

What to Wear

Tips and ideas for choosing your photoshoot clothing

The clothing that you pick for your photoshoot has a big impact on the look and feel of your final images, so plan ahead and give some thought to the colour, tone and style of the clothing that you'll be wearing.

The natural instinct is to just dress everyone in their 'best outfit' but this doesn't always make for the most pleasing photograph. Sticking with a consistent style, colour theme or tone will always result in a more cohesive and balanced image. Read on to see how we can make this work for you and your session.

You probably already have most of the key ingredients without having to go out to buy a whole new wardrobe.

TIP | If you do buy new clothing for your photoshoot, please make sure that you try it on at home first before coming to the studio. You'd be amazed how many people arrive with a brand new outfit only to find that it's not a good fit when they try it on for the first time at the start of their photoshoot !!!

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- Matching Outfits – yes or no?

The obvious way to achieve a consistent look for your photos is to dress everyone in matching outfits.

This works really well for sibling shoots, especially where children are close together in age. Whether you choose casual or more formal attire, the resulting images will look polished, planned and styled.



Matching outfits don't work for everyone though. With a large number of sitters in a group or in photographs including adults it can look too unnatural and contrived. Many of our sessions also include just one single individual, which makes the question of matching outfits irrelevant.

Whether you're booking a group session or an individual photoshoot, many of the same principles apply when deciding what to wear. Read on to find plenty of other ways that you can tie everybody's wardrobe together and how clothing choices (individual or group) also impact the final look and feel of your images.

- *Shades - Pale, Dark or Vibrant ?*

One of the very first questions we ask our clients is about their preference for the shade of clothing they wish to wear.

This choice will have a radical effect on the overall feel of your images so thinking about the look and style you want for your finished photographs is always a good starting point when deciding on clothing.

We recommend thinking about where in your home you may want to display your portraits and what will work best with your décor.

Pale shades

Paired with a white/light coloured studio backdrop or a Spring/Summer outdoor session, clothes in pale shades of white, cream and pastels give a fresh, airy and contemporary feel to your images which works really well with current home décor trends.



Dark shades

Clothing in dark or muted earthy shades, such as black, grey, navy and burgundy gives a completely different look to your finished images.

At the studio, we usually pair these shades with a black/dark coloured backdrop for an elegant, classic look which also translates brilliantly into black and white imagery.

Outdoors, darker muted shades are well suited to autumnal sessions where they complement the vibrant colours of fallen leaves.



Vibrant shades

Highly saturated vibrant shades give yet another different look to your images.

Whether it's on a light or dark studio backdrop or even outdoors, these colours will really stand out and draw the viewer's eye.

We find that images of this kind work best displayed on plain, white walls where they're not competing with lots of other colour in your home.



Mixing shades

Whichever shade of clothing you opt for, we recommend keeping it the same for everybody in your group and not mixing dark, earthy shades, pastels and vibrant clothing together. This will help us to keep a consistent look to your photographs and choose a background or location that works for everyone.

Once you've decided on your shade, read on to learn how a specific colour schemes will affect the way your photos look.

- *Choosing your Colour Palette*

Colour is a fantastic way to tie together everybody's outfit for group photos. Too many competing colours will make your photographs look messy and disjointed, but by limiting the number of colours worn your outfits will automatically blend in and give some cohesion to the group.

This doesn't mean that everybody has to dress from head to toe in the same colour. There are plenty of ways that colour can be used and your choice of colour has a big impact on individual photos as well as groups.

Colour Coordinated

Selecting a matching colour scheme helps even very different outfits look like they belong together. For the best effect, avoid overdoing it with too much of a single colour and soften the impact by combining it with one or two neutral base tones like the examples below.



Although both children are wearing very different outfits, the matching aqua ties them together. Breaking it up with cream and navy neutrals and alternating the colour in the girl's skirt with the boy's top, means that the resulting look isn't too overwhelming.

For a family shoot, we'd advise mum and dad to choose outfits from the neutral palette of cream / navy.



The same principle has been applied to this family session, but using a deeper, richer Autumnal palette.

The burgundy colour scheme is set against a base of grey and denim neutrals combined with fresh white. Note that the picnic rug also picks up on the same colour scheme.

Accent Colours

If you're dealing with fussy dressers or too much colour coordination simply isn't for you, consider introducing an accent colour instead. This is a more subtle take on colour coordinated outfits and allows individuals more scope to select clothing in a colour of their choice.

