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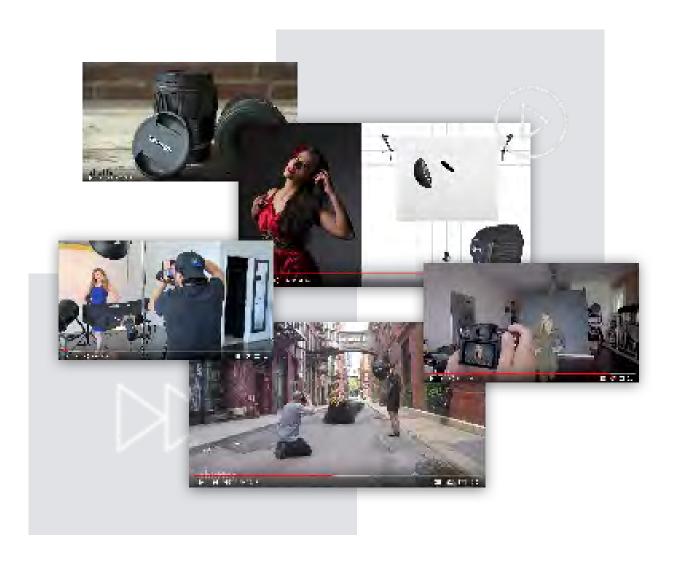# shutter
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Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education.
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LAUNCH **POINT**
A message from the publisher
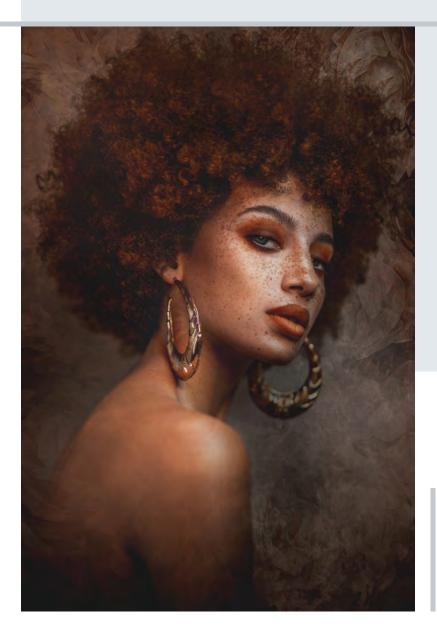
The more things **change,** the more they stay the **same.**

Another year has passed and it sure has been a roller coaster ride of a year. *To* survive**,** we have all had to pivot. **The future looks bright!**

- Sal Cincotta

THE **COVER**

PHOTOGRAPHER: amanda diaz
WEBSITE: amandadiaz.com
CAMERA: canon 5d mark III
LENS: sigma art 50mm / 1.4
EXPOSURE: f/1.4 @ 1/160 iso 800
LIGHTING: 1 constant ring light above & just to the side
MODEL: monique @ world management

ABOUT THE IMAGE: This image was taken with a very simple setup. I had the subject stand in front of a blank wall and I used a simple, inexpensive constant ring light that was positioned just above the subject's head, then tilted downward (like you would set a beauty dish light for butterfly lighting.) This was so I didn't get the hard, straight-on light that a ring light produces.

The floral texture in the background is from my floral paper textures collection.

5 CREATIVE IDEAS FOR GREAT PHOTOS

with **Vanessa Joy**

Nailing the perfect shot doesn't always have to involve endless posing or complicated lighting. Sometimes you can capture a magical photo just by thinking outside the box and using an everyday item in an unexpected way.
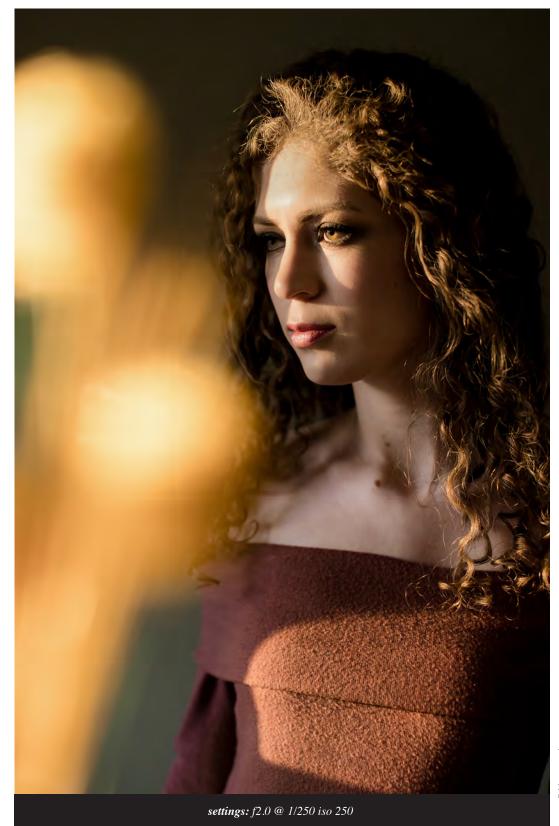
Whether it's a bouquet of flowers or the glass in the picture frame on your nightstand, simple objects can pull double duty as budget-friendly photography tools. I promise that these photography hacks aren't just novelties—they're tools you'll return to again and again. Keep reading to learn about five of my favorite ways to capture timeless photos using creative techniques.

settings: f2.0 @ 1/250 iso 250
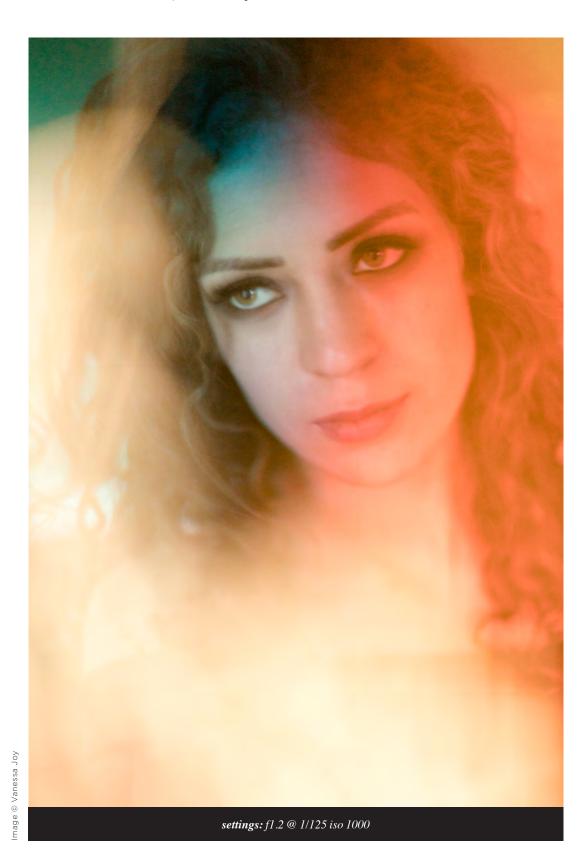
1. SHOOT THROUGH SOMETHING

When you're trying to liven up a traditional portrait, why not add color or texture by shooting through something? Shooting through something involves keeping an object out of focus in the foreground so that it adds a cool effect to the photo. You can also use this technique to frame your subject and draw attention to them. I particularly like to use objects like flowers for this—using a small bouquet of round yellow flowers is perfect for framing a subject, adding softness around the edge of the photo, and adding an interesting pop of color in an unexpected place.

If you're outside, you can always experiment by shooting through leaves on a tree. Imagine how pretty it would be to frame a couple outdoors with the out-of-focus strands of a weeping willow, or how cool it would look to add a little color to a bride's portrait using one of the flowers from her bouquet. Try experimenting with objects around your home or studio and see what works for you—you might be surprised!

settings: f2.0 @ 1/250 iso 250

settings: f1.2 @ 1/125 iso 1000

Image © Vanessa Joy

2. SHOOT THROUGH COLOR

If you have a piece of acrylic lying around, don't neglect it! Shooting through something colored can add an exciting new element of visual interest. On a recent shoot, I was looking for something to add a bit of visual flair to an otherwise plain portrait. I looked around and discovered an invitation I had received to a gala (fancy, I know!), which was a large acrylic rectangle featuring massive swirls of deep blue and orange. Once I held up the acrylic to the light, I saw that it cast my model in vibrant blues and oranges, making for a colorful and exciting shot.

Chances are, you have something that you can shoot through to add a wash of color to your photograph. Just make sure it transmits light well—colored glasses, bottles and prisms are all good places to start experimenting. Shooting through color is a great way to get photos that are eye-poppingly beautiful on a budget.

3. ADD A REFLECTION
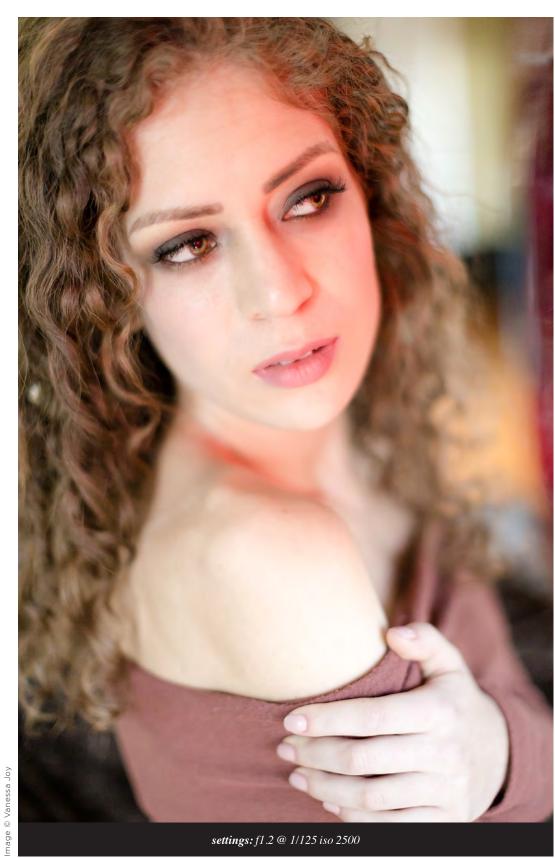
Adding a reflection to your photo is a fun and easy way to capture beauty and drama. After all, why shoot your subject head-on when you can experiment with different angles and reflections to obtain a truly striking and original composition? Try experimenting with a hand mirror (or larger mirror) to generate unique pictures. Don't have a mirror? Don't sweat it. As I found out on a recent shoot when I didn't have access to a mirror myself, most smartphones can make pretty effective mirrors in a pinch.

Using mirrors in your shoot isn't just great for adding a reflection. They can also add extra light to your subject, create drama by distorting your subject or their surroundings, establish an atmospheric or surreal vibe by fragmenting or multiplying your subject, and much more. Playing around with mirrors is fun, but it can also help you discover new techniques that you can use throughout the rest of your career. Everyone wants to take the kind of photos that make people stop and say, "Wow, how did they do that?" By using mirrors, that dream is absolutely within reach.

Image © Vanessa Joy

settings: f1.2 @ 1/125 iso 2500

Image © Vanessa Joy

settings: f2.2 @ 1/50 iso 2500

Image © Vanessa Joy
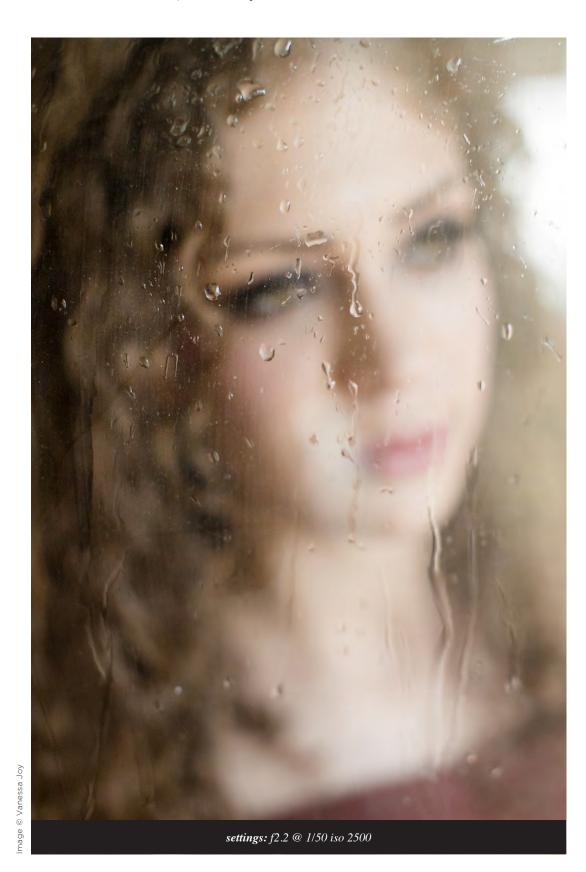
4. USE GELS

I love gels. They're inexpensive, they last forever, and they can be used to create amazing photos. You don't even need a fancy lighting setup to get cool pictures with gels—you can simply hold them up during your shoot and photograph your subject directly through them. Play around with using the whole gel or just part of it to learn how to end up with photos with very dramatic colors and enhancements that appear warm, rich and beautiful to look at.

If you don't love the dramatic look or you're having trouble holding up a gel while you're taking photos, you can also attach your gel to a window or hold it up to the light to allow the light to stream through the gel and color your subject. I love experimenting with showing off my subjects in a warm orange glow or a cool blue wash—it's an easy way to create a very cool effect that can be as subtle or as dramatic as you want.

settings: *f2.2 @ 1/50 iso 2500*

Image © Vanessa Joy

5. SHOOT THROUGH GLASS

Finally, shooting through glass is super easy to do and looks very cool. I recently tried this for the first time with a piece of glass from a picture frame and was impressed with the results. Depending on the angle from which I shot my subject through the glass, the photo could look moody, atmospheric, distorted or just slightly blurred. It's easy to play around and get a sense of what works and what doesn't, and all it requires is a piece of equipment that you probably have sitting in your home right now.

I also experimented a little more by spraying the glass with water to get a cool, rain-splattered look—almost as though my subject was daydreaming as they looked through the window on a rainy day. It added a ton of visual interest to the photographs I was taking and made it possible to achieve a very specific look without needing to wait for a rainy day. Best of all, I already had a perfect-sized picture frame in my house, making this technique a budget-friendly hack for any photographer trying to add a boost to their toolbox.

CONCLUSION
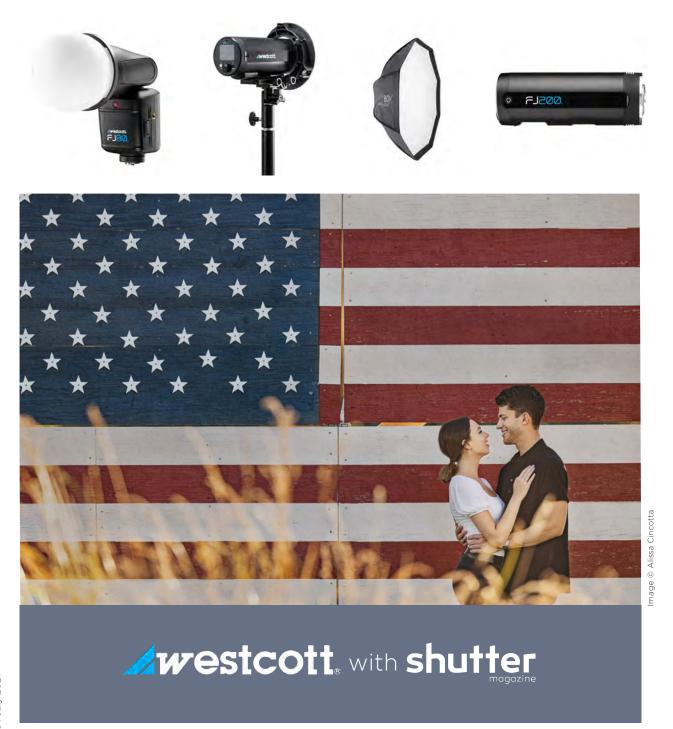
So much of photography involves using expensive equipment to get absolutely perfect shots. But taking the time to experiment with these budget-friendly photography hacks is a fun way to learn new skills that you'll want to use again and again. The next time you're trying to think of a creative new way to add flair or excitement to a portrait session or photo shoot, consider shooting through something or adding color in an unexpected and creative way. I guarantee you and your clients will have fun and be excited and pleased with the results. ■

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Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.
website: vanessajoy.com   instagram: @vanessajoy

Image © Alissa Cincotta

product spotlight

Why the Westcott FJ Wireless Flash System and the NEW Westcott Quick-Mount S-Bracket?

When it comes to lighting, both on-location and in-studio, reliability and quality of light is crucial. Having a strobe system that talks seamlessly makes getting to your shot that much easier.

