

A Guide to taking Portraits



BROAD LIGHTING

This is not a lighting pattern but a style, other patterns can be used within this style. The face is turned away from the light and the **lit** broader portion faces the camera.

Keep the primary light source above the model's head



SHORT LIGHTING

This is not a lighting pattern but a style, other patterns can be used within this style. The face is turned toward the light and the **unlit** broader portion faces the camera.



REMBRANDT LIGHTING

Characterised by the triangle of light beneath the eye on the shadow side. Light source needs to be above the top of the head and care should be taken to ensure both eyes have catchlights.



BUTTERFLY LIGHTING

Light source above and behind the camera. Used for glamour shots and also flattering for older subjects since wrinkles appear softened.



LOOP LIGHTING

Creates a shadow of the nose on the cheek. Light needs to be above the subjects eye level and at 30° - 45° to the subject. Greater than this and the shadow cast by the nose will be too large.

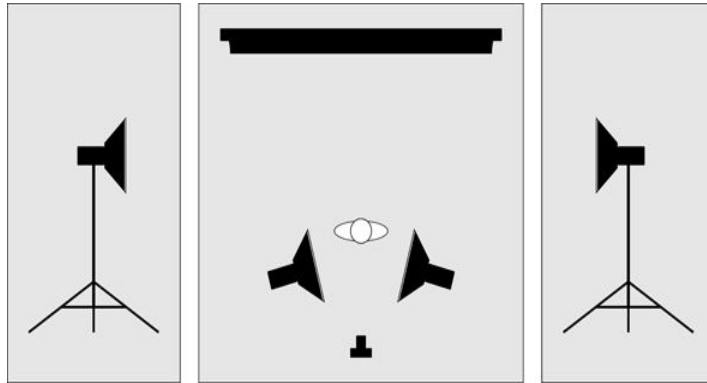


SPLIT LIGHTING

As the name implies it splits the face in two halves. Often uses available light shining through a window to create dramatic images. More a masculine lighting pattern since it accentuates cragginess.

P O R T R A I T U R E

FLAT LIGHTING

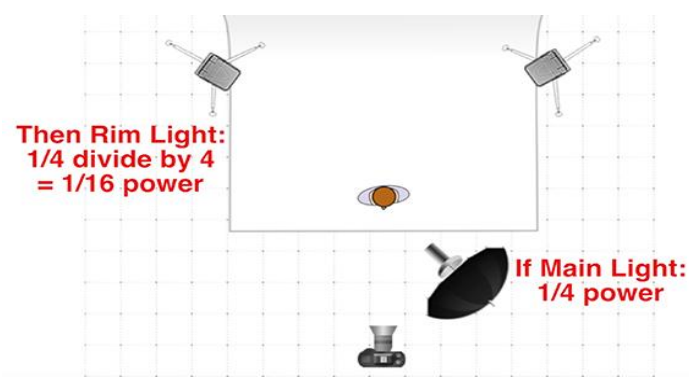


Winslow Bright



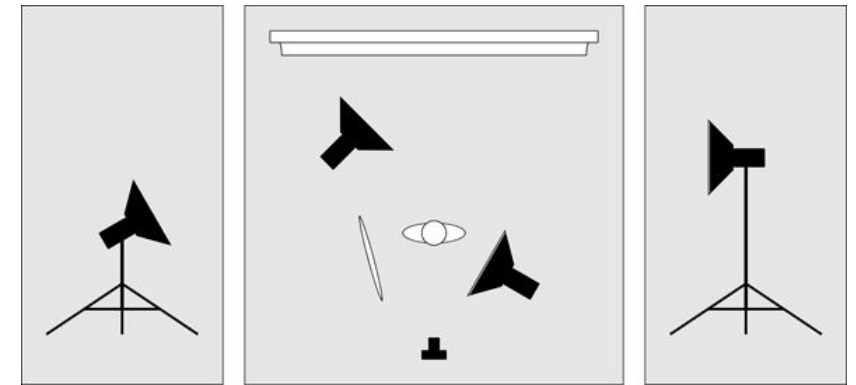
This lighting style is flattering because the fine detail of the face is not accentuated. Furthermore when shooting against a white backdrop it results in greater contrast between the model and the backdrop.

