

# Pose Like A Pro

in no time flat

**the only senior portrait  
posing guide you'll ever need**

**[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)**

Dear Fellow Photographers,

## Ours Is The Greatest Profession On Earth

(not the “oldest”;-) but the greatest)

Could there possibly be a greater career than that of professional photographer? We get to meet wonderful people during the happy times of their lives. Whether it’s the culmination of 12 years of schooling, the birth of a child, a marriage ceremony or a long overdue family reunion portrait; people invite us into their lives to help them document and preserve forever, their most precious memories.

### I Bet I Can Guess How You Got Started

Chances are someone said, “Wow, you take really nice pictures, would you do some pictures of little Betsy?” You did and they loved them, you probably gave them a CD of all the images. Then Betsy’s Mom told Susie’s Mom about you and Susie’s Mom asked you to take pictures of Susie. And you did and they loved them and you gave them a CD of all the images.

You did that for awhile and more and more people found out about your interest in photography and eventually someone asked you to do their child’s senior portraits. And you did and they loved them and you probably gave them a CD of all the images.

Then you fell into (or soon will) the photographers tar pit—equipment. You thought how great it would be to have that new camera, or some extra flash units, or a reflector, or some studio lights and a background or two. You

developed your skills and your basement filled with equipment. One day it dawned on you that you should start charging people for these pictures they love so much and suddenly your life changed forever.

## **Yesterday I Couldn't Spell Photographer Today I Are One**

Now that you're charging people for their pictures—the same pictures you so generously did for nothing before—now all of sudden they get picky.

“I really don't like Julie's smile in this one and the way her head is tilted it's just . . . I don't know, I just don't like it.”

Or, “How come the background is all . . . like light or something? Everything's like all overexposed.”

Or, “Is that the only background you have? The other guy down the street, he has tons of different backgrounds, you should really get some more.”

And so it goes.

## **People Expect More From A Professional**

Becoming a professional photographer is not quite as easy as putting your name on a business card with “professional photographer” in glossy raised type below it.

There are so many things to learn in this business. So many skills to master. Posing and lighting and color harmony. Sales and marketing, where to

buy props and backgrounds or how to make your own to save money. If you are serious about this business and want to expand on your newfound career—you've come to the right place.

## **I Know How Hard It Is and I Am Here To Help**

My name is Dave Meir and my wife Kate and I own and operate **d. holmes meir studios** in Rochester, Minnesota. We've been at this since 1994 and we specialize in high school senior portraiture, babies, families and team sports. Check us out on the web at [www.dholmesmeir.com](http://www.dholmesmeir.com).

## **Enough Palaver—Let's Get Started**

This posing guide is so much more than a simple set of photos. I'm pretty proud of it actually and I spent hours and hours putting it together. (many more than I thought it would take)

I'll tell you something right now—something you'll not hear from many other “professional” photographers—I'm not perfect. (Whew! that was hard;-) Many of the images in this posing guide include random comments on the pose or the background or the lighting. As I analyzed each image and typed my comments I realized how many of them had glaring problems with the pose or lighting, or heaven forbid—both. So while I created this posing guide for you—it's helped me as well.

## **Is There Right Or Wrong When It Comes To Art?**

I'm old school. My "professional" training in photography comes from an organization called the PPA or Professional Photographers of America. There are "rules" in professional portraiture with respect to proper lighting, proper posing, proper color harmony. If you enter portraits into a PPA print competition you will quickly learn those rules.

## Aren't Rules Meant To Be Broken?

Yes grasshopper they are. For instance, paying attorneys exorbitant amounts of money is a rule that should more frequently be broken. Only drinking Margarita's when it's hot out—stupid rule. Paying income tax—who came up with that winner? And, getting all bent out of shape because how you posed someone's arm is not "according to the rules".

## The Only Rule You Need To Know

It's the one that says: if your clients love their images enough to part with their hard earned cash in exchange for the portrait you created—then you're golden!

A small caveat. ***The rules of portraiture are important***—knowing them will improve your photography ten-fold. If knowing those rules will improve your chances of gaining more satisfied clients—then grasshopper, they are worth knowing.

## What You'll Find Down The Rabbit Hole

This posing guide is divided into several exciting, creative, sure to amaze segments. There are 135 different images of high school girls and 100 different images of high school guys. Each section—girls and guys—is divided into sub-sections; i.e. girls standing poses in-studio, girls formal poses, girls activity poses, etc. . . Same for guys.

On most, but not all of the images I have made comments. Some comments are random gibberish while many others are meaningful and poignant. (are they one in the same?) You may find some of my comments offensive. Sorry. Get a life. (kinda like that comment;-) Hah! Please know I'm kidding.

### Lighting Diagrams

To start with you'll find several pages of my most frequently used lighting set-ups. I've tried to demonstrate in these diagrams where my lights are in relation to the subject and the background. I've also included photos of my camera room so you can better visualize the lighting.

Then, on each pose you will find a lighting set-up number making it easy for you to refer back to the diagrams to learn how I "lit" that image. Incredibly genius wouldn't you say? Am I a giver or what!?!?!?

### Background Suppliers

Also on each pose I have given you the name of the background. Fol-

lowing the lighting diagrams you will find a list of my backgrounds and the suppliers I get them from.

Many of the backgrounds you'll see were created by little 'ole genius me. Please know—I am in no way an artist with a paintbrush or hammer and nails. ANY and I mean ANY of the backgrounds you see you can easily create your own self. And if you need help—I'm as close as the nearest blog post or email.

## Final Words of Wisdom

Photography is fun and I had fun creating this posing guide. It's quite possible you may be a better, more accomplished, more decorated, more creative photographer than I am. If so then you have mistakenly downloaded this guide and should immediately delete it from your hard-drive.

On the other hand if like me, you feel you can learn something from everyone—even if it's the wrong way to do something—then I think you'll enjoy this posing guide.

Have fun, email or blog comment your questions and by all means don't hesitate to commend me on my obvious skill as a portrait artist;-)

I'm here to help you build a better business and develop your skills as a photographer. Let's get started.



P.S.—Please note that sarcasm is a way of life in my family. My brother and sisters and I are terribly difficult to get along with which is why I spend hours on end alone in my basement doing stuff like this;-)

## **Important Note**

**for**

## **Ease of Viewing This Guide**

The pages within the guide are intermixed—horizontal and vertical, or landscape and portrait if you prefer.

To rotate a vertical page to horizontal:

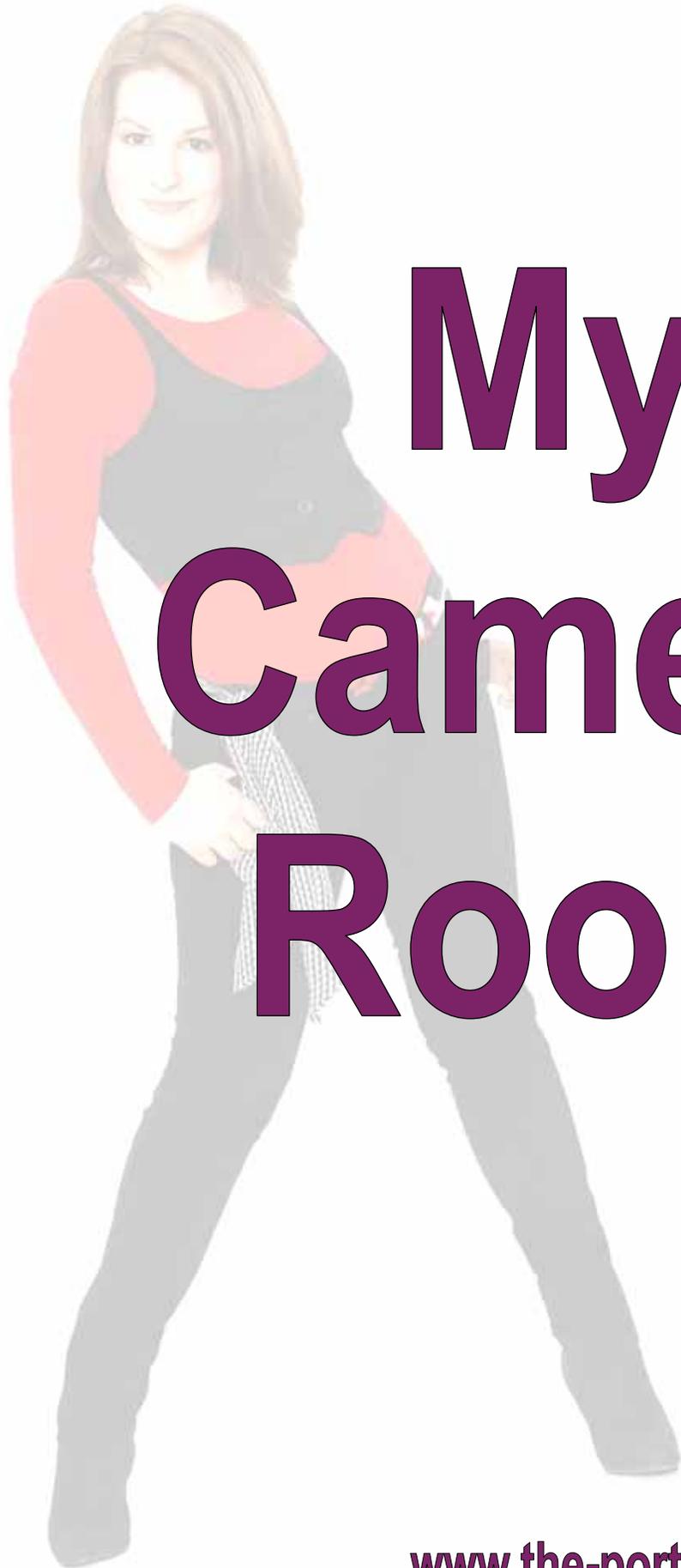
shift / ctrl / +

To rotate a horizontal page to vertical:

shift / ctrl / -

**Happy Shifting!!!**

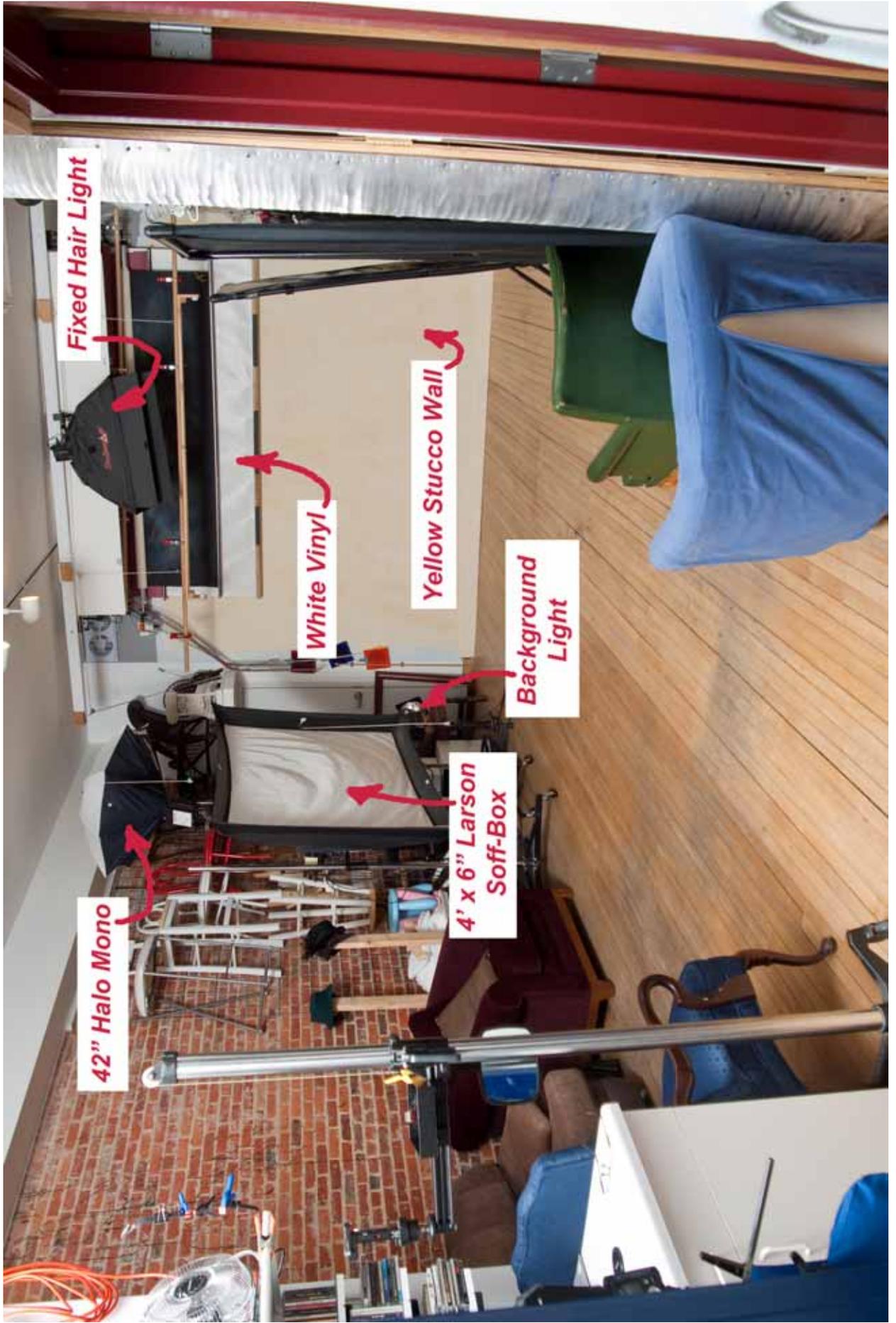
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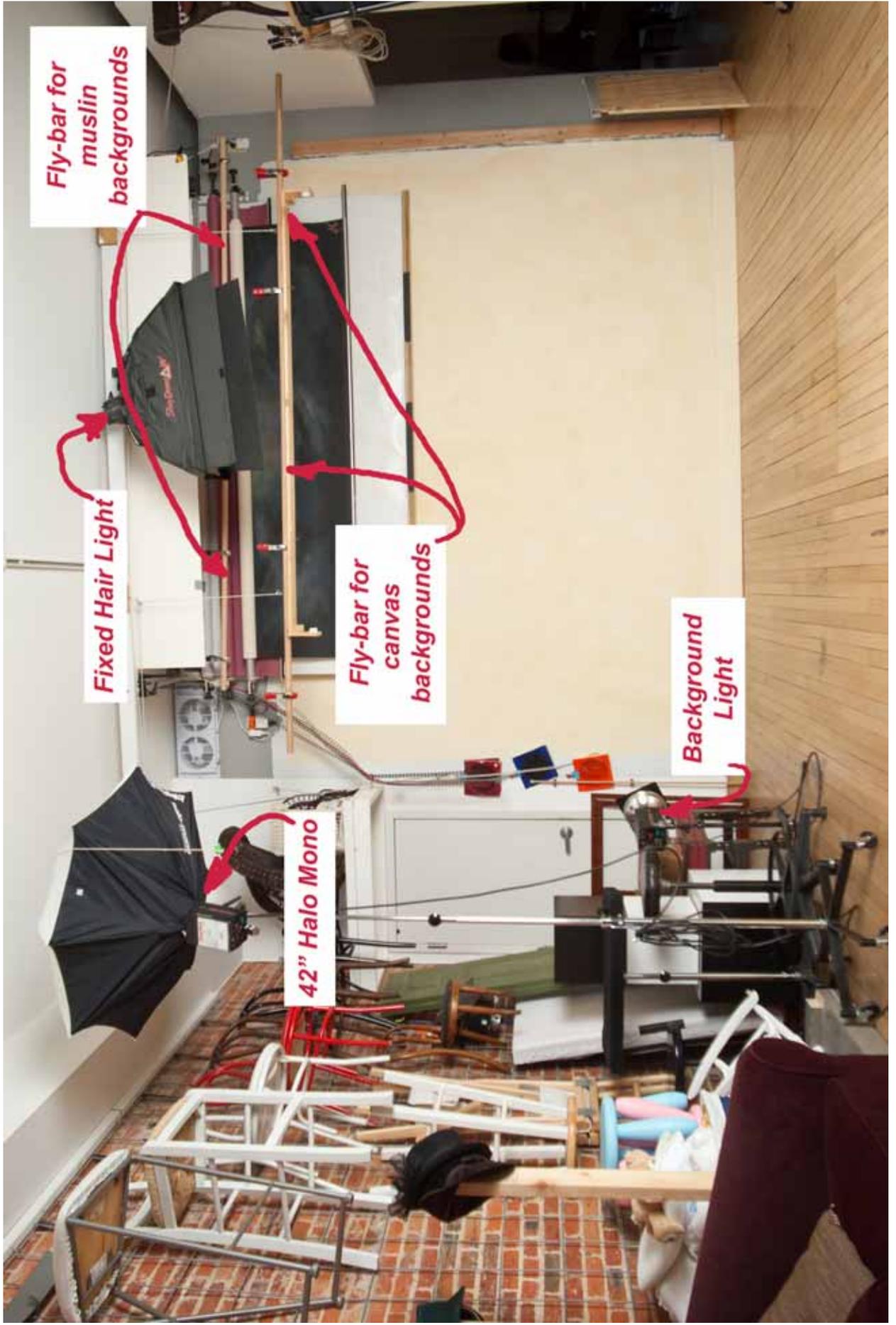
# **My Camera Room**

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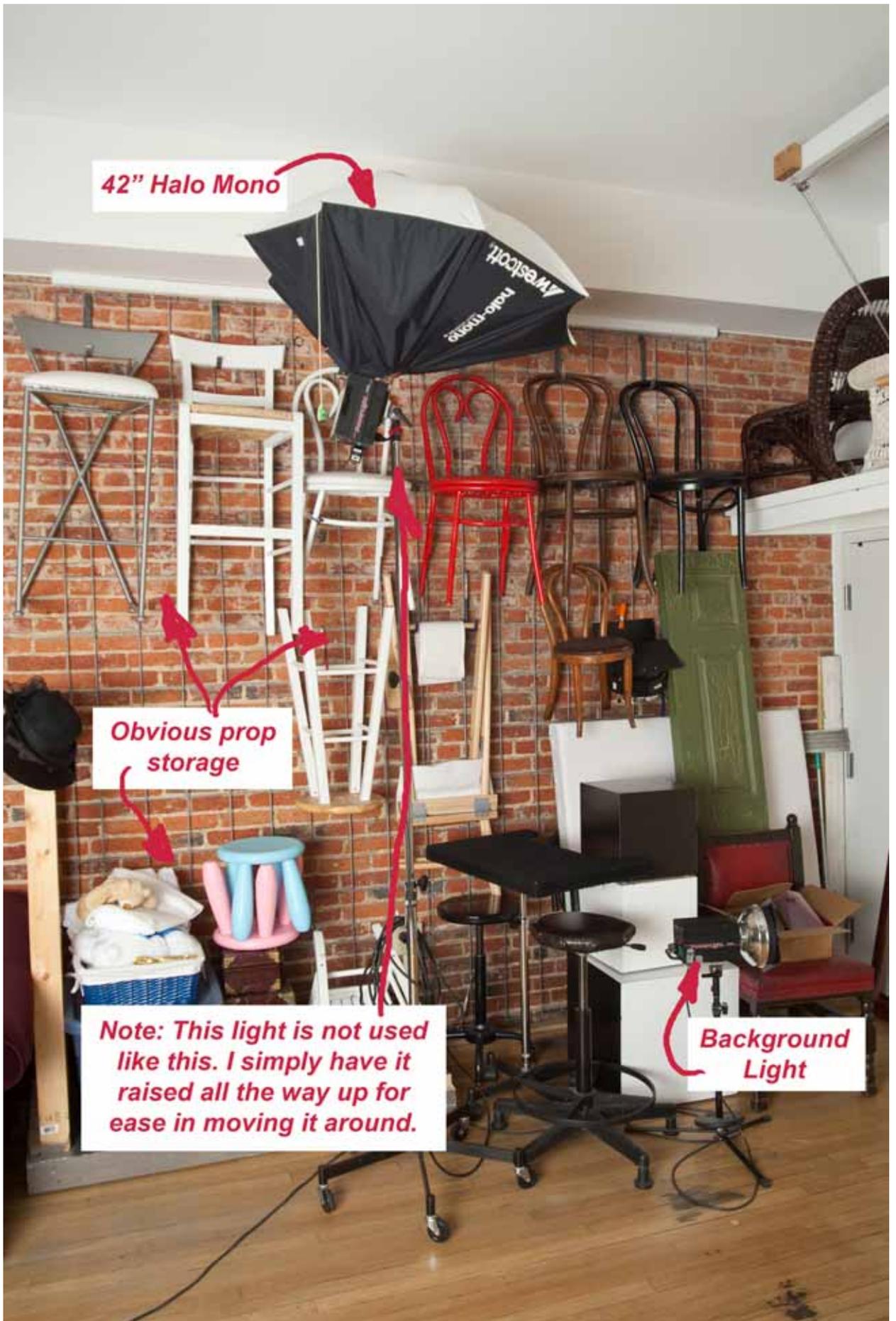
# the portrait expert posing guide