The FJ400, FJ200, and FJ80 flashes are designed for portability and performance with the most accurate color temperature stability and unrivaled consistency when used together. Featuring a 400Ws AC/DC strobe that offers the most full power flashes per battery charge and under a second recycle time, the industry's fastest 200Ws battery-powered strobe, and the first round head touchscreen 80Ws speedlight with an integrated radio transceiver, our FJ Wireless Flash System with multi-brand compatible transmitters allow you to light without limits. Add the NEW Westcott Quick-Mount S-Bracket in to the equation and now you have the ability to quickly and easily add modifiers to create beautiful light, no matter what lighting conditions you're dealing with.

Some things to note about the Westcott FJ Wireless Flash System:
• The FJ400 is the first portable 400Ws AC/DC strobe with less than 1 second recycle time at full power that offers 480+ full-power flashes per charge and unrivaled color consistency across its entire 9-stop output range.

• The FJ80 first round head touchscreen 80Ws speedlight with integrated radio transceiver that provides revolutionary multi-brand camera compatibility like the FJ-X2m. Use on-camera as both a speedlight and transmitter for controlling FJ Wireless and Canon RT flashes, or position anywhere off-camera.

• The FJ200 features an industry-leading 0.05 to 1.3s recycle time and fits in the palm of your hand. Like the FJ400, this battery-powered 200Ws round head strobe has an extended flash tube to provide superior light output and a more even light spread for filling light modifiers compared to traditional flashes.

In this video, we go on-location to check out the FJ200 with the Westcott Rapid Box Switch Octa-M, using the FJ80 as our trigger. Enjoy!

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HOW TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN AN EVER-CHANGING MARKETPLACE
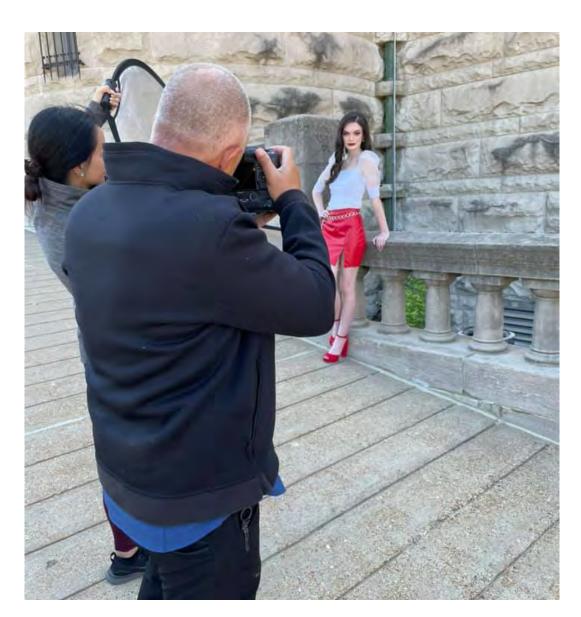
with **Sal Cincotta**

What a year it has been. It's still hard to wrap our minds around everything that has happened in the last year and a half. It's been an up and down emotional roller coaster. Even now, as a business owner, Im struggling to find my rhythm again. Do you find yourself feeling the same way?

One thing I feel blessed to have is 14+ years of experience as a small business owner. It's given me experience and perspective that has helped weather many storms over my career. It is that perspective I have found myself drawing on in recent months as I try to figure out where we go from here. What does the future look like, for me, for my business, for our industry? It's like trying to figure out the meaning of life at the moment.

Right now, it can feel like life is spinning out of control, but even worse, that feeling comes from feeling as if we have no control over our destiny. That feeling of helplessness is depressing and worst of all, can be catastrophic to our businesses. So, how to we overcome? Keep reading.

settings: f1.2 @ 1/2000 iso 50

settings: f2.8 @ 1/2000 iso 50

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 200

settings: f2.8 @ 1/5000 iso 50

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

settings: *f5.0 @ 1/160 iso 200*

settings: *f5.0 @ 1/160 iso 200*

settings: *f1.2 @ 1/2000 iso 50*

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

ASSESS THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

This is not something easy to do and at times can make you want to put your head through the wall. Maybe that's just me. How to do this is a combination of news, the stock market, and consumer feedback. Ill explain a little more at what I'm looking at so it makes more sense.

Consumer confidence is a huge thing that everyone looks at. If consumers are confident they are typically spending. If consumers are uncertain, spending usually dries up on discretionary items. Well, guess what? Photography is a discretionary item. So, we really need to understand what's happening in the mind of a consumer.

Watching the news alone will make you nuts. According to the news, we are all racist, we are all sexist, we are all selfish, we all hate one another, and soon we will all turn into zombies. Well, I don't quite have that pessimistic view of humanity, but this is being put into the minds of consumers and it's a reality when trying to understand the current environment. Based on this alone, it would be hard to be very optimistic. That is why the news alone can not be your source of reality here. Instead, here is what I'm seeing. People, for the most part, are fed up with all the negativity. It's quite incredible and a very positive sign of whats to come. If we were having this convo in mid-2020, I would say consumers were very very pessimistic, scared, concerned, and unsure of the future. However, by fall of 2020, we saw consumers so fed up with the negativity, they were willing to spend their way out of it.

We had one of the most profitable Novembers in probably the last 10 years. Why? Families were mentally exhausted and wanted some sense of normalcy. We were able to offer them family shoots as a way to celebrate family. In fact, based on what we were seeing, that was how we were marketing this. "Celebrate Family" was the tag line and it worked. By understanding our customers, their needs and their frustrations we were able to give them something positive in their lives in look forward to and be part of celebrating their incredible families.

settings: f1.2 @ 1/1250 iso 100

settings: f1.2 @ 1/3200 iso 50

This trend held true for high-school seniors as well. Think about it. We saw high-school seniors across the country miss their graduations, school sports, and more. They wanted something normal. They wanted something to feel good about. And once again, armed with this knowledge we were able to successfully market to a group of people at what would normally be a very slow time of year.
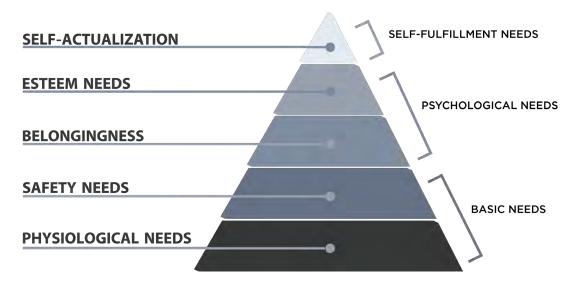
TRY TO PREDICT THE FUTURE

No, Im not asking you to become Nostradamus, but I am asking you to try and read the tea leaves so to speak. If you do your homework and just poke around, predicting the future is not as hard as you might think. Let me give you an absurd scenario. Let's say there were a tornado in Florida, its not going to be that difficult to figure out that they are not going to be too excited about taking family pictures. See my point? It's not that hard.

The hardest part is actually spending the time and energy to gather all the information to try and predict the future. In the first part of this article, I talk about how I used all the information in front of me to predict that families and teens would be willing to spend money for something that "felt good".

Timing is part of this. In the beginning, people were buying toilet paper like this pandemic was tied to intestinal disease. So, at that point, people were focused on their basic needs. Photography does not fall into this category. Have you ever heard of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs? Check out the chart, in the beginning, safety and security were the primary concerns of most families. These are basic needs of induvials. However, once these needs are met, people will start to gravitate towards psychological needs which focus more on intimacy, love, friendships, prestige and feelings of accomplishment.

My prediction was that once businesses and individuals got through the panic and things started to subside around the end of world scenarios being predicted, that people would want to move into this next stage. And I was right. Doesn't mean I will always be right, but in this case I was and it paid off for my business and of course, my employees and the entire eco-system we support.

Failure if part of the process. I could have easily have guessed wrong, but I know one thing. I would have gotten up and tried again and that's equally as important. Never give up.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

settings: f2.0 @ 1/25 iso 1600

DON'T BE AFRAID OF TAKING SOME RISK

Risk / Reward its part of the process and part of life. We have to consider these things before making any decision. However, the worst thing you can do is allow this process to paralyze you with fear. We call this analysis paralysis. There will always be self-doubt, but allowing this to overly weigh in on your decision process will truly destroy your business over time.

You have to accept and understand, there is inherent risk in everything we do. Some of that risk is just going to have to be acceptable risk. Nothing is a guarantee. I guess we could all agree that if you don't do anything then you wont lose anything. So, crisis averted, right? Well, sure, but if you don't do anything then you wont win anything either. See the dilemma here? You cant be a business owner and do nothing. If that's your mindset, you might want to stick to a corporate job.

Risk comes with the territory. However, we can mitigate risk by taking the information we have in hand and using it to make intelligent decisions. Going to Vegas and throwing it all on black is risky, but it's also tied to chance. When we run a business and we make decisions and take risk, it's rarely left to chance. We make intelligent decisions and take educated risks. Does this make a little more sense? It's rarely guaranteed, but its equally as rare that its complete chance. If you do your homework and use your experience, you can use risk to your advantage.

settings: f2.8 @ 1/2500 iso 200

REASSESS MORE OFTEN THAN YOUR NORMALLY WOULD.

This is extremely important to the process. Normally, when things are more stable, we would meet 2 or 3 times per year to assess how things were going and make changes as needed. Usually those changes were somewhat minimal. However, when the environment is pretty volatile, which our current one is, we need to assess a lot more often than we normally would. Not only to ensure we are on track, but to ensure the variables and assumptions we have made thus far are still valid.
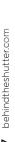
This is where we use failure as a positive thing. I like to fail and fail fast. I know that sounds nuts. Who truly likes to fail at anything? Well, lets not misconstrue what I'm saying here. I hate to fail, but I know in business and in life, that failure is 100% part of the process. So, I've chosen to embrace it as just another step in the process and journey to success.

You have to use this step, take the information and knowledge gained here and return to step 1, assess the current environment. By doing this, you are ready to adjust your plans and move forward, each time lessening your risk and learning from your mistakes. This is how your build a successful business in any environment.

settings: *f2.8 @ 1/3200 iso 200*

DON'T LET NEGATIVITY CREEP IN

This is the toughest part for any creative. Negativity is all around us. The worst of it comes from our own minds. We have to really be our own hype man in times like this. The life of an entrepreneur is a lonely one. You are on a journey by yourself. You, and you alone, chose this path, so it's not realistic to expect those around us to see what we see or believe what we believe. You have to dig deep for personal strength if you are going to survive. I know, it's easier said than done and I wont lie, I have my spouts of negativity that creep in. However, I've learned to recognize it and that allows me to brush it off much easier than it was earlier in my career.

In addition, this becomes easier when you surround yourself with the right people. The right people make all the difference. I refuse to allow negative people in my life. It's a hard NO for me and my wife. We just wont allow it and we are in lock step with this mindset. We all know negative people, they are cancer to your mental health. I'm telling you, you need to cut them from your life, yes, even if they are family. You don't owe anyone your mental health and you for sure don't need to subject yourself to their negativity. Negativity comes in many forms. Lack of support, lack of loyalty, negative words creating self-doubt, lack of supporting actions, etc.

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

settings: f4.0 @ 1/500 iso 100

Over the last year, I have cut a lot of people out of my circle. Why? Because they have done stupid shit with no remorse. If the people around you don't care enough to protect your friendship then why should you give them that loyalty in return? You shouldn't. That's setting yourself up to be walked all over and taken advantage of. We all know that feeling and we all hate it.

Of course, people make mistakes and people have moments of negativity. Friends, family, acquittances, etc. None of us are perfect. Hell, I'm sure I've done my fair share of stupid shit. The people around you, in your circle, will never be mistake free, but they sure as hell better be willing to protect your relationship and make it right. And most importantly, be there when you need them most. If not, they don't deserve your friendship or loyalty in return. Loyalty is the most precious thing you have to offer someone. Don't ever lose sight of that and you should require it of anyone you let close to you. These are the people we all need in our lives to ensure we stay focused and positive.

Stay positive. Stay focused. Crush your goals. ■

Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

salcincotta.com

THE
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

Featuring

USING GELS TO
ENHANCE
YOUR PORTRAIT
PHOTOGRAPHY

with **Angela Marklew**

Simply defined, gels are transparent colored material used to modify lights for photography (both stills and motion). Gels are placed over light sources to create colored effects. The two basic types are color correction gels and non-corrective (color effect) gels.

Images © Angela Marklew Photography

settings: f5.0 @ 1/160 iso 160

settings: f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 100

Color correction gels have specific color to compensate for either daylight or tungsten sources.

Color temperature blue (CTB) converts tungsten light to "daylight" color and color temperature orange (CTO) converts daylight balanced sources to tungsten. These gels are generally used when shooting a scene with multiple light sources of varying color temperatures and you need to compensate for the mixed lighting—with the ultimate goal being to create light that the camera will see as white.

Non-corrective (or color effect) gels are used to color the light intentionally to create mood, atmosphere or dramatic conditions in a photo. In this case, combinations of various colors are used either subtly or dramatically to create customized light conditions.

In this article, we'll be talking about the use of color effect gels.

Before you start throwing gels on all your lights and hoping for the best, it helps to have some basic knowledge of color theory.

In general, complementary colors (those that are opposite each other on the color wheel) will usually create the most visually pleasing combinations. However, I find that as long as there is some contrast between the colors, I can achieve aesthetically pleasing results. Colors next to each other on the wheel can start to bleed into one another.

Now it's time to bust out the gels and experiment!

To get you started, here are the basic necessities, along with a handful of my go-to setups.

BASIC EQUIPMENT

• Strobes. Continuous lights will also work, but they can get hot, which can melt the gels.

• Colored gels. You can get proper photography gels (I personally use a set of Rosco 12-inch colored gels) or you can use colored cellophane (found at any craft store).

• Gaffer's tape to attach the gels to your lights.

settings: f16 @ 1/160 iso 160

A SUBTLE GLOW

I often like to add what I describe as a "warm glow" to beauty or portrait images. I have two slightly different methods when using this gel technique.

The first is a two-light setup. My main light, positioned slightly above camera, is clean, white light. I then like to position a second light so it hits both the side of the model and the background. This light is a bare head (I use Dynalite 2040 heads for most of my work, and they are designed to have a bit of a built-in reflector) gelled with either my lightest pink (as shown in the example) or a light orange.

The second is a single-light setup and what I like to call "indoor sunlight." When trying to recreate sunlight, I use a small source, placed high and pointing down at the subject. In this example, I used a snoot gelled with a light orange to mimic the warmth of mid-afternoon sunlight.

settings: *f5.0 @ 1/160 iso 125*

ADD BACKGROUND DIMENSION

I'm constantly looking for ways to make my seamless backdrops more interesting. In the example below, I wanted to add some color and a design element to the background while keeping the light on the model clean. I set up my main light as usual (directly above camera) to light the model. I then set up a strobe with a snoot high and to camera left (pointed down), and placed it between the model and the backdrop. I used a full saturation teal gel to keep the darker tones of the background. To create the hard line, I simply had my assistant hold a small black card close to the light until I found an angle I liked.

