

Looking Great in Pictures is a SNAP!

Do you feel overwhelmed at the very thought of having a professional portrait taken? Don't fret! While some experts advise you can cruise through the experience, whether you're an old hand at the photographer's or a novice, we've got tips that will help you arrive at your photo shoot confident and great looking.

PLANNING AHEAD

The first step is to choose the right photographer. International photographer Jay Fletcher of Florida Portrait Artists explains that good communication is essential. "Ask questions to make sure you are working with the correct studio because not all photographers are created equal. Every camera person has his or her own style, and it may not be the vision that is best suited for you," he advises. Fletcher also emphasizes being clear about the type of portrait you want—commercial, editorial or an artistic shot.

Once you have the photographer, the type of portrait and the date, prepare for the actual day. Fletcher explains, "Do not make any radical changes like cutting your hair or getting a new wardrobe. The portrait should bring out personality and clothing." You want the other to look and feel like the real you.

Second, take good care of yourself right before the photo shoot. International celebrity makeup artist and colorist Rhonda Barrington, president of Revlon My Florida, suggests, "Arrive at the photo session well-rested, fed and hydrated, and you and the photographer will have a better chance of capturing your best image."

Third, plan what you will wear. The clothing will likely depend on the environment and your objectives and the mood and audience you want to capture in your photograph. Barrington explains, "Decide what you want to project photographically—does choice matter that is your personality and lifestyle, but don't often forget to consider you." It is usually best to bring a few changes of clothes; the photographer and stylist can help you choose among them. Less is more, and it is best to stick to the color palette you're most comfortable with and avoid items that are overly trendy. Fletcher adds, "Stay away from bold colors and stripes. Darker colors also make us appear slimmer, which we all love."

THE DAY OF THE PHOTO SHOOT

"You have to own your confidence," says Barrington. "It will show up in your expressions and your body language." Put yourself at ease about the experience and the photographer. A competent professional will make you feel comfortable and will help you understand the process and what to expect.

After making sure that your self-confidence is in place, think about taking advantage of what you like the most about yourself, whether it's your eyes, your facial shape or your smile. Many people wonder whether to smile or to not smile in photos. If you love it, use it...but plan how you will do this. Do you wear a slight, natural, wide or laughing smile? How much teeth and gum do you want to show? Practice in front of the mirror so you'll be prepared to go to your best smile each time.

Portrait can be enhanced with the appropriate hairstyling and makeup. Barrington explains, "You have to be confident



HANDICAPPED THAI-CHINA BARRINGTON ARTIST IS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE BEAUTIFUL MODEL'S MAKEUP FOR THE DAY.

to your large eyes. However, if they have dark circles under them, this could be an unwanted distraction from their overall attractiveness. A concealer can be used to temporarily camouflage the discoloration." Using a professional makeup artist and hairstylist is key. These professionals can guide you toward a look you'll love for your face, complexion and lifestyle. But make sure your consultation occurs well before your photo shoot. Barrington agrees, noting that incorrect or unwell systems can be a costly experience if they don't work out on the day of your shoot.

The final image will connect the viewer to you through your eyes; your face will most likely be the primary focal point of the portrait. The eyes are important because they can give a photograph a sense of power and intensity. Try to focus on the lens and then with the camera. A good technique is to periodically look away from the camera, and then return the focus, this way you maintain a fresh and spontaneous look.

While standing in front of the camera you want to look as natural as possible, not posed. The legs and hands are also essential to a good shot. While standing, keep your hands close to your body, one foot in front of the other, and,

standing, lean slightly forward. Otherwise, if you are looking too far to the right or the left and make a more interesting pose. The back can make up much of the emotion and feeling in a photograph. One pose that will not help you is a model leaning your shoulder perpendicular to the camera, not straight. One more pose that will not help you is a model leaning their shoulder slightly, with one shoulder slightly higher than the other.

Once you have prepared, you're the right makeup and good hair, you don't forget to have fun. You will certainly have better results if you genuinely enjoy the experience. If you follow this advice you will end up with portraits you'll be proud to show. The studio is a success if the photographer succeeded in capturing your personality. Fletcher adds, "If I have the images, I know my clients will do well. Most times behind the camera I am trying to capture something that I have not captured before. People are coming to me as an expert on how to take the best of the photos, but I am very carefully as well."

Ready for your close-up? Or perhaps you're just preparing for your professional images that will be taken at your very finest gathering. Either way, professional results are easy to achieve!



With a lifelong interest in beauty, Dr. Ronald Golostem, DDS, has been a pioneer in the field of cosmetic dentistry. He is the author of the book "The Art of the Smile" and has been a speaker at numerous dental conferences. He is also a member of the American Dental Association and the Florida Dental Association. Dr. Golostem is currently practicing in the Orlando area.