

THE SESSION

Show up as you.

A practical guide to preparing for
your photography session.

WARDROBE / POSING / PREPARATION



You are in the right place.

You do not have to be a model to look good in your photos. You just need to show up as yourself. I will guide you through the rest.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

01 Choose your look

Start with where your photos will be used and how you want to feel.

02 Try a few movements

Use the posing pages to get comfortable. You do not need to memorize anything.

03 Prepare the details

Pack your outfits, check your booking, and bring your ideas.

My job is to make the process feel easy and help you create images you are proud to share.

- CHARLES

Your preparation, step by step

Start with your goals, then build a look and prepare for the camera.

01 Start with your purpose

Think about where your photos will live, who they are for, and how you want to come across.

02 Plan your brand story

If you booked a branding session, choose the stories, tools, and props that represent your work.

03 Choose what to wear

Build complete looks, try them on, and pack the number of outfits your session allows.

04 Get ready for your headshot

Review the headshot tips and tell me what kind of expression and crop you need.

05 Explore pose ideas

Browse any of the pose sections and save the examples that feel like you.

06 Prepare for session day

Review the final checklist and bring your ideas. You do not need to memorize poses.

Start with a clear goal

A few decisions before you book help us make images you can use.

Choose your first destination

Pick your top two uses: LinkedIn, a company directory, website, press, social media, or marketing. Check whether your employer requires a particular background, crop, or outfit.

Picture the audience

Who will see the photo first? A job recruiter, a potential client, or an event organizer? Choose two qualities you want them to notice, such as warm and credible, or creative and confident.

Plan a useful mix

For a headshot, ask for a smile and a relaxed expression. For branding, identify a profile image, a wider website image with space for words, and a working moment. Your package and session time determine what we can capture.

Send a short brief

Share your intended uses, company requirements, two or three reference images, and any preferences or concerns. Tell me if you need a vertical or horizontal crop, or space on a particular side for text.

Your references are a starting point. We will shape the final look around you.

Tell your brand story

Before choosing poses, get clear on what you want your photos to say.

Who are you speaking to?

Think about your ideal client. What do they need to know about you before they feel comfortable reaching out?

What should people feel?

Choose three words that fit your brand: approachable, confident, creative, calm, energetic, refined, or your own.

Where will the images appear?

Consider your website banner, About page, social profiles, marketing, presentations, and email. Tell me where you need room for text or a particular crop.

What do you actually do?

List the services, products, tools, or moments that show your work. Think about what you want clients to understand or do after seeing your photos.

What moments feel like you?

Consider a mix of camera-facing portraits, working moments, details, and relaxed images. Save a few references and share them with me before your session.

Your answers help us create images with a purpose.

Choose props with purpose

Bring items that tell a true story about your work. You do not need everything on this list.

Everyday work

Laptop, tablet, phone, notebook, planner, pens, business cards, headphones, or a favorite coffee mug.

Your craft

Camera, brushes, tools, samples, packaging, client materials, or other equipment you actually use. Bring clean, ready-to-photograph items.

Your brand

Products, branded materials, a book you wrote, certificates, a portfolio, or a small item in your brand colors.

Your environment

A chair, desk, plant, or meaningful object can give context. Check with me about the location and what is available before bringing larger items.

A few questions to ask

What do I use daily? What am I proud to offer? What do I want a future client to recognize or remember? Which items feel natural in my hands?

Pack props neatly and remove personal or confidential information from screens and documents.

Plan a useful branding session

Turn your ideas into a short, realistic shot list.

Choose three messages

Write one sentence for each: who you help, what you do, and what makes working with you feel different. Example: "I help busy families find homes, and I want to feel knowledgeable and approachable."

Pair each message with a scene

For a consultant: a welcoming portrait, working with a notebook, and a wider image at a desk. For a maker: a portrait, hands using a real tool, and holding a finished product. Adapt the scenes to your work.

Select props that earn their place

Choose two or three real items you use: laptop, planner, samples, tools, product packaging, or a book. Clean screens and products, charge devices, and remove private client details from documents or displays.

Tell me the practical requirements

Share your brand colors, location ideas, preferred orientation, text placement, and deadlines. We can prioritize a short list based on your package and the time available.

Dress for the image

Start with the version of you that you want people to meet.



01 Find your fit

Try each outfit sitting and standing. Choose pieces that sit comfortably at the shoulders and do not need constant adjustment.

02 Keep it intentional

Solid colors, subtle texture, and simple layers are a strong starting point. Choose colors that suit you and your brand.

03 Check the details

Steam clothes, remove tags and lint, and choose underlayers that work with your outfit. Bring glasses if you normally wear them.

A blazer or jacket can create a second look without a full outfit change. Your package determines how many looks we have time for.

Make it yours

01 For a headshot

A blazer, button-down, polished knit, or simple top works well. Pick a neckline and fit that make you feel confident.

