

# Portrait Photography Tips

Article by <http://winatphotography.com/>



Image by Liz Wood

## Shooting Wow Pictures

All budding photographers, as well as those who've been shooting for awhile, are all looking for the same thing. They want to shooting stunning photographs that capture the "wow" factor. It is not an easy thing to do, since beauty is in the eye of the beholder. However, it is not impossible and rather than following rules, sometimes it is necessary to break them. Be random and boldly follow your instincts to find that special picture that makes everyone stop and take notice.

**1. Change the Perspective** - Nearly all portraits are taken with the camera at eye level. Change the perspective by changing the angle from which you're shooting. Get up high over your subject for one effect. From that vantage you may see an even more interesting aspect. Experiment with your composition.

**2. Play with the Eyes** - Eye contact or the direction in which the eyes are gazing heavily affects the effect of the portrait. Looking directly into the camera isn't always the most interesting way to shoot someone. It may be more intriguing to have the subject look off to the side, drawing those who look at the shot to wonder what's there, off camera, unseen. But be careful how you do this, because drawing the viewer's eyes to the side also takes their eyes off your subject.

**3. Staying Focused within the Frame** - In other words, have your subject holding an object, like a woman holding a baby, or a child holding a toy keeps the viewers eyes focused inside the frame and on the subjects. It creates a second point of interest and helps to create a story within the frame with the subject.

**4. Composition Rules** - Composition rules as listed in portrait photography tips, are made to be followed and broken. The rules are great to know and to use, but stretching them, or pushing to the outer limits makes for more interesting portrait art. Learn the rules, get comfortable using them, then learn to break them in order to achieve a more eye catching result.

**5. Experiment with Lighting** - The possibilities are endless with lighting. You are hindered only by your imagination and ability to be creative. There is no good and bad. So go ahead and play with the lighting. You might surprise yourself. Sidelight, back-light, silhouette, the possibilities are infinite.

**6. Make Subject Move** - Interesting portraits happen when you take the subject out of his or her comfort zone. Make them move. Put them in clothing or in a setting where you wouldn't ordinarily find them. Surround them with stuff that says who they are, but make them react differently to it. For instance, put them in business attire in an office, but have them jump up and down or read a book upside down. Again, be creative.

**7. Don't Stage the Photo** - Shooting candid shots are better than posing the subject. People, and kids in particular tend to tense up and hide rather than reveal their personality when the picture is staged and they are required to pose. Photograph your subjects while they work or kids while they play. Try to catch them reacting naturally to their environment.

**8. Using Props** - Enhance your shot by creating another point of interest with a prop. For example, if you're shooting a doctor, let them be wearing a stethoscope or holding a skull. Be careful not to let the prop dominate the picture, let it be part of the picture telling part of the story.

**9. A Part of the Whole** - Try focusing on a part of the whole, for instance, instead of shooting the head and shoulders of your subject, take a picture or two of their hands, or their back, or maybe even a shoulder with a special tattoo, keeping the face in shadow. Be dramatic and bold. Sometimes what is left out of the shot is as important as what is left in.

**10. Variation on a Theme** - Obscuring your subject in order to focus on one particular aspect works well too. In other words, shrouding a woman in a shawl leaving only her eyes visible and looking at the camera. Possibly making the shawl match the eyes of the subject making for a dramatic colour statement.

The possibilities for taking creative and dramatic shots are limited only by your ability to think outside the box. Know the rules, know how to work them, then learn how to break them for a more creative effect. Finally, take a series of shots... not just one... shoot often and quick... sometimes, in order to get what you want.

I hope you have found these portrait photography tips useful.

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