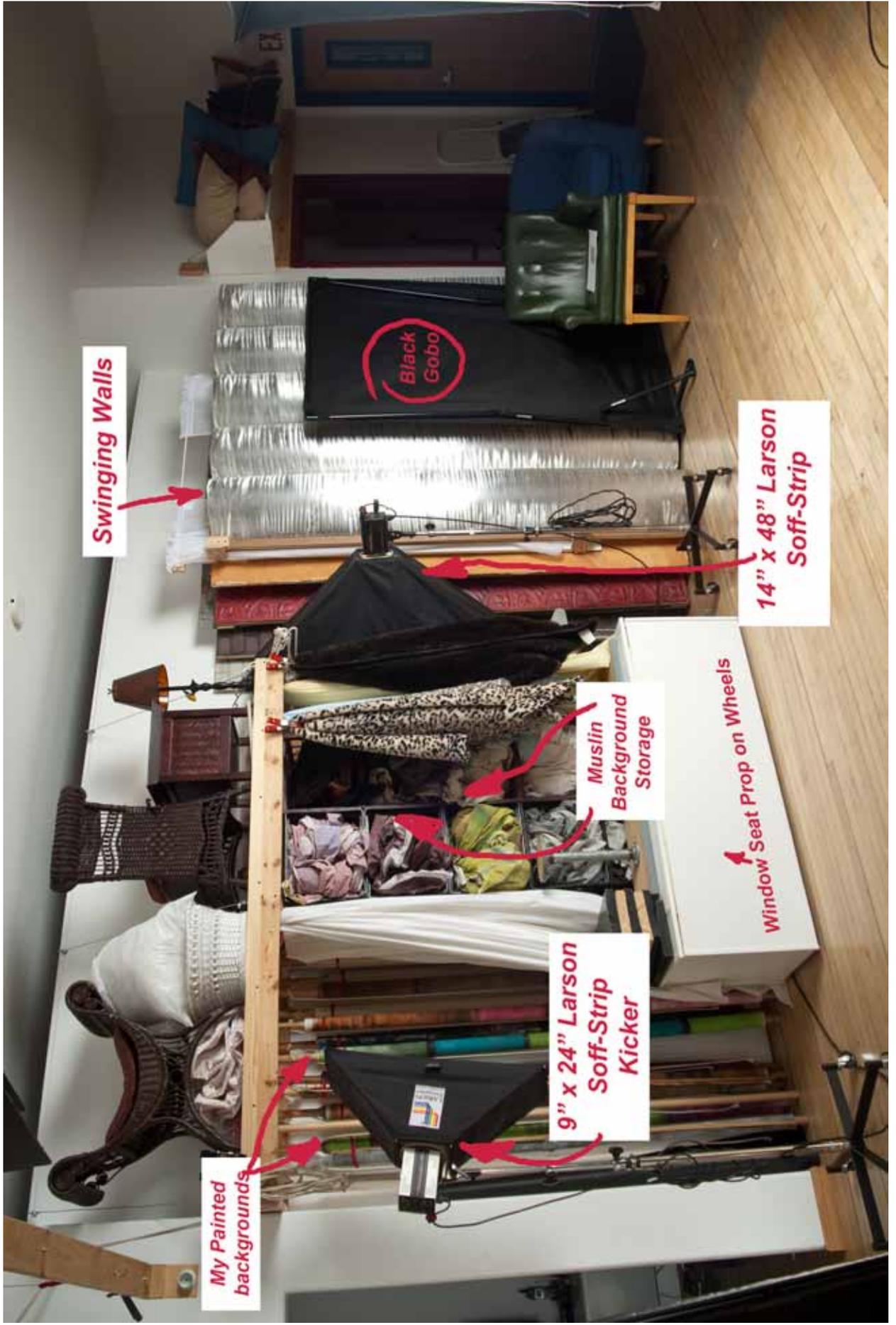
# the portrait expert posing guide



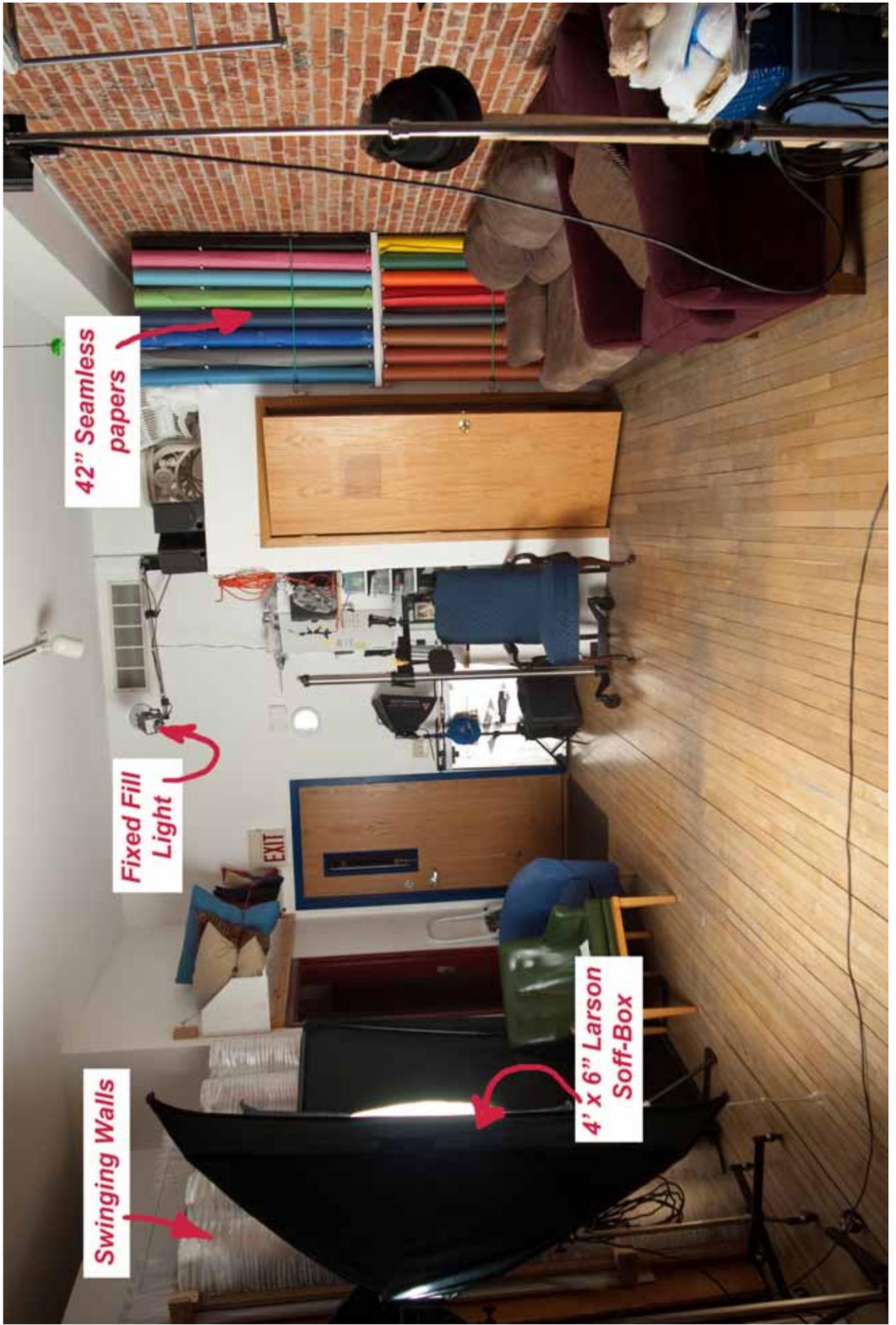
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# the portrait expert posing guide



# the portrait expert posing guide

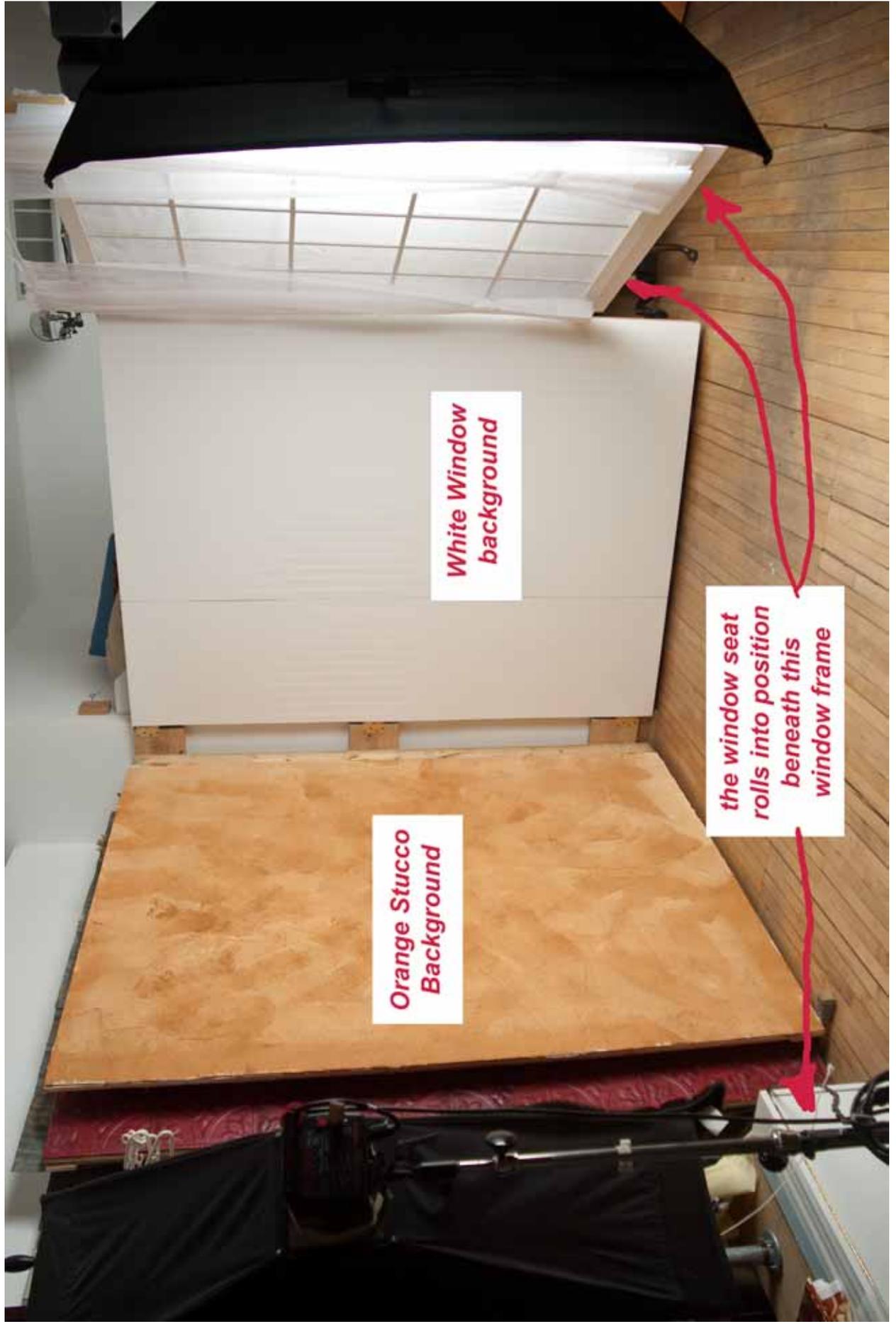


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*Metal Tubes  
background*

# the portrait expert posing guide



# the portrait expert posing guide



# the portrait expert posing guide



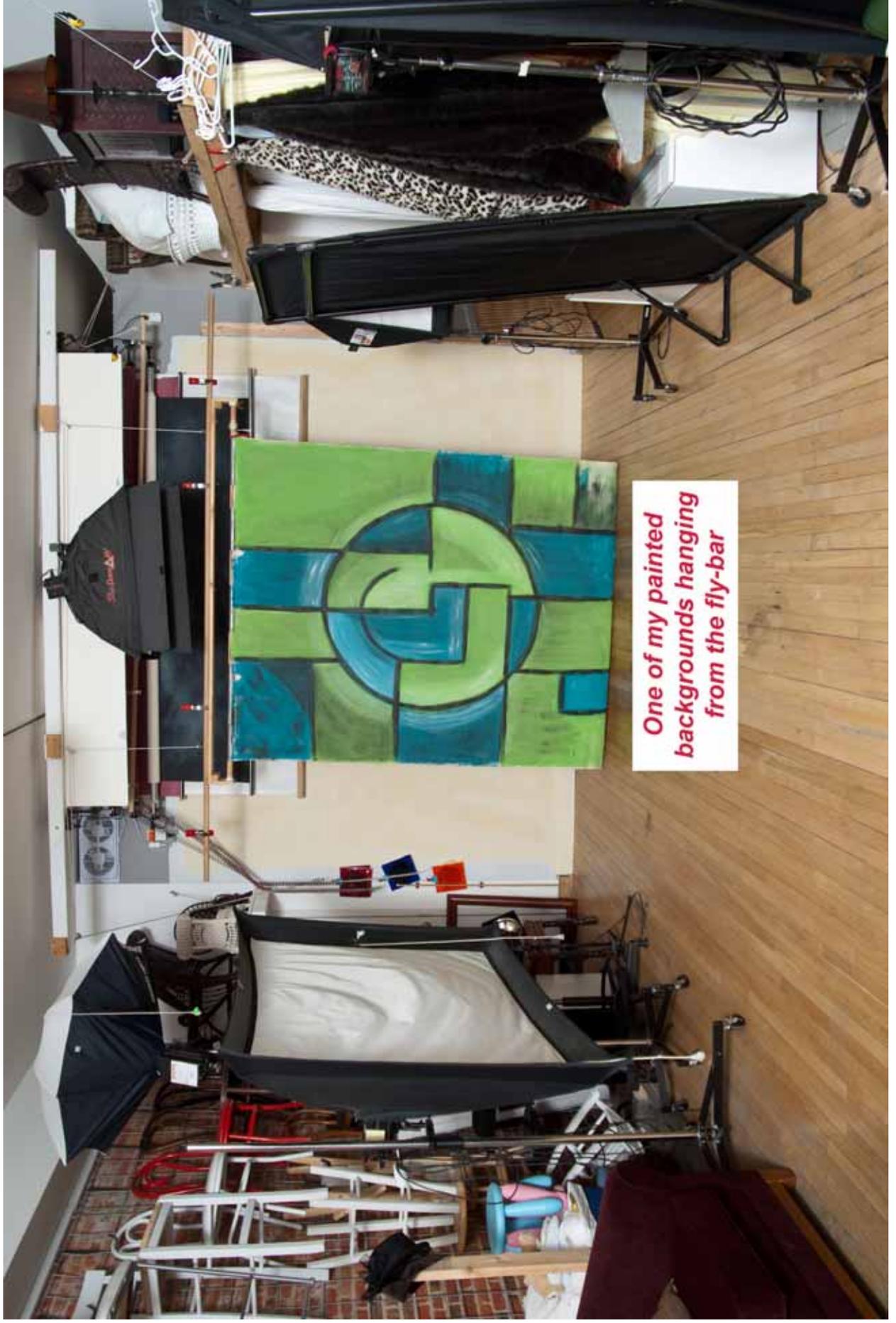
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# Lighting



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# F/8 - Light Ratios

How to change your light ratio while maintaining an f/8 exposure

## Meter Reading

Most light meters indicate exposure readings in whole stop aperture's with the remainder indicated in 1/10 stop increments. In the table below the whole stop aperture is listed followed by a decimal point indicating the remainder in tenth's.

## Example:

f/5.6.3 = f/5.6 & 3/10th's

## Where to point the dome of your light meter?

Photographers the world over will argue this point. Do it this way and ignore everyone else—you won't go wrong.

When you are metering each individual light, hold the meter at the subject position and point the dome on your meter directly towards the light.

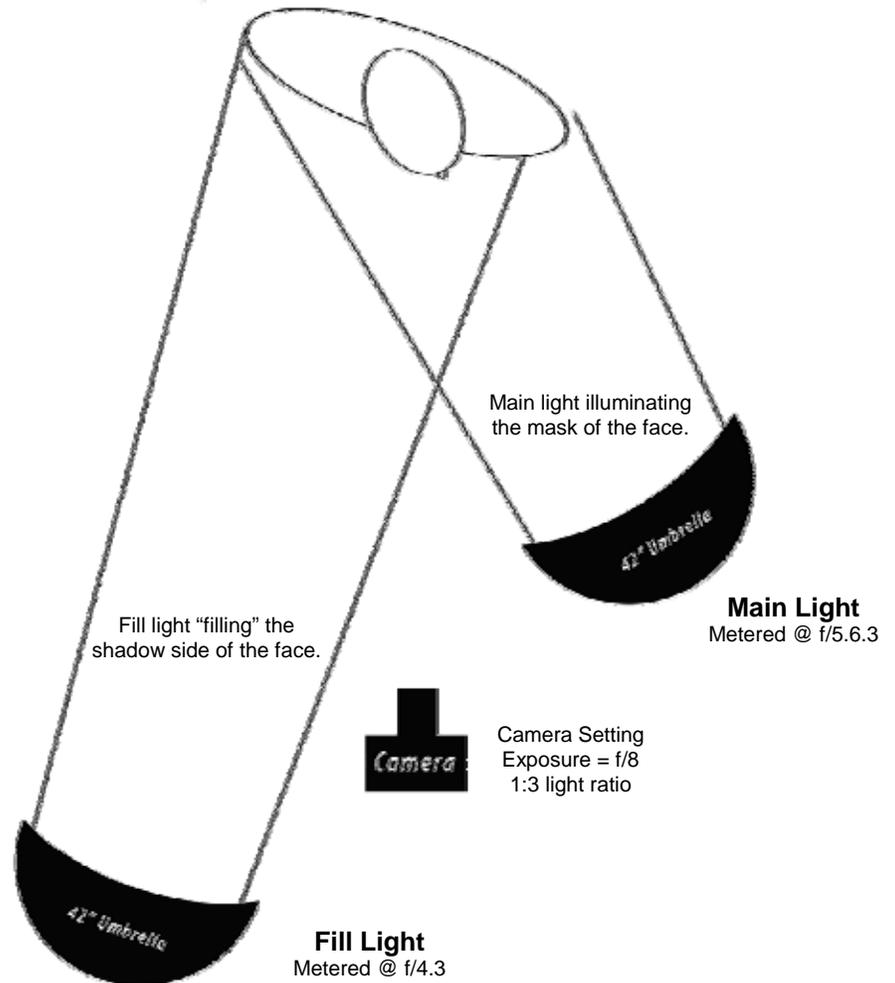
When each light is set correctly take your final meter reading with the meter at the subject's nose with the dome pointing directly towards the camera.

## String for accuracy

All of the lights in my studio (except my fixed fill) are "on a string". I've carefully metered each light and established an aperture setting at the most common distance from light to subject.

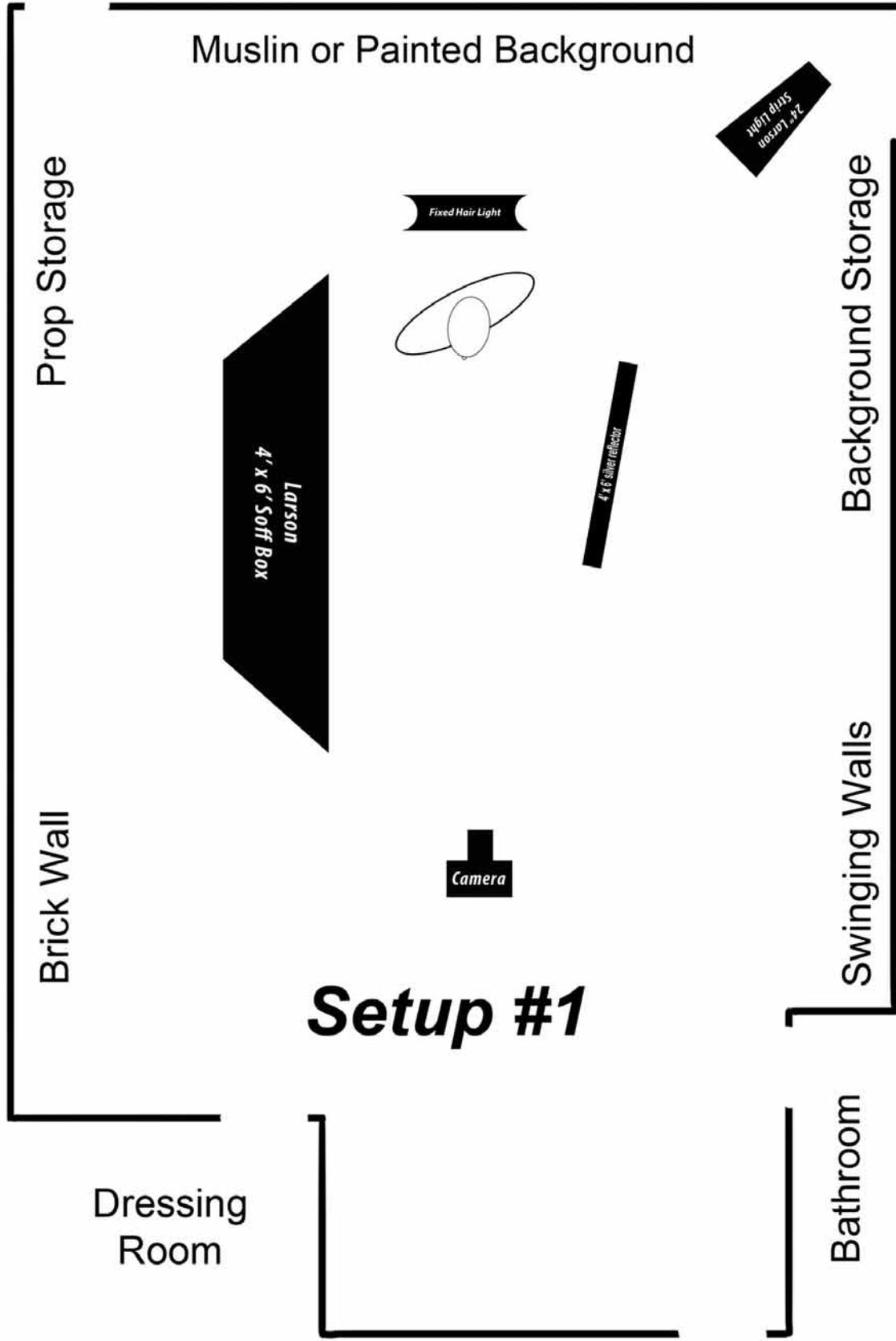
I then attach a string to the face of the light/soft box and attach a small weight at the proper subject to light distance. Now, whenever I hold the end of the string to the tip of my subject's nose I can be assured of an accurate exposure without having to take the time to meter.