Image © Angela Marklew Photography

settings: f6.3 @ 1/160 iso 200
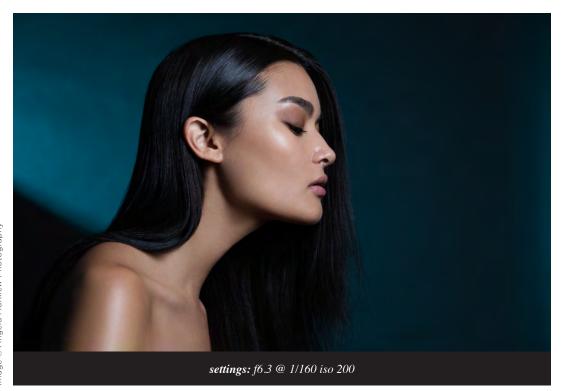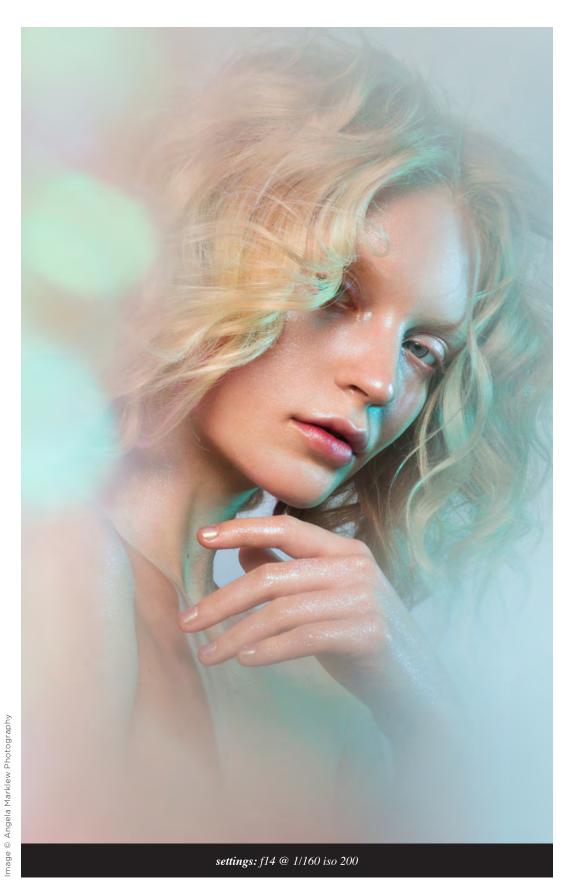
You can also use this technique to create multi-colored backgrounds. Simply set up two, three, or even four smaller light sources, all illuminating the background and gel them different colors. To keep the background saturated, make sure you place your subject far enough away that the main light will have a negligible effect.

settings: *f5.6 @ 1/160 iso 125*

settings: *f5.6 @ 1/125 iso 125*

settings: *f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 125*

settings: f14 @ 1/160 iso 200
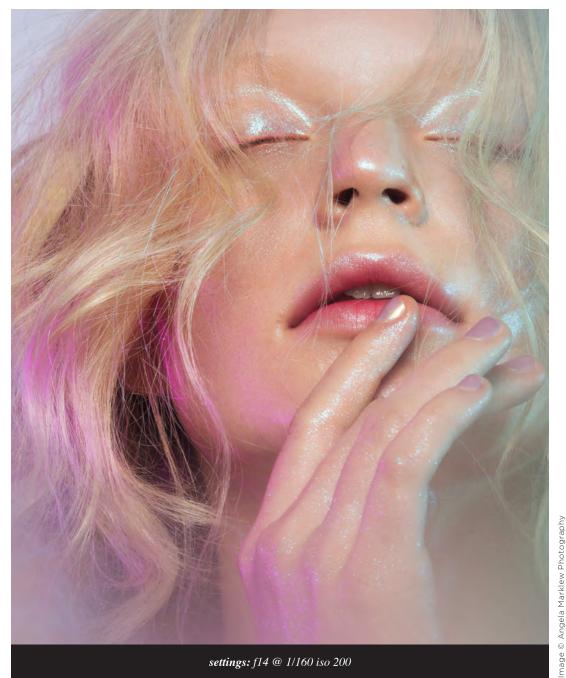
A HINT OF COLOR

Mixing in gels with clean light is simple. You take a two or three-light setup, keep your main light clean and gel the others. The gelled lights can act as rim lights, hair lights or side lights—the possibilities are numerous. I find this works best using medium-toned gels and placing the gelled lights fairly close to your subject (you don't want your main light to wash them out). In the example below, I used a magenta gel with a set of barn doors to the left of my model and a teal gel over a medium grid to the right. Both gelled lights were placed slightly higher and pointed down. They were also positioned slightly behind the model, as I wanted very minimal spill onto her face.

settings: f14 @ 1/160 iso 200

settings: f10 @ 1/160 iso 50

FULLY SATURATED

This is my favorite use of gels. It's when I get to break out my most vibrant colors and really play! I typically have three lights set up around my subject: a main light, a side light, and then a third light that I can move around to act as a hair light, a rim light, etc. Each light is gelled with a different color and I'll switch positions of the gels and/or lights until I get something that works. This is also when I'll bring out more modifiers to experiment with (like snoots, barn doors, umbrellas and grids) so I can focus certain colors while letting others bleed onto the background.

In this example above, I used a three-light setup. My main light was gelled with a full saturation purple and placed above camera. I used a grid at camera left gelled teal and positioned it so there would be no spill on the background. The third light, gelled orange over a set of barn doors, was placed at camera right and the barn doors were open to allow the orange light to spill onto the background and mix with the purple.

settings: f7.1 @ 1/160 iso 100

settings: f5.0 @ 1/160 iso 125

settings: f14 @ 1/160 iso 100
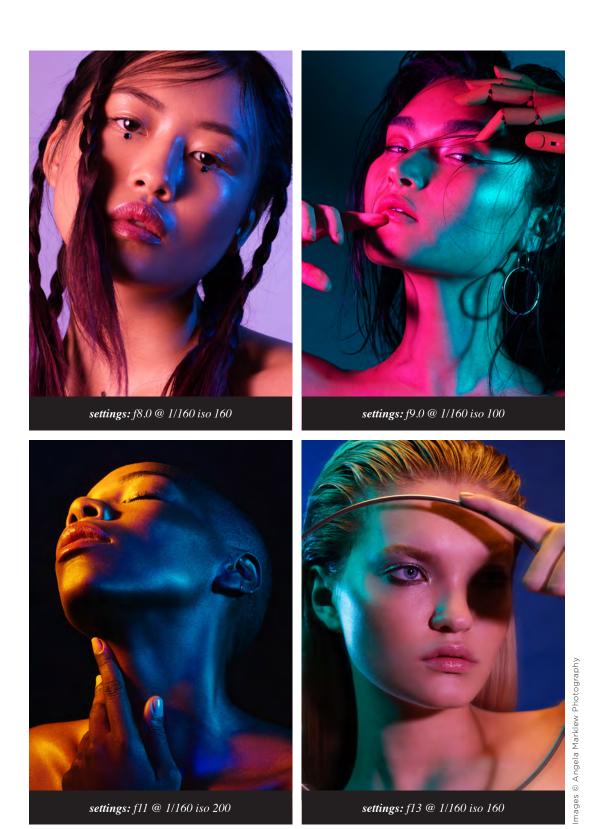
This is a super simple two-light setup. I placed bare heads on either side of the models and used complementary colors orange and teal. Don't be afraid to repeat the same color combinations as the results can be drastically different due to factors like the model's skin tone, the distance the lights are from the subject and background, and the color of the backdrop itself.

settings: f8.0 @ 1/160 iso 160

settings: f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 100

settings: f11 @ 1/160 iso 200

settings: f13 @ 1/160 iso 160

Here are other examples of the fully saturated look. The possibilities you can achieve are endless!

BONUS: TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Who says you need to stay in the studio to utilize gels? Using gels with sunlight can produce really vibrant, graphic results. It's as simple as placing the gel between your subject and the sun.

settings: f11 @ 1/160 iso 160

Image © Angela Marklew Photography

SOME TIPS TO REMEMBER

• Darker colored gels, such as deep reds or blues, block a portion of the light that the flash gives off. When working with these colors you may need to increase the amount of flash power (or simply place your lights closer to your subject).

• When starting out, remember your color theory! Complementary colors are not only pleasing to the eye, but they will also give you minimal bleed mixing (whereas colors next to each other on the wheel are more likely to bleed into one another).

• If you don't have a full set of colors, experiment with layering two colored gels over top of each other. Remember that doubling them up will block more light and may require additional flash power.

• When using colored cellophane, keep in mind that the cellophane will melt if it's placed too close to the modeling lamp (which can cause major damage to the lamp). To avoid this, simply turn off modeling lamps after the lights' power and positions are adjusted for the shoot, or bow your gel around the front of the light when affixing it.

• To make your colored seamless appear more saturated, simply gel your background lights the same color as the seamless.

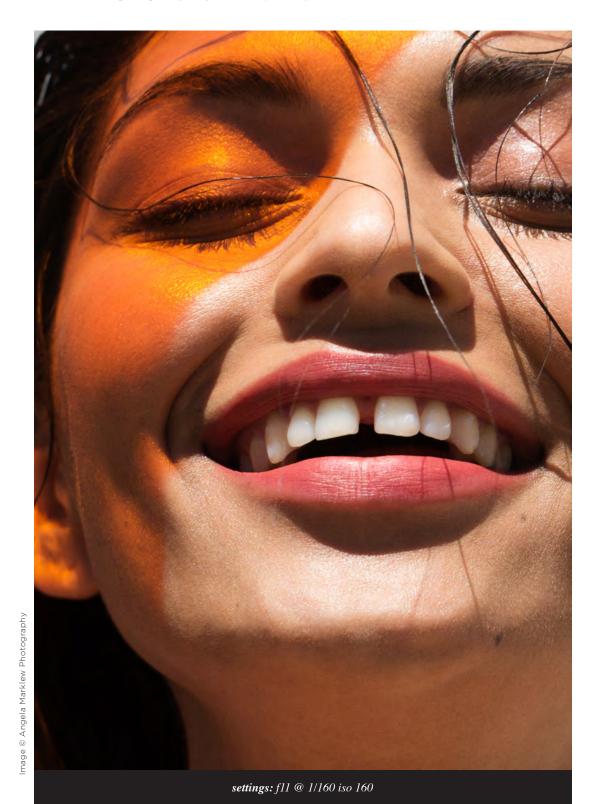• Different skin tones will give you varying results with your color combinations, so keep that in mind and adjust your lights accordingly.

• Placing your light sources closer to your subject will help give you more saturated colors. ■

Born and raised in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, I knew from an early age I wanted to be a scientist. Starting my career in environmental chemistry, I ultimately ended up working with explosives for the Canadian government. I quickly realized I was not built for a 9-to-5 and so I sold my house, packed up my things and moved across the continent to try my hand at photography.

website: www.angelamarklew.com   instagram: @angelamarklew

SIMPLE OUTDOOR

LIGHTING SETUPS

with **Dauss Miller**

Model // Gweneth Kibbey - Agency | Lmodelz
Wardrobe Stylist // Anthony J.
Hair // Dani Oglesby
Makeup // India Hall
Photo Assistant1 // BTS | Haley Lewis
Photo Assistant2 // Jonathan Summers
BTS Video // Fly Heavy Media

I love the challenge of shooting on location with wildly varying lighting situations and environmental conditions between sets. It can be an exciting way to exercise blending ambient light and existing light sources with your speedlights or OCF systems and modifiers. Also, you can get comfortable understanding light sources and how to use and manipulate them to create the shots and mood you want. Don't be afraid to use shadows. There's a special dance that happens when you use shadows to your advantage too! No matter the scene, the situation or time of day, you can be in complete control. Today, I'm shooting with my Nikon D5 with a 24-70mm 2.8 and using my Profoto B10 Plus outfit—small and compact, but powerful enough just in case I have some bright sun poking through the clouds to play with.

For this project, I set out to create a dramatic portrait story, envisioning low angles and full sun overpowered by key lights, with minimal modification to keep it simple. (I like to travel light whenever possible.) The weather on shoot day has provided quite the contrast to my original vision so I quickly adjust the plan to accommodate for inclement weather and all other details we hope to keep dry. An old Union Station underpass location nearby comes to mind that I know will be dry-ish. It's got great textures and shot opportunities all over. The trade-off? Huge, bright tungsten lights overhead casting a heavy orange glow, with bright natural light coming from each end of the tunnel. Challenge accepted!

settings: f4.5 @ 1/160 iso 800

settings: f2.8 @ 1/160 iso 800

settings: f5.6 @ 1/160 iso 800

settings: f4.5 @ 1/160 iso 800

In the first set, starting with a wide shot to set the scene, I'm choosing to position our model with her back moderately close to the natural light coming from the tunnel's end to add interest and to create a soft rim to separate her from the background, while paying close attention to where the tungsten light falls on her. I want to position her just right to use that warm tungsten light to kiss her hair from behind to create a hair light situation. The color variation should also make for an interesting scenario, and hey, I haven't added any lights yet!

Shooting a few frames without flash first helps in dialing in exposure as well as model placement to arrive at the desired final look. In this case, I want to incorporate much of the ambient light, so I expose for the scene as such. Pay close attention to how and where ambient light falls, regardless of the source. Everything looks good. Now, I add light! In this case, I'm using one gridded 2' octobox camera left about 30 degrees, positioned high and angled down, as I want to illuminate our model's face and accentuate her jawline with shadow while limiting the spread of light onto the rest of the scene. I direct our model to create movement toward my main light, illuminating the broad plane of her face and body.

Set two: It's important to keep the mood with light consistent and cohesive throughout a series, and it's also necessary for me as a creative to get to dive in and play. I first chose to backlight our model shooting directly into the natural light coming from outside the tunnel with intent to wash out the warm tungsten from above by making sure its placement was more like a fill light to her front. I then placed my key light about 20 degrees camera right to create some shape with the highlight on her face, but not too much as I don't want her shadow side to appear orange without anything else in the scene having that look. It's kinda cool, but not really what I'm after. I decided next to try moving our model further into the tunnel, away from the natural light outside the tunnel, while using the tungsten slightly behind her as a hair or rim light. This is closer to achieving the more dynamic light versus shadow look I want, so I add my key light camera right at about 45 degrees. I really want to create impact and an obvious fall off on her face and outfit from light to shadow with my light placement and I also want split light on her face to create the mood. Again, my gridded octobox provides the softness in transition I desire for this scene and allows less spill everywhere else. To really make this setup sing, we direct our model to keep her body angled slightly away from the main light while turning her face up and toward it to create flattering light on her face and set just the mood we're looking for.

Shooting on location in the midwest is forever a gamble with weather, so I'm extra close friends with my trusty radar app, and it comes in handy for days like this. I know down to the minute that the rain will pass and we can head out to our original location as planned by the time our model has changed and subtle hair and makeup adjustments have been made. So, off we go!

We arrive to a nice soft, even light from a blanket of overcast with some wet concrete and limestone as a backdrop, a perfect stacking of circumstances for some epic visual drama! In this scene I envision darker, moodier images so I'll be stopping down the ambient light a little more and relying more heavily on the light provided by my flashes. The shots up until now have been more editorial and our model hasn't yet connected directly with the viewer. I want some strong anchor shots where she connects and draws the viewer in. To accomplish this, I want to position her square to me as if facing off to have a conversation. To light her, I'm using my 2' octobox, high and at about 45 degrees camera right to create a nice shadow under chin and fall off to shadow camera left. I then add a second light behind her to create some interest camera left about 45 degrees. It's important to pay close attention to the placement of your lights in general and what that rear light illuminates. I want the kicker to highlight her hair and her outfit but not much else. I notice quite a bit of light spilling onto the ground so I add a 30-degree grid to create a tighter pocket of light to help control the spread a little.

settings: *f5.6 @ 1/250 iso 200*

settings: *f5.6 @ 1/250 iso 200*

settings: *f7.1 @ 1/250 iso 200*

settings: *f4.0 @ 1/250 iso 200*

We made it—the final set in the same location to wrap up the story. I want to show what one bare bulb light can produce, no modification and no fancy placement. This is very similar to our first set, using one light, camera left, with our model facing toward it. Before I move to create that image, I decide to shoot a few frames with our model connecting with the viewer looking directly into my lens. The bare bulb flash is placed maybe 60 to 70 degrees camera left to create a split light scenario for drama. You can clearly see the left side of her face in light with her right in shadow. Moody, just like I wanted! For the last frames of the day, the only change here was with my directions for our model. Same light and placement, I just directed her to take a few steps, as if walking away in a fit past me camera left. That hard, unbothered light was just what the scene needed. ■

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Dauss Miller is an internationally-published commercial editorial, beauty, fashion apparel and luxury wedding photographer based in Carmel, Indiana. He is a passionate and innovative entrepreneur, artist, father, reformed ice cream addict, timepiece collector, nerd, artist, drummer, and world-traveling dreamer.

"When you do what you love, people love what you do, and I truly love what I do. It shines through in every image and in every business I touch!"

website: daussfoto.com   instagram: @daussfoto

LIGHTING TUTORIAL: SOFT LIGHT

VS.

HARD LIGHT

with **John Gress**

settings: *f9.0 @ 1/200 iso 100*

Lighting isn't that hard if you have a good softbox. Sorry, I couldn't resist.

There are two main approaches you can take in the studio or on location. And which lane you choose will have a huge impact on the outcome of your images. You could choose to emulate window light, or you could choose to simulate sunlight. As an aside, nighttime interior scenes can be a mix of the two.
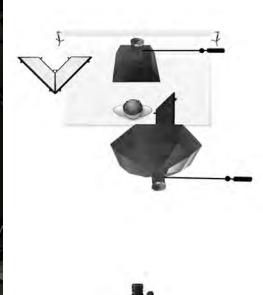
Window-lit images can be great for creating flattering light for most subjects and will look painterly, given that the Dutch master painters, whom we often seem to evoke, posed their subjects near an open window.

Sunlit images tend to have harsh shadows and speculated highlights. This type of lighting can be great for athletes and adolescents, but it might not be the best choice for the textured skin of aging adults.

In the interest of exploring these two approaches, let's go over five lighting setups.

