

# Basic Lighting Setups for Portraits

## Quantity of Light

Quantity of light is the amount of light that illuminates the subject. In normal situations you want enough light to allow you to take a photograph at a low ISO to keep noise to a minimum at a shutter speed that is fast enough to avoid movement and at an aperture suitable to achieve the depth of field that you want.

Quantity of light is directly related to your exposure. A “correct” exposure shows the full range of tones available. It doesn’t matter what you are using to light your subject, you need to know how to record it accurately. Every image has a “proper” exposure. However, a “properly” exposed image will have a “neutral” section a section that is underexposed in relation to the main exposure (known as the shadows), and a section that is overexposed compared to the main exposure (known as the highlights).

**The exposure does not depend on where the camera is, or how far the camera is from the subject. What matters is how far the light source is from the subject.**

## Inverse Square Law

As a photographer it’s important to understand how light behaves, the intensity of light follows something called the Inverse Square Law, the intensity of light diminishes by the square of the distance. What does this mean?

- Light at 2x the distance is  $\frac{1}{4}$  as bright (2 stops)
- Light at 3x the distance is  $\frac{1}{9}$  as bright (3 stops)
- Light at 4x the distance is  $\frac{1}{16}$  as bright (4 stops)

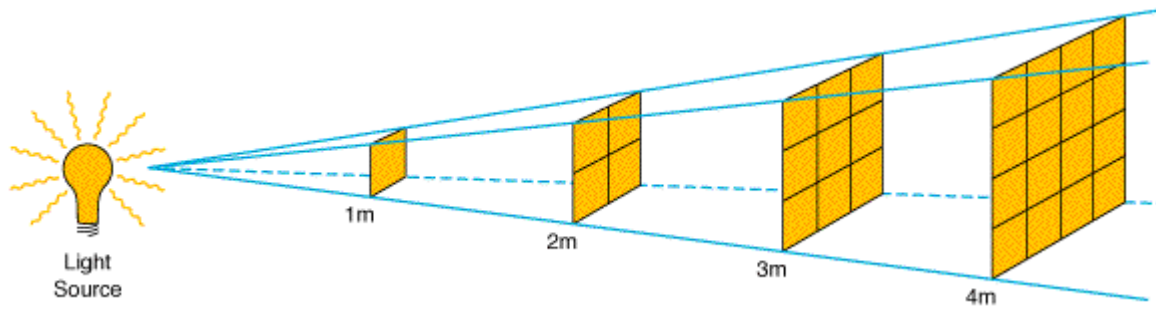
It means that if you take a light reading 1m from your light source, you will get a certain reading, lets for arguments sake say that its 100.

Double the distance, ie move 2m from the light source and the light value drops off to become  $\frac{1}{2^2}$  ie (1/4) what it was. So if it was 100 at 1m, its only 25 at 2m.

Move another metre, so now you are 3m away, and the intensity of light is now only  $\frac{1}{3^2}$  (ie  $\frac{1}{9^{\text{th}}}$ ) of what it was at 1mm so your 100, in now just over 11.

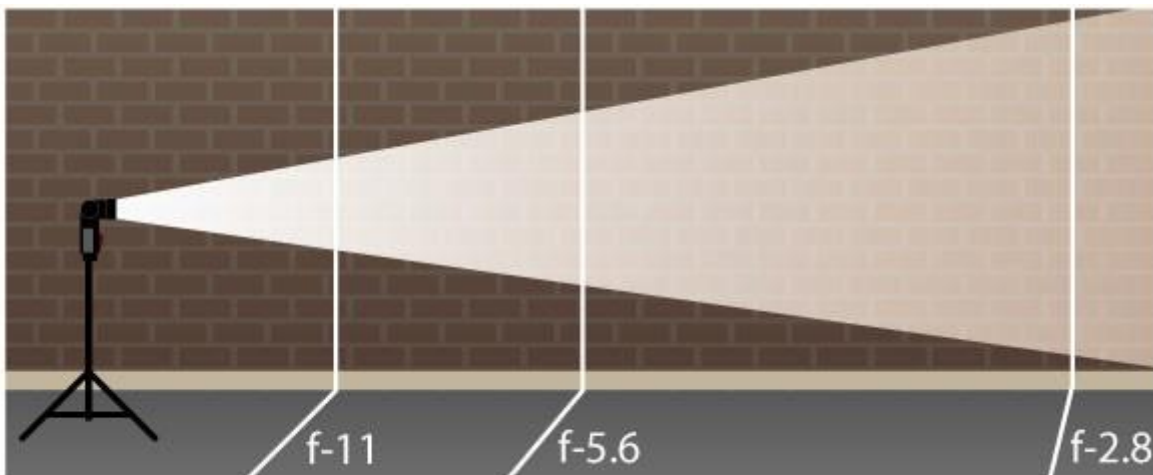
Move to 4m and the intensity is only  $\frac{1}{4^2}$  (ie  $\frac{1}{16^{\text{th}}}$ ) of what it was at 1m, so the 100 is now a little over 6.

The fall-off in light near the light source is very rapid, in this example 75% of the light is lost after 2m, as distance increases then the fall off becomes less marked.



### So what does this mean for the photographer?

Well let's put it in terms of f-stops. It means that if you were using f11 at 1m, then at 2m, because you only have  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the light, you would have to open the aperture by two stops making it f5.6. At 4m you would need to open another two stops taking you to f2.8.



If you are using one of the various flavours of 'automatic flash', then of course the actual light output of the strobe can be modified so that this effect is less obvious, but with manual flash, continuous lighting or natural light there is nothing to mitigate the effect unless you do it yourself. "You canna change the laws of physics capt'n".

If you have the light source very close to a subject, then the fall off in light can be so rapid that there can be a difference of a stop or maybe a stop and a half between one side of the subjects face and the other, If you have a group of people then the difference between individuals can be much more. This can make setting the correct exposure for the whole scene very tricky.

It follows therefore that if you want the lighting to be uniform over a subject or group of subjects, then it's going to be easier to obtain if the light source is some distance away since the fall-off at distance will be less, resulting in a more uniform light across the scene.