(This and other techniques covered in detail in each of the Portrait Expert modules.)

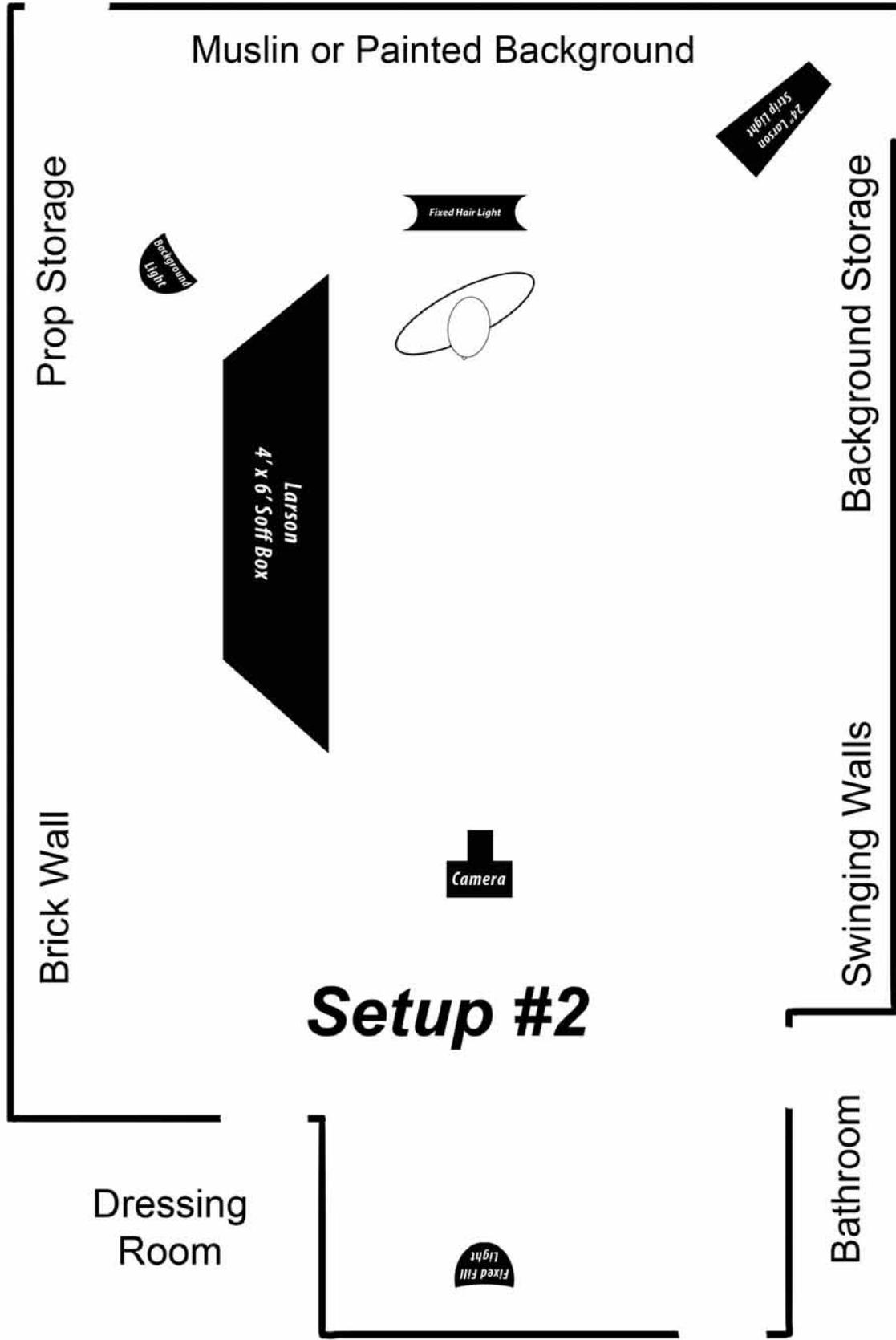


Ratio	Difference	Combined	Main	Fill
1:1	0	f/8	Off	f/8
1:2	1	f/8	f/5.6	f/5.6
1:3	1-2/3	f/8	f/5.6.3	f/4.3
1:4	2	f/8	f/5.6.5	f/4
1:5	2-1/3	f/8	f/5.6.6	f/2.8.8
1:6	2-2/3	f/8	f/5.6.7	f/2.8.3
1:8	3	f/8	f/5.6.8	f/2.8

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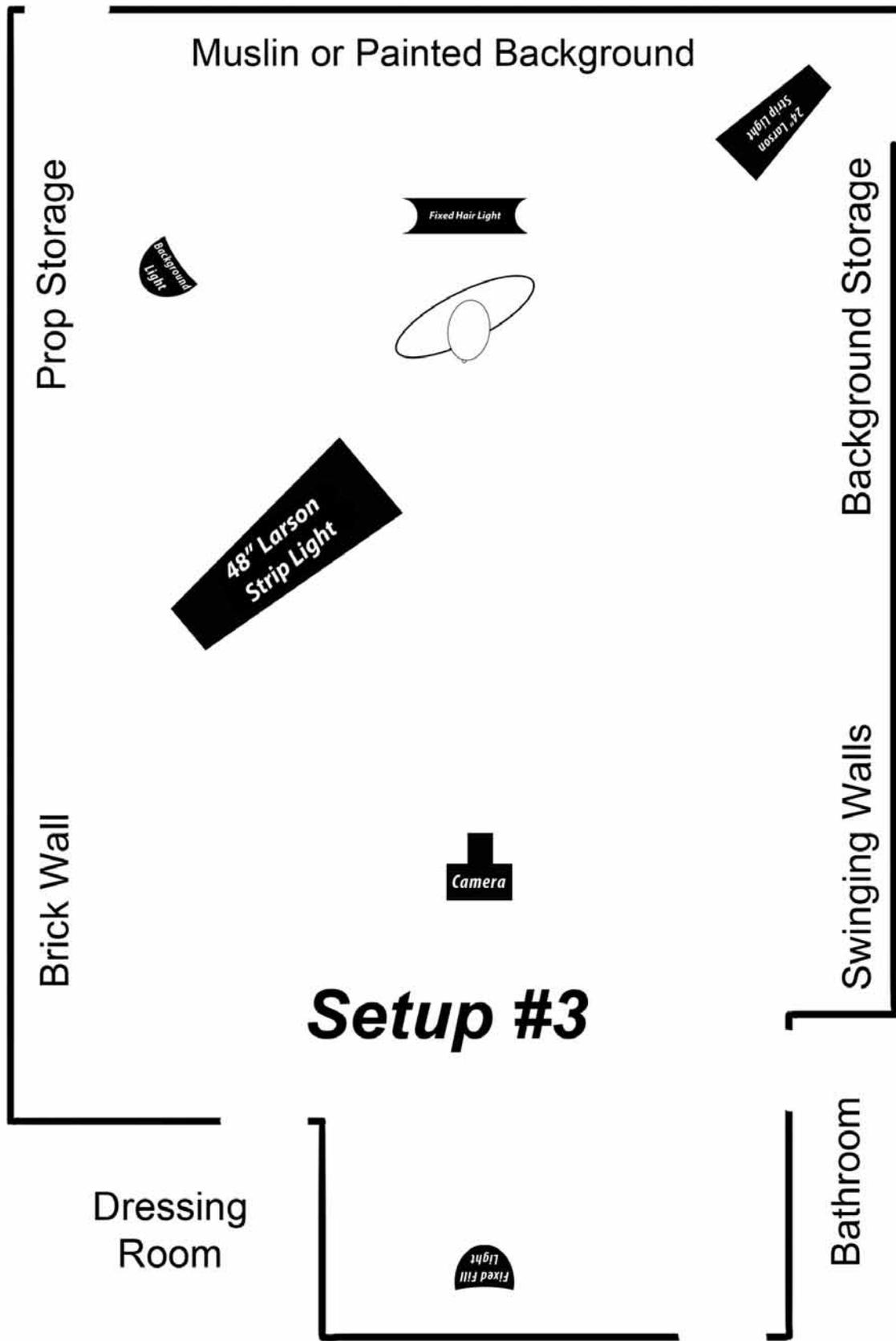


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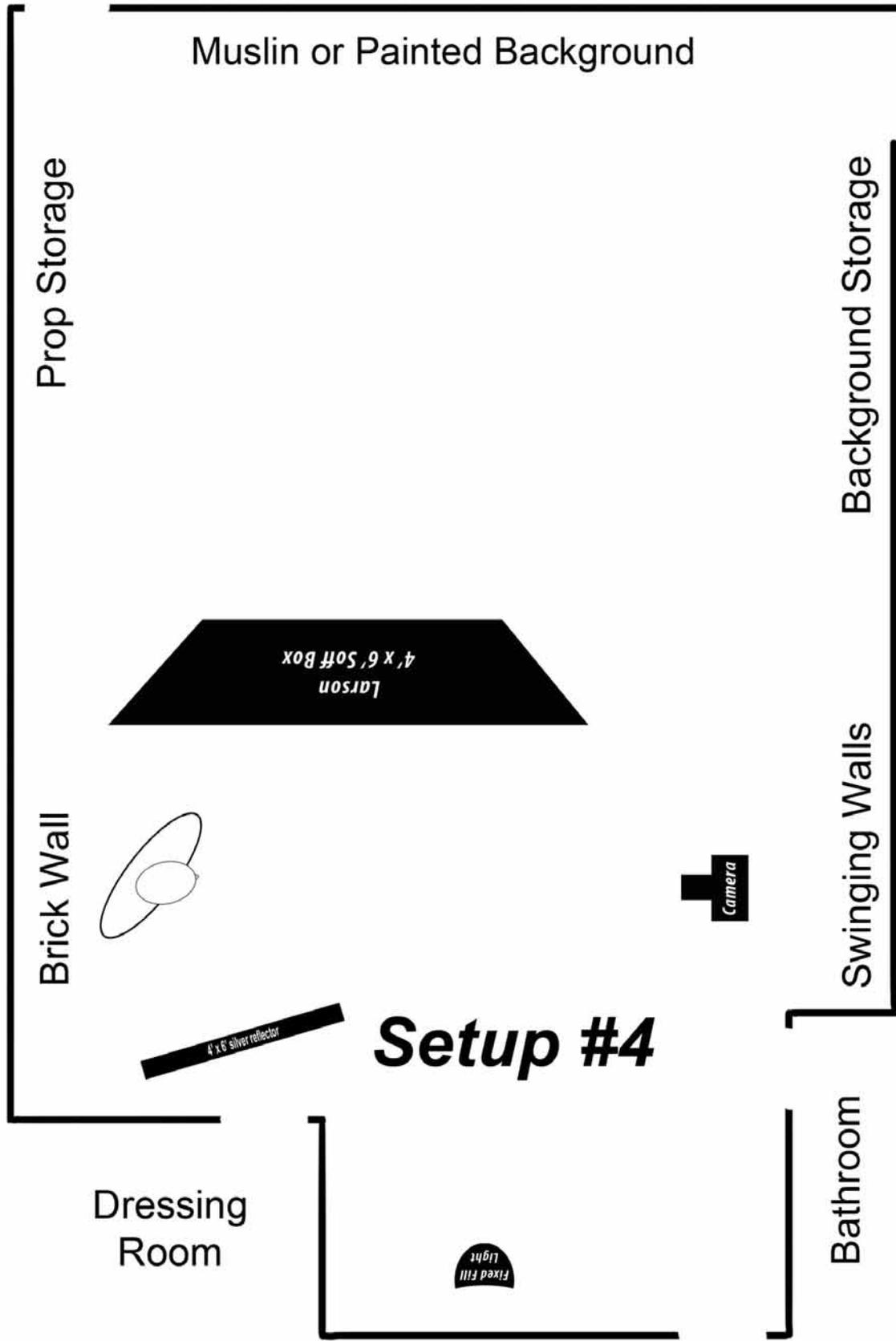
Office / Production

# the portrait expert posing guide

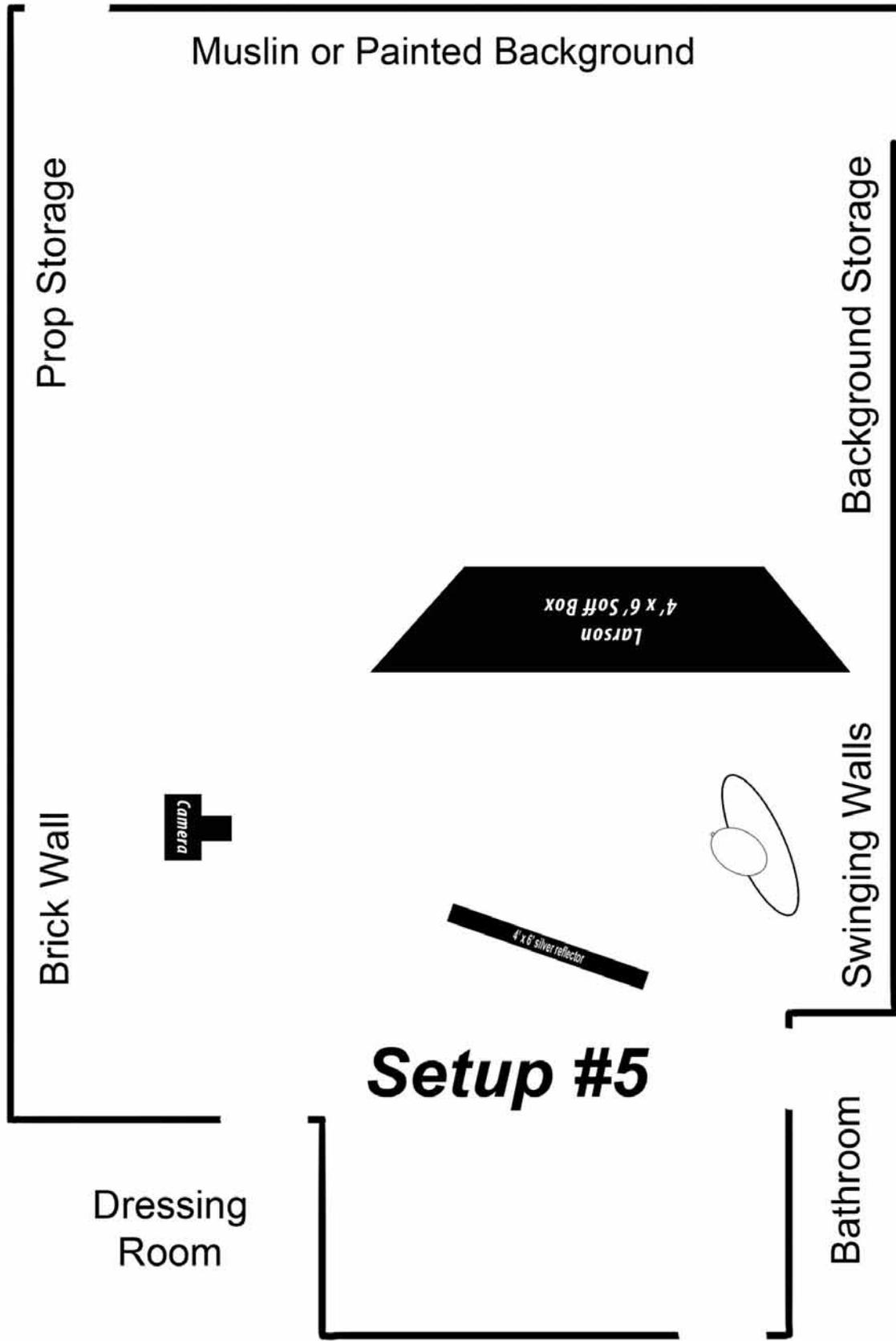


Office / Production

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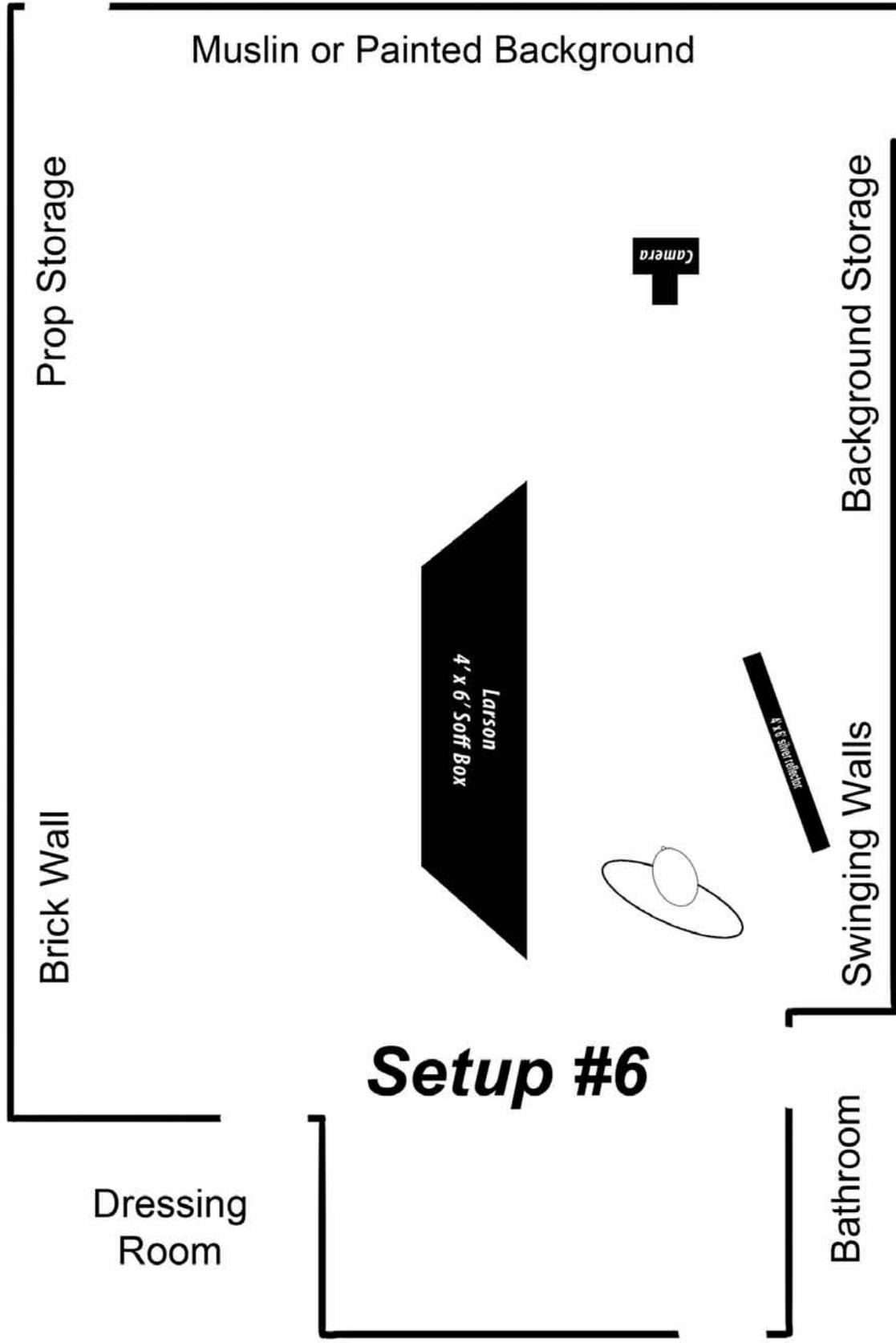


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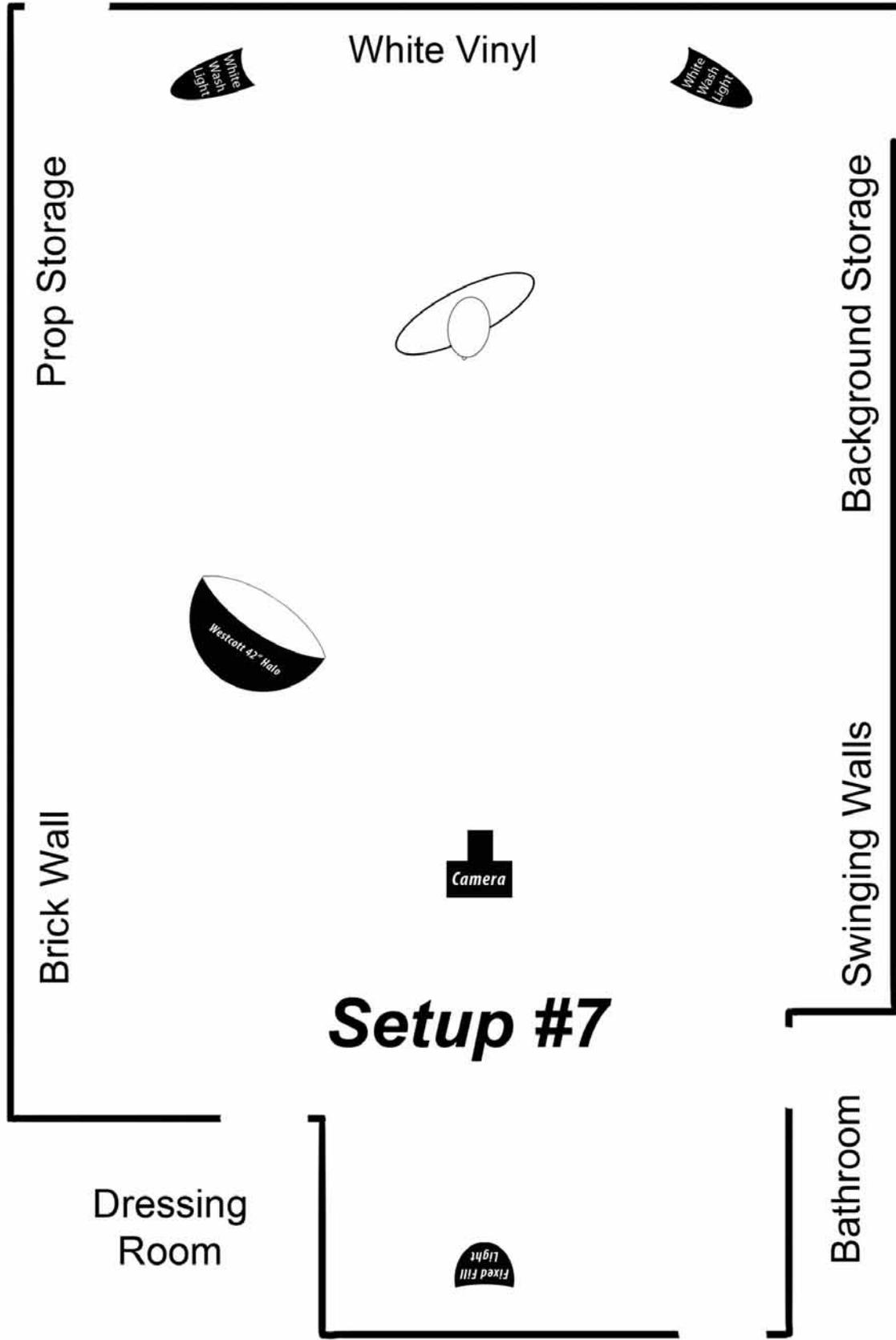


Office / Production

# the portrait expert posing guide



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Office / Production

## My Background Suppliers

<http://www.backgroundsbymaheu.com>

New England Autumn  
Monet's Garden  
Pastel Leaves (not pictured)

<http://www.studiodynamics.com>

Ecru muslin

<http://www.photoshowcasebackgrounds.com>

Goldfire

<http://www.shootinggallerybackgrounds.com>

Lime in the Coconut  
Christine  
Parisian Chablis

If you would like to learn how I paint my backgrounds and how I build my "swinging wall" sets visit my blog at;

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

email me at:

[dave@the-portrait-expert.com](mailto:dave@the-portrait-expert.com)

# Girls

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# **Activities**

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**Comments:**

This girl was big-time into drum line and while I created other images that included her drums we wanted something with a little more edge.

