

Planning for your portraits

Let's start by discussing this with your parents, so that you and they are in agreement with the style for your portraits. Your senior portraits may be traditional, classic, fun or contemporary, and a little compromise may be necessary so that everyone is happy!

When choosing your outfits, keep variety in mind — in color and in style. Your outfits can be fashionable or timeless. Traditional wardrobe styles will stand the test of time and keep your portrait looking fresh for years to come. With trendy styles, your portrait may look dated and out of style in a year or two.

The outfits you look best in are probably the ones that you wear the most. However, this is what you should consider:

- Solid colors that go well with your skin tone.
- Darker clothing colors are more neutral and go well with both light and dark backgrounds.
- Light tones work well with white or lighter backgrounds.
- Fair complexions are best with medium to medium-dark tone outfits.
- The best colors are the colors of nature — blue, green and brown in various hues; mauve, burgundy and wine colors are great too!
- While I caution against wearing bright colors, there are certainly ones you might look absolutely great in. The white or wood backgrounds work well with these.
- Darker clothes minimize body size, specifically on a darker background.

The focal point of a portrait is your face and more importantly your eyes and the expressions we are capable of capturing. **These are the outfits you will want to rule out:**

- Short sleeves (except for on fuller length poses). Longer sleeves look better because attention goes to your face rather than the brighter upper arm.
- Stay clear of stripes! They do not photograph well because they make your portrait look too busy.
- Avoid large prints and patterns—these may help you to stand out at a party, but are not the best for portraits.
- Bright colors also attract attention and should be avoided unless of course you know you look great in one—then we go to a white or wood background.
- Make sure your clothes fit properly, especially guys wearing a shirt and necktie. An inch or two larger neck size may be comfortable, but it looks weird in a portrait.
- Wrinkled clothing — please make sure your outfits are pressed and on hangers when you bring them in to the studio. **Please, don't even think of putting your portrait outfits in a backpack or a bag.**



How many outfits should I bring along?

Most seniors choose two tops for each series of images. This way, we can pick and choose the best. And, even though it's summer-time, your portraits can reflect any season, so it's OK to use fall and winter clothing for your in studio portraits. *Here are some ideas...*

GUYS — A sport coat, suit or sweater and tie look great for your formal portrait. For the casual look, choose a comfortable shirt or add a sharp sporty jacket with your favorite slacks. Khaki's or jeans with a shirt, pullover or sweater look great too, especially for outdoor portraits. A fresh shave is a must! If you have a beard or mustache, make sure it's neatly trimmed.

GIRLS — Start with a medium tone, long sleeved sweater or shirt for your traditional portrait. For your casual portraits, you'll need slacks or jeans and an assortment of tops, mostly without patterns and preferably longer sleeved. Keeping it simple is the general rule — accessories like ear rings and necklaces are a nice touch, but need not be a distraction. Please avoid sleeveless tops, shoulder pads and baggy slacks—these usually add an appearance of weight where it shouldn't be. Also, avoid tops where straps and seams from undergarments will be apparent — unless you want them to be apparent.

MAKEUP — Wear makeup the way you do for an evening out. Foundation helps even out your skin tones, and your lipstick should be a little darker than normal. At least one application of soft and light mascara on the upper and lower lashes will help bring out your eyes — please stay away from frosted eye shadow and lipstick. Fingernails look prettier with two coats of nail polish. Bring along your makeup, just in case you have to touch up.

What about glasses and haircuts?

GLASSES — If you wear glasses most of the time, you'll want to wear them in your portraits. But if your lenses are convex, have your optician supply you with empty frames for the day of your photography. Not only do glasses catch light reflections, but they can also distort the face line behind the lenses of your glasses (this will add retouching cost to your portrait order).

HAIR — Try to have your hair cut at least one week before your session, to give it a chance to "fill in" a little. Please don't try a radically different haircut or style, chances are you won't feel it expresses the real "you."

