

Posing Tips for Portraits - Shoulders

by [Darren Rowse](#)



[Photo by Sara Heinrichs](#)

When taking head shot and upper body portraits of people one simple posing tip that I've picked up over the years is to angle the shoulders of your subject rather than to have them even or squared in your shot.

While the shoulders might not seem like an important aspect of a portrait they can actually set the tone for an image as they're the widest part of your subject and they are visually what the main point of focus for your image (the head) is sitting upon.

Generally speaking, angling the shoulders slightly gives you shot balance and helps lead your viewer's eye into the shot towards your main focal point. It also stops your subject seeming out of proportion as it lessens the width of the shoulders slightly.

Getting this effect might mean actually getting your subject to lean in one direction or another or it could simply mean getting them to turn their body a little so you're not photographing them directly front on. Another technique can be to frame your subject slightly off center so that one shoulder is actually out of the frame.

Some believe that in positioning your subjects shoulders make the one closest to camera the lower of the two - but I've found that you can get an interesting effect by doing it the other way around too.

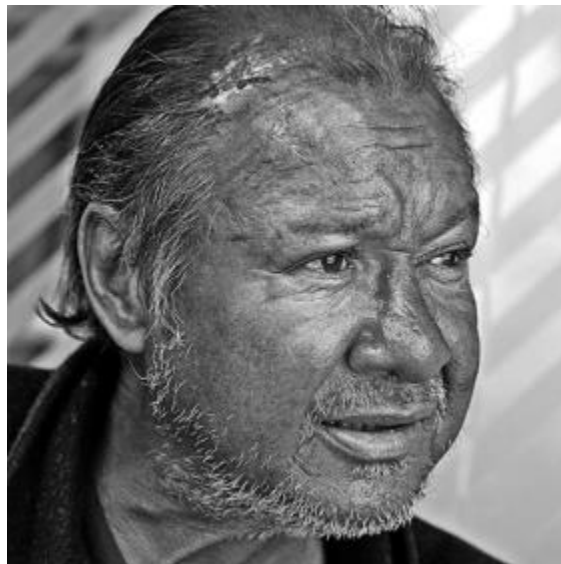
Of course - this isn't a hard and fast rule and sometimes the completely front on symmetrical shot can leave a shot can have a very powerful (and often confronting)

impact upon your readers also. So as always - experiment with posing your subject in a variety of ways and see what works best for you and your subject.

Here are a few shots that illustrate some of the different ways to angle shoulders to avoid the front on look.



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