I've done this drumsticks-behind-the-head pose before and it just depends on the kid as to where their arms end up.

Yes the light is a little bright on her left forearm and hand but that's a result of the pose. I like her head tilt, the hair over one eye and the "sly" smile - like she knows something you don't.

Standard retouching plus a Kubota filter to bring out the texture in the brick.

**Background:** Brick wall in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 4



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

The youngest of three - two older brothers - everyone into sports.

I told her to put on her "game-face" which wasn't exactly natural for her but works better than a smile with this pose.

I do this pose a lot and use it to create some funky 10" x 20" posters we call "Hot-shots". Fancy border around the edge and then a tag-line at the bottom like, "You Want Some of This?"

Standard retouching, converted to B&W using the Kubota hi-contrast action.

We got the lockers from the Salvation Army, took them all apart and then just screwed the locker doors to the wall.



**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

You've seen this pose before - here with a volleyball player instead of a B-baller. Same thing - did the pose for a "Hotshot" poster.

However, instead of the locker set we used the Parisian Chablis background - one of my all time favorites. No background light so it (the background) goes darker.

Standard retouching and then used the saturation tool on the background to help the colors pop.



**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Trumpet player. I did this pose the first time several years ago - with a clarinet player - she thought I was nuts; they bought a wall portrait of the pose!!

It's different and it draws attention to the instrument and the senior. Does the brightness on the trumpet compete with the girl - yes. Do I care - NO; they bought a wall portrait too.

Look carefully at the catch lights in her eyes. Notice that by brightening them as I did it really makes her eyes come alive. Also accented the highlight on her lower lip.

**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

This girl was on dance-line and wanted something different than what we do for our normal team sports photography.

While this pose is considered risqué by some people, a photographer friend of mine has a good rule of thumb; "Sexy pose, sexy outfit, sexy expression - have NO more than two of the three in any picture." The pretty smile and the obvious sports outfit make this pose acceptable.

Standard retouching. I also rotated the image when I cropped it providing a better composition and giving the image more "movement".

**Background:** Hardwood floor in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 2



**Comments:**

As you will see I use the all white background frequently for activity images - especially sports.

Pretty standard volleyball pose. I always have them bend the knee towards the camera and cross their foot over their other calf.

Quite frankly, doing this pushes their butt up and their tummy down which gives them more feminine curves. If I'm unsure I will always look over my shoulder at Mom for her approval.

Again, cute smile and sports theme make this acceptable.

**Background:** White vinyl on rollers

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



5 x 7 aspect ratio



*DAVIDSON*

**Comments:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah I know - this is the same pose again. I'm showing you this again for two reasons.

A - you will get sick of a pose long before your clients will. You see it every-day, they don't.

B - I added in her sweatshirt so you could see her name on the back giving the image a little more personalization.

Standard retouching but also a color pop action from Kubota. I can only tell you that it's Kubota Artistic Tools Volume 4 - the only one I have.

[http://www.kubotaimagetools.com/tutorial\\_videos/artistic\\_tools\\_v4.html](http://www.kubotaimagetools.com/tutorial_videos/artistic_tools_v4.html)

**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

## Comments:

Here's that white star I mentioned on the intro video and as I said it is still popular with dance line girls and some athletes.

If you struggle with hi-key images visit our blog at The Portrait Expert web site, you'll find a helpful article on lighting the all white background.

Standard retouching as well as retouching the nicks and cracks on the star.

I try to always tell kids to not hyper-extend their elbow - as she obviously has. If they just place their hand (her left one) as it is, and don't put weight on it - it will reduce the size of their shoulder.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

My white vinyl background from Denny Manufacturing: <http://www.dennymfg.com> is only nine feet wide so occasionally I shoot off the edges.

The angle gives this image an edge as does the "don't mess with me" pose. Wearing her snowboard pants with mittens on the belt loop but barefoot and a tank-top (wife-beater in high school vernacular) make it sporty but casual.

As you may have already noticed, I always sample a color from the image for my name/logo action.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Same girl, same sport, same background - I'm a genius of originality!

You have the lights set so try to do a few different variations - here with the rest of her equipment.

You can't win if you don't enter and you can't sell it if you don't shoot it.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio

## Comments:

Obviously she plays guitar. A pose that draws attention to her with the guitar and sheet music as supporting props.

Notice the cropping on the final image - it was for their folio. By coming in and cropping off the edges of the sheet music and the neck of the guitar is draws more attention to her and makes the image feel like it goes on forever - so to speak.

Do I wish the piece of music behind her right shoulder wasn't there? Yes. (should have re-touched it outta there)

**Background:** New England Autumn

**Lighting Setup:** # 2

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

She's also into sports - as pictured earlier. We always encourage seniors to bring their "stuff" and if they're into sports they usually do.

I like this pose because it's closer-up than some of the other equipment poses we do and you can actually read what's on the shirts.

The "posing people" are simple to make and are great for displaying shirts and jackets. Notice I have made a conscious effort to turn the letter-jacket sleeves so all of the arm patches are visible. Important!

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

## Comments:

We get a lot of requests for piano pictures - many people thinking we would certainly have one (a piano) on hand?!?!?!

If they don't have one in their home we ask about their church. If all else fails we have a music store not too far away that will, on occasion, let us use their recital room.

Is this the most creative piano pose? No. You should however notice the removal of the light switch and the cords on the floor. Little things make a big difference.

**Background:** Senior's own living room

**Lighting Setup:** Natural window light accented by off camera flash



RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

She reads - a lot. Again with encouraging them to bring their "stuff".

I bought this leather couch several years at a clearance furniture place. I screwed wheels to the bottom so I can move it around easily. (did I forget to tell you I was a genius?)

Standard retouching and a lot of vignetting to bring the accent to her face.

Background: Brick wall in studio

Lighting Setup: # 4

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

You saw this girl earlier with the drumsticks behind her head against the brick wall.

Simple is the key here - just her, the sticks and her quad. Actually I now see there are five drum heads so I'm not sure what you call that? A Fuad?

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Again simple is the key with all her "stuff". I show you this to illustrate symmetry in the pose. I could have put both of the posing people on the floor but that would have been visually unappealing. Always try to get differences in height. In sports photos I also shoot for symmetrical. Just a personal thing.

Background: White vinyl in studio  
Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Okay, here are both "posing people" (the gray things that hold the jacket and jersey) on the same level - but this is for a close-up image.

Notice on the final cropping that, if possible, I try not to cut off any names on jerseys.

You have to be careful on this pose for gaping shirts. If you are a woman you can probably say something "woman like" to have her fix it. Typically what I do is look her in the eye and tug at my own shirt collar and then look away while she fixes it. Guys remember what your Mother taught you about being a gentleman.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Here's a good one with ALL her stuff. Again notice the symmetry.

The white thing that's holding all of the jerseys is made from four inch PVC mounted together with a couple of one by four frames. I have slots at various heights to hold the hangers. If you'd like I can pose pictures of the "tube poser" on the blog - just let me know. Big tip - get hangers with heads that swivel.

Background: White vinyl in studio  
Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Another one in the locker room.

I used a narrow soft-box raised high and very minimal fill with a silver reflector.

This is not a profile (obviously) but a couple things you should note; her right eye and her nose.

On an image like this her head should be turned far enough towards the camera so that the corner of her right eye does not break the edge of her face (as this very nearly does). Also you do not want the tip of the nose to break the edge of the face or she'll look like Cyrano de Bergerac - which is not good.

**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I don't use a wide-angle lens very often but sometimes it provides a cool effect.

This was taken with a Nikon D200 and an 18mm lens. The D200 has a 1.5 (I believe) multiplication factor - because of it's APS size sensor - so the 18mm lens is actually a 27mm +/-.

I always have a step stool handy for this sort of thing. May have been standing on my toes as well.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



DP

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Same girl, different guitar.

Used a big 4' x 6' soft-box at the far rear corner of the background pointing towards the girl - and the camera. You can see the gobo on the left side of the RAW image that's blocking the light from hitting the camera lens.

Used a Kubota filter to bring out the background texture and the saturation tool on full bore to pop the color.

Background: Goldfire

Lighting Setup: # 1

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

## Comments:

Last one in the locker set.

Have had people think this was a mistake; "you cut her leg off" - usually a Dad that's an engineer!;-)

Look how much more intense the tighter cropped final image is - like she's ready to bust out of the frame! Would have liked that one index finger to be not quite so straight but hey - she really liked the picture and that's what counts.

Converted to B&W and added a Kubota filter to pop the texture.

**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5



**the portrait expert posing guide**

# All White

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



AKG

## Comments:

This is a great prom dress pose. She's barefoot under there with her legs curled up beneath her.

Notice that she's rolled up onto her left hip just a bit and I have her twisting at the tummy turning her shoulders slightly away from the main light and her face back towards the light.

This pose would have been better had her right arm/hand been farther to her right. This would have opened up the area at the small of her back allowing more of her feminine curve to show.

Background: **White vinyl in studio**

Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

First of two standing poses.

With girls I almost always have them place more weight on one foot. Then I jab myself in the small of the back and tell them to lean at that spot.

Considering the length of this skirt I also had her hold the hem with her fingertips. Notice again the body turned away from the light and the face turned back towards the light.

Cropping above the knees improves this image as well.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Cute pose that I can't take credit for - she just did this. However, good reason for keeping your finger on the shutter and always being prepared - like a good boy scout should.

I've since posed other kids this way and typically I will just stand where I am and cross my legs (kinda like this) and say, "do this". Simple.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

A dance line girl. Some times you gotta wonder when the school lets them put the team name on their butts!?!? On the other hand it's not the first time I've been asked to do a pose like this.

I know this girl and her Mom very well and everyone was good with it - all in fun. My opinion however, if you don't know the girl and Mom's not there - na-gonna-do-it!! (George H.W. Bush)

Background: **White vinyl in studio**

Lighting Setup: **# 7**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

So 15 years later I was gettin' a little tired of the plain white background. I built this set for the 2010 seniors and it was very popular.

If you're interested in how I did it and how I build my other "swinging wall" sets send me an e-mail or look me up on the blog.

The "french window" is 4' x 6' - which miracle of miracles - is the same size as my soff-box. The window seat is a box I built on wheels with a lid to access storage inside. The wall to her right is white bead board paneling.

**Background:** White window swinging wall set

**Lighting Setup:** # 6

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Here's that 18mm lens again. Great for making legs look long.

The image in color is too much - too many competing colors. She liked the shoes and they were funky so why not draw attention to them.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Another angle on that prom dress pose.

Notice the slight tilt of the camera, the twisting at the waist and shoulders and the arching of the back. I told her to just rest her right hand on the dress - see the softness in her hand.

That is a PINK dress.

Background: **White vinyl in studio**

Lighting Setup: # 7

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

I love to photograph bright colored outfits on an all white background - really makes it pop.

On this pose I tell them to just rest one "cheek" on the edge of the seat and put their front foot on the chair peg/cross member.

Her elbow is just shy of being hyper-extended and I used the liquefy tool in Photoshop to smooth off her shoulder.

An all white chair would be better so there were no competing colors.

Background: **White vinyl in studio**

Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Another cute pose I can't take credit for.

I often times tell kids to sit on the white floor like they would sit on the floor at home - watching TV. I always shoot at least one image of them just as they are - then I tweak it a little bit. If you tell them to sit like they would and you tweak it right away they might feel stupid - like they can't even sit right.

When I tweak the pose I'll say something like, "Maybe raise your left knee up once - yeah like that, that's cool. Snap." ("Wow" they think, "I wish my Dad- Grandpa were cool like you.";-)

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

First of three poses of the same siblings - older brother and twin sisters.

It's simple, it's not rocket science. Notice the girls, weight on their back foot allowing them to lean into brother. Again, I jab myself in the small of the back and tell them to lean at that spot.

I know these kids well - older brother was a Senior Rep for us. Either way you can't be afraid to act stupid and make a fool of yourself. Give them all you got - leave it all on the field with every session and you'll get smiles like these.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Is this pose kinda lame? Probably. But I'm not taking just one, I'm going with the flow - probably took ten or 15 of the three of them on the all white, tried lots of stuff.

However, all of the images in this guide are poses the client ordered from so while this may seem a bit cheesy they saw something in the faces they liked. And that's what counts.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



DMG

## Comments:

Last one. Symmetry combined with varying head heights and poses.

A good rule of thumb in group posing - each person should be posed such that they would look good in that pose all by their lonesome.

*(First time I noticed that the girl's toenail polish matches their shirts! Of course we always do a pre-portrait clothing consultation but man - that's above and beyond!)*

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

**Comments:**

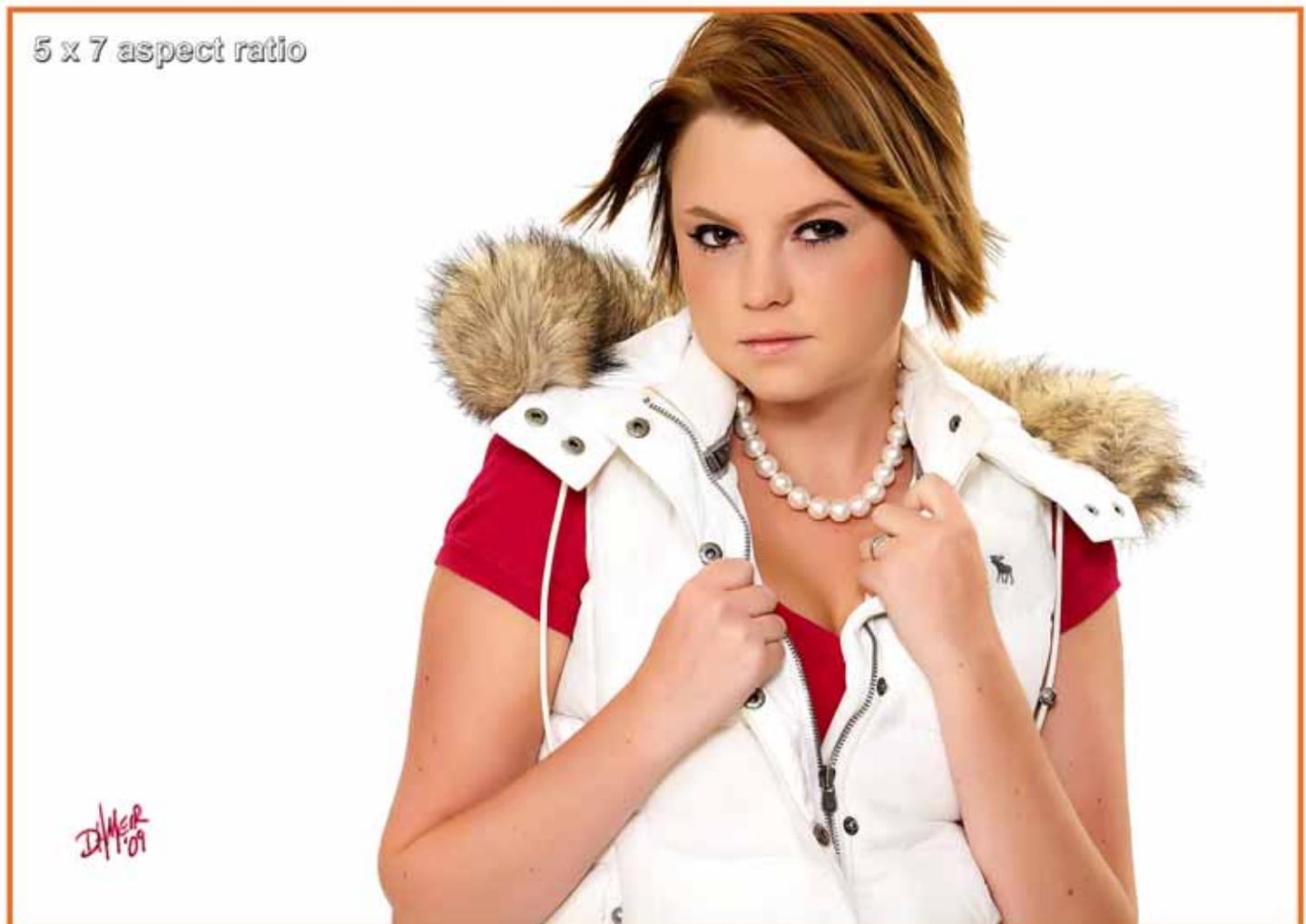
For years I only did full length images on the all white background. Not sure why.

The color adds pop to this image but imagine it with a white long-sleeve turtle-neck instead of the pink t-shirt!?!?!? Your eyes would go right to hers.

Hair movement provided by a small tilt-able fan I got at Walmart. I place it on a stool just out of camera and point it up at them - lifts the hair out of their eyes.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



**Comments:**

Cool hat, cool jacket, cool pose - and it works well with girls or guys.