Of course you can also take advantage of the nature of light in other ways. If you want to light a subject with two lights, but have one  $\frac{1}{4}$  the power of the other, then set them to the same output and have one twice as far from the subject as the other.

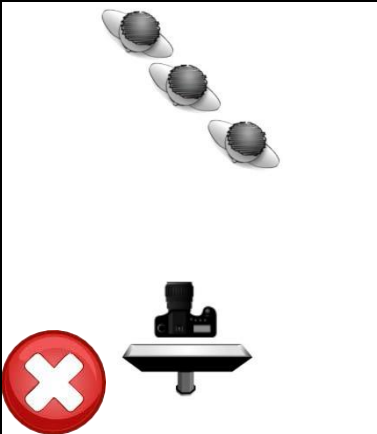
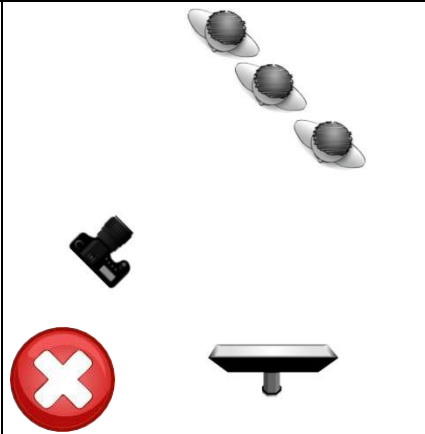
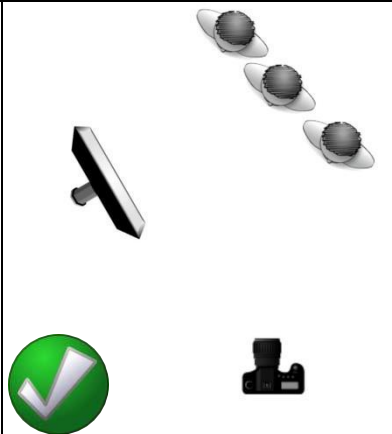
If you want to make subtle variations, then rather than tinker with the power output on your lights, you can physically move the lights themselves – or in the case of natural light move the subject relative to the light.

Open sunlight does of course work exactly according to the inverse square law too, there can be no exceptions. Yet sunshine seems very different, and actually appears NOT to work that way, unobstructed sunlight seems to have constant brightness regardless of distance.

Remember that it's the distance from the subject to the light source that matters, NOT the distance to the camera. We are 93 million miles from the Sun so the added fall-off in light between subjects is going to be infinitesimal. A few miles or even tens of miles to the distant mountains is insignificant. Even the 240,000 miles to the Moon is insignificant as it represents less than 0.25% of the earth to Sun distance.

The constancy of open sunlight can give a false impression about how other light ought to work, but it is the Sun's distance that is the exception. If the light source is only a few feet from the subject, you WILL see the Inverse Square Law in action and you need to work with it.

It is important to expect and plan for the light REMEMBER. It does not matter in terms of amount of light where the camera is in relation to the light source, but pay attention to distance between light source and subject. If you remember this you can arrange your subjects so they are equidistant from the light source and light them evenly.

		
<p>NO. The subjects are different distances from the light source and will be unevenly lit.</p>	<p>NO. The subjects are equidistant from the camera but are different distances from the light source</p>	<p>YES. The subjects will be evenly lit as they are equidistant from the light source.</p>

One other point – we are used to seeing subjects lit from above or from the side – that's where the sun is. Subjects lit from below are best consigned to the horror category. Occasionally you may want to add a fill light or reflector below the subject, but main (Key), lighting should (almost) never be below the horizontal.

## Measuring Light

If you want to measure the amount of light, then of course you can use your camera's built in light meter, this will measure the amount of light being reflected from the subject. However, your camera's light meter can't measure flash, as its too brief. If you want to measure flash objectively, then you can use a flashmeter. This is just a special type of light meter that can measure the briefest of flashes. Simple flashmeters such as the Sekonic L-308S are about £80 and will do most things you need.

Other meters that can spot read at a distance and/or be used to remotely trigger your flash can be purchased, but don't expect much change from £400 if you want one of these.



## Colour Temperature

In the natural work light is not white, but your eyes normally go a great job in making all light look the same. Early morning and evening light has more red in it, noon-day sunlight is bluer. Fluorescent lights tend to give off a green light, tungsten bulbs orange and sodium lamps yellow.

Most cameras have a setting called AWB (auto white balance), where the camera will try to do what your eyes do and make all light look 'as it should'. The trouble is it does not work too well in extreme situations. You can set the white balance yourself using the pre-defined settings such as sun, cloudy, shade etc, but it's a bit hit and miss. Some cameras will allow you to set the colour temperature in °K but again, with nothing to go on you are just guessing. For a more accurate WB setting you can use an EXPO disk or Grey Card to determine what setting to use so that your whites appear white.

By far the most versatile solution is to shoot in RAW. Use a grey card and introduce it into the scene – get your model to hold it near the face and take a couple of shots. By all means adjust the WB and shoot again until you are happy with the colour (but this is not strictly necessary).

If you are shooting RAW, then the WB information is simply added as a tag to the RAW data, telling the RAW converter what it thinks the WB setting is. At the end of the shoot you can then simply load all the images into the RAW converter, examine the test shot in detail on the screen and adjust the WB setting as needed. It's then a simple matter to apply those same settings in a batch to your other images.



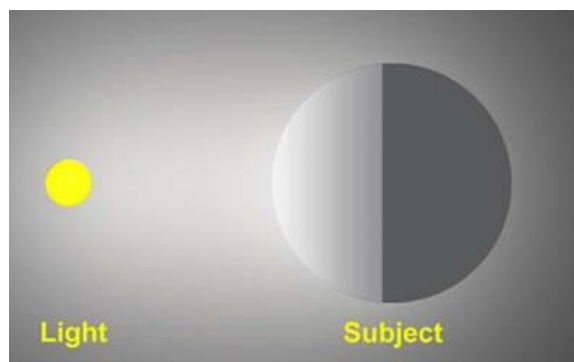
## Quality of Light

### Hard Light

Hard light is light that produces strong highlights and deep shadows with a rapid transition between the two. Hard light results from the effective size of the light source being relatively small compared to the subject. The light is highly directional and cannot wrap around the subject.