1. One of the easiest ways to recreate window light is to use a large softbox and then bounce some of that light off a V-flat. In this setup with our models Paulo and Klaudia, to give the sense of light coming from a skylight, the main light was an Elinchrom ELC 500 in a Litemotiv 120cm parabolic style softbox, boomed high and on camera left. It was feathered so the far rim of the softbox was aimed at their faces and the center of the modifier was directed more at the floor in front of them. Then on camera right, I had a V-Flat World V-flat wrapped around them to bounce some of that light from the Litemotiv in order to fill in the shadows, which also created a barely visible highlight on her left side. Then I had an Elinchrom 35x90cm strip softbox boomed high and behind the couple, pointed at the top of their heads to create just a little separation between them and the background. It was just bright enough to create a sense of three-dimensionality, but not bright enough to really be noticed.

2. For this image of Trae, I used a very similar approach, only I had an Elinchrom 190cm Indirect Octabox located very close to him. Because I didn't have the V-flat fully open on the shadow side as I did in the previous setup, and given that Trae's skin tone is darker than Klaudia's, I was able to bounce some light off of it to create a highlight on Trae's right arm and face. It's very subtle, but it does create a nice 3D effect in this image. A second V-flat is blocking the main light, and its reflection off of the floor, from striking the lower right corner of the photo.

I placed a hair light in almost the same position as the previous setup, but this time it was a little brighter because his hair is darker than Klaudia's.

settings: *f9.0 @ 1/200 iso 100*

settings: *f5.6 @ 1/160 iso 125*
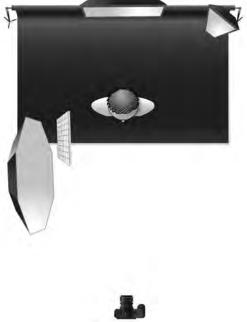
3. By moving the main light more to the side, you'll convey to your viewers the feeling that light is coming from a window perpendicular to your subject. In this setup with Stan, I feathered a Litemotiv 120 so the bottom was lined up with his jaw and the trailing edge was lined up with his face. Then on camera right, over his shoulder, I had another light in an indirect strip softbox, creating an outline on Stan's side and the props. Once again, I used the 35x90cm strip softbox as my hair light. To further refine the image, I used a cucoloris as a flag to block some of the light from the main light from affecting the lower half of my frame.

Overall, when you are recreating soft light, remember that it's all about subtlety. You don't need every light to scream at the viewer, "I'm here!" You just want to create a subtle amount of shape. Keep in mind, this type of lighting is going to create the least amount of texture and that's going to make older subjects look their best.

In contrast to soft lighting (pun intended), hard light creates a lot more texture and you're going to get a lot more specular highlights, the reflection of oils on your subject's skin, and maybe you guessed it, contrast.

You're also going to create a lot of shadows that will sharply pronounce the angularity of your subjects' faces. Someone with high cheekbones and low body fat is probably going to look fantastic with hard light as long as they're a little on the younger side, but if they are a little older, this type of lighting would work out great if you want them to appear weathered and full of character.

4. For this portrait of Santiago, I wanted to give the impression that a shaft of sunlight was coming through a window. So, I put a Bowens 200mm Fresnel on an Elinchrom ELC 500 about 15 feet away from the model. Then I placed two 20x30-inch pieces of foam core between the model and the light in a position that would darken the right side of the scenes and the lower half of his body. And then to top it all off, you guessed it, I added my 35x90cm strip softbox high and behind him so I could create just a little separation between his hair and the background.
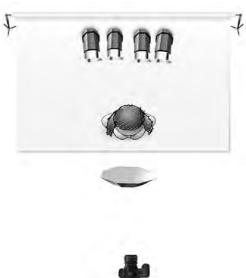
Named after the French engineer Augustin-Jean Fresnel, fresnel lenses collimate light rays to create an even hard light with brilliant contrast which is much larger than your flash tube. If you don't have one of these specialty modifiers you could substitute a standard grid reflector and a 10 or 20-degree grid.

settings: *f6.3 @ 1/200 iso 100*

settings: f11 @ 1/200 iso 100

5. This portrait of Ericka is a little bit simpler than it may appear at first glance. What is really key here is the main light, which was an Elinchrom ELC 500 in a 70cm Deep Octabox with all the diffusion removed and a deflector disc inside. This essentially creates a silver beauty dish—but it's a beauty dish that can be folded up and tucked away for storage or mobility. This light was positioned in front of and above the subject, angled down at a 45-degree angle. This hard light created a series of shadows under her jaw and showed off her abs. Of course, what is really noticeable in the shot are the four hard lights in the background. They are simply Elinchrom lights with standard 7-inch reflectors that are turned down quite low, because hard reflectors with bare bulbs are very effcient at projecting light forward. Overall, they're creating just enough drama in the scene while also subtly edging out her physique.

If there is one thing I regret about the setup, it's that I placed the light stands too close to the cyc-wall because they are being hit with light from the main light and casting shadows on the background. If I had just moved these lights maybe 3 feet away from the wall, those shadows would have been a lot less defined.
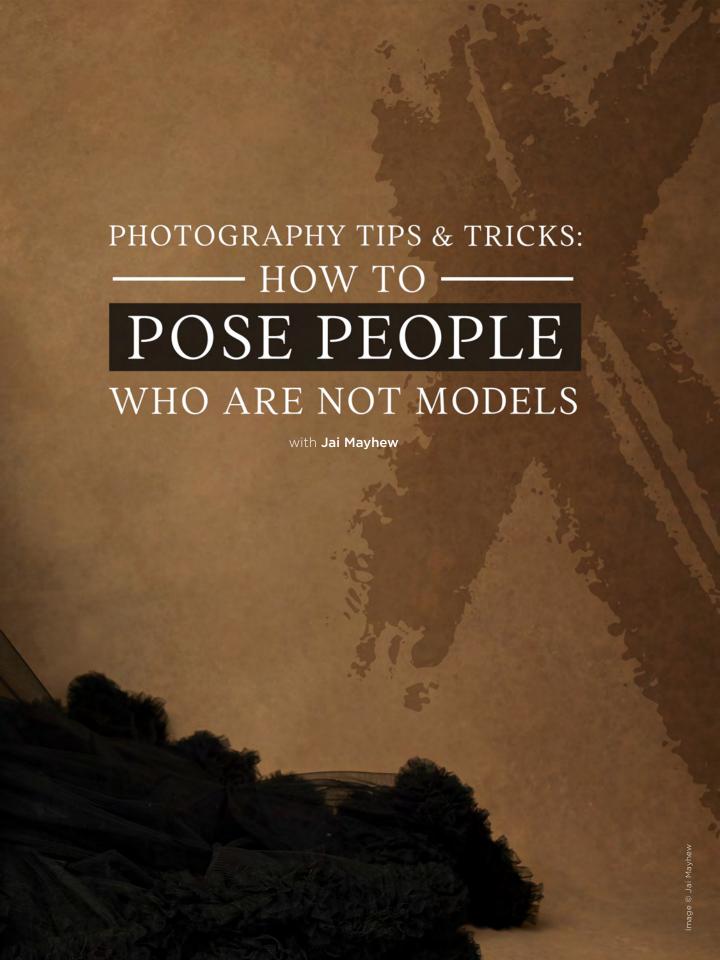
Whether you like soft edges or edgy light setups, the choice is all yours. But why not have it one way for your entrée and the other way for dessert? You only live once and shoots are seldom one look! ■

For over 20 years, Chicago photographer and director John Gress has created stunning photography and videos for some of America's largest companies and international media outlets. His work has included national lifestyle advertising, portraits and videos for the beauty industry, and action photography of professional athletes.

website: johngress.com   instagram: @johngressmedia

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS & TRICKS:
— HOW TO —
POSE PEOPLE
WHO ARE NOT MODELS

with **Jai Mayhew**

You were born to pose. It's second nature to you.
You cross your legs, you cock your head, maybe you arch an eyebrow.
It's as natural as breathing.
Until you're in front of a camera.
And suddenly you've forgotten what a natural smile feels like.
But never again.
An editorial pose starts with a relaxed subject.
Let's talk about how you can bring model vibes to your non-model shoots.

As both a fashion and portrait photographer, I photograph a wide variety of posing styles. I photograph models in back-breaking avant garde positions and portrait clients who would prefer to remain seated, thank you very much (not that I let them). And it's my job to coach them all.

While it's of course easier to work with a model who knows her angles, posing feedback is required at every shoot. Remember, your subjects can't see the back of your camera. Without your help, they don't know if a pose looks incredible or odd, and they can't see to correct for lens distortion or a severe angle. Knowing not only how to communicate what you see, but how to correct for it is a valuable skill. Think of posing as the art of using body language to tell a story. Then together with the wardrobe and lighting, the posing will bring your story to life.

So how do you pose subjects who are not models? With encouragement and practice. Any poses that you want to demonstrate to your clients (I suggest having at least 10 memorized and ready for shoots), practice yourself in the mirror. Know how to get into them, know some variations of them, and be confident in those poses so you can help your clients. Then use the following tips to truly elevate your posing technique.

1. MAKE HER COMFORTABLE

In my experience, the best poses and expressions come from a place of trust. When your clients like you and they're having a good time, they're more likely to try those poses that might feel strange but photograph well. But you're not going to rush right to those poses. Not yet. Start by creating a rapport with your clients. Do this by building an extra 10-to-15-minute warm-up into the start of your session and use this time to chat and socialize as you begin shooting. If my client seems nervous, I make a point to lower the camera often so that she can see my face. (Sometimes having that block between the two of you can create nerves. Seeing your face and smile can be reassuring.) Show her that this isn't scary and let her get used to the process. For some clients the warm-up might be brief, for others you might need those 15 minutes. You will get better images out of a client who lets down her guard.

2. REFERENCE THE MOODBOARD

I'm ridiculously addicted to making moodboards. Because they work. If you've never made one before, a moodboard is just a collection of inspiration images displayed on one page to give a snapshot of what you're wanting to create. They can be digital, they can be printed, and they're used to shape the vision for your story. I create my own moodboards for fashion work, then ask my portrait clients to create their own Pinterest boards for their sessions. This helps to define the style, the wardrobe, lighting and posing they're drawn to.

If you are new to posing clients (or if you just want to add some variety), I highly suggest making a moodboard of poses you want to incorporate. I try to prioritize two or three new poses per shoot, but don't just have them on your phone (or printed out). Test drive those poses yourself. Get in front of the mirror and try them out. You are going to mirror this for your client and there's nothing like muscle memory to help you in the heat of the shoot.

3. GIVE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

More than lighting, more than retouching, my ability to encourage my clients and make them feel beautiful (in an otherwise vulnerable moment) has become one of my greatest strengths as a photographer.

When I am mentoring other photographers on set, the first thing I teach them is to never, ever, EVER give negative feedback. In photography studios over the years, I've watched what happens when professional models are criticized. Here's what I saw: I saw them retreat into themselves. I saw them less likely to take risks with their poses and expressions. I saw them shut down just enough to lose the magic of the shoot. So my stance on feedback is this: I don't believe in constructive criticism on set. *I believe in redirection.* I don't care if you're working with a professional model or a headshot client.

I've never seen criticizing work, but here's what I have seen give beautiful results.

• *Show the back of your camera.* If something really isn't working, instead of putting the awkwardness into words, just show her a shot you did like and say, "I loved what you were doing here," then scroll through some of the other shots so she can contrast that to the less successful poses. Remember, the client can't see what you're seeing. Often just seeing it for herself will help her to make adjustments.
• *Keep going.* If you're not loving something, either take the shot and move on (you can delete it later) or simply change the pose. A negative comment will linger over the entire shoot. Just keep going.
• *Praise, praise, praise what you do like.* The best way to keep getting what you are liking from your client is to reward it. Encourage poses and expressions that excite you. Only positive reinforcement.
• *Keep talking.* I didn't realize how much talking (encouragement and guidance) I did during shoots until we filmed my tutorial. There is very little silence on my set and I'm OK with that. It means I'm reassuring them. Silence = the client wondering what you're thinking and hoping they're doing it right.

4. START FARTHER, MOVE CLOSER

There's something about a camera right in your face that doesn't feel super comfortable. For that reason, I always start my sessions a bit farther back, either shooting three quarters or full body, then slowly working my way in. (I often tell clients I'll spend the shoot circling them like a shark. They laugh. And the mood on set relaxes even more.) Often, we'll repeat poses in different crops, but by not starting up close immediately, clients can get comfortable before I move into their personal space.

5. ELONGATE & EXAGGERATE

Any good Instagram influencer will tell you that the key to a good picture is the following: elongating the legs, exaggerating the curves, and accentuating the hourglass shape. (When you go viral be sure to tag me.)

Why do we do this? Photos are a snapshot of reality, but through angles, poses and filters. It's a distorted reality. By having your seated client point her toes and extend her legs you can make her legs seem a mile long. When she's standing, have a client pop her front foot up on its toes to flex those calf muscles then exaggerate her hip curve to make a beautiful S-bend. Take a normal shape and push it to its extremes to get a gorgeous, made for film pose.

6. PLAY DIRECTOR

The hardest part of posing is doing it solo. Incorporating apple boxes/chairs, graphic shadows and flowing fabrics add visual interest, but there's even more we can do. Adding selective props (such as furniture to hold on to, mirrors, florals) to your scene will give your subject something to interact with and move the focus away from just her (which might help her comfort level).

If props aren't your thing, consider adding in action. The best poses are rooted in authentic movement. So keep shooting while your subject runs her fingers slowly through her hair, takes a few steps forward and backward, slowly draws a hand across her mouth, slowly turns her head side to side/lifts her chin, or tucks her hair behind her ear. Adding movement or props not only gives your subject something to interact with but adds something dynamic to the shot.

Image © Jai Mayhew

Posing anyone takes practice. Posing non-models takes patience and intention. Practice your flow poses and pose modifications in front of a mirror, then on a friend or (bribable) family member. Once you have the core poses down, then elongate, exaggerate and add some action. You've got this.

I would absolutely love to see your posing style. Please feel free to tag me on social media (@jaimayhew) when you post. ■
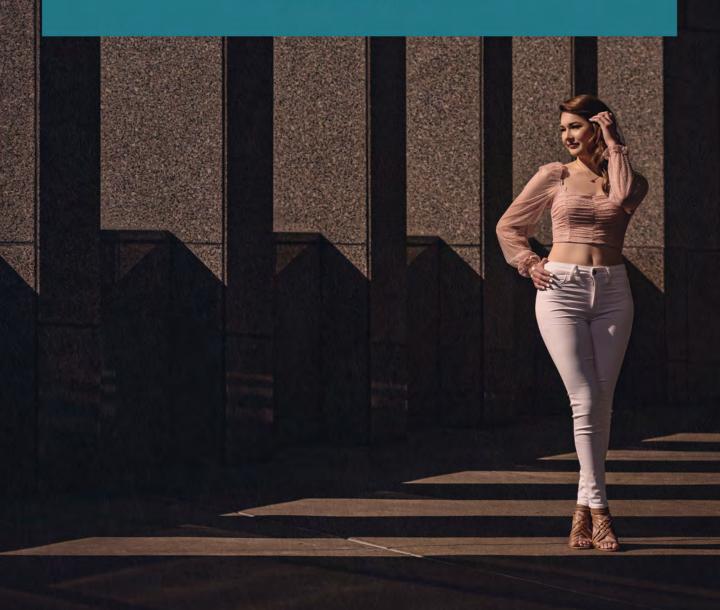
Jai is a portrait and fashion photographer, content creator, and the newest tutorial instructor for PRO EDU. Her work, which is known for its editorial and sensual style, has been published internationally, featured in galleries and commissioned by public figures. When she isn't in the studio, you can find Jai with her beautiful family, in the gym, or mixing an especially dirty martini.

website: jaimayhew.com   instagram: @jaimayhew

premier

IT'S **TIME** TO **ELEVATE** YOUR
POST-PRODUCTION

evolveedits.com/premier
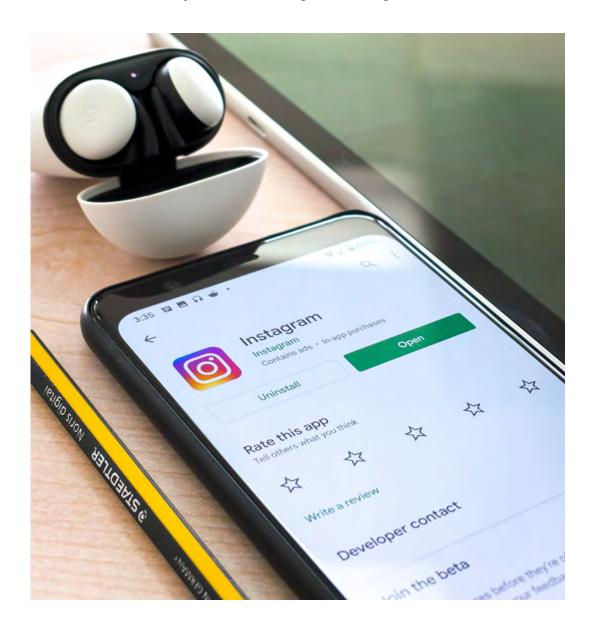
10 INSTAGRAM REELS HACKS
— FOR —
PHOTOGRAPHERS

with **Jonathan Tilley**

Instagram Reels launched in August of 2020 in 50 countries worldwide. Since then, photographers everywhere went scrambling to learn yet another social media trend—all while trying to keep their businesses open during the corona crisis and homeschool their kids. Who needs sleep, right?
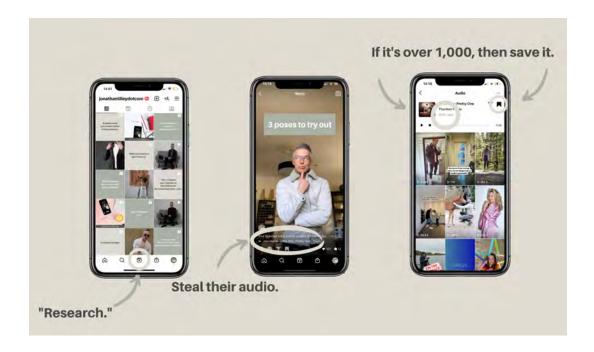
But here's the thing. Since Instagram was "strategically inspired" by TikTok and offered a short, hooky, video creation tool on their own platform, Reels have exploded, giving photographers a once in a lifetime opportunity to welcome thousands of new followers to their profile. To be successful with Reels, your followers don't want to see your portfolio. They want to see your personality and what they'll get when working with you. If you're not creating Reels, then you're missing out on the Instagram gold rush.