Plan your family's outfits around a selection of easy to wear base colours. Try to limit it to no more than 3 different bases and make sure that everyone has one colour in common with at least one other person in the group.

Once you've agreed on your base palette, pick a contrasting accent colour to accessorise with. This can be a big block of solid colour like a jacket, a colour picked up in a pattern or simply a scarf, tie or piece of jewellery.



Left to right, family wears clothing from a range of 3 base colours:

- a) dark blue, pale blue and white
- b) white
- c) pale blue
- d) white and dark blue

All wear an accent colour of pinky-mauve



Neutral colours like black, white, beige & greys are great choices for base colours that will work for anyone.

Colour Popping

Stronger accent colours can be introduced very subtly with just a single pop of your chosen colour. If you love vivid shades don't be afraid to incorporate them into your images - just remember that less is usually more!

The key is to keep all other shades plain, simple and neutral and stick with a small amount of a single strong colour to make your statement – just a splash in a piece of jewellery, a scarf or as part of a pattern will work just as well. Reds, pinks, greens and yellows are all good candidates.



The base palette in this portrait has been limited to just 2 colours – navy and white.

Pops of magenta have been added through ties, earrings and hair accessories.

Single Colour Palette

For babies and toddlers, you may choose to stick exclusively with a palette of soft pastels that are gentle on the eye. By limiting your outfits to varying shades of a single colour, the resulting photos will be subtle, soft and harmonious.



If you intend on participating alongside the children, choose a pale neutral for yourself (white, cream, beige, soft denim etc.) and maybe accessorise with a small amount of whichever colour you've chosen.



Bold Contrasts

If you don't want anything too 'matchy matchy' bold blocks of different primary colours can work brilliantly for children. However, if you choose not to coordinate with colour, we recommend introducing consistency through matching styles of outfit instead.

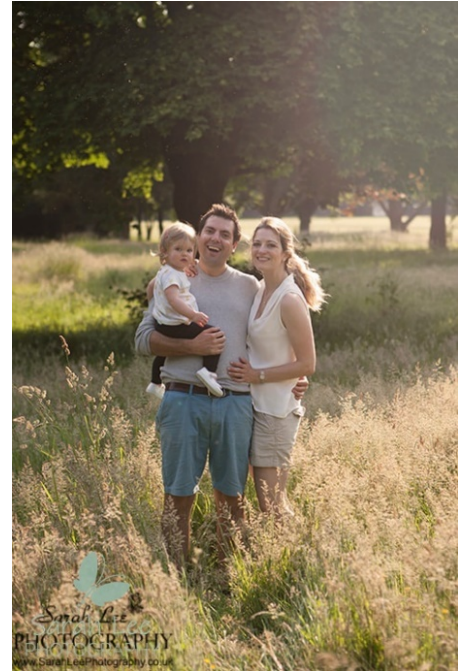


No attempt at colour matching has been made in this image. However, both boys are wearing the same shirt in different colours paired with denims. This helps the image to hang together.

- Clothing Styles

There is no 'single best' style of clothing for your photoshoot. It completely depends on the look and feel that you want in your final photographs.

However, we normally recommend keeping a similar feel or style to everyone's clothing and advise you to decide on either a formal, smart or casual dress-code before choosing outfits for everyone accordingly.



There are exceptions to every rule.

In some instances, especially with multi-generational family groups or with teens, allowing everyone to wear their own individual style can work well and help to showcase each person's personality. The most successful photographs of this kind make use of consistent colour and/or tones instead to help match everyone together.



In this image, all 3 children are dressed according to their individual style and taste with a mixture of opaque tights with boots, a formal dress and jeans.

Despite this, similarities in colour tone and patterns tie all of their outfits together.

- *Dressing for the Studio*

In the studio, we can work our magic and make it Summer all year round or even give you Christmas in June. Any style or theme can be accommodated and if you're booking in for a custom photoshoot we'll have a consultation before your session to understand your requirements and what set up will work best for you.

The one piece of advice that we do give is to avoid wearing dark coloured clothing against a white backdrop / pale clothing against a black background. The contrast between the two can be quite jarring and it pulls the viewer's attention immediately to the clothes rather than the sitter. While this may be an intentional effect for fashion photography where the clothes are the main focus, it's usually much less successful for portrait work.