Ideally I wish my main light had been lower - to get under the bill of the hat. On the other hand the shadow over her eyes is not that strong and I do think it lends something to the image. If she were smiling - no.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



5 x 7 aspect ratio

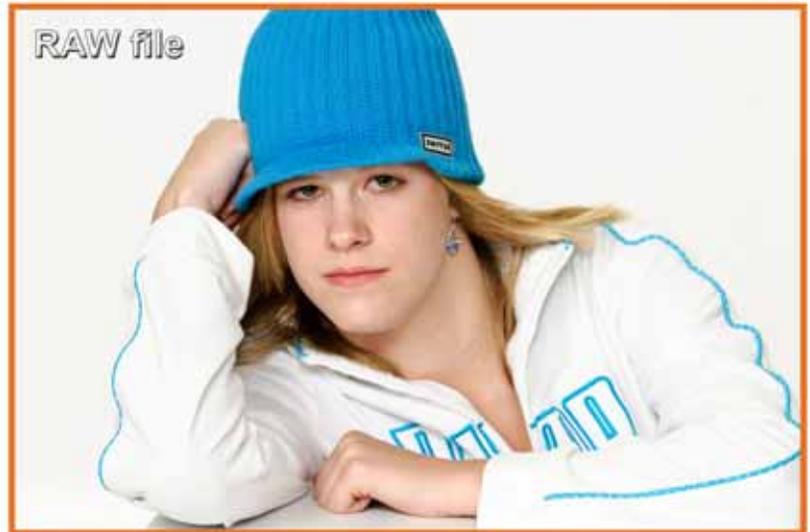


DH 1/10/01

**Comments:**

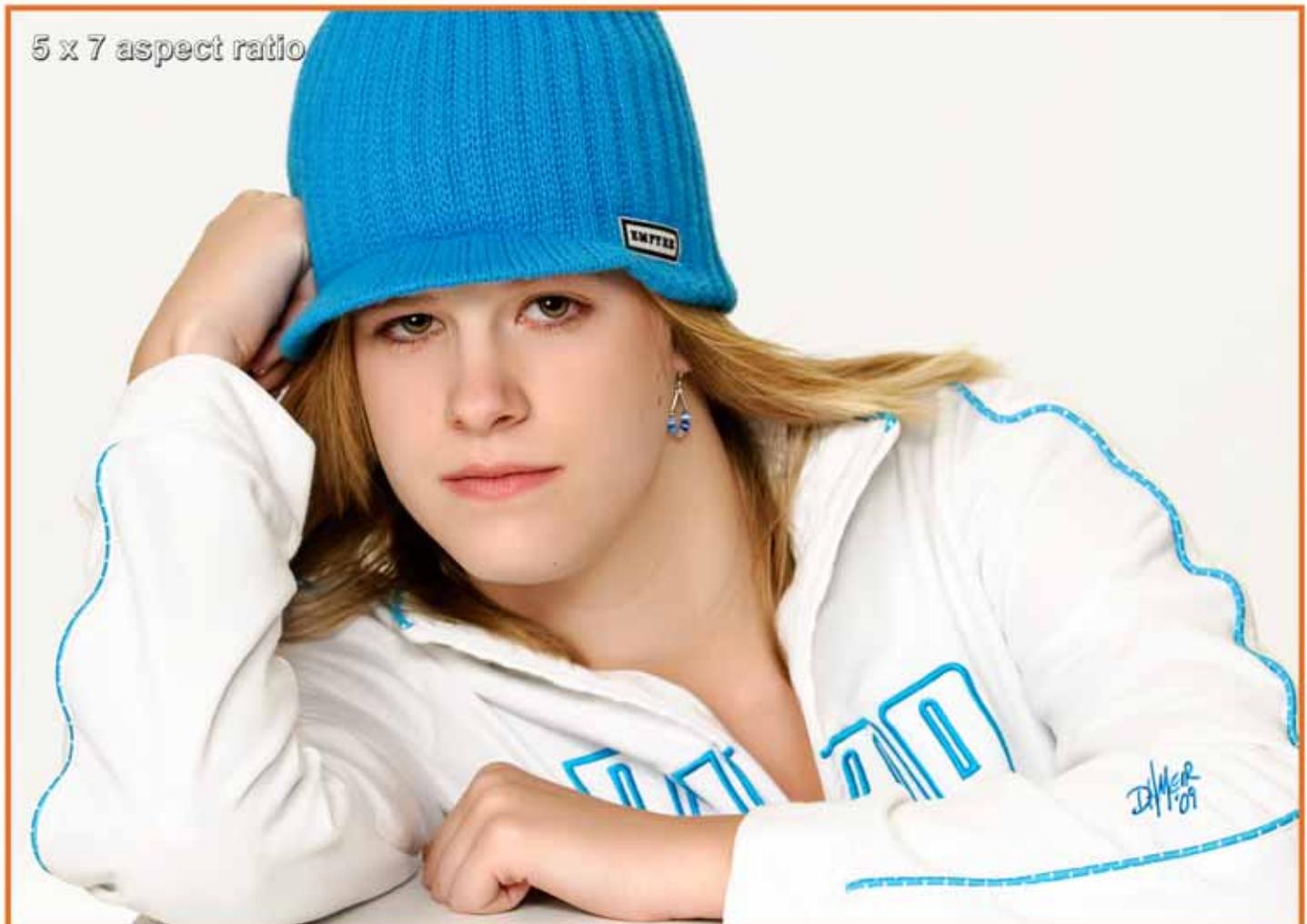
Same cool hat. Popped a cube under her elbow and did a close-up.

The blue hat is cool but again, if it were white with just some blue piping like the jacket. Powerful.



**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



**Comments:**

Does this pose say high school girl or what?!?!?

I used to do this pose a lot - sans the cell phone - but I've given it up. I still get requests for it but do it reluctantly.

With the phone I think it's great - so high school kid. Without the phone it can look somewhat suggestive. (*you'll see a couple more later and understand what I mean*)

Again, sexy pose, sexy outfit, sexy expression - two out of three is okay, but never all three in the same image.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



**Comments:**

Another case of saying, "sit like you would sit."

Her right arm is a little hard but I think it goes with the tank top and the serious expression.

They chose four different poses from this series on the all white. You've got them down on the floor make sure you do a variety of small changes to the pose.



**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

8 x 10 aspect ratio



**Comments:**

See what I mean about the white on white?!?!? Cool.

Try not to have them straight across perpendicular to the camera - (*except in an image like the girl with the blue stocking cap.*) A slight angle is more interesting.

Knees together, feet flat on the floor. A little more back arch would have been good to accentuate the small of her back.



**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



**Comments:**

A lot of fingers? Maybe. Having her hands softly folded might have been better - but you wouldn't have seen her manicure - and that's important too.

You'll notice her eyes in the final image are pretty dang near identical to her sweater color. I don't do this very often (*had her eyes been brown I certainly wouldn't have made them blue.*) but since her eyes were blue I just helped nature along a little bit.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



**Comments:**

Here's the pose I mentioned earlier. They don't seem any more wholesome than this girl and again I knew Mom well - photographed both older brothers.

She had purchased this outfit in France - I think - on a summer class trip. The outfit is pretty tight and obviously designed to show off the curves and the pose helps as well.

Maybe I'm getting stodgy at 51. Maybe it's because I have a granddaughter now and never had any girls of my own. Just know your subject and seek Mom's approval first.

**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7



5 x 7 aspect ratio



*DAVID P. 01*

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Close-ups**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

**Comments:**

Look at that hair!! Nothing better than adding a kicker light to accent curly hair.

To get them into this pose I have them cross their hands backwards down in front of them and then pull them up and invert them under their chin. Easier to do than explain. Again she's leaning at the waist.

I do a lot of eye work on close up images. Saturate the iris, darken the edge of the iris, the pupils and the eyelashes and whiten the whites - JUST a little.

Let me know if you want to learn how to paint backgrounds like this. Pretty easy and cheap.

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Used the fan again on this one. Used to use a small leaf blower - seriously - but it was a might too powerful.

A lot of eye work as well as accenting the high-light on the lower lip and adding some lip liner.

This is another thing to watch out for - tops like this. Do a close-up image of a girl in a strapless top and she'll look like she ain't wearin' nothin' at all. This one is borderline.

**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



**Comments:**

Pretty good job on the hands here - her right wrist is maybe bent a little too much. The key is I don't think the hands detract or draw attention away from the face.

That little kicker light on her left cheek adds a lot. Big Daddy Don Garlits called it his "garlic" light - you only need a little bit.

The imperfect out of place strand of hair is essential as well - adds to the casual soft expression.



**Background:** Christine

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

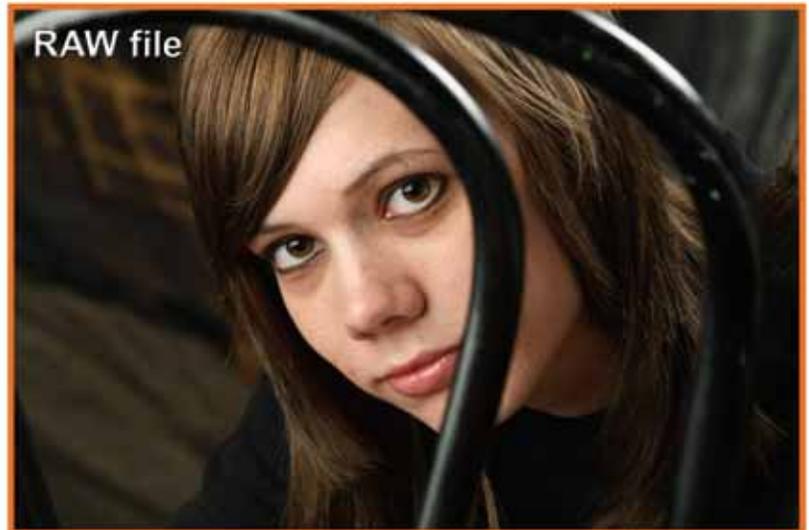
Have I done this pose before? No. Have I done it since then? No. Did they like it? Yes; ordered a wall portrait, wallets and several other prints.

This is the girl with the colored tennis shoes from earlier. She was very quiet and kinda shy. I'd had her sitting on this chair and just decided to try this. It's almost like she's hiding, peeking out from her inner-self.

Whoa!!! Way too philosophical!! But do watch your subject and get to know them, try to bring out the real them.

**Background: Goldfire**

**Lighting Setup: # 1**



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

A couple of years ago I really got into trying to have backgrounds with colors for every outfit. You can go broke buying backgrounds so I started painting them myself. A little red wine, a little Jim Morrison, some paint. Bing bada bing.

Often times I'll lower the background bar so the background lays on the floor and I have the senior sit on it - as in this case.

I used the saturation tool to make the colors of the background pop to match the shirt. Cropped to put her eye at the intersection of the upper left third of the image. The "rule of thirds" is powerful

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

A little fan action to move the hair. The subject far enough from the background to let it go out of focus - the compression of the telephoto lens helped that as well.

Again with the rule of thirds on her right eye. Eye retouching and lip enhancement make it pop.



**Background:** Custom painted by Dave

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Hands are the hardest thing to pose and look natural. A good rule of thumb is to have the side of the hand towards the camera to make it look smaller.

Whenever I do a pose like this, their head on their hand, I always tell them to just rest their chin "lightly" on their hand so as not to squish the meat of their face.

**Background:** Brick wall in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 4



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

She's wearing a halter style top and I asked her to hold on to the loop of material that is around her neck.

Her skin tone is obviously "warm" in the RAW file and I warmed it up quite abit more in the final image.

Again, she's leaning at that spot in the small of her back.



**Background:** Rusty corrugated metal

**Lighting Setup:** # 6



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Remember Lime In The Coconut - Harry Nilsson - Nilsson Schmilsson album. A friend of my had it in "quadrasonic". The drum solo would melt your mind!!!

Anyway, the good old fan again. This pose the girl is standing, leaning with her hands on a stool, pushing her shoulders up.

You gotta do the kicker light behind her and to camera right.

Background: Lime In The Coconut

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Here's a good illustration of proper hand placement. Side of the hand to the camera, chin resting lightly so as not to squish her face.

Seamless paper - 42" wide - are great backgrounds. Cheap enough so you can have a bunch of different colors. The gels were initially a little expensive but I've been using the same ones for over 15 years.

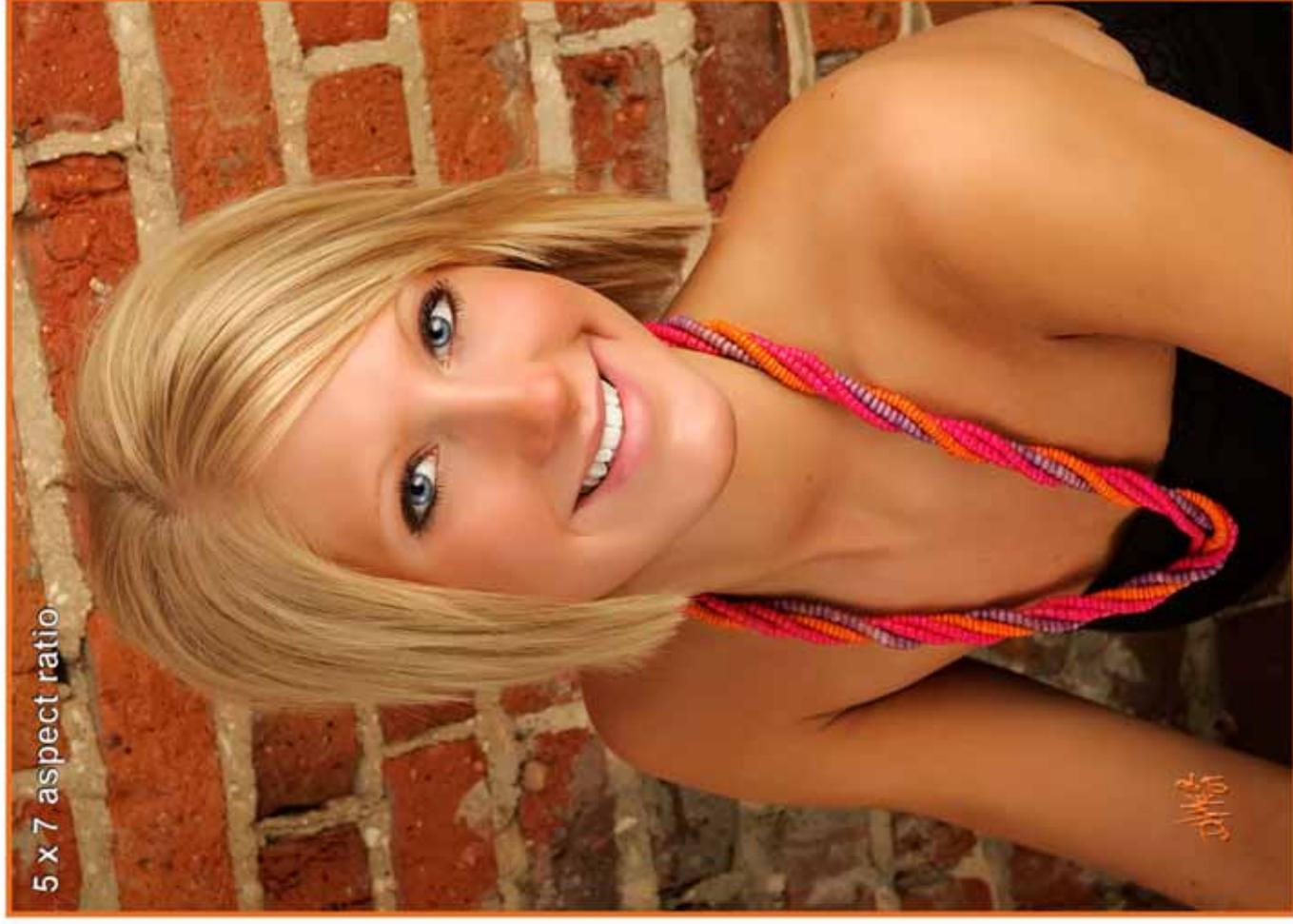
**Background:** Ginger colored seamless with pink gel  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Sitting on the floor looking up. Obviously this girl doesn't "need" this pose - put a high camera angle will do wonders for an over-weight subject. Lifting their head tightens the skin on their neck.

Used classic head and shoulder cropping guidelines on this - 1/3 - 2/3's. Her eyes are 1/3 of the height from the top leaving 2/3's for her body.

Body turned away from the light, face turned back towards the light.

Background: Brick wall in studio

Lighting Setup: # 4

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

For some reason I just like the way the ginger colored seamless takes the gels. I use ginger (small g) 90% of the time.

Eye work and lip work typical of a close up image. Obviously this would have been better had her hand been turned more sideways to the camera. (You know I'm getting just a little bit tired of you harping at me about that!!!)

**Background:** Ginger colored seamless with purple gel  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Formals**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

This is my favorite all time background - an 8' x 10' canvas painted by Joe Procia of The Backgrounders. I looked but can't find him on the internet anymore. Sorry.

Her right arm is resting on a posing table. Her body is turned away from the light, her face to the light. Kicker light illuminating her hair.

She is wearing a black drape that we do not use very much anymore - used to be all the rage for senior girls formals.

**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson

**Lighting Setup:** # 2

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Again this girl is wearing the black drape. She is sitting with her legs crossed - right over left at the knee. Her hands are clasped around her upper knee and she is leaning at "that spot" in the small of her back.

I like this pose but sometimes the cropping is kinda funky because of the blank space to her right. You can see that I've added extra vignetting to this area to darken it.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson  
Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

99.9% of the time my formal portraits have the main light to camera left - and not just because I'm lazy. *(Well I am but that's not the reason. I was born with a lazy right eye, glasses helped but it was too late - it spread to the rest of my body)*

We read from left to right and our eyes are used to doing that. It is easier for your eyes to view an image posed facing to the left - it leads your eye into the face of the subject.

This girl liked her other side - so just throw all that left/right stuff out the window.

8 x 10 aspect ratio



**Background:** Brown/blue formal of unknown origin

**Lighting Setup:** # 2

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

A pretty girl and dress that needed more than a head and shoulders formal.

She has her weight on her back/left foot and her right toe is turned to the right causing her right knee to bend slightly which also causes her to suck-in the small of her back.

Body away from the light, face to the light, shoulders pulled back.

I like her right hand on the chair - soft. Her left hand is a little hard - should have had her wrist on the back of the chair.

Background: **Blue Lord Nelson**

Lighting Setup: **# 2**

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

This is as traditional as it gets for a formal senior pose. Body and face both towards the light is more of a masculine arrangement but it can be used for girls as well - obviously.

Her right arm is on a posing table and her left hand is in her lap.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Sitting In-Studio**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

There's that cool red hair again!

Sitting in a chair I pulled out of a dumpster in our alley. (*An attorney threw it away - doesn't that just figure!?*) She has one foot up on a block and is putting weight on her left elbow.

Body away - face towards. I used the dodge tool in Photoshop to lighten the left edge of her sweater to give it more separation from the back-ground.

Background: Parisian Chablis

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

My favorite dumpster chair again. Nothing better than a free prop. (*unless you count the ones my sister stole from Pizza Hut - shhhh*)

Sitting side saddle in the chair, arm over the back so the upper part of the back of the chair is in her armpit. Sometimes I'll have them sit on a couple of pieces of wood to achieve the right height.

Background: Brick wall in studio

Lighting Setup: # 4

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Sitting backwards in the "Edith Ann" chair. (*You know - Lily Tomlin - Laugh-In*) It's a really big over-stuffed purple velvet chair - right outta my double-wide mobile home.

I just have them curl up in the chair and turn towards the back - the chair's at an angle facing the main light.

Background: Ginger seamless with burgundy gel  
Lighting Setup: # 1 with background light

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Same basic pose as the previous image. Here I liked the simple soft beige color and chair to compliment her skin tone.

Basic retouching plus removing tan lines and the bruise from her left upper arm.

Background: Ecru Muslin

Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

This is one of those fashion poses kids like. Hit on it by chance earlier in the season and used it a couple more times - this being one of them.

This background is one of my swinging walls which you can learn more about on the blog. The wall is covered with two by two metal ceiling tiles that I painted. It was beige a couple of years ago.

I picked up the chair this last summer from a theatre group that was going out of business and selling off their props.

**Background:** Swinging wall with red tiles

**Lighting Setup:** # 5

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

For the longest time I had maybe two or three different poses I did with this chair - a Turkish Bench from Wicker by Design - and this wasn't one of them. Sometimes you have to remember to slow down and break out of your mold.

With legs I always have them raise one knee higher than the other to give more visual interest - her left knee could have been a little bit lower here.

Would I have preferred the white edge of her t-shirt not show? Yes. But that's how kids like it.

**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

A word of caution before you attempt this pose - not very many people can get into it.

Is her calf muscle distracting? Probably. Is her right shoulder a little big? Maybe. Is her left hand placement perfect? No.

Those are the kinds of things that judges in big professional photography organizations will ding you on. Did this person care? Not in the least.

You should know the rules of good posing but never let them inhibit your work or your relationship with the client.

**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I show you this same pose again to illustrate a point about clothing and posing.

Her right shoulder is better - for two reasons - dark long sleeve shirt and her hand is further down and more relaxed so her bicep isn't pumped up.

The long pants eliminate the distraction of the bare legs in the other image. Left hand placement still sucks.

"Technically" a better image than the last but hey - they both ordered from them.

**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Kids like the hardwood floor as the background; it's natural and could be found just about anywhere.

Twisted at the waist to turn her upper body away from the main light - face back towards the light. Hands are "soft".

Background: Hardwood floor in studio

Lighting Setup: # 2

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Don't get much more basic than this pose. Do notice however, the difference in the height of the knees.

Haven't talked much about color harmony but I like the chair and background being the same color. Draws more attention to her and less to the background and prop.

Background: Ecru muslin

Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Pretty easy to go from the last pose to this pose to give more variety.

Money saving tip: This chair is from IKEA. The beige version in the last image is as we bought it - this is just a blue slip cover that goes over the beige. We also have a brick orange color and a red/pink/green/white plaid patterned cover. Chair was \$129 I think - covers were maybe \$50.

Background: **Monet's Garden**

Lighting Setup: # 2

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

- I like this background better when I give it a little more light. (same background as last image)
- I think this works because of the serious expression; serious expression - serious light.
- I do this pose with guys - knees apart leaning harder on their elbows. Knees together a little more feminine.
- I should have told her to relax her hands more or pull the left one back so you don't see those fingers.

Background: **Monet's Garden**

Lighting Setup: **# 1**

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Here's the original version of the fashion pose I mentioned earlier. I was getting her into a different position and as she was adjusting herself her friend said, "Stop - do that right there, it's cool." So we did and it is.

Added a Kubota filter to pump up the texture in the brick.

Background: Brick wall in studio

Lighting Setup: # 4

**Comments:**

Sitting backwards on a black cafe chair. I tell them to slide their butt back as far as they can and then lean their chest against the back of the chair. (yes I do say *butt and chest*)

I like how the gentle slope of her back leads your eye into the image and her face which is placed at the upper right intersection of thirds.

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1



**Comments:**

Again the blue muslin background without any extra light. However, I used the saturation tool on the background which lightens as well as bumps the color.

Casual pose that makes any girls legs look longer - always a plus.

Head could have been turned slightly more to the light.

**Background: Monet's Garden**

**Lighting Setup: # 1**



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

The same pose with a couple of differences.

Notice her right elbow compared to the girl in the last image. This one, maybe her arm/elbow is a little "pointy" but I like how it compliments the slightly bent right leg and pointed toe.

Also note that here her face is turned slightly more to the light giving a better light pattern on her left cheek.

Color harmony to the extreme.



**Background:** Ginger seamless with purple gel

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

First of five images I want to show you using the brown leather couch. Kids and parents love this couch because it could be in their home - it looks real, not proppy.

Never "stack" their legs. I always have them place the top leg/foot in front of the bottom leg - and never the other way around. Makes their legs look slimmer.

Right hand is good, left hand a little too posed. I filled in her dress on her right side near her armpit to cover a little too much exposure of skin.



**Background:** New England Autumn

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Good hands on this one.