Hard lighting can be used very effectively in portraits especially where you want to add drama and emphasise the character of the subject but it is pretty unforgiving. Hard light portraits can be especially effective if you go the extra step by converting to B&W and using a black background.

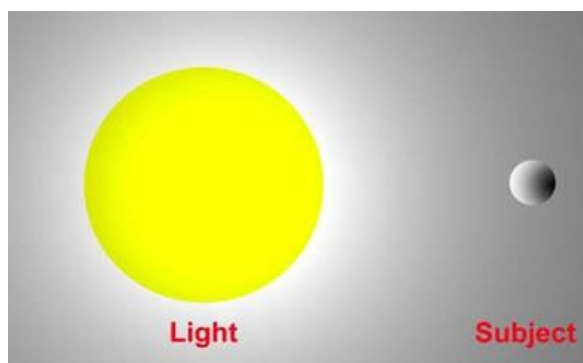
If you want to use hard light, then it's all about making the light source smaller relative to the subject and increasing the directionality of the light. Moving the light source away from the subject makes it smaller, adding a directional reflector such as a beauty dish, snoot or similar light modifier can all help.



### Soft Light

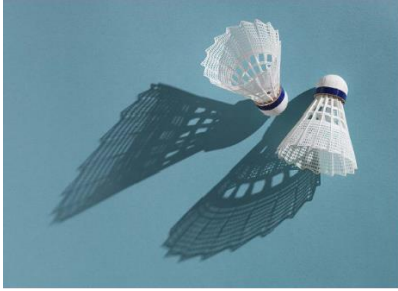
Soft light is light that produces no hard shadows. The light is more even with no hot-spots and a gradual transition in shade with no deep shadow. You get soft light when the light source is large relative to the subject. The large relative size of the light source means that the light hits the subject from a variety of angles and wraps around the subject filling the shadows.

The current vogue is for portraits tend to be shot using soft light as it's generally more flattering. You can soften light by moving the light source closer to the subject. If you are using a natural light source (like a window) try something as simple as moving the subject into the room, pulling the curtains, or hanging a white sheet to diffuse the light. With other light sources then of course getting it closer to your subject will actually make it relatively larger and as a consequence the light softer. You can also bounce your flash, use diffusers, soft boxes and even reflectors to soften the light.



## Flat Light

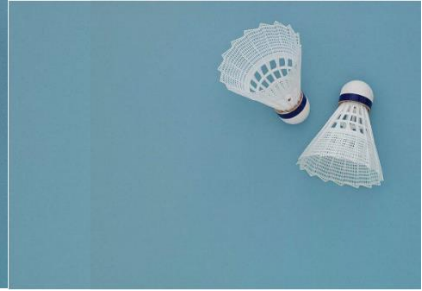
Flat light is light that is so diffused that it is directionless and produces no discernible shadow at all on the subject. It can be produced by a very overcast sky or direct (on-camera), flash. While flat lighting can be useful in some situations, flat lit images generally look rather lifeless and uninteresting, not because of the content, but because they lack contrast, depth, detail and colour. Flat Light can result from an overcast sky or by illuminating the scene from the same angle as the picture is being taken – on camera flash for example.



**Hard Light:** Well defined shadows with hard edges and no transition areas.



**Soft Light:** Shadows are obvious but lack hard edges and contrast.

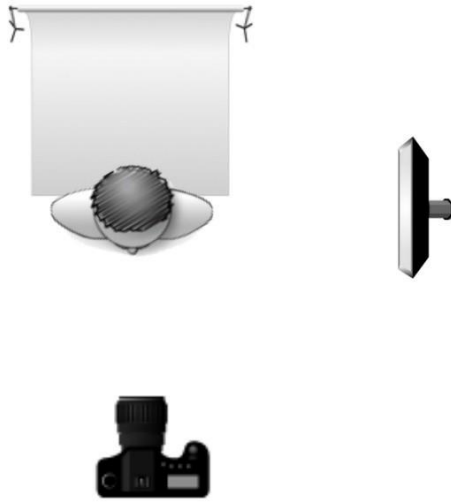


**Flat Light:** No Shadows

## Basic Lighting Patterns

### Split Lighting

This is very simple pattern and often used for dramatic results. You split the subject's face with the light. So only half of the face is lit by the light, the other half lays in the shadow. As you understand, the main light source is placed way to the side of the subject and almost on the same plane as the subject's head. With the subject lit from 90° or thereabouts which results in one half of the subject being in the light and the other in the shade. The harshness of the effect is determined by the quality of the light. A large soft light source will give a more subtle transition than a hard narrow light.



Split lighting can produce a dramatic effect probably more appropriate for males, actors, artists, musicians and businessmen where the effect can emphasise character and power.

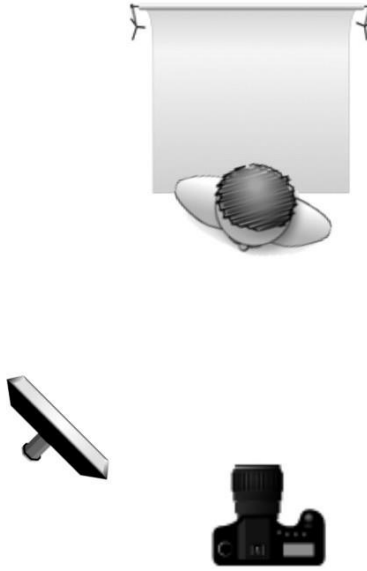
The light source should be at around 90° to both subject and camera, maybe even slightly behind the subject. It should be level with, or slightly above the level of the subject. Watch for how the light falls on the face and adjust the angle to get the desired effect. In true split lighting the shadow side of the face picks up light in the eye only.