02 For your brand

Think about your audience and the places your images will appear. Bring a polished look and, if your package allows, a more relaxed option.

03 For a creative session

A statement layer, a pop of color, or a meaningful prop can tell more of your story. Let me know your ideas before the session.



Bring complete outfits on hangers. If you are unsure, send me a quick photo and we can decide together.

Build outfits that work

Make decisions now so you can focus on the session later.

Start with the setting

Match the formality to the way you want clients or colleagues to see you. For example, a consultant might pair a blazer with a simple top; a creative business owner might choose a textured shirt and relaxed jacket.

Try the entire look

Wear each outfit with its underlayers, jewelry, and shoes. Sit, stand, and raise your arms. Check for pulling at buttons, collars that shift, gaps, visible straps, and fabric that rides up.

Check your camera frame

For a close headshot, the neckline and shoulders matter most. For wider portraits, check the full outfit and shoes. Take a phone photo in daylight from the front and side to catch wrinkles or distracting details.

Pack with intention

Bring the number of looks your booking allows, plus a simple backup top if practical. Put clothes on hangers; pack lint roller, brush, and touch-ups. Ask about changing facilities and time before planning several outfits.

Color, layers and details

Keep the focus on your face while letting your personality come through.

Choose colors you like wearing

Neutral tones are versatile, and a rich color can work beautifully. If you have brand colors, bring one piece that connects to them without feeling like a costume. Lay options beside each other and choose a clear favorite.

Keep the face area simple

Fine texture can add interest. Large lettering, shiny material, or very busy prints may compete with your expression. If a bold pattern is central to your brand, bring it and we can test it.

Use layers for variety

A jacket over a simple top can create a polished image and a more relaxed second look. Check that the layer lies comfortably at the shoulders and can be removed without disturbing hair or makeup.

Consider glasses and grooming

Wear the glasses that feel like you; I can change the light or angle to manage glare. Bring your usual touch-up products. If scheduling a haircut or other grooming, allow time for it to settle if that matters to you.

Your headshot starts here

A good headshot should feel like you and work where you need it.

Decide where it will be used

LinkedIn, your company website, a speaker bio, social profiles, or all of the above? Share the platforms and any company requirements for background, crop, or wardrobe before the session.

Choose your first impression

Pick two or three words that describe how you want to be seen: approachable, capable, warm, confident, creative, or relaxed. Think about the people who will see the image.

Share what you like

Bring one or two examples and tell me what you like about the expression, lighting, or crop. If you have a preferred side or a past photo you like, show me that too.

Plan for options

A smile and a more relaxed expression can serve different purposes. Let me know whether you need a close headshot, a wider crop, or space for text so we can plan for it.

You do not need to know your best angle. We will find it together.

Dress for your headshot

Think about the frame: your face, neckline, and shoulders will be most visible.

Choose a look that fits your role

A blazer, simple top, tailored shirt, or polished knit can work. Select something that feels like you and fits the impression you want to make.

Check the neckline and fit

Try your top on sitting and standing. Make sure it sits comfortably at the shoulders and neckline, and check for pulling, gaps, or visible underlayers.

Keep details intentional

Simple colors and subtle textures can keep attention on your expression. Jewelry, glasses, and colors are welcome when they reflect your style. Avoid distracting logos unless they belong in the image.

Prepare hair and grooming your way

Choose a style you recognize and feel good wearing. Bring a brush or comb and any products you normally use for touch-ups. If trying a new style, leave yourself time to adjust.

Bring your preferred options on hangers, ready to wear. Ask me if you need a second opinion.

Small moves, natural expression

You do not need to practice or master these. I will guide you through each adjustment.



Relax first

Breathe out and let your shoulders settle. A comfortable posture gives us a place to start.

Turn just a little

I may ask you to angle your shoulders and bring your face back toward me. We will try both sides.

Move your head gently

Imagine bringing your face a little toward me. We can adjust your chin slightly if it feels natural; no pushing or straining.

Let the expression change

Start with a relaxed face, then try a small smile or a bigger one. We will talk and move between expressions.

If anything feels uncomfortable, tell me. We will change it and find an option that feels like you.

Headshot setup from the ground up

Try these as gentle directions, not poses you must memorize.

01 Plant your feet

Stand about hip-width apart, with your weight balanced and your knees relaxed. If you prefer, slide one foot a small step behind the other and settle your weight until you feel steady. Tell me if standing is uncomfortable; we can sit.

02 Turn your body

Turn your whole body slightly away from the camera, as if you are about to speak to someone just to my side. Bring your face back toward me. We will try both directions and compare; facing straight on can work too.

03 Settle your shoulders

Breathe out, let your shoulders fall away from your ears, and lengthen through your back. Avoid pulling your shoulders so far back that your chest or neck feels stiff.