Right is natural and the long sleeve eliminates the distraction there would have been with a bare arm. Left arm is soft and not posed. (*although it was*)

I tell them to turn towards their tummy a little and pull their left knee up.

**Background:** New England Autumn

**Lighting Setup:** # 2



5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

From the last pose to this one. "Turn almost all the way on your tummy and cross your arms on the arm of the couch."  
*(also removed the pillow)*

I will do a close up head and shoulders of this pose as well; smiling and not for more variety.



**Background:** New England Autumn  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1 and background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

From the last pose to this pose by just having them sit up and tuck that leg under.

Quick - what's wrong with this pose? If you said her body is turned to the light and her face away from the light you're the winner. (sorry *no prize*) Is it BAD that she's posed this way? No - and she actually looks more natural. But the light on her face would have been better had it been turned more to the light.

Background: New England Autumn

Lighting Setup: # 2

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Earlier I said I also do a close up head and shoulders when they're in that laying on their tummy pose - here it is.

Hands good again because they're hidden.

Also notice how much better her eyes look having removed the extra catch lights. Enhanced the highlight on her lower lip as well.

**Background:** New England Autumn

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 and reflector

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Standing In-Studio**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Hard sometimes to come up with poses to show off those high heels - this is a good one.

A little fan action and a lot of kicker light to accent those curls.

They ordered the image cropped as it is here but also a black and white wallet cropped horizontally as a tight head shot.

Used a Kubota action on this one.

5 x 7 aspect ratio



Background: Stucco painted wall in studio & Flokati rug

Lighting Setup: # 3

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Two of the same girl - here's the first one.

Body away from the light - face back towards it but not quite far enough.

Her leaning and the camera angle add movement to the image. Keeping her left arm behind her and her right arm bent as it is shows off the smallness of her mid-section. (*that and a little lively too!;-)*

Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Same girl as the last image.

She is tiny - but flip back and look at the difference in her upper right arm. Same sleeve length, but because her arm is straight at the camera here, it looks much bigger.

Now look at her waist. Because her right arm is not bent as much we can't see the small of her back and it makes her look wide.

This outfit would have been better on the all white. (I was hot on this background because I'd just painted it that summer)

Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Nice angle to give movement. You can see the small of her back but because of the darkness of the background in that area it's not as obvious. (I can't ALWAYS think of everything!!!;-)

Weight on her back foot, front foot forward and leg slightly bent.

Good color harmony.

Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I do this crossed arms pose a lot - maybe too much.

Notice her right fingers sticking out. Her nails are nice - if they weren't I tell her to cross her arms the other way. Her left fingers are not curled up enough. Usually they're just hanging out there and I tell them to curl them up so I don't see them.

Nice lean, body away, face towards the light.

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 but no background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

This is a tough one to get to look right.

Would have been better had her left elbow been turned more towards the background - but then her fingers would have come in front of her face. (see *what I mean*)

Curve of the back is nice as is the soft smile and the movement in the hair.

Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Soft arms and nice placement. Hair on her right shoulder helps to frame her face.

Made this background several years ago and it continues to be one of our best sellers - even for wall portraits. Go figure.

Learn how to build your own swinging wall sets at [www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

Background: Swinging wall with metal tubes

Lighting Setup: # 5

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Obviously she's tiny but even at that a little Liquify tool across her tummy area smoothed her shirt and improved the image.

This is the only image in this guide that the client did not order from. Her friends thought she looked "too much" like a model - and that wasn't her. She was big into sports.

So you never know - I really liked this image but that don't make no difference Ernie. "Beauty is in the eye of the check book holder."

**Background:** Blue seamless paper

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio

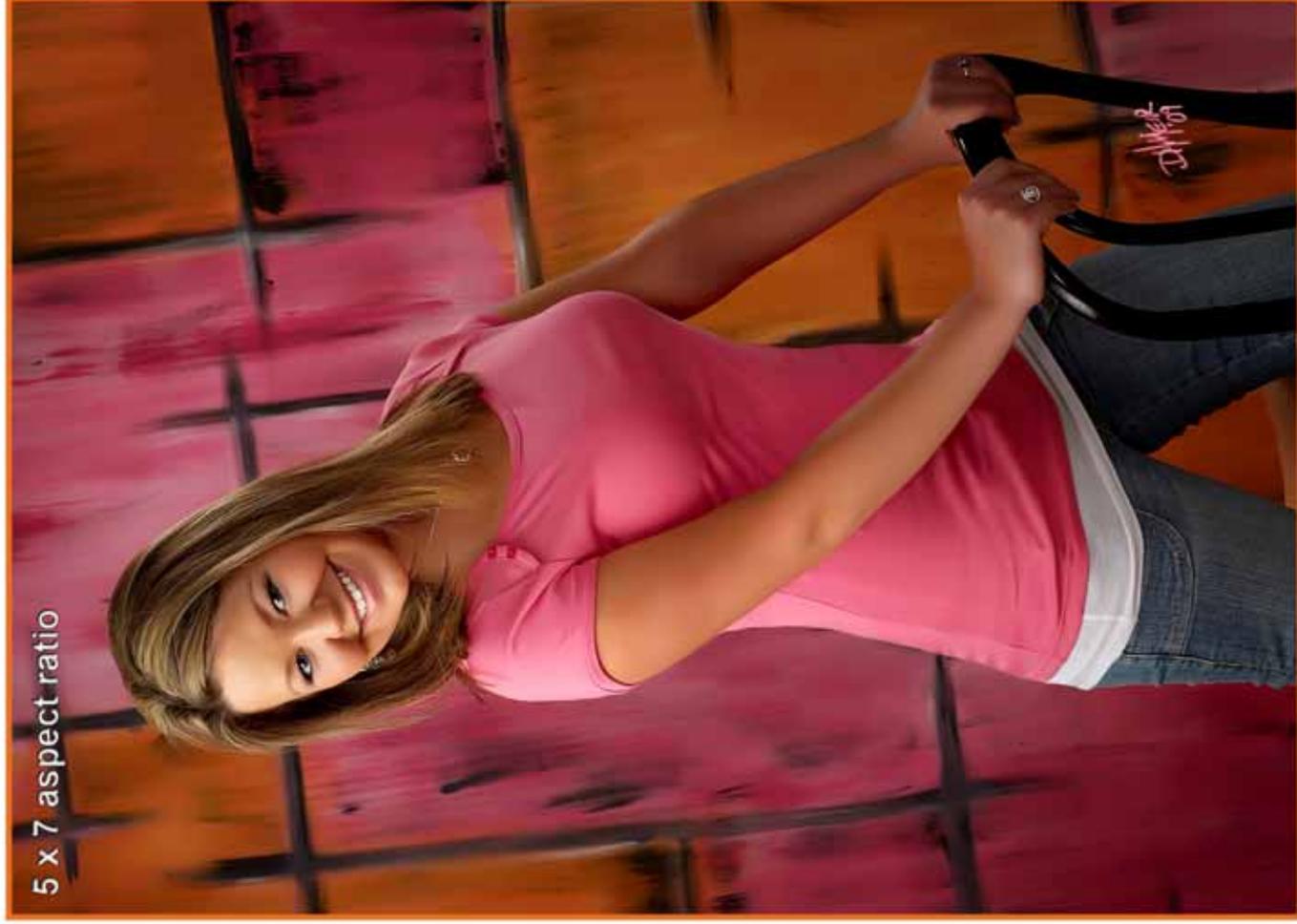


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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio

## Comments:

Popular pose. One knee up on the chair. I tell them, "I'll count to three and then raise up on the toes of your right foot and put some weight on your hands - but just a little."

Color harmony, body away from the light, face towards it.

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 but no background light

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

You can see the fan in the lower left corner of the RAW image.

I usually try and have them keep one hand lower than the other when they're holding the lapels - not as static.

Typically I would have retouched the glasses glare in this image. However, sometimes when you do, it looks "too" perfect. Here, since the glare did not cover her iris I thought it added something to the image. (that's my story and I'm sticking to it) I also saturated the purple color of the frames.

**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 2

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Obviously this pose is aided a great deal by the sweater. Her hand placement holding the hem of the sweater could hardly be any better.

Weight on the back foot, right foot forward and knee bent slightly, leaning at "the spot" in the small of her back.

Face a little more to the light would have been better.

Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 2

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Again, frugal use of the Liquefy tool improved this image. Smoothed off the bump in the tank top at the small of her back as well as the flare in the hem of the top at her right hip.

The lean, the arching of the back at "the spot" - all help.

Background: Brick wall in studio

Lighting Setup: # 4

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I like this pose for a little more reserved, more feminine look.

Still with the weight on the back foot and the front leg slightly bent. A little more upward break of the wrists would have helped the feminine aspect.

I think she got this outfit on a class trip that summer and it was "the style". But the blouseness at her right hip is distracting and makes her look bigger than she obviously is. Probably I could have minimized it with Liquefy but I don't think it would have looked right if I had.

**Background:** Christine with purple gel

**Lighting Setup:** # 2

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Look how the high camera angle diminishes her waist and legs.

It's not often that I have them cross their arms like this - with one completely exposed on top - however, I wanted to see her rings so we did it this way.

Learn how to build your own swinging wall sets at [www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

Background: Swinging wall with red tiles  
Lighting Setup: # 5

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

It's not often that someone can bring their own ballet bar with them to the studio.

Obviously the lighting adds a great deal to this image - and I had nothing to do with the pose - other than the angle to the camera.

I found the base of the bar by her left foot to be distracting so I removed it. If you think about it's also distracting that it's not there - but not as much as the other way around;-)

**Background:** Stucco painted wall in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 3 with no background light

**Comments:**

I often use this background like this so kids can stand/crouch on it.

Ideally I would have had her left foot flatter on the floor and her left knee more upright. However I can NOT get myself into this position to demonstrate so I take what I can get by explaining it!!

A lot of rubber stamp tool to extend the background.



**Background:** Custom painted by Dave  
**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Not so much a pose as it is an idea of what to do with a hooded sweatshirt. She actually did this herself and I tweaked it a little.

Kubota action to add texture to the background and the saturation tool to pop the color.



**Background:** Custom painted by Dave

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Sitting Outdoors**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

**Comments:**

Pay attention boys and girls because this is where it gets good. Mastering studio lighting/posing is a whole different ball game from natural light. You have to, you must, **learn to see light**.

Key point - look for locations where the overhead light is blocked and the background light is fairly even.

In this image there are trees over her head and a big beige stucco building bouncing light into her face. In addition I almost always use off camera flash modified by a mini-soft box.

**Background:** Stone wall and pine trees

**Lighting Setup:** # Off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Some days nostalgia takes over and I go back to using a reflector. I use a "Fuzzy-Flector" and if you know who Fuzzy Duenkel is you know what I'm talkin' 'bout.

Trees overhead to block the light. Slate tile roof with sun bouncing off into her face with a little help from the reflector.

Outside I'm always on a tripod and using a 80 to 200 lens. I shoot at f/2.8 to f/4 almost exclusively. I like the soft backgrounds.

**Background:** Impatiens and Hosta

**Lighting Setup:** # Fuzzy Flector



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

This spot was made for portraits. It's the entry to a new building next to our studio. It's inset about ten feet so it has overhead light control. In the late afternoon the sun bounces off the brick courthouse building to the east providing beautiful light.

She's sitting on the top step leaning her arms on the railing.



**Background:** Entrance to commercial building

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light and off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Yes Virginia this is a good spot for a portrait.

She's sitting at a picnic table outside a restaurant on the busiest street in town. There's trash all over the ground and bird crap all over the table. Behind those bushes are four lanes of rushing traffic.

BUT - the light. She's facing west and it's early morning so the light is skimming those bushes and hitting her hair. Fill light from the off-camera flash illuminates her face.



**Background: Bushes**

**Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash**



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

I am fortunate to have a historic home, that is a city park, within five minutes of my studio.

This image is late afternoon and the sun is coming from behind and to the left of her and bouncing off the stone wall on the other side of this dilapidated greenhouse foundation.

Her right hand is a little too posed.



**Background:** Stone wall of greenhouse

**Lighting Setup:** # Fuzzy Flector



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Same location as the first image of the girl with the blue plaid shirt - different time of day.

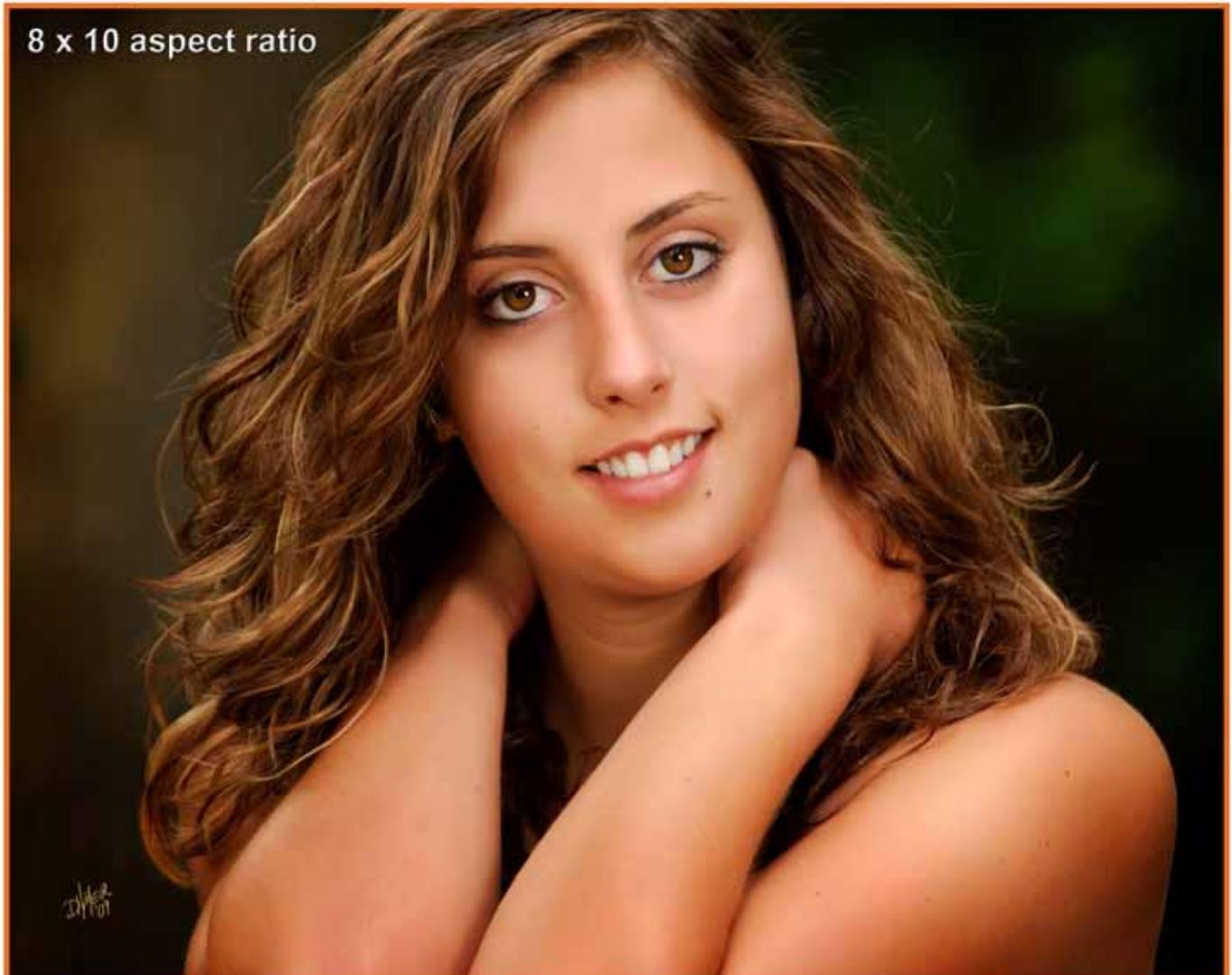
I was able to position her to take advantage of light that was coming through the trees to her right that was illuminating her hair.

Off-camera flash filled in her face.



**Background:** Evergreens

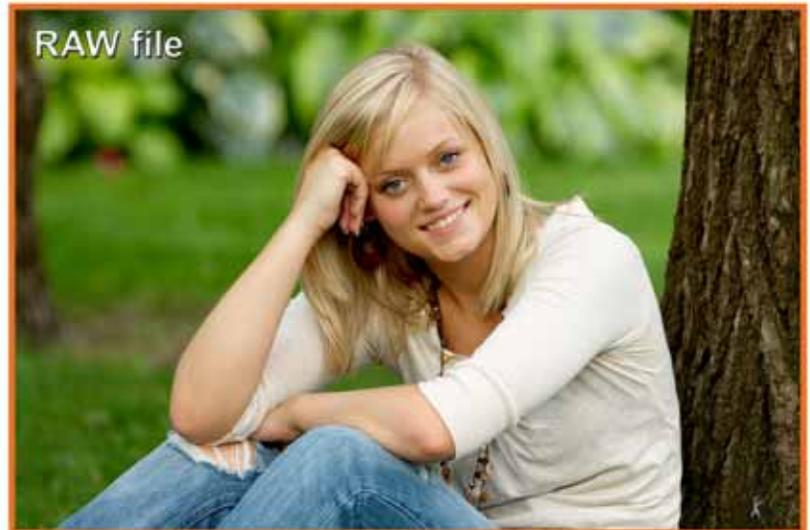
**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Leaning against a big pine tree that is also blocking the overhead light. Late afternoon sweet light coming in from the west aided by fill flash.



**Background:** Grass and Hosta

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

The girl earlier - in the dilapidated greenhouse - same general spot but sitting on top of the foundation wall.

More overhead light than I typically want but it's doing a nice job of lighting her hair. I used flash and a reflector to compensate.

When retouching outdoor images I don't mess much with the catch lights. I like how the extra light in their eyes adds sparkle.

**Background:** Trees

**Lighting Setup:** # Fuzzy Flector and fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

See the light grasshopper.

It's earlier in the morning and the light is coming from in front of and to her left. She's sitting on the patio and I'm standing on a retaining wall shooting down at her.

Cropped tight to eliminate her upper bicep and hyper-extended elbow.

**Background:** Brick patio

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

You can achieve color harmony outside as well. Obviously retouching, enhancement and cropping all helped this image considerably.

Warming it up gave her a better skin tone and brought out the red in her hair. I used the saturation tool on the iris blooms to make them pop. Vignetting and cropping eliminated the bright area at the top of the image and helps draw attention to her face.

I also removed the Iris bud coming out of the top of her head and moved it to her right.

**Background:** Purple Iris and foliage

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Trees blocking the overhead light combined with late afternoon sweet light hitting her hair.

Hand placement is pretty good but see the difference between the two? You see only the side of the right hand but too much of the back of the left hand making it look big and drawing attention.

She's sitting on a retaining wall with her left foot up on a step - both elbows on that knee.

A wide aperture throws the less than attractive background out of focus.

**Background:** Gravel driveway and weedy area

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

What do you see here except for her face?

Nothing - which is what Mom wants. Three basic colors in this image; her shirt/hair, eyes/foliage and her skin tone.

Again with trees blocking overhead light and late afternoon sweet light illuminating her hair.

A longer sleeved shirt would have been better but you don't always have that choice.

**Background:** Bushes

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Good example of, "it doesn't take much for a background".

This is from a "streets and alleyways session" - their outdoor pictures in the downtown area around our studio. Even though it's more "urban grunge" some kids want greenery too.

She is sitting on the edge of a sidewalk that is bordered by these spirea bushes. The flower tops were very nearly the color of her sweatshirt and the saturation tool helped.

Sign-post about 12 inches to her right, parking ramp 20 feet behind.

**Background:** Spirea

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

I have almost always avoided light as strong as that which is hitting her hair and blowing it out. It wasn't "proper" lighting technique. Ask kids if they care about that.

No, there's no detail in her hair in the blown out area but kids see images like this all the time in magazines (the lighting)

Do notice however that the brightness on her hair competes for attention with the light on her face. If you know this and you do it fine. But don't do this and wonder why.

**Background:** Hosta, driveway, weedy area

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

At some point in your outdoor portraiture you will find a spot that "always works" - this is mine. She's sitting just inside a covered walkway that runs the length of the back of this historic home. Sometimes I close the door that's behind her and other times I leave it open - depends on the light.

Look for both foreground and background elements in your location - they add depth to the image.

**Background:** Stone wall, slate floor

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

**Comments:**

Same location. Remember, your camera rotates from vertical to horizontal.

So, we change her legs a little, a smile instead of serious and horizontal instead of vertical. They ordered from both.

Warming the skin tone, vignetting and popping the contrast make a big difference.



**Background:** Stone wall and slate floor

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I like this spot because of the distance to the background - really adds depth.

Trees blocking overhead light with added fill flash.

Notice her left arm (*not sure why every one I show you has this problem when I'm always correcting it on kids*). Too much weight on her hand hyper-extend her elbow and cause her shoulder to bulk up. Right arm is perfect. Is that called *batting .500?* (*lucky thing she only has two arms*)

**Background:** Grass and gardens

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio

## Comments:

Animal owners are funny.

People with horses always want the horses ears to be up and turned forward. Dog owners always want the dog's mouth shut?!? And they're so much cuter this way. Did a half dozen of this pose to get a good one with the dogs mouth shut 'cause Dad didn't want to see the birthmark on his tongue. They bought this one!! This lab is a National Champion at field trials. Same pose as previous image - just added in the dog. Remember to shoot for variety.

**Background:** Grass and gardens

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

This might be one of those questionable poses. (ya think?) A friend of mine down south does this pose all the time and everyone loves it. I'm guessing if you live in Utah this ain't your pose. I'd been wanting to try this forever and had been waiting for the right subject. Haven't done it since. They liked it but I felt uncomfortable explaining how to get into it. And I certainly wasn't going to demonstrate.