Obviously as the subject moves the light source must follow the face to maintain the same effect. You can use this to your advantage, getting the subject to turn their head a little is often easier than moving the light source.

## Loop Lighting

Loop lighting is probably the most common for general portraits and it very effective both with males and females. The idea with loop lighting is to create a small shadow of the subject's nose on their cheeks. It sounds odd, but is usually quite flattering.

The light source needs to be at an angle of about 30-40° from the camera and slightly above the subject, so that the shadow of the nose, (the loop), falls down on the cheek towards the edge of the mouth.



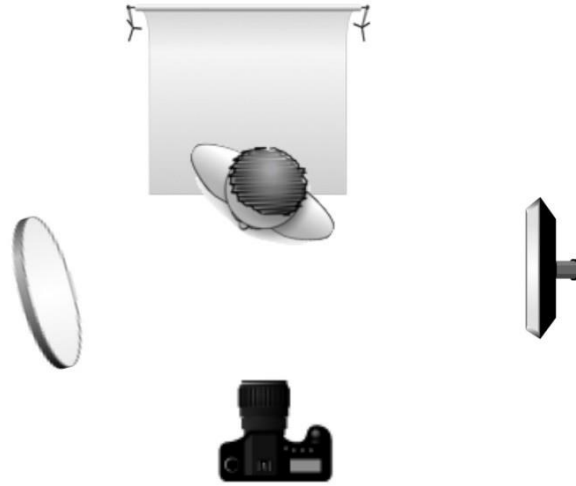
The as the Loop lighting is made by creating a small shadow of the subjects noses on their cheeks. To create loop lighting, the light source must be slightly higher than eye level and about 30-45 degrees from the camera (depends on the person, you have to learn how to read people's faces).





## Rembrandt Lighting

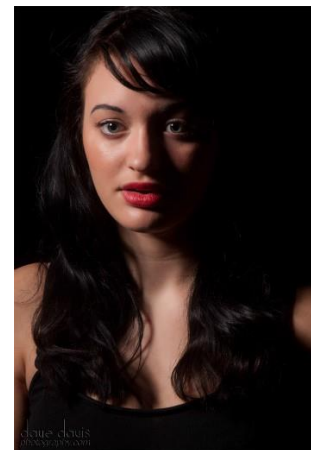
So called because the style was used by the Rembrandt the painter. It has a darker and more moody look to it than split lighting. The essential characteristic is a triangle of light on the cheek. In loop lighting the shadow of the nose and cheek do not touch but with Rembrandt lighting they do. This results in a little triangle of light in the middle. If the eye that is on the shadow side is to sparkle and not look dead then you need to make sure it has a catch-light in it. The subject has to have the right facial features it Rembrandt lighting is going to work. Small flat noses won't produce the shadow, prominent cheek bones on the other hand emphasises the effect.



The lighting set-up is similar to split lighting with the light source at approx. 90° to the camera but to create the effect it must be above the top of their head so that the shadow from their nose falls down towards the cheek, and the subject must turn slightly away from the light.

Position one flash head with a silver brolly at a 45° angle to the model at about six feet high.

This creates a strong, hard, direct light from the side and above. To even the lighting, position a reflector on the other side of the model to bounce the light back into the shadow side.



### Butterfly Lighting (Hollywood lighting or Paramount lighting)

Butterfly lighting is so called because a butterfly shaped shadow is created under the nose of the subject. This type of lighting is often used for fashion and glamour shots as it results flatters subjects with defined or prominent cheek bones and a slim face. Butterfly lighting is also flattering for older subjects as it emphasizes wrinkles less than side lighting. However someone with a round, wide face would look better with loop or even split to slim their face.



To achieve the effect you need the main light source to be above and directly behind the camera. The photographer is basically shooting underneath the light source and in order to produce the shadow a harder light may be required.

In turn the harder light may result in some unwanted shadows and skin textures so it's quite common for a reflector (often held by the model themselves), or a secondary light to be used to counter the effect.

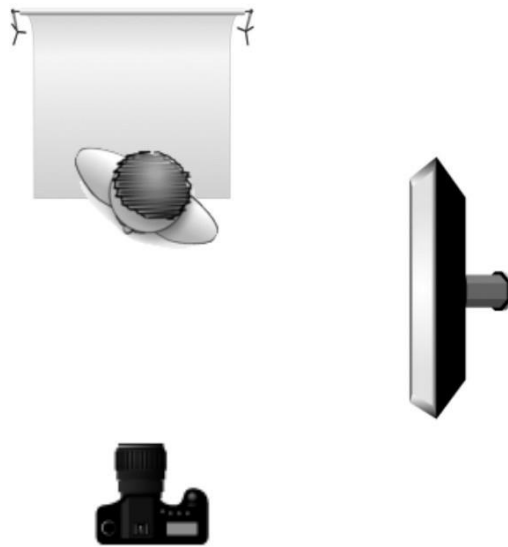


## Lighting Styles

### Broad Lighting Style

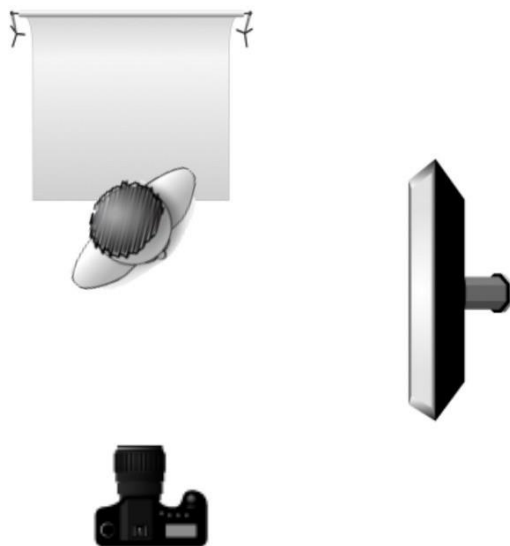
Broad lighting is not so much a pattern, but a style of lighting that can be combined with Split, loop or Rembrandt.