RIM LIGHTING



Using this lighting technique the subject is backlit and the image is exposed to hide the features in shadow. The technique gets its name from the thin rim of light that clings to the outline. This can be enhanced using coloured gels.

HIGH KEY LIGHTING



The background needs to be white, but the subject should not be overexposed. Therefore the background needs 16 times more light than the subject (about 4 stops). Put the flash behind the model they need to be 4-6ft away from the backdrop. Take care not to overexpose or the subject will look washed out.

HIGH KEY

High key photography uses unnaturally bright lighting to blow out most or all harsh shadows in an image. High key methods were originally developed as a solution to screens that couldn't properly display high contrast ratios, but has developed into more of a stylistic choice.

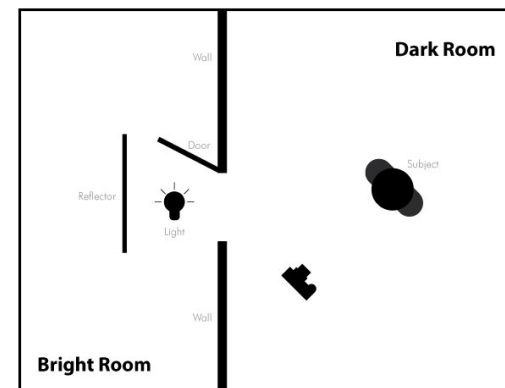
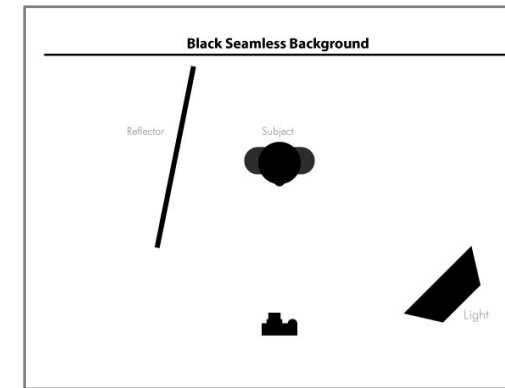
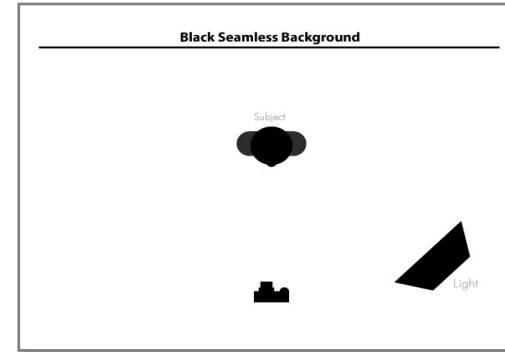


High key images usually convey a positive or upbeat tone. This method is perfect for a subject that is funny, light-hearted or beautiful. High key is regularly used to photograph female models since it has the effect of softening the skin contours.

HIGH KEY Versus LOW KEY

LOW KEY

Low key refers to a style of photography that utilizes predominantly dark tones to create a dramatic looking image.



TIP

When using low key lighting use a black or dark background and avoid lighting it directly as this will show all the creases and imperfections that are not wanted in the final image.



1. SHIFT TO THE SIDE

When you're working with people who aren't used to being in front of a camera, it's not unusual for them to stiffen up and lock their knees. One of the easiest ways to fix this issue is to simply instruct your subjects to shift their weight to one leg. It's a versatile move that works in just about any situation, and it instantly makes the people you're photographing look at ease.



