

How to...

Run a successful photo shoot



If it's not your day job, setting up and running a photography session can seem daunting, but it's not as difficult as you might think. A few pieces of equipment, the appropriate preparation and a small dose of confidence are the keys for success. Here are our top five tips to make your next photo shoot go swimmingly.

1 Do your preparation

Before the shoot, list and gather all the props you need and, if you are hiring models, ask them to come with a specific wardrobe of clothes (watch out for white shirts on white backdrops!). On the day, arrive early to set up your set, lighting and backdrop. Ask someone to stand in for the model if you can, so you can test and experiment with different setups.

2 Plan the poses

During the shoot you need to get your models in several poses. It's good to have a checklist of those poses and movements, including a series of different facial expressions to secure the whole range of shots you will need. And, if you have the time, why not add some extra 'generic' poses for stock photos that might be useful for further projects?

3 Get the lighting right

Light kits come cheaply nowadays and we suggest 200w/s strobes for their flexibility. You need at least one main light or flash, a fill light to cut out shadows and ideally a third backlight to light the backdrop and isolate the subject. Proper umbrellas help soften the light, and don't forget to turn the lights off a while before packing so they can cool down.

4 Invest in the right camera

Digital cameras have increased their capability to produce high quality images, therefore a digital SLR camera should suit your purpose. The main players here are Canon, Nikon, Sony and Pentax. If you have extra budget to spend then spend it here - a good camera is worth the investment. A tripod is also a necessity to support and stabilise the camera.

5 Shoot too many pictures, not too few

Shoot as many images as you need (if not more) without fear. Memory cards can store up to 500 high resolution photos and most digital cameras can also be plugged directly into a laptop, which permits you to view the high-quality photos straight away and make the required adjustments on the next round of shots.