With broad lighting the side of the subjects face that is nearest to the light source is also the nearest to the camera. The side of the face which is toward the camera and therefore appears larger, is in the light. This produces a larger area of light on the face, making a person's face look broader or wider (hence the name) and can be used on someone with a very slim face to widen it. Most people however want to look slimmer, not wider so this type of lighting would not be appropriate for someone who is heavier or round faced, However broad lighting is sometimes used for "high key" portraits where the effect is countered by the general lack of shadow.



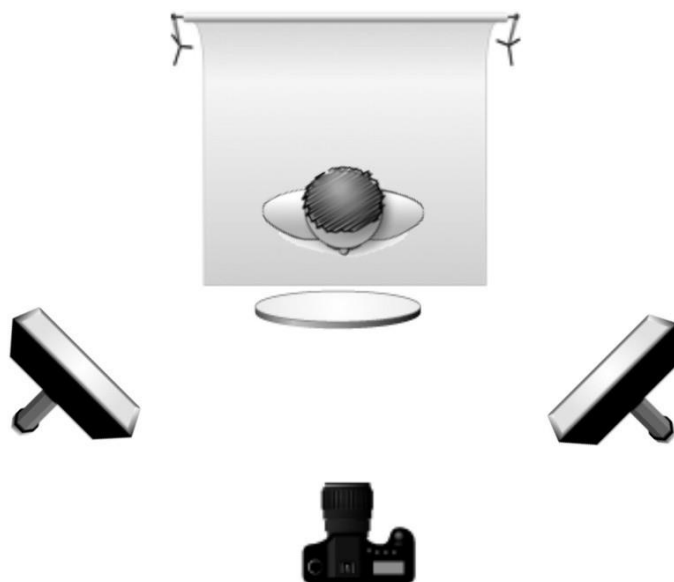
### Short Lighting Style

This is the opposite of broad lighting. The subject is turned away from centre, but in such a way to put the side turned towards the in shadow making it appear smaller. It is often used for low key, or darker portraits and because it puts more of the face in shadow, is more sculpting, adds 3D qualities, and is slimming and flattering for most people



### Flat Lighting

Flat lighting is flat and even. It has little or no directional light that can be identified as such. Shadows are therefore minimised which can be flattering and it can therefore be useful for 'beauty images'. Cloudy skies can produce flat light, if you want to create flat light then you can do it artificially. You need to do is place two softboxes on either side of your subject at the same angle and at an equal distance and with equal power so that they cancel out each other's shadows. To prevent shadows under the cheeks and nose a reflector in front of (or held by), the subject can be added.

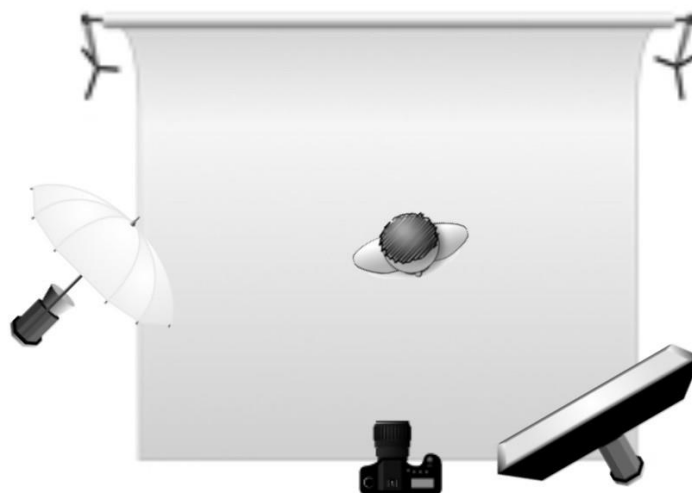


## Taking it a step further

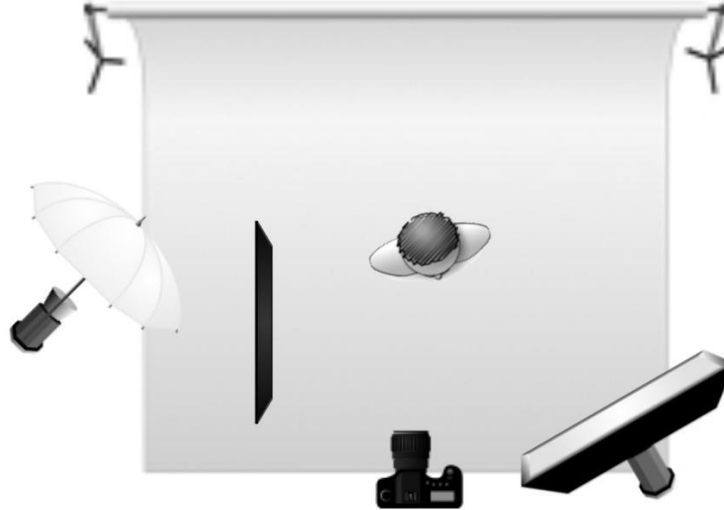
To create natural looking photos it was decided to use a large diffuse light as the main light source – the key light. Any large light source will do, a large softbox, octabox. Large shoot-through brolly or diffuser over a window etc. This needs to be placed to one side of the camera and close to the subject to produce a nice soft light that wraps wrapping around the face. Position it above the subject's head and pointed down slightly, watch the shadows under the nose and chin though so that they are not too pronounced. This is similar to light you might get from the sun shining through light clouds.



After setting the key light, think about the background, if you want the background to be white(er) and wrinkle free and you don't want the model to cast a shadow then you need to put some light on the background itself. A fill light is needed to add light at the back. A smaller shoot through brolly placed to camera left will do the job and produce a soft light, depending of the brolly and power it can, if you want, be used to produce a natural looking 'hot spot' directly behind the model. If you don't have a second light, then a reflector placed in the same position may be all that you need.



The problem with using a fill light like this, it that as well as lighting the background, some light will spill onto the subject creating unwanted light/shine on the side of the subject nearest the fill light. To get rid of light spilling on the subject from the fill light you can use a flag, a piece of matt black material used to block light and deepen shadows, and use it to mask the subject from the fill light.