New Green Screen...

Studio portraits that are photographed against a green background — the green will be dropped out with computer software, and replaced with another background or an outdoor scene. Check out my Blog at <http://go2portraits.blogspot.com/2010/06/green-screen-chroma-key.html> for examples.

Grunge looks... Totally Rad!

The "Street Scene" is taken a step further by going to locations of urban decay... the neat stuff hanging around from yesteryear and making it current for today's generation. The object is not to just take some shots in an area of abandoned buildings, but to work with an individual to make their portraits uniquely their own. See: <http://go2portraits.blogspot.com/2010/06/be-totally-rad.html>

What else can I bring?

If you like, bring your favorite hat, musical instrument, sunglasses, hobby, jackets or uniform. Bring enough props and outfits to add variety and interest to your portraits. Your pet is also an option for an outdoor portrait — but please make sure there is someone along to handle your pet. Above all, use your imagination, whatever ideas you come up with, I will do them for you!

Get your wardrobe, accessories, props, makeup, etc. ready the night before your session. Be sure you have all the outfits ready that you want to bring along for the next day.

Artwork and retouching

This is an integral part of portraiture, and is one of the things that makes my portrait prints of a higher quality. Much of the retouching is included, but some things may cost extra:

Retouching that is included:

- Remove minor blemishes and scars.
- Remove moles when requested.
- Soften facial lines.
- Brighten darkness under the eyes as necessary.
- Remove stray hairs.
- Whiten teeth.

Retouching that is an additional charge:

- Remove major blemish issues.
- Reduce sunburn.
- Remove peeling skin.
- Blend tan lines.
- Reduce five o'clock shadow.
- Reduce eyeglass reflections and distortions.
- Raccoon eyes from wearing sunglasses.
- Remove visible under garment straps.

Retouching that is not offered:

- Rearrange hair.
- Remove wrinkles in clothing.
- Remove braces.

Simplicity is the key to a successful portrait — along with all the little elements that come together to create the end result. Each thing you do right will make a major difference in the end product. Get a good night's rest, relax and be ready for a great portrait experience.

On-location portraits...

These are a specialty at Portraits & Dreams — done at a nearby park, home, street or other interesting location — we can spend a limited amount of time or a lot of time depending on your needs.



Limited outdoor session...

This is when we spend about one-half hour at the studio and photograph you in one outfit, then in another outfit or two at a nearby park, for another half-hour. Scenes and poses will be varied to give you a variety to choose from. This is offered when you need only one or two outdoor poses for your A la Carte selection.

Regular outdoor session...

This is when we spend up to 2 hours, at a local area and photograph you in several outfits. Scenes and poses will be varied to provide a good variety. This is offered when you need more poses to choose from, and is great for your portrait panel. This is the **most popular session!**

Ultimate outdoor session...

These are locations like parks with shade tree or fields with tall grass, or downtown street scenes to name a few. Interesting locations like the Third Ward or Riverwalk areas are great ideas as well. This session is offered when you need more poses to choose from for your Artists (5 to 10 pose) Collection or a 2 - 4 hour A la Carte session.

Location sessions are offered mid-morning on Wednesday through Friday, or at mid-afternoon on Tuesday through Thursday.

Wisconsin weather ...

It's been said that if you don't like the weather in Wisconsin, just wait a minute. Typically, our outdoor sessions are scheduled in tandem with the indoor session. Outdoor conditions may dampen our activities however — in the event of rain, we will continue with the indoor portion and reschedule the outdoor session. Cloudy days are OK and perhaps preferable.

How much money should I bring?

There are two retainers of \$125 each. The first is paid when you schedule your portrait session, the second one is due on the day of your portrait session.

When will my originals be ready?

You will be able to see and order your in-studio portraits immediately following your portrait session. Sessions that include outdoor portraits will be put on an online gallery. A return viewing and ordering appointment will be scheduled to make your final selections, determine sizes, retouching and finish options.

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