

Senior Portrait Tips

Here are some tips and suggestions for our [seniors](#) as they prepare for their senior portrait session. These suggestions and tips are designed to ensure that each senior session is a successful one; each one comes from my experience as a senior portrait photographer. If there is a tip or suggestion that you have any questions about, please by all means ask – I want you to look your best as much as you do and there are times when we can bend things to make it work!

Each senior portrait session image will be individually reviewed, retouched, and enhanced without changing the nature of the image, and this is included with your session fee; good preparation for your senior portrait session will make those same images look that much better!

I would like to again remind each senior that if you would like to include a pet or other prop that is important to you, you can! There is never an additional charge for you to include your pet. All I ask is that you let me know in advance of your senior portrait session so that suitable arrangements and preparations can be made.

With our studios located in St. Louis, MO we have a wide array of parks, historic buildings, and other locations to provide you with a unique senior session that will truly be yours! Don't forget that there is no limit on the number of locations, provided we stay within the allotted time.

**Ready for some tips to make your session the best possible portrait session?
Great! Here they are!**

Tip 1 – Nail Polish

Although just about every senior portrait photographer in the world mentions this tip, it bears repeating. Blue and black finger nail polish will make your hands look weird, and even more so 20 years from now. Neon colors are cool, but they will draw too much attention to your hands or feet and can clash with your outfits. It is highly recommended that you stick to neutral tones.

Tip 2 – Shaving

It is important for girls to shave under their arms the day of their portrait session, especially if you are going to wear a sleeveless top. Stubble will show and it will not look pretty. Guys should shave their beards for the same reason – stubble just does not look good in a picture.

Tip 3 – Hair

Use hairspray sparingly, you will want your hair to move with you and hair that blows nicely with a breeze makes for great photos. Do not get a haircut or hairstyle change right before your senior session; let your hair grow out for a week or two prior to your photos. What looked good then may not translate to great senior pictures. Lastly, bring a comb or brush to your senior session!



Tip 4 – Shirts

Avoid white shirts or blouses. White has a tendency to draw the viewer's eye away from your face unless it is worn against a very light or white background. If you would like to wear white it is important to tell me prior to the session so that I can let you know when a background is appropriate for such a blouse or shirt. Long sleeve shirts or sleeveless work best.

It is important to note that short sleeve shirts visually cut the arm in two, there is nothing I can do in enhancing a photo to remove this visual. Big stripes will add a dress size to your appearance as well as draw the viewer's eye away from your face, they are a big no no – just do not wear them. Big logos across your chest will distract the viewer as with the others and they will also date your images. Do you want someone to view your images 20 years from now and immediately know how old you are? Best way to avoid a problem is to just avoid logos altogether.

A few things to avoid:

- Baggy Pants or Shirts
- Tops with crew necks
- Big shoulder pads
- Polka Dots
- Floral Designs
- Bold Patterns

Tip 5 – White Tennis Shoes

Bright white tennis shoes work the same way white shirts do, they will draw the viewer's eye away from your face and to your shoes. Therefore I strongly recommend that you do not wear white tennis shoes.

Tip 6 – Prepare

To prepare for your senior portrait session, it is important that you try on your outfits BEFORE you arrive for your session. It is also important that you try on your outfits with the undergarments you are going to be wearing. Clingy knit tops worn with hard cup bras have a tendency to show, and no image touch up is going to be able to properly fix such a look.

Make sure that your outfits are clean and pressed; WRINKLES will show up in your images. If your eye can see them, so will the camera.

If you are planning more than outfit change, choose varying styles of clothing, it will help you achieve several different looks. If you choose three sweaters, even though they are different colors and possibly a different style, they are still going to look the same.

As a suggestion, bring in tops with different necklines, colors, and styles; some casual and some dressy. It will definitely give you a different look! Clothing, sweaters, jackets, etc. can help give a similar outfit a completely different look.

The rule of thumb here is “Keep clothing Visually Simple and avoid flesh tone or neutral colors”.



Tip 7 – Its About YOU not the clothes

It is important for each senior to understand that a senior portrait session is about YOU – The senior – not the clothes!

Tip 8 – Get plenty of rest the night before your session!

If you have a late night, your eyes will be tired and it **WILL** show in your pictures. A good nights rest will help you be fresh and alert and that will only enhance your pictures!

Tip 9 – Makeup

Oily skin or foundation that gives an oily look is your **ENEMY!** It will give your skin a shiny appearance, a look that does not look appealing in pictures. You can refresh your makeup with translucent powder during your session, or use face blotters.

Do not wear lotions or makeup with glitter in them, the reflective nature of the glitter will ruin your pictures and there is no way to fix the look – which will appear like little white spots. Avoid makeup with SPF protection. SPF protection has a reflective nature to it that will cause hotspots or shiny spots on your face.

Tip 10 – Suntans

BE VERY CAREFUL – Do not overdue the tan, they will look fake. Also keep in mind that sunburns are impossible to fix. There is also nothing worse in a portrait than a tan line.

Tip 11 – Eye shadows, Eyeliners and Lips

Use neutral eye colors, such as grays and browns. Avoid pastel shades and highly frosted shadows. Use a fresh tube of mascara so you won't have clumps on your eyelashes; your eyelashes are going to show. No clumps looks fresh.

Chapped or cracked lips are going to show in your pictures. Moisturize and take care of your lips **BEFORE** your session.

If you use a tanning salon, do not go in the week leading up to your portrait session, and even better would be to not tan in the two weeks prior to your portrait session. This also includes the spray on tans. They will make your skin look blotchy – something else that is impossible to fix.

Regardless of whether you are striving for a classic look or an edgy one, you want your senior portrait session to be successful and so do I. These suggestions are important, because in the ultimate end, it will take both of us working together to make your senior portrait session a successful one.