If you find that the shadows created by the key light, under the chin and nose are a bit too dark, then a little additional light from the front can soften them, a silver or white reflector placed below the camera and angled up slightly, should do that job very effectively.



## Some Dos and Don'ts

Some *rules* that you can break once you know about them!

Some of these *rules* apply to female subjects only, some for males and some for couples and groups only. Then there are rules for seated poses only, standing poses only and some work best on younger subjects as opposed to more mature subjects. As with all rules once you know them you can judiciously break them.

### 1. Talk to the subject

Often the difference between an average photographer and a good one comes over in the relaxed atmosphere between the two. Chat with the subject and get them to relax, put them at ease. Be prepared to take a lot of shots at the beginning that you will throw away while you build the relationship.

### 2. Consider using a tripod and remote release

This will allow you to stand out from behind the camera and talk to the subject without any barrier – beware though, keep near the camera, you don't want the subject turning their head or eyes to engage with you at the expense of looking towards the camera.

### 3. Use a low ISO and a reasonably fast shutter speed

100 ISO and 1/125<sup>th</sup> should do the job. The aperture should be set to get the effect and depth of field that you want, don't make the DoF so shallow that slight movement of the subject causes them to go out of focus. Using your camera on manual will give you full control and is especially recommended if the lighting is consistent.

### 4. Use a lens of suitable focal length

Conventionally 80-100mm on a full frame camera (50-70mm on a crop sensor). Wide angle lenses distort the features especially the nose as it's nearer the camera, long lenses flatten the features. Short telephoto lenses will prevent foreshortening which is where objects nearest the lens will appear larger than objects farther away. The use of a short telephoto lens in group portraiture will make all the faces approximately the same size regardless of whether they are in the front row or the rear row.

### 5. Don't have the key light below the level of the subject

Indeed take care when having any light below the subject. Upward facing shadows are best left to the horror film industry.



## 6. If shooting across the face, keep the nose inside the line of the face

If you photographing across the face having the nose outside the profile of the face and extending beyond the cheek can make it look disproportionately large.

## 7. Concentrate on the eyes

The eyes are the most important element of the face. Focus on the eyes, get them sharp, fail and the portrait fails. If the subject is at an angle to the camera, focus should be on the eye nearest the camera. Since you want the subject to maintain eye contact with both you and the camera lens, it is essential that you keep your face very close to the camera when shooting. This may seem obvious, but it can be easy to forget if your camera is on a tripod. We've all seen photographers do this; stand far aside from the camera and engage the subject. This results in a look that makes the subject appear distracted by something rather than engaged. Just peer over the camera or slightly to the side and your subject will appear to looking directly into the lens.

If you feel that an off-camera gaze is necessary, here are a few things to keep in mind. Eyes to camera-right indicate looking forward to the future. Eyes to camera-left indicate the past. Eyes up are positive or hopeful; whereas eyes down indicate contemplation or melancholy. Eyes to the side just generally look distracted. These angles can be used together as well. For instance, posing eyes up and to the right would indicate hope for the future. Of course, these are not precise indicators of emotion; but the general ideas can be applied to a variety of situations.

A subject's eyes should follow the line of the nose. This is particularly important when the gaze is off-camera or the model will simply look distracted.

Slightly off-centre eyes; positioned midway between the nose and the corners is a good pose as well. Try not to completely eliminate the whites of the eyes from any one side; but, more importantly, avoid a large area of the white showing or it will be distracting.

This is probably a good point to mention that the eyes are the one body part that breaks the rule that says if you have two of them, make them different. As if it actually needed to be said, crossed eyes are rarely appropriate in any portrait

## 8. The far eye should either been seen completely or not be seen at all

If you are shooting across the subject's face make sure that you angle the face so that you leave some of it visible between the eye and the background, otherwise the eye seems to be disconnected from the subject. The far eye should either been seen completely or not be seen at all, but one should never photograph the face so that only 1/2 of the far eye shows.



### 9. Catchlights are essential in any portrait.

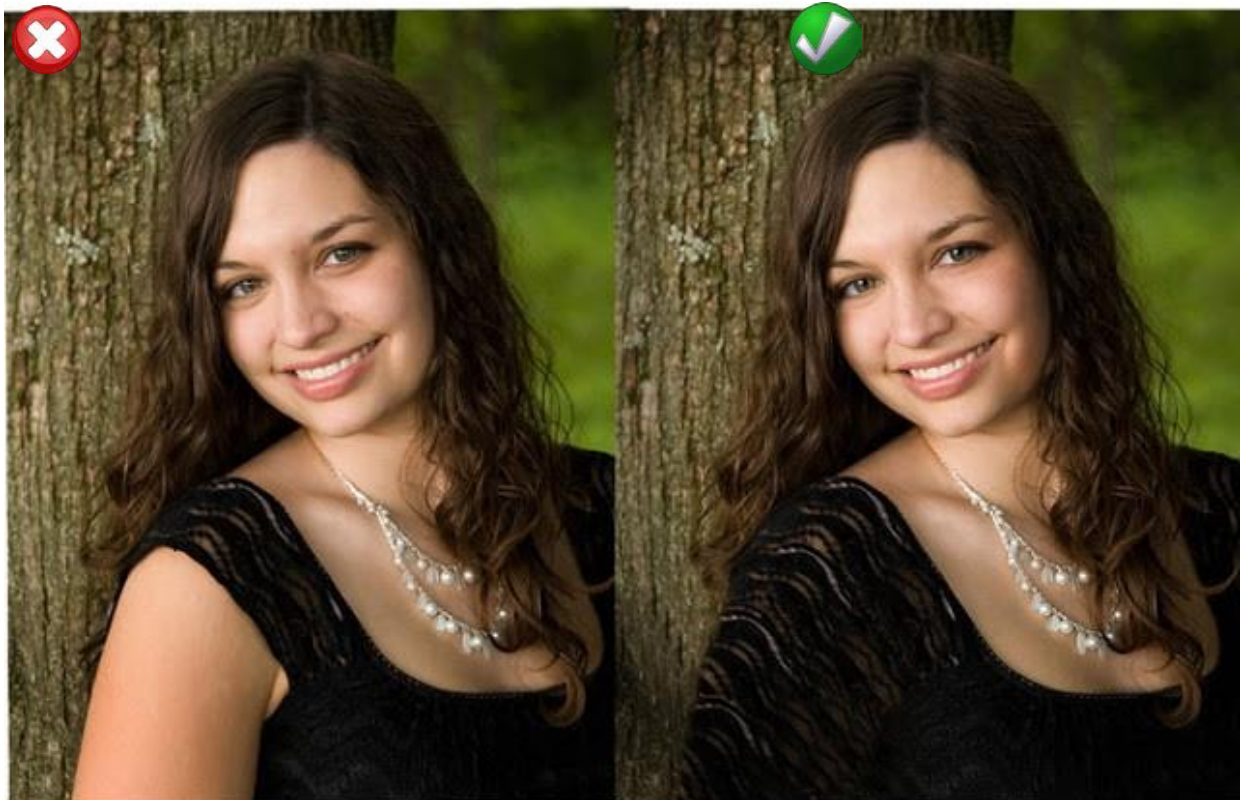
They are the reflections of lights within the eyeballs. If the eyes are the window to the soul, catchlights mean that the lights are on. Having no visible catchlights in the eyes will make a person look creepy or soulless. All too often they are ignored or forgotten by photographers, particularly in full-body and outdoor shots. This will almost always diminish the portrait to some degree.