Added a texture in processing.

**Background:** Parking ramp

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Open shade by being on the opposite side of the house from the sun.

Foreground element to draw your eye in and add depth to the image.

Background: Trees and garden area

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Every once in awhile you'll create an image you're especially proud of. This is mine.

Could not have asked for a crappier day for outdoor portraits. High gray skies, flat, flat light and windy.

It took some time to balance her skin tones and retouch her hair but I was happy with the end result - as was the client.

**Background:** Playground park area

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Third image in this spot - first one is girl in blue plaid shirt close-up.

More of a half length pose with what is apparently now my signature hyper-extended elbow and big biceps. (*I don't know, maybe people secretly like that look*)

If I was thinking I would have had Mom hold my reflector to the girl's left to add some light to her hair and separate it from the background.

**Background:** Stone wall and pine trees

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

In addition to learning to see light you need to watch for leading lines. I liked the repetitive nature of the vertical lines.

Background: Commercial building

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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**Comments:**

Another image from the earlier swing-set session.

Never been there but I thought this looked like images I've seen of eastern coastal beaches. Maybe?

I was standing on about the third rung of a metal fence to get high enough to keep the river out of the background - it would have been a blown-out gray mass.

I added a couple more yellow flowers in the background



**Background:** Overgrown river bank

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

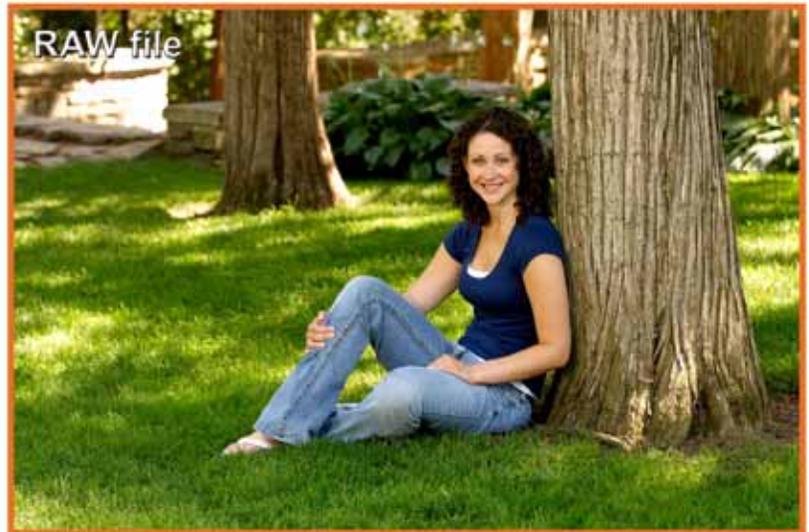
5 x 7 aspect ratio



**Comments:**

A great casual pose leaning against a tree. Arms are relaxed and not posey.

Dappled light on the grass adds interest. I should and could have easily retouched the hot-spot on the retaining wall in the upper left of the image. However, they only ordered wallets of this pose and I only do basic retouching on wallets.



**Background:** Grass, trees, gardens

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Standing Outdoors**

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

A nice soft pose for a warm smile and a dress. This is my favorite spot I mentioned earlier - inside the covered walkway. Both doors in the background are open.

Shallow depth of field aided by telephoto compression keeps attention on her.

Background: **Bushes**

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Railroad tracks are always popular. I've also learned it is a Federal offence to stand on them. (So watch out for the railroad police - they're usually undercover and dressed like Amish farmers) These tracks are rarely used so I feel pretty confident.

I like the look of this location when I saturate the colors - personal preference.

Used a little liquefy to smooth off bumps in her shirt.

5 x 7 aspect ratio



**Background:** Railroad tracks behind studio

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

**Comments:**

I liked the graphic lines of the railing against the simple lines of her dress. I also liked the contrast of a dress and pretty girl against hard steel and concrete.

I added a little extra vignetting under her left thigh. Early morning light from the east is illuminating her hair.



**Background:** Steel railing

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Again - I liked the contrast of the pretty girl and amazing dress against the railroad tracks. They liked this enough to invest in a wall portrait.

Had her hike up the dress to show the shoes of course. Good illustration of weight on back foot, front foot turned and knee slightly bent.

**Background:** Railroad tracks behind studio

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I like this staircase but struggle to get good images on it. There's nothing to block the overhead light but this was taken late in the day and the sun was at the opposite end of the house.

Color harmony would be better if the city would repaint the railing!;-)

**Background:** Steel railing and stone wall

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I use this spot when my subject has green in their outfit. the light coming through the glass blocks is green and I help it along with the saturation tool.

Although not a prime example this is somewhat illustrative of the "lonely corner". Put the center of attention in the upper right or lower right corner with the subject looking out of the frame. It's more effective in a horizontal image with the subject in the lower right corner. Try it.

**Background:** Parking ramp glass block window

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I like the way the driveway recedes into the distance although it would be better to have the complete curve to the right in the image.

Unfortunately this image illustrates an incorrect profile of the face. The ideal profile shows only the eyelashes of the far side eye - you should not see her cheek or the white of her eye as you do here. Remember earlier when I said the tip of the nose should not break the plane of the face - like it does here.

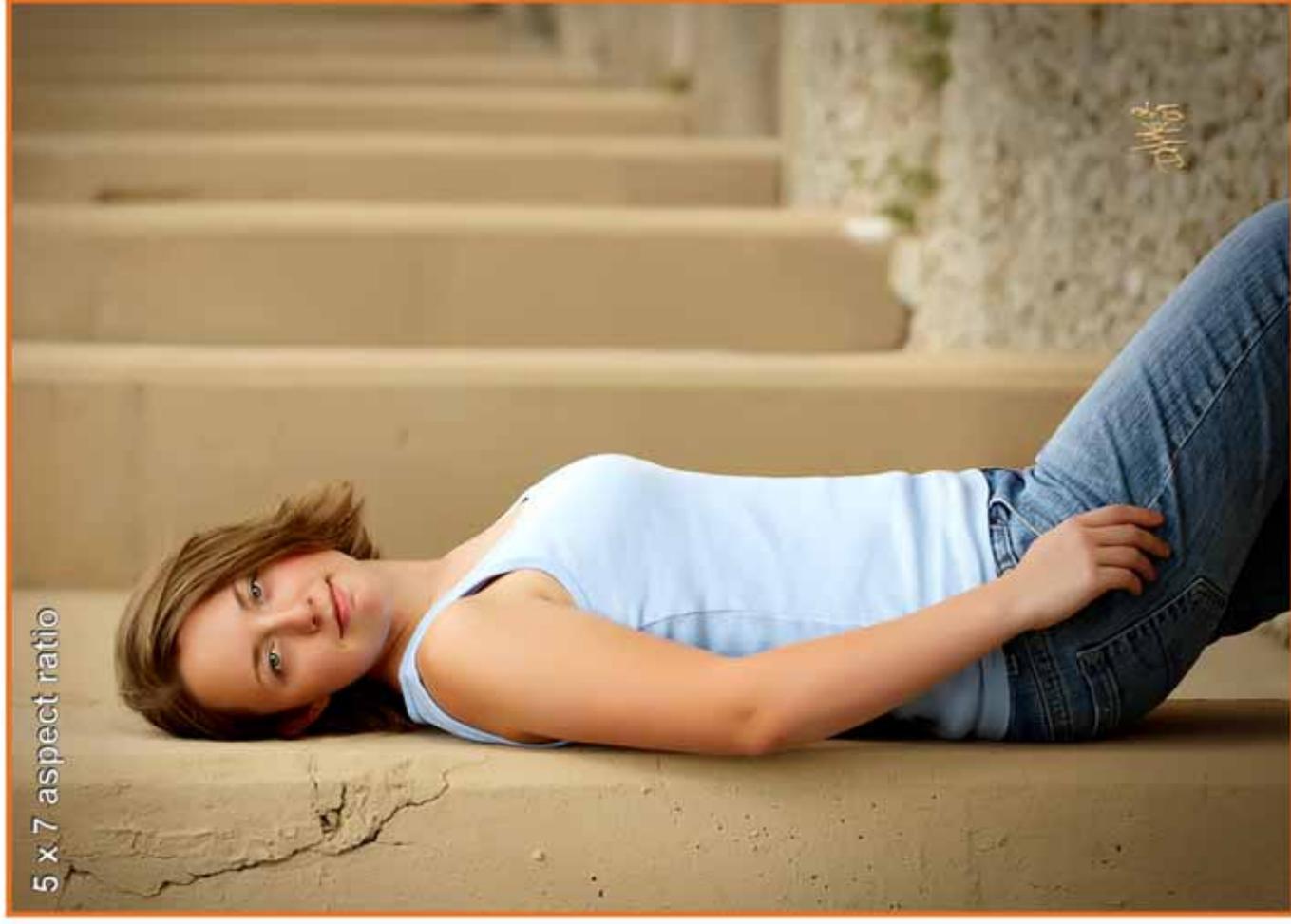
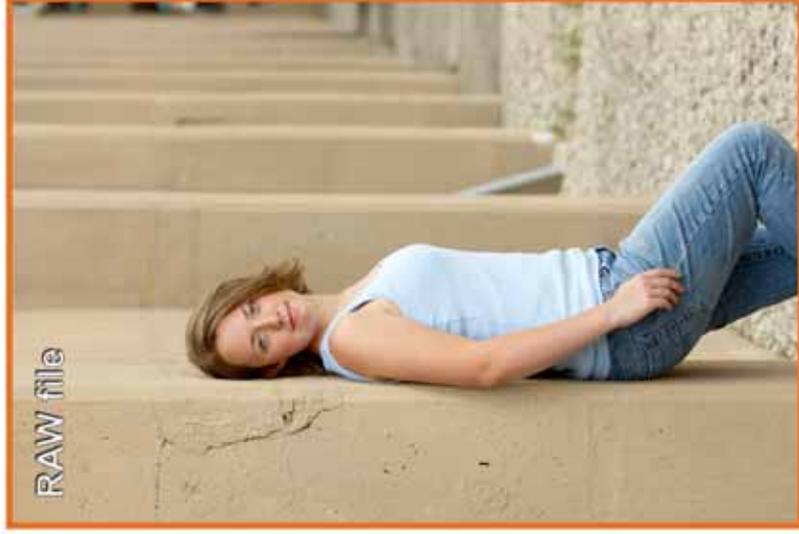
I almost dropped this image out of the guide since apparently it sucks! Learn from my mistakes.

**Background:** Long gravel driveway and trees  
**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Remember the image earlier when I mentioned leading lines - another example. This one is better because the lines lead your eye through the image whereas the image of the girl in the dress by the building, the lines - while still effective - tend to stop your eye.

**Background:** Parking ramp

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio

## Comments:

My favorite spot again.

Left arm and hand are nice. Right hand is how she did it and it could have been tweaked but I didn't.

Notice more weight on one foot.

Background: Stone wall

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Heavy vignetting on the background eliminates most of the distracting elements.

This girl was as close to a model as they come - could move and pose easily and this is one of several from this spot.

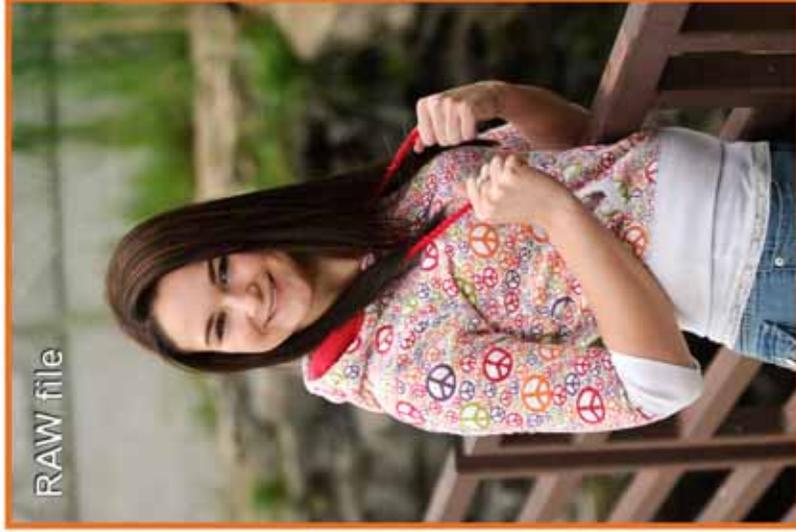
Warmed the skin tones, removed tan lines and bumped the contrast.

**Background:** Pine Trees

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Watch the outfit to help in the posing. Holding on to the hood strings of her sweatshirt gave her something different to do with her hands.

She's standing just underneath a walkway bridge that blocks the overhead light. Light reflecting off a concrete wall to her right illuminates her face.

5 x 7 aspect ratio



**Background:** Steel railing and fountain area

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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**Comments:**

Trees as a senior portrait prop have been over-used. But the fact of the matter is - even when they say, "Oh man, do not pose me by a tree," they still buy them.

Try to find a tree that will allow you to make it different than the standard "leaning against" pose.



**Background:** Tree

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

The railroad tracks are right behind her - the bushes on the other side of the tracks. Late afternoon this spot is perfect with the sweet light coming in from the west.



**Background:** Fence and bushes

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# Guys

the portrait expert posing guide



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# **Activities**

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**Comments:**

With guys you're going to see somewhat stronger light ratios - making them look more masculine.

Normally I do this pose with just the left hand on the guitar neck - but he was repositioning the guitar and grabbed the neck with his other hand and you could see his class ring. Click.

This is one of my swinging wall sets with maple plywood stained dark and some fancy molding to dress it up.



**Background:** Swinging wall den set

**Lighting Setup:** # 6

Learn how to build your own swinging wall sets at [www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

You saw a similar image in the girl's section although this pose and lighting is much more popular with the guys.

Go back to the girl outdoors standing on a long driveway wearing a white top and read the comments about a profile image. This one is done correctly - you can just see the eyelashes on his far eye - as it should be.

Even a blind hog finds the barn once in awhile!;-)



**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 14X48 Strip & reflector



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

This kid can blow a horn. Both parents are band directors and he was accepted into the most prestigious trumpet performance program in the country at some school in Michigan.

Anyway, the pose was his idea from a CD cover. We encourage kids to bring in CD's, magazines, etc... to show us poses they like.

Genius lighting of course but that's to be expected;-)



**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Sometimes you have to play around.  
This guy was up for anything so we gave this a shot. You'll want to keep the light off the racket head as much as possible. His right hand felt awkward holding the racket like this but I don't think it's noticeable.



**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5



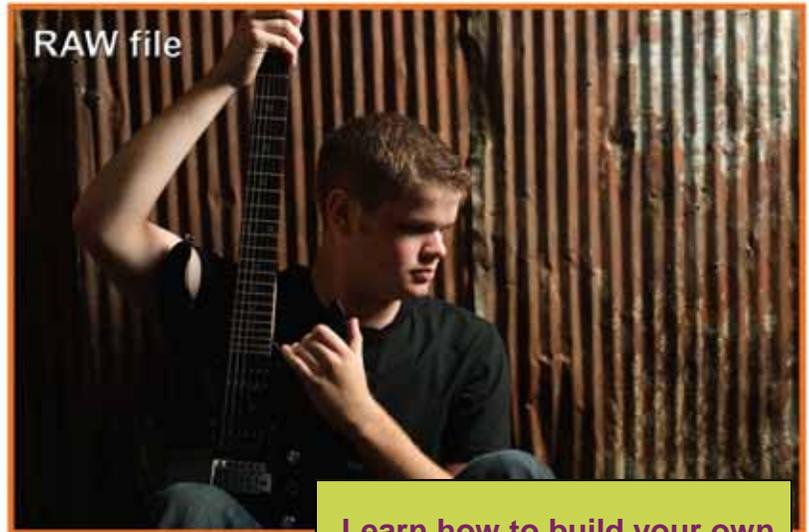
**Comments:**

Played the guitar and the cello.

Cropping the image tighter makes it more intense.

Used a Kubota filter to pump the contrast and bring out the texture in the metal.

And by the way, nasty old rusty corrugated metal is not easy to find - at least in these parts. Drove all over southern Minnesota looking for it. Course I wanted it for free which made it a little harder!!



**Background:** Swinging wall with rusty corrugated roofing

**Lighting Setup:** # 5

Learn how to build your own swinging wall sets at [www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

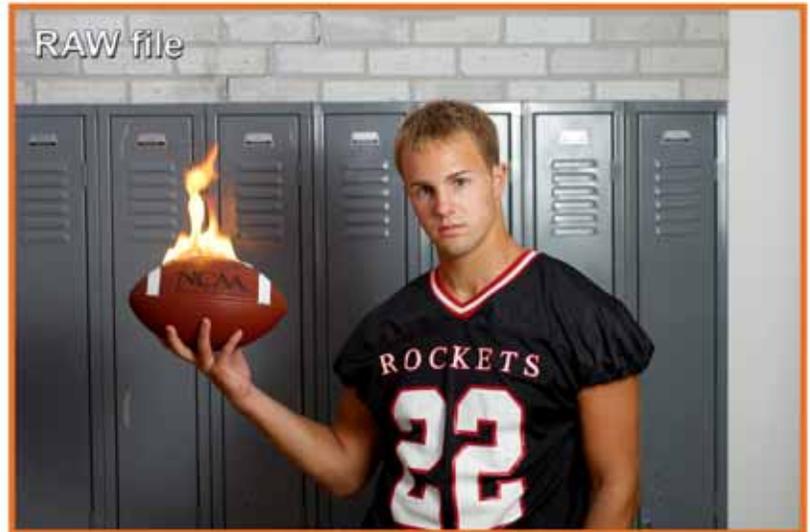
I've been doing this for years and it had kinda died off. Used to incorporate a smoke machine for added effect.

I put about two or three layers of duct tape on the ball (my ball) and then a long row of fire starting paste - comes in a tube like toothpaste. (backpacking and camping stores will have it)

We've started everything on fire from ballet slippers to laptop computers. Had one guy say he'd been waiting since he was a sophomore to do this pose. It's over so quick we did it twice for him - just for the fun of it.

**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

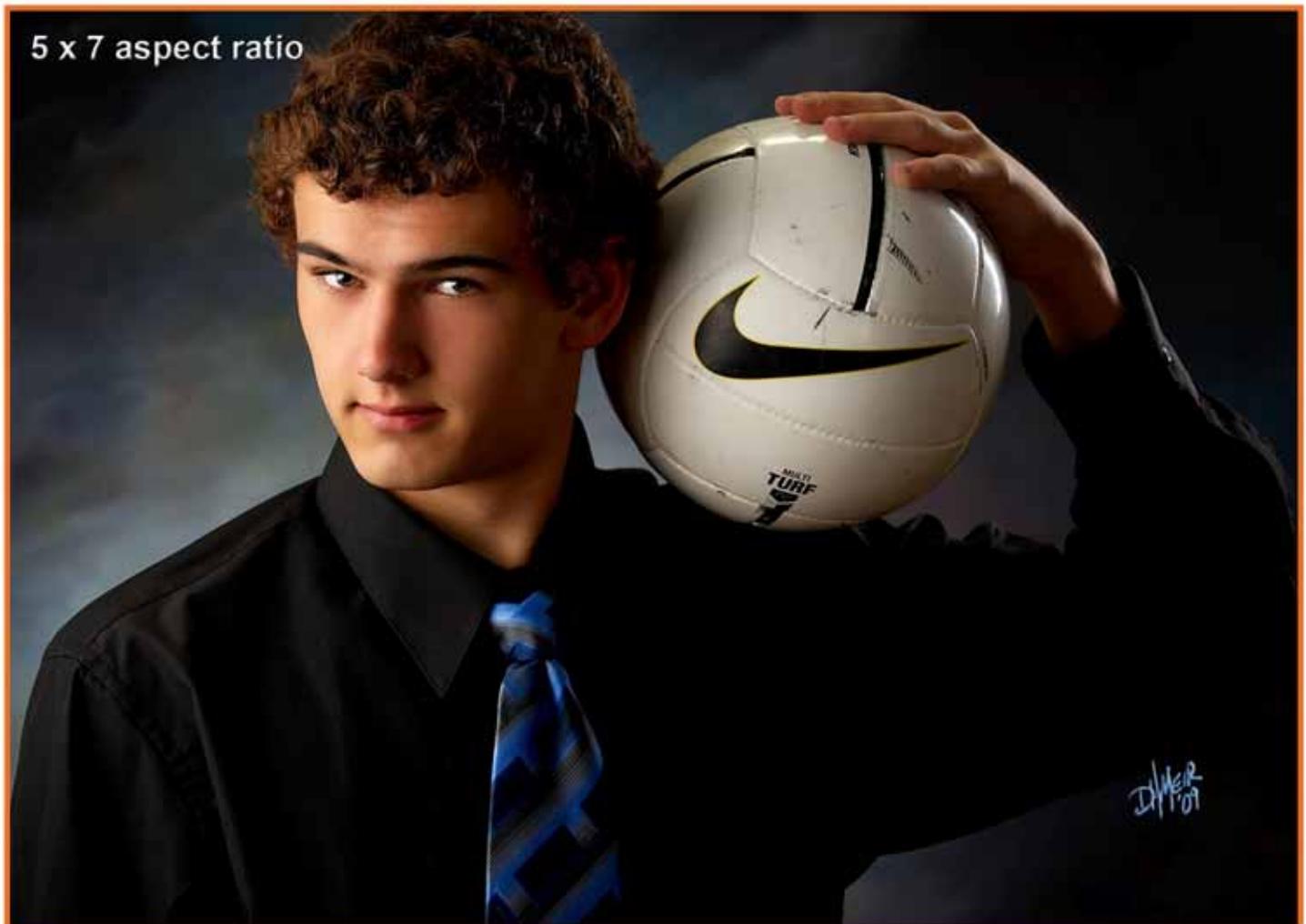
I almost always start with the formal poses first. If I know the guy is into sports I'll try something like this - usually a hit with parents.

