

# Portrait Photography's Power Posing Part I: The Components

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On location portrait photographers find summer the perfect season to book their portrait schedule. It's beautiful outside and many people want to take advantage of the weather for their pictures.

Regardless of season however one thing remains the same. Your job as a portrait photographer is simple: Make your subject look fantastic.

Critical components of dynamic portrait photography include indoor or outdoor lighting, creative locations, stellar composition, capturing your subjects personality and, last but certainly not the least: Posing.

Posing is nothing more than "body language". Pointed fingers. Sagged shoulders. Head down. Each of these "say something" about the person to you. Essentially, posing is simply learning how to demonstrate and guide your subject's personality through their body language.

Think about it: A confident person will not sit with hunched over shoulders and head down. Most likely, they will stand tall and excited about life. Someone who is quiet probably will not be the quickest to dance in the middle of the street, but someone who is extremely expressive? Bring on the music!

Think about anatomy for a moment: Each body part will speak volumes about someone's personality depending on how it is posed. You



need to study how to pose each component to best communicate personality, and flatter your subject.

Here are some general basics for posing anatomically. Study these and learn them well. From here, you can mix and match the components to truly “express” your subject’s personality in your portraits.

### **1. Hands:**

- Girl’s fingers should be long and elegant.
- Guys should have hands lightly fisted (like they are holding a small rock).

### **2. Feet:**

- Feet hip width apart will give a look of strength
- Feet at different angles or heights (on a step, chair etc) will give better “balance” to depth.

### **3. Arms**

- Elbows bent express a comfortable casualness.
- Arms straight give a feeling of formality and often stiffness (to be used with much caution)

### **4. Head / Chin**

- Head tipped back slightly will generally give an attitude of “punk” (especially for guys, think, “bring it on”)
- Head tipped back to the “high” shoulder will feel fun and flirty
- Head down toward the “low” shoulder can express power or position (especially when shooting up at the subject).

### **5. Legs**

- Legs spread hip width apart while standing will give an air of strength.
- Generally while standing, one leg should hold the body weight; the other leg can be bent, or extended behind like a graceful dancer



## **6. Shoulders**

- Should be on different “planes” (i.e. one slightly higher or lower than the other)
- Shoulders square on will express a strong attitude.

## **7. Joints**

- One rule: If it bends, bend it. This goes for elbows, knees, wrists, etc.

## **8. Hips**

- Girls who stand with hips tilted forward will appear more slender