Catchlights at the eleven o'clock and one o'clock position of the eyes are generally optimal. One or two catchlights are preferred. More can indicate exuberance or even a manic feeling.

Watch for the catchlights disappearing when lowering the chin or shooting outdoors on a cloudy day. You may have to resort to adding the catchlights in post-processing. We will be releasing a new catchlight brush series soon along with a video tutorial on their usage

### 10. No sleeveless clothing in head and shoulders portraits

Note the difference below as to where your eye is drawn when you view these images. In a portrait your eye should be drawn to the subject's face. Your eye tends to be drawn to the lighter areas of the image, in this case the bare skin of the arm.



### 11. No shorts or short dresses in group portraits

Same reason as above. Eyes are attracted to bare skin, and that is why the ONLY bare skin that should show in PORTRAITURE is the face.



### 12. Avoid Bright Colours and Bold Patterns in Clothing.

The idea of a portrait is to see the face of the subject. Brightly coloured clothing and bold patterns draw the eye away from the subject's face especially true in the head and shoulders portrait.

### 13. Avoid 'Rugby Shoulders'

The body should not face straight to the camera. That said neither should the body should **not** be turned 90 degrees

45 degrees is usually the ideal angle for the head and shoulders portrait. Posing someone at a 90 degree angle to the camera does not allow the head to appear to have proper support.

After posing the subject at a 45 degree angle, bring the arms out to form the sides of the pyramid.

### 14. Do not allow the subject to slump

If the subject slumps it makes the shoulders appear rounded and makes them look short and dumpy.

The photo below breaks rules 13/14/15



### 15. Correct Posing Height

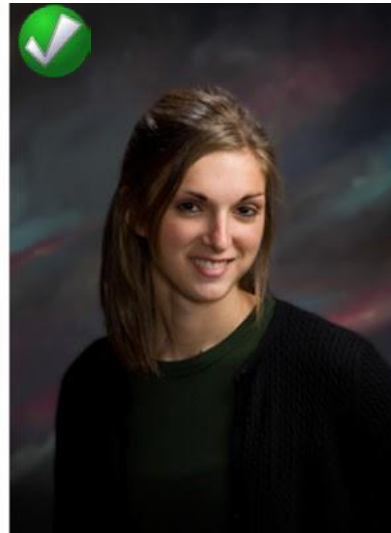
Chairs are generally a little too low for posing and encourage 'slumping'. A high bar stool stretches the body in a flattering way.

With **females** raising the leg closest to the camera will tilt the torso (and the shoulders) slightly away from the camera will keep the shoulder that is closest to the camera higher than the other one, but will still allow the subject to relax.



## 16. Lean forward slightly -"Over the belt buckle."

Without slumping. This eliminates the static straight up and down look and will give a feeling of movement and motion to the portrait. In the left image below she is seated bolt upright. In the right image she is leaning over the belt buckle to camera left and also slightly to the left rear with her head back toward the main light at camera right.



## 17. With standing poses Weight on the Back Foot- and shift the hips.

This will put the hips and shoulders at a pleasing angle. Ask the subject to point her foot that is nearest to the camera toward the camera and shift her weight to the back hip. This means the front leg and foot will have no weight on it. She should then bend her knee slightly toward the other leg. This will give a pleasing "S" curve to her body. You should always keep your subject grounded; even if it's just the tip of the toes barely touching the floor. Avoid showing the bottom of the feet. If it does become necessary for whatever reason, bare feet are preferable to the soles of shoes. Just make sure they are clean.



### 18. Project the Chin

Especially if your subject has a full or double chin. By projecting the chin out toward the camera and using a slightly higher camera position the double chin can be nearly eliminated.

### 19. If it bends, bend it, wherever there is a joint, "break" it.

Generally straight arms and straight legs to are less pleasing to the eye than ones which are bent. In the image bellows nothing is straight (other than her wrists) or straight up and down. She is at a 45 degree angle to the camera, leaning back, her hips are canted, her shoulders are slightly tipped, her head is tilted, her back leg is bent, both elbows are bent, all of her fingers are curled and even her eyes are not straight in their sockets.

### 20. If the subject has two of them, make them different.

Note her hands are not at the same height nor are they across from one another, her elbows are at different heights, and her knees (even though you can't see them) are at two different heights. **(Do not apply this rule to eyes!)**



## 21. Head tilt

As with all joints, you should bend them. The head is no different. A tilt of the head can be a powerful conveyance in portrait. The subject's shoulders should be posed diagonally for a more pleasing effect. This creates a higher and a lower shoulder

A head tilt to the higher shoulder is considered feminine. Conversely, a head tilt to the lower shoulder is considered masculine. A woman's head can be tilted toward the masculine side, but a man's head should rarely be tilted to the feminine side. In some poses the masculine head tilt works better for the female, especially if the background or the set she is posed in is a more masculine background or set.