POSING COUPLES

2. SEAT SUBJECTS CAREFULLY

As any experienced portrait photographer can attest, not all poses are created equally. While having your subject sit may seem like a way to get your models feeling more comfortable, it's important to pay attention to detail to get the most organic end result possible. Something as small as the direction a model's feet are pointed can make a big difference in the quality of a pose. It's also important to give directions to avoid unflattering angles that may arise from being in a seated position.

4. AVOID CHOKEHOLDS

Having one model hold another can be very sweet, but it's easy to get into territory where the models smother one another. A few small movements can take this pose a long way

5. STAY AWAY FROM THE PROM POSE

You don't want awkward gaps between your models. Have participants use their bodies to fill in empty spaces and, ultimately, create a more dynamic pose.

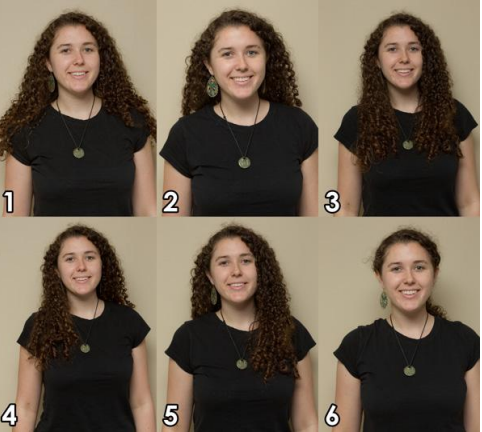


3. NO POCKETS ALLOWED

The more limbs that are in play within a photograph, the more opportunities a photographer has to create an intimate connection. Don't have your models shove their hands into a pocket—it usually won't look quite right. Instead, ask them to place their hands in a comfortable position that brings them closer to their partner.



POSING TECHNIQUES FOR NON MODELS



Manage the hair

The first thing to remember is that hair sitting on the shoulders looks terrible. If the hair sits on their shoulders, then it looks wild and you need to do something with it.

There are five different things that they can do with their hair.

Hair all behind the shoulders.

Hair all in front of the shoulders

Hair all on one side.

Hair all on the other side.

Hair up.

Hair on the shoulders (#1) should be avoided at all costs.

All of the other hair positions have their place depending on your model and the look you are trying to achieve. The reason I shot the hair on both sides (#4 and #5) is because the natural part in a person's hair will lend to one side looking better than the other.

Generally you want their part facing the camera so more of their face is included. For this tutorial, I chose hair up (#6) so we can more easily see the posing instructions without distraction.

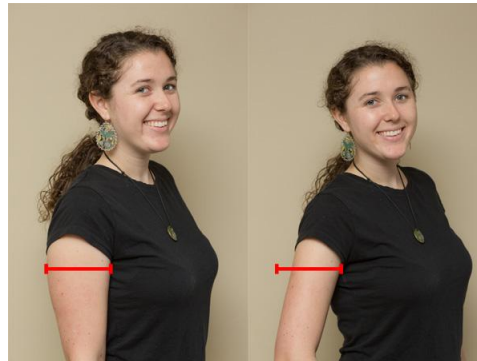


Pull the Chin (or Ears) Forward

When someone stands in their normal relaxed stand, or even stands up straight to have nice posture, there is a little bit of flab right underneath their chin. No matter how skinny they are, you will see this. If you tell people to bring their chin forward, which sounds like the sensible thing to do, they will point their chin at you, which brings their face up and ends with you shooting up their nostrils. (Not attractive.) Instead, tell your model to bring their ears forward.

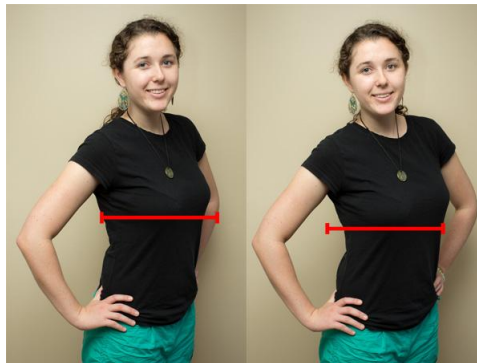


Same technique from a male subject. He was very fit and athletic, but our natural stance is not very photogenic



Lift the Arm

When people stand naturally, another thing they do is stand with their arms flat at their sides. **You can correct that by having them just lift their arm an inch or two so it is "floating" and not pressed against them**



Leave Visual Space by the Waist

Everyone loves looking thin. One of the things you can do to trim down your subject is by giving them their "natural" waist, without any additives.