But where to start? What to do? And the most important question: Do you really need to dance and lip-sync at the same time? The answer to these questions and more are right here. So let's go.

1. RESEARCH

What if your endless scrolling was transformed into guilt-free "research"? Now we're talking! Click on the bottom middle button on Instagram to get access to the trendiest Reels. Notice what audio they're using and if it vibes with you. Also notice what their Reels are about. What's the theme? What's the hook they're using? By scrolling through everyone else's Reels… I mean, doing "research"… you'll find out what's trending and how you can jump on that trend.
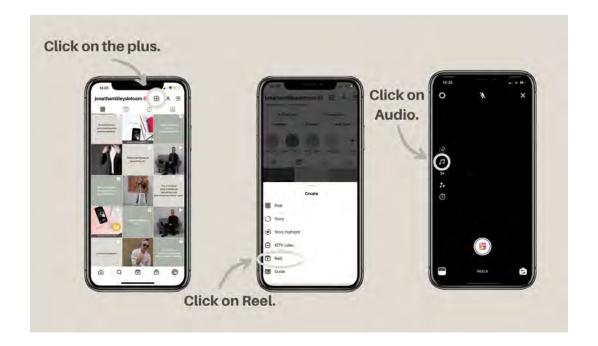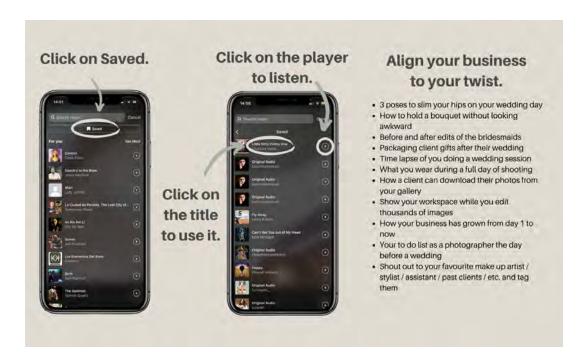
2. STEAL THEIR AUDIO

When you do your "research" and find audio that vibes with you, save it immediately. At the bottom left corner of that specific Reel you'll see the name of the audio scrolling horizontally. Click on it and on a new page you'll see the original creator of the audio and how many people have used it. If the audio has been used 1,000 times or more, then you've found a trending audio. Click the save icon at the top right to save that audio for later. Then get back to "research." If the audio has been used less than 1,000 times then move on.

3. CREATE YOUR REEL WITH YOUR SAVED AUDIO

With fresh eyes (and ears) click on the + at the top of your screen then choose Reels from the bottom of your screen. In the Reels content creation section click on the music notes to go to audio. Then click on the top tab called Saved. Here's a list of all of the audio you've stolen… I mean "saved." At the top is the most recent saved audio and at the bottom the first audio you ever saved. Click on a few audio player buttons on the right and listen to them. Then when you've decided which audio you want, click on the title in the middle to use it. You'll vaguely recall what that audio was used for in the back of your mind. Good. Now, use what you remember and think of how you can give it your own special twist.

Click on Saved.

Click on the player to listen.

Click on the title to use it.

Align your business to your twist.

- 3 poses to slim your hips on your wedding day
- How to hold a bouquet without looking awkward
- Before and after edits of the bridesmaids
- Packaging client gifts after their wedding
- Time lapse of you doing a wedding session
- What you wear during a full day of shooting
- How a client can download their photos from your gallery
- Show your workspace while you edit thousands of images
- How your business has grown from day 1 to now
- Your to do list as a photographer the day before a wedding
- Shout out to your favourite make up artist / stylist / assistant / past clients / etc. and tag them

4. ALIGN YOUR BUSINESS TO YOUR TWIST

Building off of number 3, let's pretend the person you saw use that audio was showing three different poses to try out in front of the camera. That's nice, but vague. What's your twist on it? How does it align to your specific business? Let's pretend you're a wedding photographer. You know your brides dread looking like they have wide hips on their special day. So your own special twist on it could be "three poses to slim your hips on your wedding day."

This aligns beautifully with your wedding photography business and is uniquely your perspective. This shows off your personality, shows how you work with clients, and shows that you know what you're talking about. Your Reel will speak to your dream clients' fears and help build your know, like, and trust factor. All from showing these three poses.

If you're feeling stuck on content ideas for Reels, here are a few others in the picture.

Each Reel idea is a piece of micro-content that shows a tiny peek into your life as a wedding photographer. When your content is created for your dream clients and not for other photographers, your dream clients will feel like you are speaking directly to them and not just bragging about your latest gear. When you align your business to your special twist, a world of content ideas opens up that you never could have imagined.

Click on the timer.

Click on Set Timer.

Make sure there's enough headroom.

5. PREP YOUR REEL

This is where it all comes together. The "research," your audio, and your own special twist. Set up your phone in a stable place with good lighting (duh), click on the Timer button, and the audio will start playing for you without recording. When starting out, film everything in one take. It's easier that way. Then when you feel comfortable, amp it up and film multiple takes later on down the road.

From here, click on Set Timer. Now you are back to the screen where you see yourself. Make sure there's more than enough headspace above you to write in your text later. Practice what you are going to do a few times by yourself without recording and then when you feel ready, click on the record button. You'll have three seconds to get into place and then it's show time.

6. FILM YOUR REEL

Start your Reel with a hook. In this example, it's "three poses to slim your hips on your wedding day." So when you hit record and the timer counts down from 3 to 1, hold three fingers close to your smartphone's camera. Then when it starts to record and the audio plays, bring your hands back to your body and smile. Imagine your hook written in text above your head. You'll do this later in number 8.
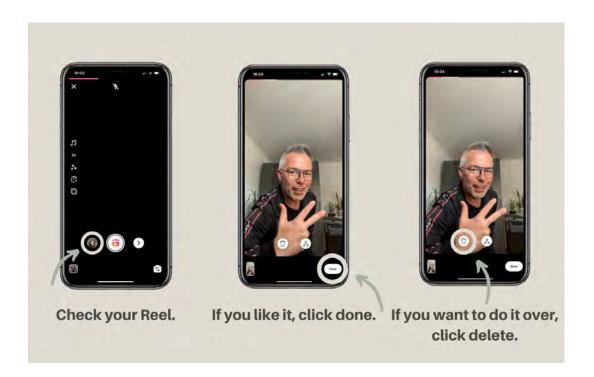
Give us what we came for. Show those three poses! Use the audio to set the vibe. If the song has a few good accents in it then use the accents for the poses. You don't have to dance around and point at things in the air, but when the music is going it's hard not to have a good time! The more personality you show, the better. Don't overthink this. Just have fun.
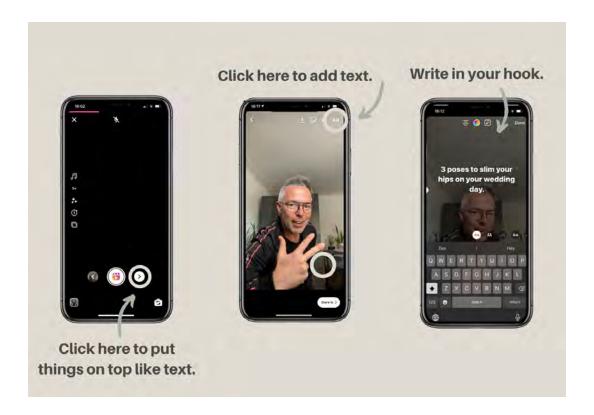
Finish strong. You filmed the third and final pose and you have a few seconds left. Instead of dropping your energy, rolling your eyes and hitting the record button again to turn it off, just let the audio play to the end and it will stop filming automatically. This is a great time to give some positive reinforcement with a thumbs up to let your viewers know that they can do it. The better they feel after watching your Reel, the more likely they'll want to engage with you, which builds your know, like, and trust factor.

Start with a hook.   Give us what we came for.   Finish strong.

7. CHECK YOUR REEL

When you're done filming your Reel, click the left back button on the left side of the record button. There, you'll see what you filmed. Do one final check of the content that you created. If you like it, then click done and move on to number 8. If you don't like it and want to do it over, then click the delete button and start over. Repeat number 5 and number 6.

Check your Reel.   If you like it, click done.   If you want to do it over, click delete.

Click here to add text.

Write in your hook.

3 poses to slim your
hips on your wedding
day.

Click here to put
things on top like text.

8. ADD YOUR TEXT

When you like what you see, click the right forward button on the right of the record button.

Now you can add your text above your head. Studies have shown that if you place your text above your head it makes you look more intelligent and builds trust faster. Text anywhere else is harder to read and doesn't convert as well.

You'll notice that when you write your text above your head and place it on the screen with your finger, a blue horizontal line close to the top of your screen will appear. NEVER place your text on or above this line. The same applies if you place your text too low on the screen. With your text too high or too low it will cut off your text when you post your Reel to your feed and is an amateur move. No bueno.

By the way, your Reel will be playing on loop while you're doing this, so turn your sound down so it doesn't annoy you.

9. WRITE IN YOUR CAPTION AND HASHTAGS
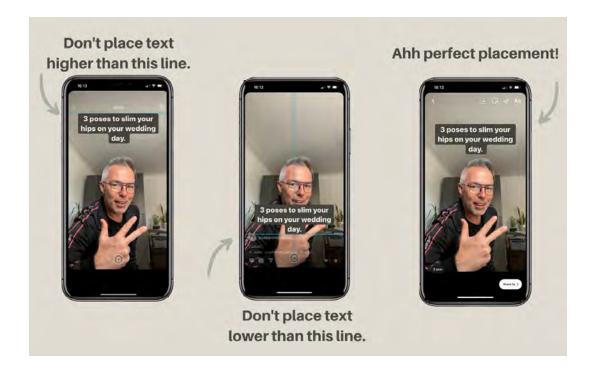
Almost there. Now you can add in your caption and hashtags. Since Reels are lightning fast, your captions should be super short. Write in one or two sentences max in your caption with a call to action. In our example of the wedding photographer showing three poses that slim your hips on your wedding day, your call to action might be, "Drop a heart in the comments if these poses will make you feel more confident in front of the camera for your big day."
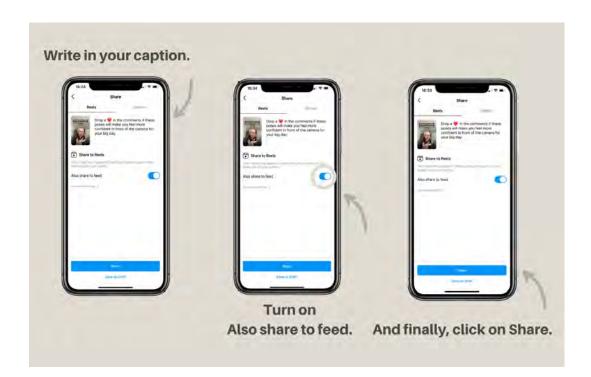
This does three things:
1. It's ridiculously simple for people to engage with, so they engage with it.
2. The algorithm loves engagement on Reels so more of your content will be shown to them in the future.
3. It's aligned with who you are as a wedding photographer and who they are as your dream client bride.

It's an open door for them to walk through with a DM that says, "Hey, I loved your Reel on the three poses that will slim my hips. I'm looking for a photographer for my wedding in a few months. Are you available?"

Newsflash: Your Reels content is the conversation starter that continues in the DMs. If you aren't getting people DMing you asking questions, your content isn't aligned to your photography business. Period.

Write in your caption.

Turn on Also share to feed.

And finally, click on Share.

10. SHARE TO REELS (AND FEED)

Before posting your Reel, make sure you also have the button turned on that says, "Also share to feed." This shows your Reel to non-followers who are also doing "research" scrolling through Reels. And it also shares your Reel to your feed and current followers. Win win. And finally, click on Share.

And there you have it. Ten hacks to level up your Instagram game with Reels. Just like anything new, it may feel weird at first (especially showing your face when you're used to being behind your camera), but with practice you'll get the hang of it. And the more Reels you create, the more Instagram will show your Reels to non-followers — something unprecedented in the history of the platform. The time to jump on creating Reels and joining the Instagram gold rush is now. So go for it. I can't wait to see what you create! ■

Jonathan Tilley is a personal brand strategist who helps photographers shine online and share their talent with the world. He loves teaching his Instagram Reels training inside his Inner Circle program, a place where creative people can breathe, belong and blossom.
To learn more about Jonathan's Instagram Reels training inside his Inner Circle program, hop on over to www.jonathantilley.com/innercircle.

website: jonathantilley.com   instagram: @ jonathantilleydotcom

MAKING THE
MOST OUT OF A
BACKDROP

with **Shannon K Dougherty**

Image © Shannon K Dougherty

settings: f2.8 @ 1/1200 iso 320

Years ago when I started my own studio, I didn't have the space I had in previous studios. I thought I would give backdrops a try to give myself variety. After purchasing an inexpensive one, I asked a friend to pose for me as a test run.

Yikes! It was awful. I didn't know what I was doing. Why was shooting on a backdrop so difficult? I knew how to light, pose and edit my subjects, but throw in a backdrop and it felt like my first day picking up a camera. I felt frustrated. I didn't even consider using a backdrop until months after that.

Flash forward to now, 90% of what I photograph uses backdrops. I literally cannot get enough of them and even created my own collection in 2021 with Intuition Backgrounds.

When I was asked to write for *Shutter Magazine* again, I knew backdrops were a great topic! In past issues, I talked about photographing in small spaces. Backdrops are a great way to add variety to that.

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 1000

BACKDROPS CAN BE INTIMIDATING

Why are backdrops intimidating? To answer this question, I had to think back to why I was having so many difficulties when photographing my friend on my first backdrop.

At that time in my career, I was rebranding myself and I knew I didn't want to do outdoor shoots anymore (hot weather, mosquitos, unpredictable weather… yeah, not for me). I was trying to find a way to give variety to my sessions without breaking the bank and also to not overwhelm my small space. I remember flipping through a book of some of my favorite photographers and seeing something in common was the use of backdrops. They all looked so perfect and effortless. What was I doing wrong in my first photoshoot with the backdrop?

I've since deleted those images but they are burned into my memory. I'm going to chat about what I did wrong in the next section.

settings: f2.8 @ 1/80 iso 3200

settings: f2.8 @ 1/160 iso 320

Images © Shannon K Dougherty

LIGHTING

Yes, you may know how to light your subject, but it's different when you have a backdrop. When shooting outside, all of what's around you is a backdrop. If something isn't working, you just move your subject. Being in a studio or small area with just a backdrop can change how to light your subject. A common mistake is setting your subject too close to the backdrop and causing shadows. If you know you want a smooth and seamless look, keep the subject at least 1 to 3 feet away from the backdrop. Often I see someone get in position to be photographed and they stand right against it. We just have to coach them to stand away.

When I want to shoot something dramatic for a beauty photoshoot, I'll bend these rules a bit to get the shadow behind the subject. I've often found for my own work that heavy shadows work best for editorial and beauty images but not for everything. Even though it is a common "mistake," take the time to see what works best for your brand and aesthetic.