MASCULINE HEAD TILT



FEMININE HEAD TILT



MASCULINE HEAD TILT



FEMININE HEAD TILT

## 22. Don't Shoot Into a Bare Armpit or up the nose

Either cover it with something or raise the opposite arm and bring the near arm down. I've seen bare armpits covered with the young lady's long hair, flowers, strips of cloth, and small props. With long sleeved clothing shooting into an armpit is usually not a problem. In the example one with her long hair, and the other heavily retouched.

Shooting up the nose can be equally unattractive.



## 23. Avoid Crotch Shots

Raising the leg that is closest to the camera in a standing pose will prevent shooting into the subject's crotch. In groups, turning the subject's body to a 45 degree angle and keeping the legs together should prevent shooting into the crotch.





## 24. Appropriate Camera Height

Generally speaking, the camera lens should be at about eye level for head and shoulders portraits, chin level to chest level for  $\frac{3}{4}$  length and chest level to waist level for full length portraits. However, a lower camera height for heavy set brides, that are posed standing, will make her appear taller and more "regal."

However bear in mind that a higher camera position in head and shoulders will give their eyes a more "glamorous" look. With longer shots it can also make the subject look thinner. In the example below the second image was taken at the top of a step ladder. Note how much thinner she appears in the second image. This works best for subjects seated on the floor. Note how the background "moved up" when I raised the camera position up. You may want to pre-position the background somewhat lower to compensate for this.



## 25. Avoid Flat Lighting

Portraits usually look best with one side brighter than the other side. Flat lighting is where there are no shadows on the face at all. As a result the image has a distinct 2D feel and is uninteresting.

If the shadow is on the side opposite of the lens it is called broad lighting. Broad lighting will make the face appear wider and heavier.

When the shadow side of the face is closest to the lens it is called short lighting. Short lighting will make the face appear narrower and more slender.



## 26. Use the 1-2-2 or the 1-3-2 Posing Technique.

In these atypical poses the subject will have their bodies facing to camera right, the main light will be at camera left, or if they are facing camera left the main light will be at camera right. In both cases the body is at a 45 degree angle to the camera.

In the 1-3-2 pose, the face is turned back beyond where it would face directly into the lens (by about 20 degrees) then the eyes are brought back to the camera. This will short light the subject and the face appear thinner. This is typically used for female subjects

The 1-2-2 technique is where the body is in position one (a 45 degree turn from the camera position) then the head and eyes are both in position two. The main light will not cross over the torso like it does in the female technique, rather it is directed straight into the front of the body as shown in the example.



1-3-2



1-2-2

## 27. Avoid Clutter

Simplicity is usually best. Avoid too many props in one image, busy patterned clothing backgrounds that are too busy, and/or in sharp focus, brightly lit backgrounds, and backgrounds with large areas of bright sunshine or patches of white sky. All attract the eye to them rather than to the subject.

By opening the aperture, using a longer lens and moving the subject from the background it can be made less distracting.

Notice how the top worn by the model on the left draws the eye while the background is also sharp and distracting.



**28. Crop between the joints, not at them.**

Cropping at a joint makes the subject appear amputated. Also when cropping leave room for the subject to breathe (room in front of their face) and leave room for the subject to think (don't severely crop off the top off above their head.) Generally if you crop off the top of the head you cannot also crop off very much in front of their face at the same time. If you do them the subject will look crowded in the frame.

It looks best to have the entire arm visible rather than the upper arm/shoulder area visible then the elbow/middle arm not visible and then the hand suddenly reappearing at the wrist.



Cropped at the wrists



Cropped just above the knees

## 29. Hand Placement.

Use good taste in the placement of hands. The hand(s) of the client should not disappear between his or her legs and the hand(s) of a young lady should not be placed on top of either of her breasts, nor should a young man's hands be on the buttocks or breasts of the female. When photographing hands watch that the middle finger doesn't protrude out further than the rest of the fingers.

Don't Stack the hands or clasp them together, separate them and place them apart and between the joints. Hide the rear hand if possible in group portraits. Don't place an elbow directly on top of the knee. Place the lower arm area that is 1/2 way between the elbow and wrist 1/2 way between the hip and knee. That way the elbow does not end at the knee forming an uninteresting straight line.



HANDS CLASPED

HANDS STACKED ON TOP OF KNEE

HANDS STACKED ABOVE KNEE

Subdue the Near hand-The hand that is nearest to the lens. It will appear larger than the other hand especially if it is held very close to the lens (foreshortening.) Feet or legs pointed toward the camera will also look elongated due to foreshortening.

Don't project the hands toward the lens and keep them within the range of focus. Generally speaking, if the hand is above the subject's waist, the fingers should be directed upwards. If below the waist, the fingers should be directed down.

**30. Don't Photograph the Back of Women's Hands.**

The sides are much more graceful than the flat of the hand. Fists are masculine, open hands are feminine. Note how much more graceful the edges of the hands of the young lady in the second image looks when compared to the flat back of the hand in the first image.



**31. Do Not Photograph Two Heads at the Same Height**

When photographing couples have the heads at different heights. Ideally the eyes of the shorter subject (usually the female) should be at about the same height as the mouth of the taller subject.



### 32. Have No Head Directly Above Another

In group photos all heads should not only be at different heights but also not directly above (or below) another subject. The eyes of the subject that is lowest in the group should be at about the same level as the chin of the next highest subject. For example in the image below note the eyes of the young lady at camera right are at the same level as the chin of her older sister at camera left. You may have to have someone take off their shoes or stand on something to get this effect if needs be.



### 33. Face Inward

In groups, have the subjects at either end of the image face in toward the centre. This will keep the viewer's attention on the subjects. The master painters of the Renaissance used this technique to keep the viewer's attention within the painting.