Turn the Shoulders

This is a very simple tip, but important. If your subject stares at the camera head-on, they look bigger. By having your subject turn, they are showing a slimmer profile of themselves to the camera, and look slimmer.



Don't Show the Whites of the Eyes

When you want a far off, dreamy look and choose to have your subject look off camera, do not tell them to "look over there." Give them an object behind you to focus on so you can control their eyeline.



Don't Let the Nose Break the Face

This one is a bit more complex, but still important. When you don't want your subject facing forward you have them turn to the side.

Models with Spectacles

- Remove the glasses
- Change position or angle of the light.
- Change position or angle of the subject.
- Change position or angle of the camera.
- Ensure the frame of the glasses does not obscure the eye.

CHECKLIST

- Hair is behind one shoulder, and/or in front of the other.**
- Chin is forward to create a strong jawline**
- Arm is lifted from the torso**
- Waist doesn't have any visual extenders**
- Shoulders are turned**
- Iris is seen over the whites**
- Nose doesn't break the line of the face**
- Spectacles check**



SHOOTING GROUPS

1 – Choosing a location

You won't always have the luxury of being able to choose your location – sometimes you'll be stuck with your aunt's backyard, or some other less-than-ideal spot. If you have the luxury of choice, look to open spaces and [uncluttered backgrounds](#).

There are two reasons why simplicity is important in group shots

- a) By its very nature, a group shot is cluttered. With so many different faces and competing outfits, your group shot can end up looking very messy if the background is also complicated.
- b) The second reason is that, in order to keep your entire group in focus, you will need to shoot at a higher number f-stop than you would for a single portrait, so you won't benefit from the blurred background that you would when shooting wide open.

2 – Lighting

Soft, even, light is imperative when photographing a group. If you can choose the time of day to shoot, opt for early morning or late afternoon to early evening, when the light is gentle and warm.

3 - Lens and aperture selection

Lens and aperture preference are always controversial. To photograph a large group, I'd recommend playing it safe and using a 50mm lens. Depending on the depth of your group arrangement, stick with [an aperture of f/9](#) or higher to ensure that everyone is sharp, and always do a test shot first.

4 – Vary the head heights

If your subjects are huddled close together on a level surface, chances are the people at the back will only be visible from the eyes up in the final images. You can easily remedy this by placing them on a graduated surface. A flight of steps is ideal, or a sloping lawn, a playground slide, the branch of a tree – anywhere that you can stagger the height of the heads to make sure everyone can be clearly seen without sitting in a dead-straight row.

5 – Last call: Nose check!

While you are preparing your set-up, ask the women in the group to reapply their lipstick and check their hair and makeup.

Immediately before you start shooting, ask the adults in your group to check their partners' and children's faces and clothing, paying special attention to noses, teeth and eyebrows.

6 – Ready, steady, shoot!

Once you have your group positioned, work quickly. Fire off a test shot for exposure, focus, and depth of field. When checking the image on your screen, enlarge it to the maximum size and make sure everyone from the front row to the back is in focus. Adjust your aperture if necessary. When photographing smaller groups, you can get creative with depth of field by focussing on some individuals and allowing others to soften, but that's a whole other story. With a large group, everyone should be in focus.

With your camera's drive mode set to continuous shooting, ask everyone in the group to close their eyes and open them on the count of three. Fire multiple shots on the count of three, and then repeat the process a few times to ensure you have at least one great image.

7. Try getting creative to make unusual images .