I also suggest sticking with more matte backdrops. Often the light can bounce off of the backdrop if not positioned correctly and not only can this create weird bright spots, but it is a pain to take out in post-production.

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 500

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 500

Images © Shannon K Dougherty

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 250

FOCUS ON THE SUBJECT

When I'm choosing a backdrop for a photoshoot, it's always important for it to fit the aesthetic of what I'm shooting. If I'm photographing a series that is more fine art, I will grab a backdrop with more textures or even one that has a print to fit the mood. For a portrait or branding client I might choose to keep it more simple and use less textures or even a solid backdrop. I am more of a rule breaker when it comes to this. I don't believe that personal branding or headshots have to be boring and always on a solid background. Especially if you're photographing someone in a creative field, have fun with the backdrop! Something to keep in mind though is that you don't want the background to take away from your subject. It should complement the portrait and not compete.

Something I love about using backdrops is I can visually take them almost anywhere by picking a theme (such as being in the clouds or in the forest) without ever leaving the studio.

settings: f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 800

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 320

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 320

settings: f2.8 @ 1/250 iso 400

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 500

Images © Shannon K Dougherty

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 500
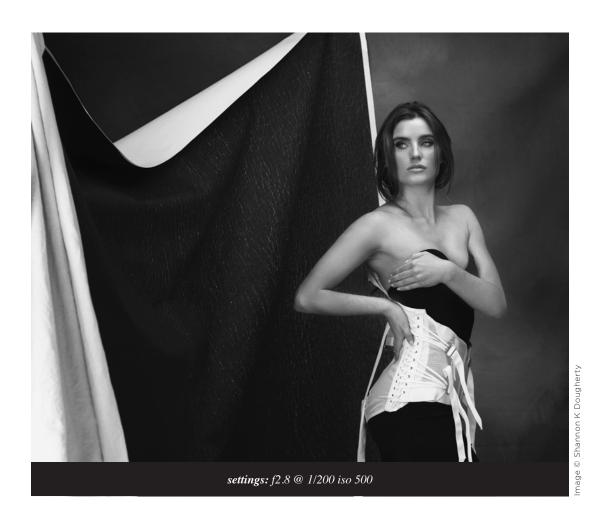
CREATING DIFFERENT LOOKS

During photoshoots with my clients, I don't usually change the backdrop more than one or two times, but they still walk away with many different options.

I do a couple of things for this. First, I change my depth of field. When I am photographing farther back, I want the whole set in focus. I want all elements to be seen and sharp. Often this is to show off the dress or gown but also the space we are in. I will also literally build a set for them using chairs, drapes and the backdrop. When moving in closer, I will often change to a more shallow depth of field to create a softer background and focus more on the subject.

Don't be afraid to use more than one backdrop. To be honest, I'm not always the most gentle with my backdrops (I know, tsk-tsk), but I will use some just for layering or using on the floor. Even just a little switch up of having the texture on the floor can change the vibe of the image.

I will try to stick in a similar texture family when I do this to start and then see if I want to go bolder.

Image © Shannon K Dougherty

settings: f2.0 @ 1/160 iso 800

DON'T FOLLOW THE RULES

Hear me out because I know I just gave a few rules to follow. However, rules were meant to be broken. Once you feel more comfortable with using a backdrop then I suggest finding your style with them and doing whatever you want. Personally, I like a messy studio (it takes me back to my college days in the painting studio). I feel more uncomfortable when the backdrop and space is TOO simple. Not everyone feels the same and some laugh at the chaos of my studio and sets. This all serves a purpose though. Every layer and texture has a purpose and fits with what I'm shooting and my brand as a whole.

One last thing: You don't need to have a huge budget to start building a backdrop collection. I started small and even created some of my own before investing in more and high-quality backdrops for my studio. Take the time to learn and play with different textures to start. There are a variety of options to choose from such as seamless paper, canvas, muslin… the list goes on. Also, consider what sizes will work best for you and the space you're using or if you're planning to travel or move with your backdrops. ■

Shannon K Dougherty is an internationally published portrait and boudoir photographer based in St. Louis, Missouri. Starting in the mediums of painting and drawing, she soon turned her interests to photography. She currently works at her studio in St. Louis but loves to travel for assignments. She likes to create dramatic and emotional sessions for her clients and currently has her own backdrop collection with Intuition Backgrounds.

website: shannonkdougherty.com   instagram: @shannon_k_dougherty

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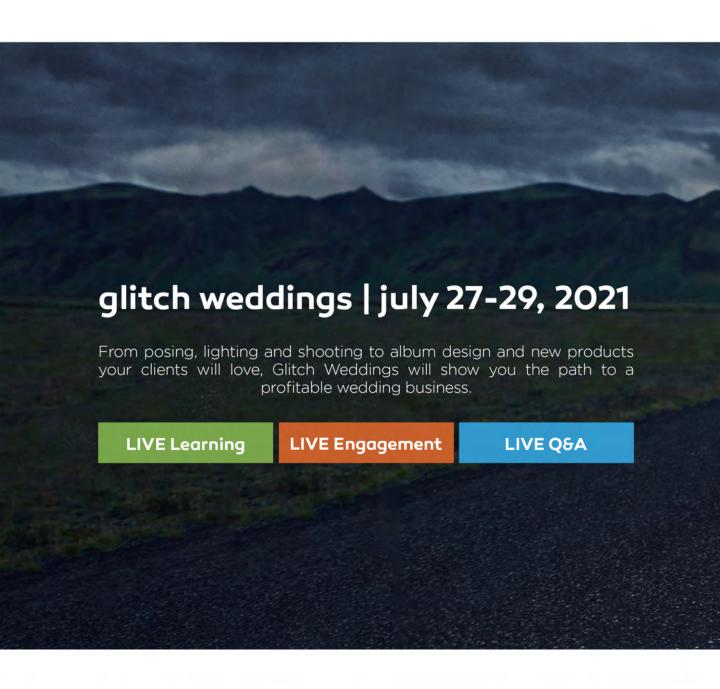
Image © Shannon k Dougherty

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unlimitedvisibilitydesigns If you are a photographer and you're not attending Shutterfest Glitch, you are SO missing out! I've learned so many things today on day one, my mind is blown. One of my favorites was watching Casey Dittmer show how to get different looks on one black backdrop. When she turned it red, my jaw dropped. I never would have considered gelling something that dark cause I just wouldn't think it would take the color.. boy was I wrong! From business advice to practical shooting, this event has it all! #sfglitch #shutterfest #salcincotta

1h

Nicole Jarrett Alvarado
9m · 🌐

Getting my socially distanced learning on with Shutterfest Glitch! Photography education & Snacks (including a dog-shaped popcorn thief!!) Such a great day! #sfglitch

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COMPOSITION TIPS FOR BETTER PHOTOS

with **Scott Detweiler**

We pass many milestones in our lives, and when each new door opens, we grow in what we do. In photography, some of those moments include understanding how to use our cameras, the exposure triangle, and maybe even Bayer filters and circles of confusion. Eventually, manual mode becomes a method for freedom of expression rather than an artificial barrier to being a "professional photographer." Another one is, of course, lighting, but as soon as we learn how to manipulate it for people, we find that trying to work with products unlocks even more challenges and that little "level-up" icon appears over our heads. Basically, there is a lot to know to "master" photography.

There is so much to learn on the technical side that little of a photographer's education revolves around composition. Most stop learning about composition pretty early on by just shoving the subject into one of those magical "rule of thirds" lines and calling it done. When cameras were first created, the planning of each shot was much more meticulous, and composition took a much more prominent role. It is still pretty strong in some areas like landscape photography, but again many of us fall back to that compositional plateau, the rule of thirds, and today few look beyond it.

The study of visual composition has been around for literally thousands of years. Many great painters and sculptors have had to discover these things and pass them down to their apprentices from generation to generation. Did you know there are even dedicated branches of psychology devoted to learning how the human mind consumes visual art? It turns out we can be manipulated by colors, patterns, shapes and other highly complex concepts. If you think about it, we as photographers appear to have the kindergarten equivalent of this enormous well of information because we get stuck in the technical understandings and rarely move past them.

Images © Scott Detweiler

Composition is incredibly vast, and I am sure what I know just scratches the surface of many concepts. But I thought it would be great to show you a few doors I have cracked open, and you can start on this adventure with me. To do this, I thought it best to start with a few key concepts and demonstrate them using a specific work of art.

We are all familiar with the golden ratio and that famous drawing by da Vinci known as "Vitruvian Man." It shows us just a hint of how much nature loves to use this mathematical concept, and it appears in leaves, snail shells, finger joints and even the placement of our naughty bits. Basically, if nature made it, it probably has some of this magical ratio built in. It is so pervasive that once you start looking for it, you will find it all over the place—even in the structure of our galaxy!

As humans, we find this shape and repetition quite pleasing. However, if it is slightly off, we instantly notice it. So perhaps this is a survival thing hardwired into our brains? In reality, artists have been using this for millennia to create a pleasing composition or create discomfort in certain instances. The placement of key elements in drawings and paintings is purposeful because each component needs to be made with an actual brush stroke. As photographers, we often get lazy with details in a scene because it is what "the world handed us," and we focus on the human pose. After all, we know we can just remove that tree or dumpster later in Photoshop.

Not that I want this article to be an art history lesson, but I want you to ponder the sheer amount of effort that went into the composition of the image in this article.

I will use the artist Jean Honoré Fragonard and one of my favorite paintings hanging right here in the Milwaukee Art Museum to highlight this concept. "The Shepherdess," painted in 1745, is a treasure trove of how artists laid out their ideas before painting the details and how to hide things in plain sight.
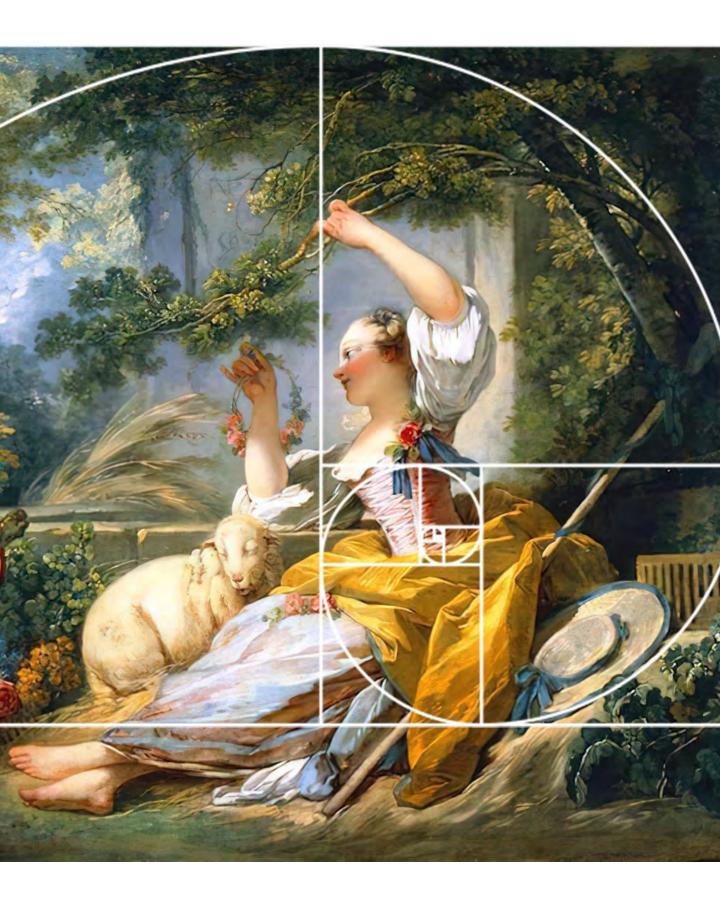
Every element in this portrait was placed with purpose, which we as photographers forget we can control. By placing the Fibonacci spiral over this image, we can clearly see that the artist used this tool to help position many of the elements in this painting. Other methods are also at work here, but we will focus on this single concept for today. Those swooping arcs are places where our animal brains like to see primary elements. This work of art is a visual masterpiece to me. My enjoyment of this piece doesn't end with this elegant use of math to lay out the position of primary elements; it is also in the subtle details. This painting is considered a beautiful example of the Rococo period. One of the hallmarks of this period is how hedonistic and sexual it can be, but typically not on the surface.

Many of Fragonard's pieces are some of the best examples of hidden intimate details, and finding them is an adventure. If you have been staring at this image and these things are eluding you, the most obvious one is that the hoop in her hands is the feminine symbol here, and that stick with the red cloth and spray of grain are pushing this painting into a new realm of storytelling. If you enjoy this painting, I would suggest you check out "The Swing," which is arguably Fragonard's most famous piece and has so much going on, it could merit an article or two on its own. At least three other areas in this painting push the boundary of 17th-century acceptability; can you find them?

There is so much going on in this image that isn't immediately obvious, and I love that! A friend of mine once told me that if someone takes the time to walk across the art gallery to get up close to your work, you should reward them with details they would otherwise not see. What if you put efforts like this into your next personal piece? Do you think you could open new doors for your growth as a photographer?

Artwork: The Shepherdess by Jean Honoré Fragonard

We often forget we can arrange the scene for a much deeper visual feast, rather than just shooting it and dealing with the few things that jump out at us. A world of opportunity is there for us to take the time to arrange elements in our scenes. I often think we do something as simple as adjusting the crop for a nice compositional boost, but our understanding shouldn't end there. If you have heard me speak at an event, I often mention that I feel strongly that each of us should take drawing and painting classes to fill this void in our visual knowledge. If you are attending ShutterFest this fall, I will have a much more in-depth session on composition in photography that will change how you view the world.

It seems that as we reach a new level of mastery in each area, we are suddenly aware of how little we know, as new skills and knowledge are no longer hidden from our eyes. Therefore, I invite you to take the time to plan an image that has a level of compositional depth beyond a fancy crop or lopsided mat. Attempting to use these tools will further open your mind to new possibilities and additional mastery of our visual art. Who knows, someday your art might be hanging in the Milwaukee Art Museum as well. ■

Scott is a conceptual portrait photographer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Along with his original approach to portraits, he excels at fashion and boudoir, and is an amateur body painter. When he is not shooting, Scott turns his studio into a classroom where he holds workshops on lighting, conceptual work and boudoir.

website: sedetweiler.com   instagram: @sedetweiler

BUILDING A TEAM FOR YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHY EMPIRE

with **Ayla Quellhorst**
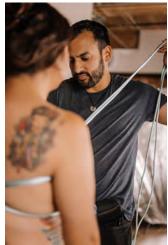
In 2018, I was a single mom, a medically retired Airman, going to school full-time, working at Target and trying my hardest to make my dreams come true. The same vision I had for 11 years. The same goal you may have. To build a photography business so I could do what I love while supporting myself and my daughter.

Then along came Rob, my now partner. The man who shed light on so many things that would slingshot my dreams into reality. One of the biggest things I have learned from him is that I can't do it all. It takes a team to make things happen. That team is critical to your success.
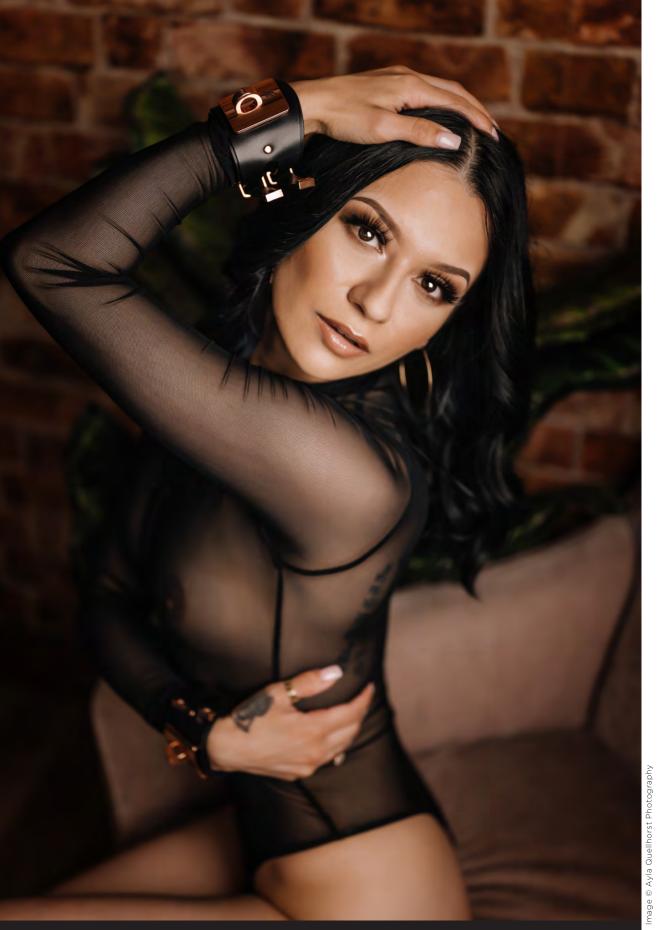
Your team can take many forms, from the contractors you hire to vendors or even employees. No matter who they are, it's essential to build your team around three simple ideas.

settings: f1.8 @ 1/100 iso 100

settings: f1.8 @ 1/100 iso 100

SHARE YOUR VISION

The first step to building a reliable team is to find people who share your vision. Our studio works mostly with H&H Color Lab for client products. It's not because they are the cheapest or the best quality, although they kill it in both areas! We work with H&H because they share our values.