04 Let your hands rest

For a close crop, let your arms hang or rest one hand in a pocket. If your hands are in frame, lightly touch a jacket or rest them on your lap. Shake them out if your fingers feel tense.

The camera may only see your face, but a comfortable stance helps the rest of you relax.

Head, eyes and expression

Small changes matter more than big movements.

Bring your face gently forward

Imagine listening closely to someone across the table: move your whole head a little toward me without lifting your shoulders. If it feels natural, lower your chin a fraction. Stop if there is strain; I will adjust the camera instead.

Use your eyes naturally

Look at the lens as if you are making eye contact with someone you like. Blink normally, then look back at me. You do not need to force your eyes wider, squint, or hold a stare.

Find your angle

Start with your nose pointing toward me. I may ask for a tiny turn to either side or a subtle tilt. We will compare both sides and choose what looks and feels like you.

Reset between frames

Unclench your jaw, let your lips part briefly, breathe out, and start again. Relaxing between expressions usually feels better than holding a smile while the camera clicks.

Make a smile feel real

We will try a range of expressions rather than holding one smile.

Start at neutral

Relax your mouth and take one slow breath. Think of someone you enjoy seeing. Let the corners of your mouth rise a little, then release them. We can capture a calm, approachable look here.

Build the smile gradually

Imagine greeting a friend you have not seen in a while. Let your smile grow naturally. If you want teeth in the image, let them show comfortably rather than stretching your mouth wide.

Use conversation and movement

I may ask a light question, invite you to look away and back, or have you take a breath before smiling. You do not need to laugh on command. Real reactions often happen between the posed moments.

Ask for what you want

Prefer a closed-mouth smile, a broad smile, or a serious look? Tell me. We will shoot a few options and, when practical, review them together so we can adjust.

A natural expression is one that feels familiar to you; there is no required smile.

Headshot day

Bring your ideas. I will take care of the direction.

Before you leave

Check the time and location in your booking. Pack your selected looks, glasses if you wear them, and any touch-up essentials. Leave time to arrive without rushing.

When you arrive

Tell me how you plan to use the photo, any requirements, and anything you want me to know. If you prefer a particular angle or expression, we will start there.

During the session

I will guide your posture, angle, and expression in small steps. We can reset, take a breath, and try options. Tell me if a direction does not feel right.

After the session

You will receive a gallery to review and select your included images for editing. Your package details explain what is included.

Your job is to show up. We will create the headshot together.

Before we pose

Think movement, not perfection. We will build every pose one small step at a time.



01 **Plant your feet**

Stand comfortably with your feet about hip-width apart. Let one knee soften and shift a little weight to one leg.

02 **Relax your shoulders**

Take a breath in, then let your shoulders drop as you breathe out. Imagine growing a little taller without stiffening up.

03 **Reset when needed**

If something feels forced, shake out your hands, take a breath, and start again. I will guide the small adjustments.

Standing poses that feel natural

Begin with a comfortable base and change one thing at a time.

The easy stand

Place your feet about hip-width apart. Shift a little weight to one leg, keeping the other knee soft. Rest one hand lightly in a pocket or let both arms hang, and breathe out.

The jacket adjustment

Start from the easy stand. Gently hold the edge of a jacket or smooth a sleeve once, then pause. Let your fingertips stay loose; there is no need to pull or grip.

The relaxed turn

Rotate your body a little, keeping your feet comfortable. Turn your face back toward the camera. Try looking at me, then just past me; I will guide where to look.

The slow walk

Walk a few ordinary steps toward me, not a runway walk. Keep your pace easy and allow your arms to move. We may repeat it, pause mid-step, or try a glance to the side.

If a position does not feel stable or comfortable, we will change it.

Seated poses with support

The chair should work for you. Choose a supported position first.

Find your seat

Use a stable chair with enough room. Sit as far back as you need to feel supported, with your feet on the floor or a support. There is no requirement to perch on the edge or cross your legs.

Make a small turn

Keeping your feet secure, turn your torso slightly toward me, or sit square to the camera. Rest one or both hands comfortably on your thighs or the chair. We can compare both views.

Try a gentle lean

If comfortable, lean forward a little from your hips, keeping your back long. Rest forearms on your thighs or the chair arms. Return to a supported upright position whenever you need to.

Check the details

Smooth fabric where it bunches, loosen a tight grip, and make space for your arms if that feels natural. Tell me if the chair, outfit, or pose is uncomfortable and we will adjust it.

Hands, movement and confidence

Give your hands a purpose and keep the action small.

In a pocket

Slide a hand in loosely, leaving the thumb or fingers visible if comfortable. Let the elbow rest naturally instead of pressing the arm tightly against your side.

With a jacket or accessory

Lightly hold a lapel, adjust a cuff, or carry a bag you normally use. Touch rather than grip. If your hand looks tense, shake it out and gently place it again.