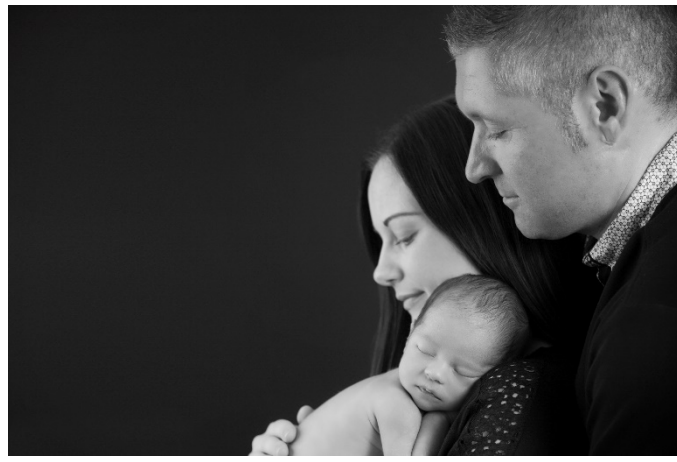
White backdrop recommended with lighter coloured clothing

Our plain white backdrop is one of our standard studio set ups and is available for all custom sessions and our regular mini sessions (excluding seasonal or themed minis)



Black backdrop recommended with darker clothing

Our plain black backdrop is the second of our standard studio set ups and is also available for all custom sessions and regular mini sessions (excluding seasonal or themed minis)



Coloured and Themed Backdrops

Coloured / patterned backdrops are available on request for all custom photoshoots. Talk to us about your chosen colour and clothing style during your consultation and we'll advise on a backdrop to match. Certain seasonal mini sessions also take place with a themed backdrop and we'll always advise you in advance about what clothing works best.

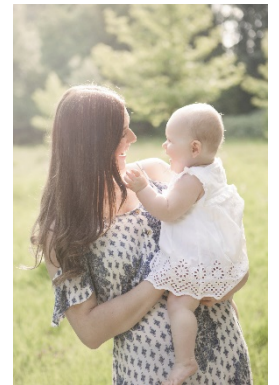


• Dressing for Outdoors

If we're planning on an outdoor photoshoot please make sure that you dress appropriately for the time of year. Remember that we could be outside for up to an hour and no matter how beautiful your outfit might be, if you're either freezing or melting in the heat your discomfort will be obvious in the finished photographs.

Spring / Summer

Choosing clothes for Summer sessions is relatively easy. There's no shortage of choice with dresses, shorts or lightweight tops in any style that suits you and you can always add a wrap or sweater if there's a chill in the air.



Autumn / Winter



Autumn and Winter photoshoots present more of a challenge. Padded, bulky coats are rarely flattering for photographs, so consider layering up to keep the cold out instead. Knitted sweaters, wraps or ponchos give you a great opportunity to introduce colour and texture. If it's really cold outside, accessorise with woolly hats and scarves for another chance to introduce accent colours.

While photoshoots in the pouring rain are a bit of a no-go, if it's just a bit damp and drizzly, umbrellas can be used to great effect as props and there's nothing cuter for little ones than a bit of puddle splashing in brightly coloured wellies.



- *What to avoid*

Logos / Text

When it comes to dressing for photographs, plain and simple is usually better.

Clothing featuring large logos or blocks of text tends to catch the eye and creates an unnecessary distraction. This often results in photographs that look cluttered, messy and draw your attention in all the wrong places.

Young children often don't stand still, so for children's or family sessions text on clothing creates another issue. Any graphics on the front of their clothes may end up partially obscured by arm positions, twisted or partly buried in folds of fabric, all of which detracts from the look you were aiming for.

The final thing to remember is that you'll be looking at your photographs for years to come and as tastes and fashions change, heavily branded or 'gimmicky' clothing will quickly look out of date.

Busy Patterns

Try to avoid clothing with bold, busy patterns - these can cause as much of a distraction as blocks of text.

If you want to include patterned clothing for your photoshoot, stick with smaller, subtle patterns or wide blocky stripes and limit the number of people wearing patterns for group photographs.

Sunglasses / Reactalight lenses

In the majority of portraits, your eyes will be the main focal point so we usually want to avoid anything that obscures or covers them up.

Sunglasses can sometimes be worn to good effect if they form an integral part of an outfit or as a way of expressing someone's personality, but in most cases are best avoided.

Tinted optical glasses (eg: reactalight lenses) rarely work well. If at all possible choose to wear a pair with standard clear lenses on the day of your photoshoot or consider removing them completely before each photo.