Look at the lab's core values: "Truthful communication, building people, integrity, honesty, team success before individual success, and only a right thing done in a right way is right." You can see that the lab stays true to these values because they offer education to photographers. Heck, they put together Project Obscura and are a massive supporter of ShutterFest. I have seen their communication and ability to build people because David Drum himself is at some of these events and takes the time to talk with photographers to find out what they need. Our studio has also received calls from the company to find out how they could better serve us.

Our studio takes all of these seriously. I wouldn't be writing this article if I didn't want to help build up other photographers. Integrity is a core value the Air Force built into me. I am quick to respond to clients and admit if I do something wrong. I expect the same from my team. Knowing that my lab follows those same values is important to me.

But your staff should do the same. There is nothing worse than an employee who comes in, clocks their hours and then leaves—never going above and beyond in any way. My staff is there for me and each other. We have a group chat and we share our successes, even if they aren't studio related. We celebrate each other. When we moved to a bigger studio, they volunteered to take a day to go to IKEA to get furniture and put it together. We all know what a pain IKEA furniture is.

Sharing values goes beyond that too. It's also how staff and contractors interact with your clients. My team is about empowering women. They will gush over our studio's experience and how it changed things for them on a personal level. They aren't afraid to get real with clients and tell them their journey. They fully believe in what we do for women and share the vision of continuing to help other Warrior Women grow through boudoir sessions.

Without a team that shares your vision, you will be stagnant in your growth. Frankly, your clients will feel the disconnect and lack of positive energy. It's similar to the emotion you hear when someone smiles on the phone. Our team is like a family because we all believe in a shared vision.

Image © Ayla Quellhorst Photography

settings: f3.5 @ 1/100 iso 160

HIGHLIGHT THEIR STRENGTHS

When you bring people onto your team, you hire them for a reason. It would be best to focus on those strengths they have and use them where they are needed.

We have a young studio manager who loves social media and is super bubbly. Then we decided to hire an administrative director. As we worked with her, we realized that she is a killer at phone consultations. She gets the clients. She loves talking to them and she loves sharing her story with them.
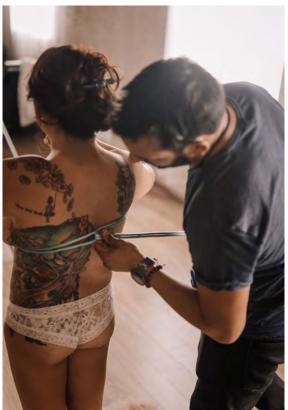
Our studio manager focuses on social media and interacting with clients once they are on the books. She isn't a massive fan of calls, and you can hear that in her voice when she makes calls. We did find that she loves to edit images. So we transitioned her to editing all of our shoots rather than making consultation calls.

Our administrative director has taken over the calls because that is where her strength lies and what she loves to do. She also has so much administration experience that she has become my right-hand man in brainstorming solutions to the studio's problems. She has written out procedures for our staff to follow and will be in charge of training our sales and administrative team as our studio grows.

One of the easiest ways to make sure you are highlighting your team's strengths is to ask them. Our staff has a task dashboard we created in a program called Notion. They fill it out every day with their tasks for the day. At the end of each day, they also type up what went well for the day. This way, I can see where they feel they are exceeding and learning, what is getting them excited. I am using that to highlight the strengths they see in themselves.

settings: f1.8 @ 1/200 iso 31

Image © Ayla Quellhorst Photography

IMPROVE THEIR WEAKNESSES

While highlighting your team's strengths is important, you can't overlook growth. You need to help them improve in the areas they are weak. It takes time and practice to get good at something. As photographers, we spend years learning to use our gear, and even when we do, there is always more room to learn.

We make a habit of having one staff meeting per quarter. At this meeting, I ask each staff member to tell me about their "rose, bud, and thorn." The rose represents what they feel is good right now, the bud is what they are looking forward to, and the thorn is what they are struggling with at the studio.

At one of these meetings, my cosmetologist said that she felt she was struggling to be creative. We were doing so many of the same sessions that she couldn't express herself, and she was getting drained without that creativity. This revealed to us that her weakness was creative blocks. We took the time to brainstorm with her and decided to set aside one day per month to do a creative shoot. She would get to plan the shoot and pick the model which we would photograph for her.

Like finding our team's strengths, we also ask them what they can improve on at the end of each day. This no-pressure question helps us see where they feel they are struggling and plan to help them overcome this.

Without evaluating their weaknesses and considering what they think they need to work on, we would not know how to help them improve. We want to build our team up by allowing them to have input and control over their growth.

Growing a team can be a struggle. The more people you add to your team, the more personalities you have to mesh together. You have more to oversee as a manager. It is vital to build a team that is going to help you succeed. Jim Rohn said, "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." As a manager, you want to build a team that will build each other up. You spend at least 40 hours a week with them, and as a small business, it's often more than that.

When you bring on team members and work with your team, make sure you ask yourself what their values are and if they align with your business. Take the time to help them grow by highlighting their strengths and improving their weaknesses. Most importantly, give them input and power over what they get to learn and do. Help them become more invested in your studio. A team that is supported wants to help you grow that empire you wish to have.

If I hadn't taken these three things into account, I wouldn't have grown from a studio that made just over $21,000 in 2018 to a studio that made over $350,000 in 2020 even while being closed for four months due to a pandemic. My studio would not have shown this kind of success without the team I have around me, without my vendors, contractors and employees. Your team will help make or break your business. ■

Ayla is a full-time boudoir photographer located in Tacoma, Washington. Her favorite part of the day is when she goes home and cuddles up with her daughter. Most of the time, you will find her working. She has developed a slight obsession with music festivals. Ayla is also an Air Force Veteran. The best part of her job by far is helping women find their inner Warrior, when they see how beautiful and strong they truly are.

website: aylaquellhorst.com   instagram: @aylaquellhorstphotography
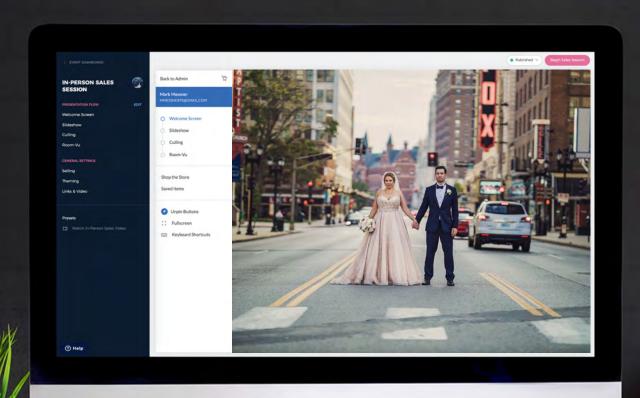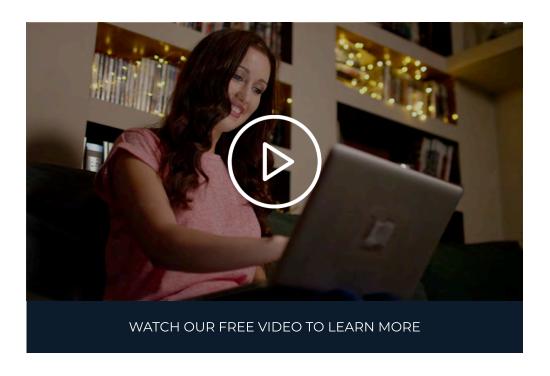
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Inspiration can come when you least expect it. As photographers, we are visual artists. We express ourselves through our camera and the images we create. Inspirations represents a sampling of our industry and the vision of professional photographers from around the world.

Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is you.

Sal Cincotta, Publisher

BEST PORTRAIT IMAGE

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THE
LIGHTING
EDITION

SIMPLE TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING
MEN

with **André Brown**

settings: f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 2500

There is a distinct art to photographing men, one that I would even say has become a passion of mine. This is most likely because of my love for men's fashion and styling, but also because I don't get to do it as often as I'd like on wedding days because as the lead photographer I'm primarily with the bride. I do, however, try my best to prioritize time to capture specific photos, many of which have been instrumental in defining my photography style and have afforded me the privilege of calling myself an award-winning photographer.

If you are a wedding photographer, you may have started your career as a second or third shooter. This generally means that you will be tasked with photographing the men. As of late, I have had the opportunity to work with a few new mentees and it appears that photographing men has been a bit of a pain point. So, I wanted to share some simple tips on how to capture great photos of men.

settings: *f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 250*

STYLING

First and foremost, it is imperative to have a basic understanding of fashion etiquette. A client having a well-tailored suit and shirts that fit properly are often outside of our control as photographers. But if you have an understanding of some of the basics, you can act as a trusted advisor and give suggestions to your clients ahead of time.

Beyond that, understand that when wearing a jacket, the jacket is to be unbuttoned while seated and buttoned while standing. Now, you know the saying, "rules are meant to be broken," and occasionally I break the "unbuttoned while seated" rule. This is usually when the subject's jacket is too large and I want to mask it so that I can achieve a cleaner looking photo. When the subject is seated with a buttoned jacket, it creates unflattering bowing and bunching in the lapel of the jacket, making the subject appear unkempt, which is not appealing in photos. Admittedly, I also break the "buttoned while standing" rule if I'm creating images that are laid back and casual. Yes, the rules can be broken but when you do so, be sure you do so with tact and intention.
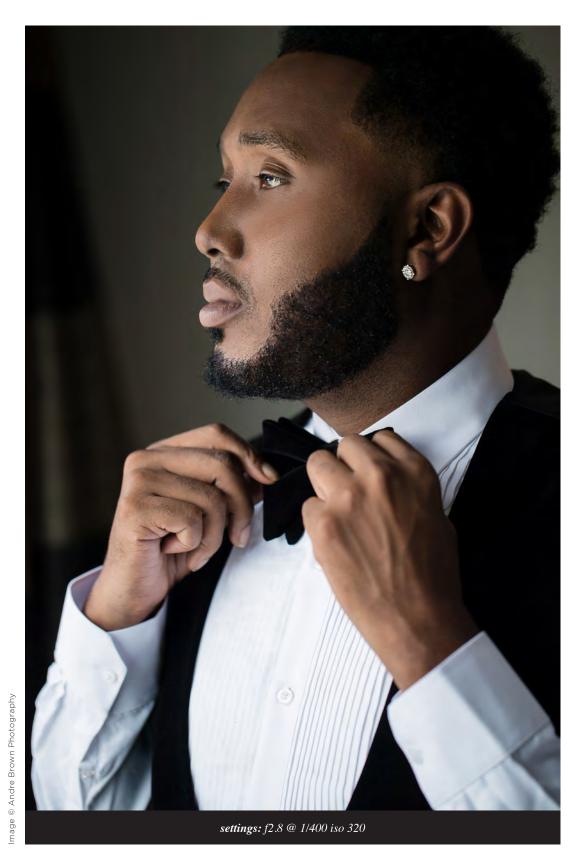

settings: f5.0 @ 1/200 iso 3200

Note: When wearing a jacket, the bottom button is always to remain unbuttoned. For example, if there is one button, button it. Two buttons, only button the top button. Three buttons, the top two buttons are the only ones buttoned. Aside from being a faux pas, I find that having the bottom button fastened limits the range of motion and makes the clothing fit in an unflattering manner. Posing with the subject's hands in their pockets isn't very appealing, especially if the suit is tailored properly.

You may wonder, what does the fit of clothing have to do with photography? Simple, a proper fit provides a polished look, thus a higher end look to your photos.

settings: f5.6 @ 1/200 iso 1000

settings: f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 1250

settings: ƒ2.8 @ 1/400 iso 320

CONTEXT

At this point in my career, I am known for a certain style of men's photos, so most of the clients I attract love what I do and want to be captured in the same manner. However, I find it important to understand your client's level of comfort and how they want to be captured. Photograph your subject in a manner that complements their style and personality. For instance, imagine an image that is lit dark and moody and your subject has a big cheesy smile. Those two things don't quite go together. It is important to take into consideration the context of the photo and the subject. Taking the time to get to know what will make your subject feel comfortable and confident in themselves will go a long way not just in producing quality images, but images your client will value.
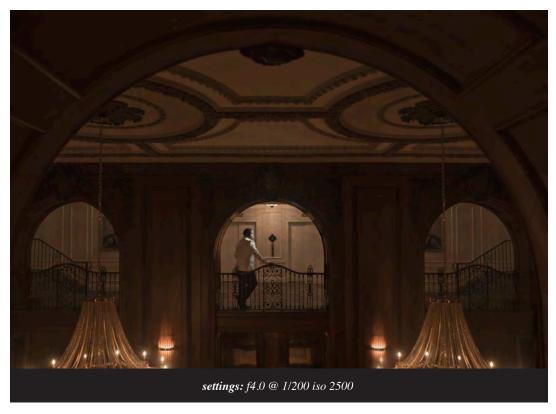

settings: ƒ4.0 @ 1/200 iso 2500

LIGHTING

Your personal photography style will strongly determine how you choose to light your subject, but as mentioned previously, be sure it complements the subject. If you follow my work or have previously read any of my other articles, you know that I always use some sort of directional lighting pattern, thus I'll likely be utilizing a Rembrandt, short light or split light pattern. If you aren't familiar with your lighting patterns a quick YouTube search will help you with that.

For the most part, all of these lighting styles can lend themselves to creating dark and moody images but it isn't always the case. On wedding days, I like to move quickly so I will always default to window light before choosing to create my own light with strobes. Wedding photographers know that wedding venues don't always provide grooms with spaces that have great lighting for the prep portion of the day. We sometimes have to wonder if we are in the broom closet or the groom's suite. Although these are the cards we are dealt, you have to be fluid. Don't just settle for what you've been given. Find good light! I've photographed prep in the front door of the venue. I've even shot prep outdoors. Quality lighting is key when it comes to great images. Once you find it, shape it and make it what you want it to be or create it if necessary. Just don't settle for what you've been given.

settings: *f4.0 @ 1/160 iso 1250*

settings: *f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 1250*

POSING

Posing is another thing that needs to be complementary to your subject. Can you imagine Paul Blart: Mall Cop posed in a manner reminiscent of *Vanity Fair?* It is my experience that guys aren't inherently comfortable in front of the camera. I do this for a living and the moment someone points a camera in my face, I immediately turn into Ricky Bobby and I have absolutely no idea what to do with my hands. Many people share in this camera-shy awkwardness and require a little more direction.

Meet your client where they are. *GQ* style poses don't work well for everyone. If you want to push the boundaries of what your subject can do, warm them up a bit and ease into it. Start seated so they only have to worry about facial expression and posing their hands and they won't have to worry about posing their full body right away, then move to standing poses. Capture some cool off-guard candids of your subject and be sure to show the client some of the good shots along the way. This will build their confidence and help them to loosen up in front of the camera. I'm sure you are familiar with the acronym K.I.S.S. (keep it simple, stupid). You don't have to over pose guys in order to get great shots, so no more posing your clients like Mr. Peanut in an effort to make them look cool. Keep it simple. It will go a long way.

Image © Andre Brown Photography

settings: *f2.0 @ 1/320 iso 500*

settings: f2.0 @ 1/8000 iso 1600

All in all, photographing men is a relatively simple task. As you go into your next wedding or photography session, remember K.I.S.S. Pay attention to the details to be sure that your subject's clothing looks as good on them as possible. Take the time to get to know how your subject feels most comfortable and confident. Find or create quality light that flatters your subject's style and personality and most importantly, don't overthink it! Have fun. ■

Andre Brown is an award-winning wedding photographer based in Atlanta, Georgia. As a former music manager, his passion for creative processes transformed into his love for photography. He is now the lead photographer of Andre Brown Photography, a boutique photography studio specializing in wedding and portrait photography. His work has been featured in several notable publications and has won awards from prestigious organizations including WPPI. Andre is also a speaker, educator and brand ambassador for MagMod and Light and Motion.