Resting or holding a prop

Place a hand softly on a chair, table, notebook, or thigh. Keep the prop close to your body unless we are intentionally showing it to camera; I will check the angle so it does not block your face.

Communicate with me

Point out images or angles you love, ask for a break, and say when a direction feels unnatural. We can review a few frames when practical and change the pose together.

Men / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



01

The easy stand

Stand comfortably, soften one knee, and rest a hand in your pocket if you like. Let your other arm hang naturally.

Relax and reset as needed.



02

The casual angle

Turn your body slightly and let your weight settle onto one leg. Look toward the camera or just past it.

Relax and reset as needed.

Men / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



03

The upright seat

Sit comfortably with your feet supported. Rest your hands loosely on your thighs or in your lap, and let your shoulders drop.

Relax and reset as needed.



04

The forward lean

Sit with support and lean forward slightly from your hips if comfortable. Rest your hands or forearms loosely on your legs.

Relax and reset as needed.

Men / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



05

The jacket adjustment

Lightly hold or adjust your jacket. Keep your fingers soft and breathe out as you settle into the pose.

Relax and reset as needed.



06

The relaxed lean

Rest lightly against a wall or stand beside it. Let your weight settle naturally, and place a hand in a pocket if it feels good.

Relax and reset as needed.

Men / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



07

The slow walk

Take a few easy steps toward me at your normal pace. Let your arms move naturally and look where I guide you.

Relax and reset as needed.



08

Hands together

Bring your hands together loosely in front of you, with relaxed fingers. Shift your weight until you feel steady and comfortable.

Relax and reset as needed.

Men / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



09

The seated turn

Sit at a slight angle, with your feet supported. Rest a hand on your leg, then turn your face gently toward me or look away.

Relax and reset as needed.



10

The headshot turn

Turn your shoulders slightly and bring your face back toward the camera. Relax your jaw and let your expression settle.

Relax and reset as needed.

Women / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



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The easy stand

Stand comfortably, soften one knee, and rest a hand in your pocket if you like. Let your other arm hang naturally.

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The casual angle

Turn your body slightly and let your weight settle onto one leg. Look toward the camera or just past it.

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The forward lean

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Plus size / pose guide

Try what feels like you. I will guide and adjust every pose.



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Plus size / pose guide

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The headshot turn

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Relax and reset as needed.

Branding / pose guide

Use the items you actually work with. We will adapt each idea to you.



01

At your desk

Sit comfortably and open your laptop. Look at the screen as if you are working, then glance up when I ask.

Make it your own.



02

Write it down

Rest your notebook on a table and write a few words. Keep your shoulders relaxed and pause naturally between notes.

Make it your own.

Branding / pose guide

Use the items you actually work with. We will adapt each idea to you.



03

Tablet in hand

Hold your tablet with both hands at a comfortable height. Turn slightly and look toward me or just past the camera.

Make it your own.



04

Show your craft

Hold your tool the way you normally use it. Let your elbows relax and look toward me, then try looking at your work.

Make it your own.

Branding / pose guide

Use the items you actually work with. We will adapt each idea to you.



05

A relaxed coffee moment

Sit back comfortably with your mug in one hand. Take a breath and imagine catching up with a client or friend.

Make it your own.



06

Present your product

Hold your product gently near your waist or chest, with its front visible. Look at it, then back toward me.

Make it your own.

Branding / pose guide

Use the items you actually work with. We will adapt each idea to you.



07

Connected and ready

Hold your phone loosely at your side or in front of you. Shift your weight, relax your free hand, and look toward me.

Make it your own.



08

Hands at work

Sit or stand at your work surface. Arrange or use your tools naturally while I capture a few details and wider frames.

Make it your own.

Branding / pose guide

Use the items you actually work with. We will adapt each idea to you.



09

The professional pause

Stand beside a chair with a book or portfolio resting at your side. Let your shoulders settle and look toward the light.

Make it your own.



10

Walk with purpose

Hold your portfolio comfortably against your side and take a few easy steps. Look ahead, then glance toward me.

Make it your own.

A final check before you leave

Use this in order, then let me guide the session.

A few days before

Confirm your location, travel time, session length, and number of looks. Send your priorities, references, accessibility needs, and any questions. Try outfits and check props.

The night before

Steam clothes and hang them together. Pack shoes, accessories, glasses, grooming items, and clean props. Check device batteries and remove confidential information from anything in view.

The morning of

Wear or pack your first look, leave enough time to travel, and bring water if you like. Check yourself in a mirror before leaving; do not worry about memorizing the poses.

When you arrive

Tell me which image matters most, what you like or dislike in past photos, and any pose or physical limitation we should account for. We will start comfortably and adjust together.

See you soon. I have the posing covered. - Charles