizer, not a thick body moisturizer, or you could break out.

Nails

A fresh coat of nail polish will make a world of difference in your photo shoot. Pick a neutral color that won't distract in your shoot or clash with your outfits. Freshen the morning of the shoot, then be careful not to scuff it while prepping. Your photo shoot is a great excuse for a fresh manicure, but if you can't go to the salon, make sure your nails look tidy and clean, including the cuticles.

Bloating

Ladies, avoid high salt and high fat foods for two to three days in advance of your shoot. Being bloated will sap your confidence and comfort in front of the camera.

Undergarments

Bra straps won't do anything to help your outfit look its best. Be sure you bring a set of bras and strap-adjusting accessories to work with any outfit you want to shoot in to keep those straps well-hidden.

Sun burns and tan lines

If your shoot is booked for Saturday, don't go to the beach on Friday. If you plan to tan before your shoot, do so at least a week beforehand and don't get burned. Be mindful of clothing tan lines, sunglass tan lines, hat tan lines, etc.

Ironing

If you iron, iron the night before and then hang the clothes for your shoot. If you're wearing something that wrinkles easily, don't wear it in the car on the way to the shoot – just change at the location.

Shoes

Ladies, can't go wrong in heels or wedges but be sure you can be comfortable for hours on your feet in whatever you choose. Men, clean'em up! Dress shoes or boots are best.

Hydrate!

Be sure to bring water bottles to keep yourself hydrated during your shoot. It is also advisable to bring along a light snack, especially if you have trouble with low blood sugar. Please bring snacks that will not stain teeth or dirty up your clothing.

Stay cool

You will want to have a handkerchief or soft rag or paper towel handy during hot months to wipe away sweat.

Here are some specific suggestions for certain types of shoots:

MATERNITY

Moisturize that belly!

Gather your props to bring along

Ultrasound printout, alphabet blocks that spell your baby's name, baby shoes, stuffed animals, flowers, whatever you've seen in other maternity photos that you like.

Wear whatever you feel comfortable and pretty in

Long, flowy skirts, especially solids are nice, and strapless bras that coordinate with them. Tube dresses are great for showing off your shape. Bring a pair of regular jeans, not the belly panel ones. A button-up shirt also makes it easy to transition into showing your belly. If you're doing semi-nude/IMPLIED nude photos, bras and underwear will create noticeable lines on your skin, so wear loose-fitting clothing to the shoot. You can add undergarments as necessary for photos later in the shoot.

Do bring your significant other!

They'll make a great prop for your photos, and greatly expand on the number of different photos you can make during your shoot. They should bring outfits that coordinate with what you'll be wearing, or a dark long-sleeved shirt or sweater and dark pants. The focus should always be on you, your expressions, your emotions, your personality, your joy and your connection.

NEWBORNS AND BABIES

Use a wash cloth to clean away flaky skin and eye boogers.

Trim those tiny fingernails and toenails with appropriate baby trimmers.

**Book your shoot around your baby's feeding and nap times,
work with the natural rhythm of your baby.**

The perfect time to shoot is right when the baby would be laying down for a nap. If your baby normally falls asleep after a feeding, wait to feed the baby until you're at the shoot. If your baby takes a pacifier, bring it – if they're bottle fed, bring an extra bottle to help put the baby to sleep.

Dress up paper diapers.

Cloth diapers are classy and stylish, but if you don't use them, bring bloomers or decorative diaper covers, solids preferred.

Nothing is the best wardrobe for a newborn

No outfit fits a newborn well, and they often look swallowed in clothes. Accessories are good, though – little hats, dainty headbands, boys in crocheted hats, etc. Bring sentimental items like the quilt that Grandma made for the baby, a baby blanket from your own childhood – they're great for the youngster to lay on.

CHILDREN

Clean, clean, clean

Clean nails, clean hair, wipe away eye boogers, clean feet (sandals on kids = black feet!), wipe snotty noses, fresh-scrub teeth. The cleaner the kid, the better their photos will turn out.

If your child is still in diapers or pull-ups, tuck'em in or wear bloomers.

If your child is still of napping age, make sure they nap before the shoot.

It is perfectly okay to bring bribes to a photo shoot

Given a stage and being the center of attention, it's like our kids know exactly when to act their worst. Some cereal, smarties or other candy that won't stain teeth can help a short photo shoot go by smoothly.

Avoid colorful drinks or lollipops within 24 hours of your shoot, don't let them eat or drink anything that will stain their face, teeth or mouths.

Wardrobe

For girls, you can't go wrong with cute dresses, rompers, and dainty hats or headbands. For boys, jeans and polos or a button-up shirt, or a T-shirt with a button-up over it can be very cute, as well as overalls on the right age and personality. For siblings, the children don't have to match perfectly, just coordinate. You can't go wrong with dark, rich monotones, which drive the attention in photos to sweet faces and darling expressions instead of loud prints or colors. If nothing else, pick a color that compliments your child's eye color.

FAMILIES

Dad

Have a fresh shave or trim, and use a new razor with shaving cream and a moisturizing after-shave lotion to limit bumps and redness. Make sure nails are clean and trimmed. Wash your hands. Clean up your shoes. Moisturize and scrub away flaky facial skin (see above). When you wash your face, pay attention to eye boogers and sleep crusties. For wardrobe, go for jeans or pants, tucked polo or dress shirt with a belt, or go casual with just a T-shirt or untucked polo, button-up short sleeve, etc. In general, whatever your wife tells you to wear. Again you don't have to perfectly match the rest of the family, just wear something that coordinates.

Mom

Women know what to wear, but in general, unless you are extremely thin you may want to wear something that covers your upper-arms. Long- or 3/4-sleeve tops are very flattering. If you wear jewelry, aim for subtlety, and be aware of it twisting or turning.

Kids

Same advice as above, but again, everything needn't match, simply coordinate with the parents' outfits. If Dad's in a T-shirt, don't put the kids in dress shirts – make it make sense.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Tans

The biggest tips for seniors are to have an even tan, don't get sunburned, clean and freshly-paint those nails, and moisturize and scrub away dry skin.

Bring a variety of outfits

Cap and gown, something casual, something stylish, ladies slip a dress in there to throw folks off, fellas try a formal look to impress. Wear what you think you look best in, but take the opportunity to also try a new look, just to surprise folks. You can even plan to shoot barefoot if you have taken good care of your feet.

Props

Bring props that recall your high school years – band instrument, sports gear like a volleyball or baseball bat, your beloved (or cursed) high school car, letter jacket, sunglasses. Most of all, rep your style, whatever that may be. Your senior photo should be unique to your life and personality. You can also bring photos of loved ones. Have them in attractive frames that aren't scuffed or damaged. It can be your high school sweetheart, your grandparents, parents or maybe a best friend. Most importantly, if you have a senior ring, wear it. That symbol of your success will be greatly photographed!