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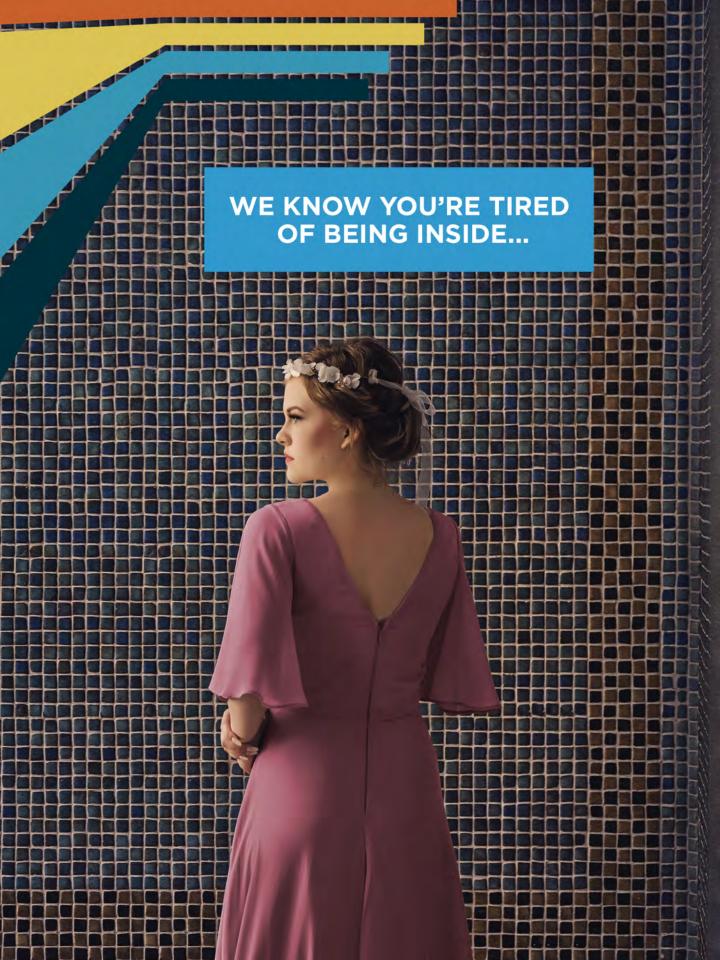
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TOP 10
TRICKS IN
LIGHTROOM
CLASSIC

with **Dustin Lucas**

Over the years, some of my favorite tricks in Lightroom Classic have saved me seconds per image, minutes per job and hours in a week. Saving time is vital for my workflow and sanity when I have dozens of jobs piling up. To get to a place where you can cull and color-correct a job fast, you have to be open to tips and tricks. Be teachable! In this article, I am going to give you my Lightroom settings, plus tools and techniques I use daily. These are standard for me in Lightroom and you may be familiar with many of them!
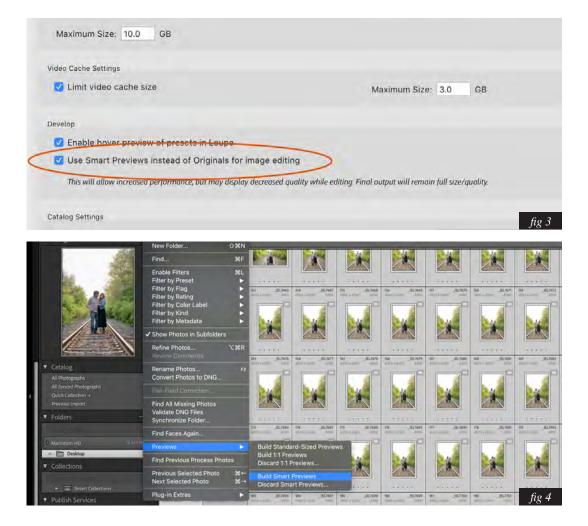
First tip, import with Smart Preview and then disconnect your original files. Second tip, change your Catalog Settings to lower Standard Preview quality and size. Third, use Lights Out for culling or selecting images. Fourth, enable hover preview of presets to quickly see different effects. Fifth, turn off the graphics processor for most computers. I have yet to see a computer get performance with this turned on. Sixth, edit in bulk in Quick Develop. Seventh, use the Match Total Exposure to quickly sync images in the same lighting sequence. Eighth, dial in color and tone with Target Adjustment tools. Ninth is how to use auto settings the right way. The last tip is using Reference Mode to match edits in Develop. Let's dive in!
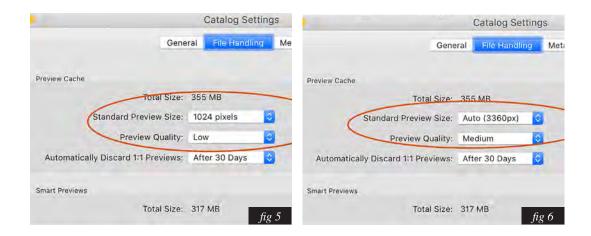
TIP 1. IMPORT WITH SMART PREVIEWS

Smart Previews are a godsend in Lightroom because they allow you to work on your images without having the original files connected to the computer. Not only that, but the speed and performance of editing is 10x compared to being connected to the Originals. Next time you import raw files into Lightroom, check the Build Smart Previews and I swear you'll never look back. (fig. 1) Then you can physically disconnect your external hard drive or virtually change the location of your files in Lightroom. (fig. 2ab) Either way you will immediately see the difference in the editing.

fig 1

fig 2a

fig 2b

You can also adjust your Lightroom Preferences to utilize Smart Previews as well. To do this, go into Preferences and from the Performance tab check the box next to Use Smart Previews instead of Originals for image editing. (fig. 3) This is an alternative to disconnecting Originals, however, I get more performance when they aren't connected. If you already imported but forgot to build Smart Previews, not to worry. Select all images in grid mode and go to Library in the top menu bar. Then hover over Previews and click Build Smart Previews. Boom, that's it, you got it. (fig. 4)

fig 3

fig 4

TIP 2. LOWER STANDARD PREVIEWS SIZE AND QUALITY

This is crucial to check anytime I open Lightroom and it's running slow. Lightroom can be a bear when it comes to building Standard Previews. Every change you make requires a new one to render, so it would be smart to keep this process lean, right? Go to Catalog settings and in the File Handling tab you can change these. Let's move Size to the smallest setting at 1024 pixels and Quality to Low. (fig. 5) This along with running Smart Previews give you an insane speed boost editing image to image as well as seeing changes in grid mode. Keep in mind, unlike Preferences, Catalog Settings will revert back with new catalogs and updates. Always check this first when things seem slow. (fig. 6)

fig 5

fig 6

TIP 3. LIGHTS OUT MODE FOR CULLING

When it comes to culling, most photographers use a program called Photo Mechanic due to its insane ability to zoom in to images and cull out the bad ones fast. Personally, I do everything in Lightroom because I like to work in one place, and since I build Smart Previews, culling is very fast for me. If you are a pixel peeper you need to build 1:1 Previews and can import as well. (fig. 7) When it comes to culling I turn on the filter based on any flag status so I can quickly remove the bad shots as well as duplicate ones. (fig. 8) I use the reject flags by striking the X key. When I apply a flag it disappears from view and I can quickly run through my job.
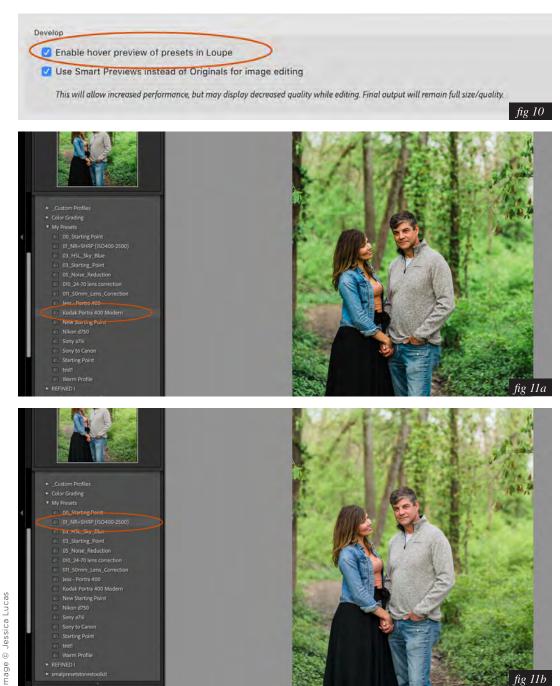
To do this, I am always using Lights Out mode. After turning on the filter for any flag, I double-click my first image, remove my panels by holding Shift Tab Command, and tap the L key twice. (fig. 9ab) Culling this way keeps me focused on the work and helps me work fast. I guess this was a two-for-one trick!

fig 7

fig 8

fig 9a

fig 9b

TIP 4. ENABLE HOVER PREVIEW OF PRESET

This is another Preference setting I like to use to work faster. In Preferences from the Performance tab you can select Enable Hover Preview of Preset. (fig. 10) This allows you to preview each preset in Develop instantly versus clicking on each one and waiting for it to load. Of course if any are grayed out they are incompatible with the image. It's simple but well worth the adjustment. (fig. 11ab)

Develop
☑ Enable hover preview of presets in Loupe
☑ Use Smart Previews instead of Originals for image editing

This will allow increased performance, but may display decreased quality while editing. Final output will remain full size/quality.

fig 10

fig 11a
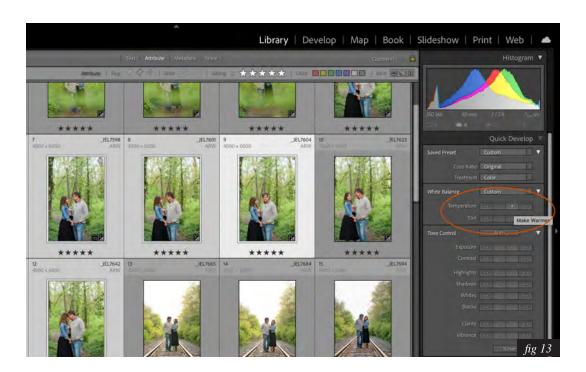

fig 11b

Image © Jessica Lucas
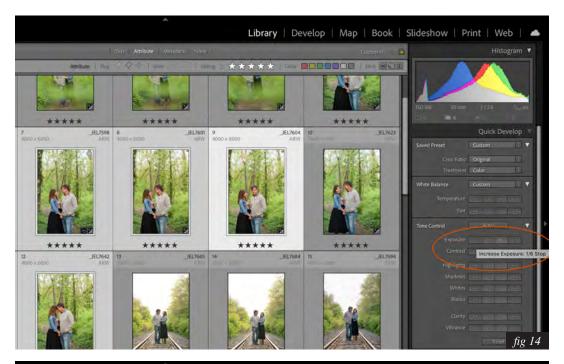
TIP 5. TURN OFF GRAPHICS PROCESSOR

This is 101 for most of us since the inception of the Use Graphics Processor option. I always turn this off especially if Lightroom is running slower than usual. Keep it simple and leave this off as a default. (fig. 12)

fig 12

TIP 6. EDIT FAST WITH QUICK DEVELOP

One of my favorite tools to batch edit is Quick Develop. This lets me shift an entire set of images warmer incrementally. (fig. 13)

fig 13

This means if they have different temp settings this will add about 300K to the images and I can do this in one click. Same goes for all the tone sliders, and to make adjustments smaller I can hold Shift Tab Command while clicking on the arrows. (fig. 14) I can also double-click on any of the settings to reset the theme as well. (fig. 15) Keep in mind this is the last step after I finish in the Develop panel.
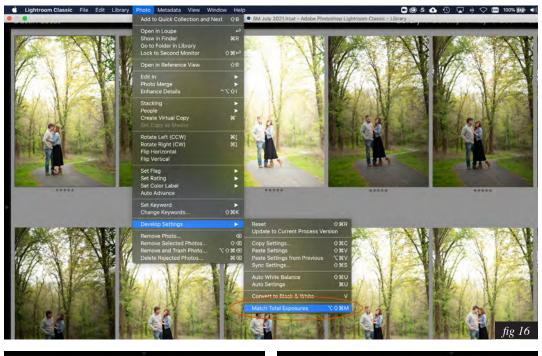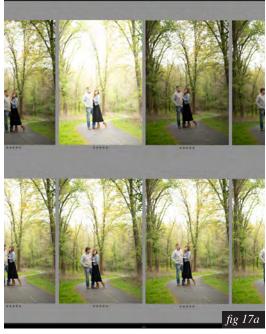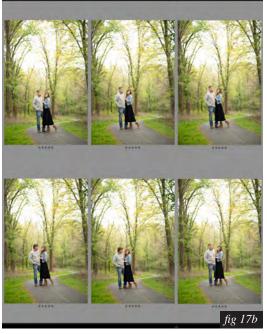

fig 14

fig 15

TIP 7. EDIT WITH MATCH TOTAL EXPOSURE

This is a very useful tool but you have to understand the limitations of it. Match Total Exposure works well for similarly lit sequences where you want to match brightness amongst multiple exposures. (fig. 16) Start with the first image and then select the entire sequence. From there you will hold Shift Tab Command, and the M key to apply this tool. Instantly your images adjust incrementally to match. Keep in mind this is histogram-based, so it won't sync for an entire job. You do this scene to scene when exposure bounces around. (fig. 17ab)

fig 16

fig 17a

fig 17b

TIP 8. GET PRECISE WITH TARGET ADJUSTMENT TOOLS

I love using this to tone down the greens in the background. To activate the Saturation target adjustment tool I can hold Shift Tab Command, and strike the S key. Once the tool is active I can click anywhere in the image, drag down to lower saturation for the color(s) present, or drag up to increase saturation. (fig. 18) Same goes for Luminance by holding Shift Tab Command, and striking the L key. Tone Curve can be controlled as well by substituting the T key with the same action to lower or increase tonal regions. (fig. 19)

fig 18

fig 19

TIP 9. USE AUTO SETTINGS

Before you roll your eyes and say, "I am a real photographer, I don't use auto," get off your high horse and level with me. When I am trying to dial in color in mixed lighting or reset my eyes, I love using auto tint. You can apply the auto adjustment per setting in Develop by holding Shift Tab Command and double-clicking the setting. This is really helpful if you add density quickly by getting true black and white points. (fig. 20) You can even add auto Vibrance as well to add some punch.
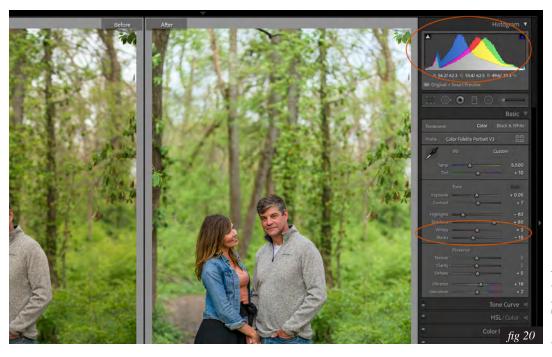

fig 20

10. REFERENCE EDITING

Reference Mode is by far one of the best upgrades with Lightroom Classic. This makes it easy to match edits across a job and compare two images while you edit in Develop. Once you have Develop open you can hold Shift Tab Command and strike the R key to activate this tool. Then you need to click and drag your edited image to the left pane. (fig. 21) Now you can arrow right to start editing the next image side by side to dial in settings. This is a game changer for me. (fig. 22)

fig 21

fig 22

THE RESULTS

These 10 tips should set you up nicely in Lightroom to work faster and dial in for more accuracy. Of course there are plenty more tips out there to help and I encourage you to try them out. End of the day, as a photographer it's about using the tools I need and getting the most efficiency out of my production time to focus on the more important things like running a business. There are 10 ways to do something, so I ask myself which one is the fastest to handle the job. You have to be adaptable and teachable or else you get trapped in the minutia. Stop wasting time and try these tips out today! ■

LEARN MORE.
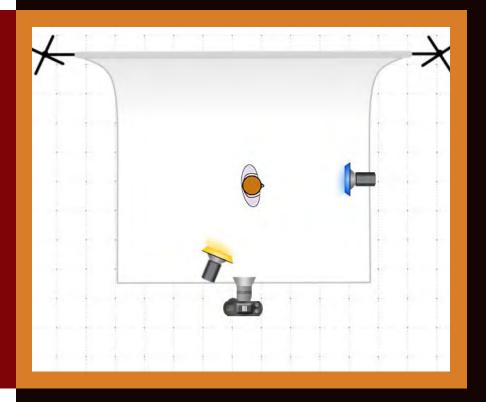Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his Master of Fine Arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

website: evolveedits.com   instagram: @evolveimaging

final inspiration

photographer | angela marklew
website | angelamarklew.com
model | lily

exposure | f/8 @1/160 iso 100
lighting | main light had a reflector and was gelled a deep orange placed slightly to the left and above the camera, pointed down at the subject. a second light equipped with a grid and gelled with both a teal & a light blue was placed directly facing the subject.
gear | canon 5d mk3 & canon 70-200/f4 is usm lens

45
60
75
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