

Portrait Photography's Power Posing - Part II: The Poses

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As we discussed previously in [Portrait Photography Power Posing Part I](#), posing is no simple matter. It requires great attention to detail in subject's personality and artistic use of body language. A pose will speak for itself, but remember, facial expression also will give character to the pose.

The following are examples of basic poses that will work for a large variety of masculine personalities and body types and between both sexes.

Pose I - Standing Tall: Give an air of confident ability and self-assurance.

- a. Shoulders Square
- b. Feet shoulder width apart
- c. Thumbs in pocket or on hip
- d. Head slightly tipped back



Pose II - Casual Seated: Express an easygoing attitude

- a. Sitting down on chair
- b. Back leg bent at knee
- c. Front leg extended slightly
- d. Lean back hand on knee
- e. Back straight



Pose III - The Wall Chill: Describes natural and casual expression

- a. Lean with back to wall
- b. Front foot slightly against wall
- c. Front hand in pocket



Are all these attention to details really necessary? Doesn't posing make a person unnatural? This argument is given all the time against detailed posing. Think about this: why do models look so good? It isn't because they "just stand there" or "sit". Every part of their body is perfectly posed.

You say, "but I don't want my subjects to look stiff!" Absolutely. But guess what? It is entirely possible to pose your subject and avoid the stiffness factor. Don't take the picture immediately after posing. Let them loosen up, shake out, and adapt the pose for them. Ask them to relax into the pose, and more often than not; your subject is completely capable of this.

So, now that you have some poses in your pocket, where do you go from here?

Dive into posing yourself.

Yes. You.

It is not uncommon to hear stories of professional portrait photographers taking a few classes at a modeling school. What better way to show your client the pose than for you to demonstrate it?

So, how do you become skilled in portrait posing?

1. Practice. Practice. Practice - Learn how to pose yourself. Stand in front of a mirror and go through each point of the following poses. Practice them until your comfortable.
2. Determine poses that match personalities or “moods”. Not every pose is for every person. Everyone has their least favorite body assets
3. Go for what is natural. Trust me. If your subject does not feel natural, your subject will not look natural - in the viewfinder or the prints. The objective is to use the pose to best communicate your subject. Don't force them to strictly adhere to the pose you place them in. Ask them to relax. You will find they naturally adapt into the pose as most comfortable for them.

Once again, the best way to learn every pose is to go through each component and pose yourself, over and over, until you don't need that cheat sheet anymore.

Lastly, be patient! Learning how to pose - be it yourself or others - is a process. But don't give up! Be patient and persevere. Posing is more than possible with a little bit of practice.