Again notice the stronger light ratio - I probably wouldn't do this with a girl.



**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Big time into his Mac and his iPhone (as you'll see in a bit).

This is just one light with a grid spot attachment. Typically I shoot at 1/125th of a second in the studio but this was probably at least 1/15th or slower - camera on a tripod (camera stand). You have to slow the shutter speed to let the light from the monitor burn in and you have to keep the main light off of the monitor screen so it doesn't wash it out.



**Background:** Goldfire

**Lighting Setup:** # Background light with grid



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Everybody does this now but at this point I never had. I liked the contrast of the kinda tough guy look holding the phone against the boy and his kitty.

If you need to learn how to do this go to the blog and ask me - I'll 'splain it to you Lucy.

**Background: Goldfire**

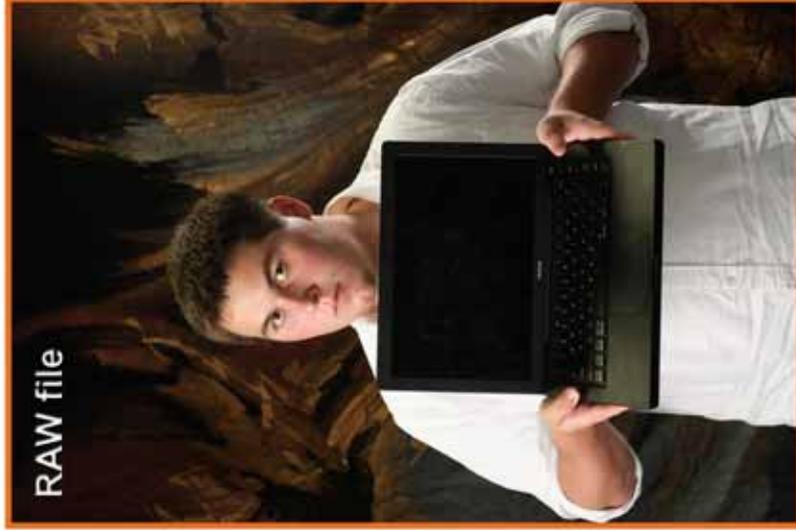
**Lighting Setup: # 1**



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Okay fine, now I'm just showing off. But you have to admit it's a cool idea for a guy into computers and smartphones!

I enlarged and brightened the "MacBook" logo so it was more visible. Added a Kubota filter to bump the color and the texture.

Background: Goldfire

Lighting Setup: # 1 with background light

8 x 10 aspect ratio



[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

**Comments:**

So what do you do when it's pouring buckets, the guy wants his bike in the picture and doesn't want to reschedule his outdoor session? Yes, outside in the rain would have been cool - but it was REALLY pouring - and bein' that I'm made'a sugar I melt in the rain.

It was a bit of a struggle to get it through the doors.

Used a Kubota filter to bump the color and then the saturation tool on the blue of his shoes and the bike.



**Background:** Goldfire

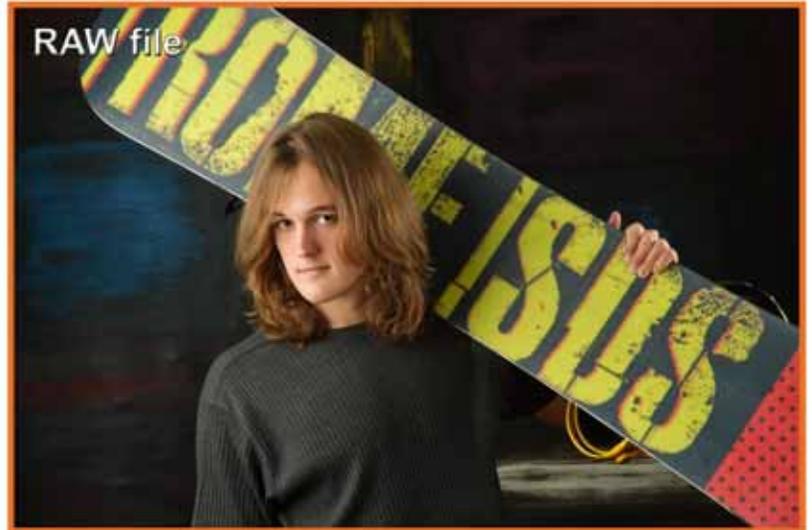
**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

The bottoms of snow boards are usually cooler than the top and I never knew why - until I watched the winter Olympics. Something different with a snowboard.



**Background:** Custom painted by me  
**Lighting Setup:** # 2



**Comments:**

Again with the formal background, shirt, tie and sports equipment.

I like the angle on this pose. Yeah, you could have him face the camera straight on and I've done that - just not as effective.

Converted to B&W using a Kubota filter.



**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

One of my all time favorite images. When I'm doing a setup like this I ask them to play - I don't catch the movement but the pose is more real.

I wish I could remember what kind of guitar this is - he played Flamenco/Spanish style music - and he was GOOD. I had him play for awhile just so I could listen. Awesome.

**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson

**Lighting Setup:** # 3



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

One more of the guitar guy.

The main light is to his right and behind him - a gobo between the light and the camera. Just enough fill light to bring out the detail on the camera side of his face.

Should have messed with his jacket collar to make the white line of his shirt even and also brought out his shirt sleeve cuff a little further.

8 x 10 aspect ratio



Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2 with main light at back left and reduced fill

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I like to show off the length of the neck on bass guitars.

On this type of lighting there really shouldn't be that little triangular (Rembrandt) patch of lighting on his left cheek - it's distracting. Added a Kubota filter to bump up the texture.

This wall is made from 4 x 8 brick paneling onto which I applied ceiling texture compound. I then "washed" it with black paint applied with a damp sponge.

**Background:** Swiving wall - brick paneling & texture paint  
**Lighting Setup:** # 14" x 48" strip light

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Pretty standard pose with a violin - always a challenge on what to do with the bow. He held it like this naturally and I thought it looked good.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio

## Comments:

He came in with this idea - found it in a tennis magazine I think.

Mom was up on the stepladder (you can see the leg of it on the left side of the RAW image) with a small bucket of tennis balls. "One, two, three, go," and she dumped them. Took a few shots and obviously this is a combination of a couple.

Fun idea.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Sometimes less is more on the whole equipment thing - then again there ain't a whole lot more for a runner;-)

I always make sure to twist the sleeves of the jacket so you can see the patches.

Background: Locker set in studio

Lighting Setup: # 5

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Again with less is more.

This is just a small - 9" x 24" strip light soff-box for lighting - set down low and pointing up.

Background: Locker set in studio

Lighting Setup: # 9" x 24" Strip light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Pretty good lighting here - that small triangular patch of light on his left cheek - called "Rembrandt Lighting" - should be a little bigger. Would have been better had his head been turned just a smidge more towards the light.

Little bit of angle on the trumpet is good.

Background: Parisian Chablis

Lighting Setup: # 1

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Another one of my all-time favorites. There is a famous black and white image of Pablo Casals from the opposite angle and showing more of his back - my basic inspiration for this pose.

Again I asked him to play and he was. Should have retouched that bump of hair on the back of his head.

*(If you're wondering why I may seem a bit off - I played the cello in 5th grade and I had to carry my cello on the bus with high school age kids. Oh, and my Mother wouldn't let me wear blue jeans!!;-)*

**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson

**Lighting Setup:** # 1 with background light and main back and to left

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I've never been on skies but apparently this can be a challenging position to get in to - at least on purpose.

He had on the whole get-up; pants, jacket, gloves, helmet - the poor kid was roasting. I have a new action now that creates the appearance of snowflakes; would make a nice addition to this image.

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Another pose to show off the bass guitar neck. Used a Kubota filter to bump the color and the texture and then saturated the guitar body.

Learn how to build your own swinging wall sets at [www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

Background: Rusty corrugated metal roofing  
Lighting Setup: # 5

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

You've seen this same basic image in the girls section - works for guys too.

I always do a variety once I get things setup; him standing, stick over shoulder, sticks leaning against the jerseys, etc...

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



## Comments:

Had someone tell me once that they liked their son photographed from this angle because he looked like Princess Diana!?!?? (not this guy - Prince Harry maybe)

Simple is always good. A high camera angle makes the subject appear "approachable" - a low camera angle can make them look "menacing". (there's an example in the guys outdoor section)

Background: White vinyl in studio

Lighting Setup: # 7

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

You'd think I'd get tired of pointing out the deficiencies in my own portraits (and you'd be right;-); but hey, we're both learning.

Notice the triangular patch of Rembrandt light on his left cheek - but his chin is a little too low and there's not much light in his left eye. (As I recall I added the main catch light.)

Is it vital that every portrait be perfect - obviously not. Is it important that you try to make it so - absolutely!

**Background:** Locker set in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 5

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Skate boards like Snow boards are cooler on the bottom.

High light angle and low camera angle. Added a Kubota filter to bump the color and texture.

Background: Brick wall in studio

Lighting Setup: # 4 with light raised high and pointed down

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Again with the receding lines to draw your eye through the image.

Just enough - the drumsticks - to give the feel this kid is really into drum line. They used this image on his grad party invite as well.



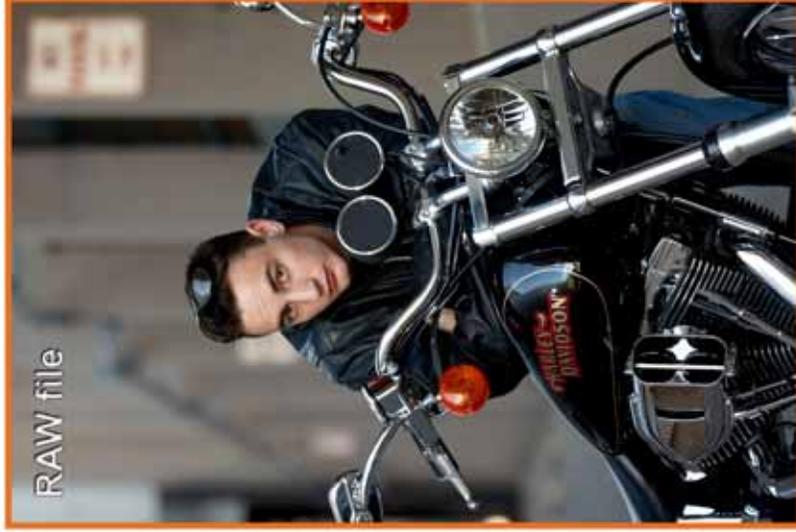
**Background:** Parking ramp

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Background is nondescript due to shallow depth of field from wide open aperture and telephoto compression. Draws all the attention to him and the bike.

Background: Parking ramp

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

8 x 10 aspect ratio



[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Right outside our back door and I use this spot a lot. I like the reflections in the glass.

Natural light is bouncing off the building to his left but I also added some fill flash. Notice the shadow from his nose on his right cheek - you have to watch your lights outside just like you do in the studio. His head should have been a little more to the light.

**Background:** Alley windows

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

This is our local minor league stadium - he was able to get us in because his American Legion team plays here as well.

Not rocket science here - just wanting to reiterate the soft background. Just enough to know it's a stadium but not enough to detract from the image.

**Background:** Baseball stadium

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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**Comments:**

Cars can be tough if you don't have some overhead shade. Remember that you don't have to show the whole car - pick the coolest parts and do closer images. They're portraits of the senior - not the car.



**Background:** Alley

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Shallow depth of field makes this image - you won't get this shooting at f/8 with a normal lens. Obviously no overhead shade. Off camera fill flash.

Something different than his team photos.



**Background:** Tennis courts

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Same courts different guy - different idea.

Little bit higher camera angle to keep the rest of the court and the top of the net out of the image.

Simple and effective image.



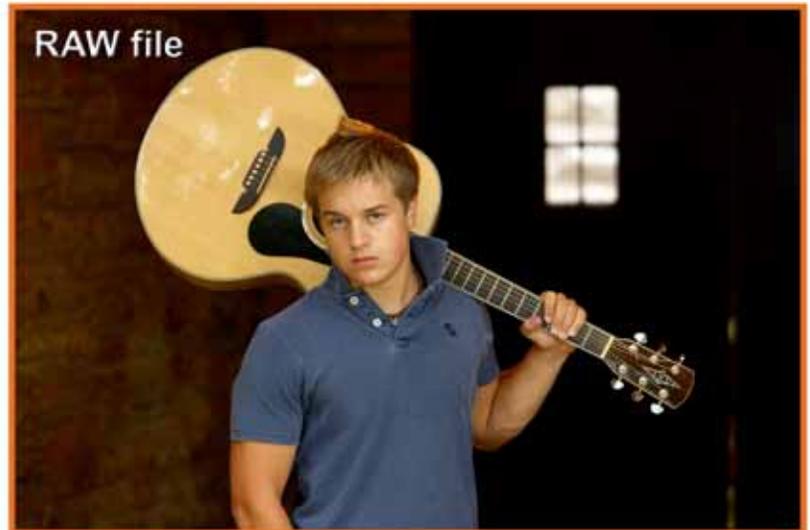
**Background:** Tennis courts

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



**Comments:**

How easy would it have been to remove that window? Piece of cake right? But I like the balance it gives to the image so I left it.



**Background:** Stone wall and doorway

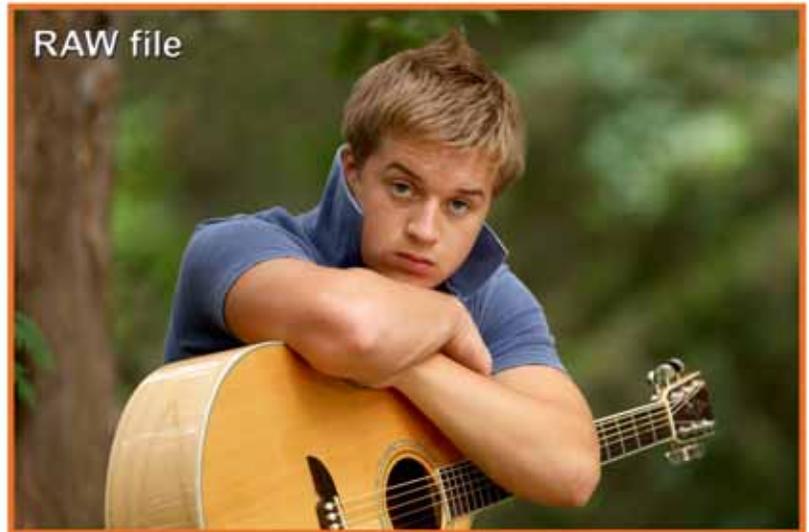
**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Creative cropping can help an image. The tree at the left edge of the RAW image doesn't add anything and is kind of distracting. Cropping the image tighter centers your attention on his eyes.



**Background:** Distant trees

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

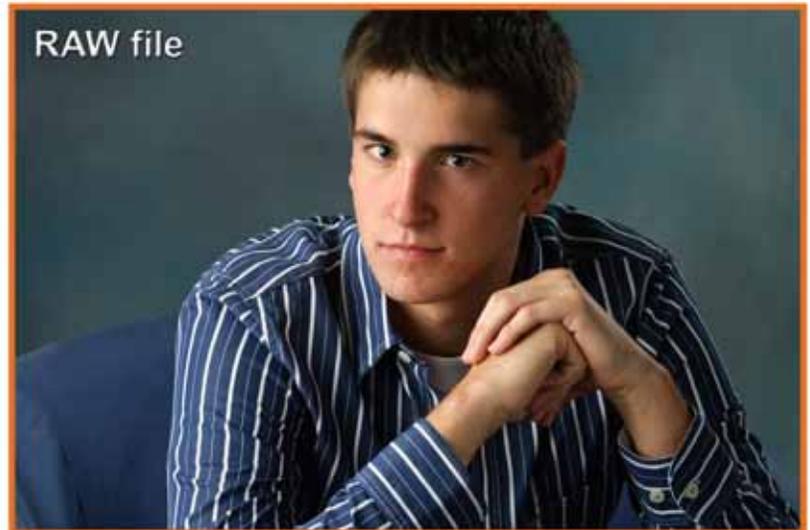
**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Close-ups**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

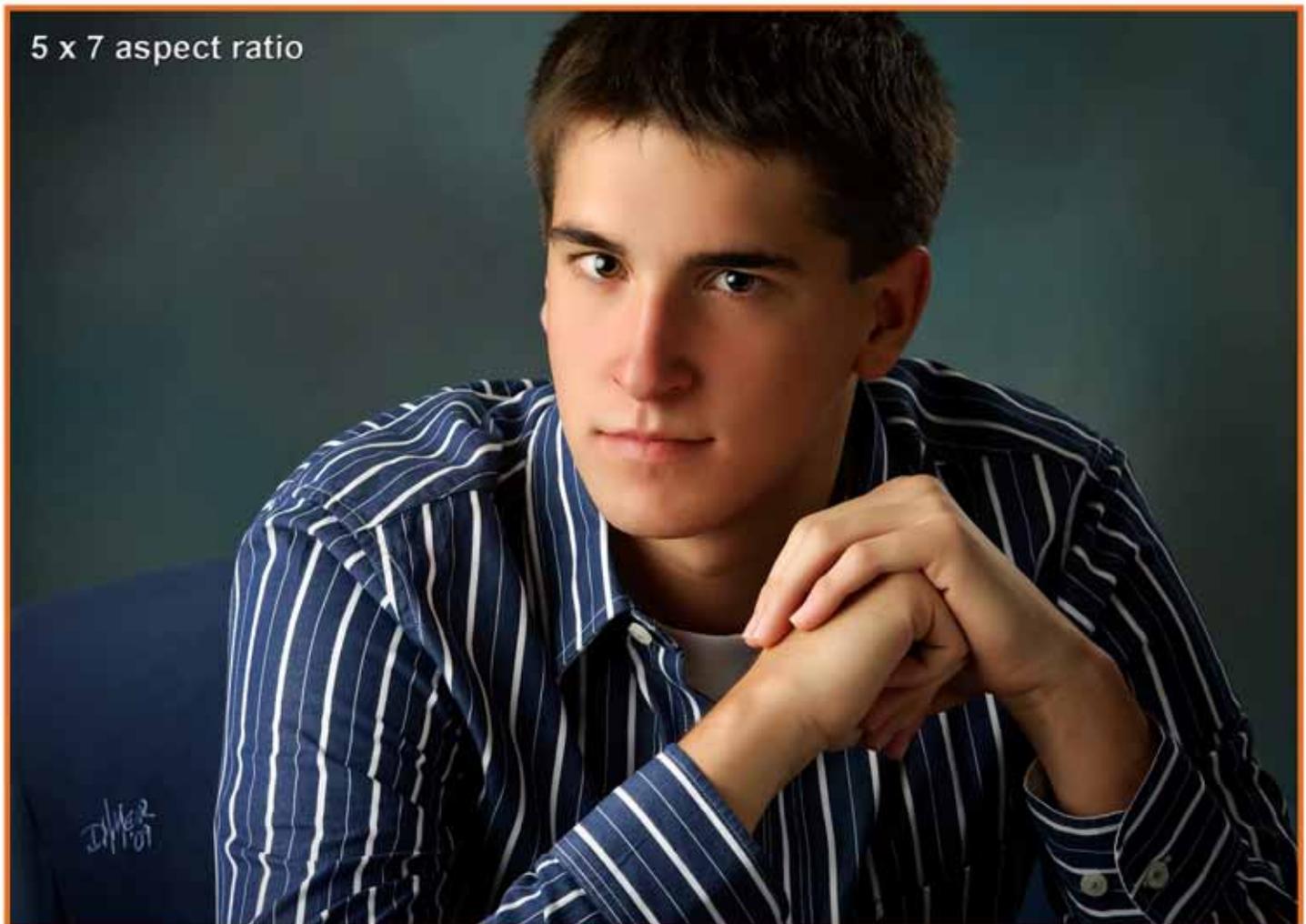
**Comments:**

Moms love close ups of their sons.  
Simple color harmony with the chair and the background and the shirt. Hands are decent - seem relaxed and natural.  
His legs are spread, feet flat on the floor, elbows are resting on his knees.



**Background:** Monet's Garden

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Same basic pose as the previous image  
- good one to show off the class ring.

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**Background:** Brick wall in studio

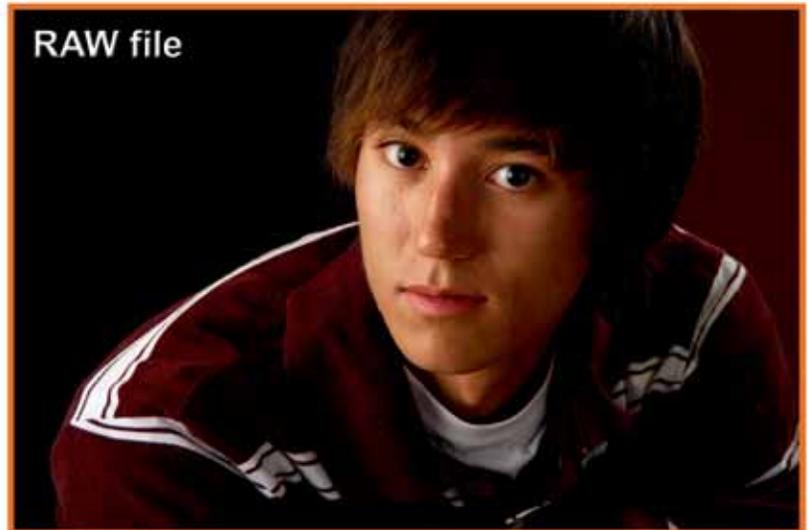
**Lighting Setup:** # 4



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

He's sitting backwards on a cafe chair with his chest leaning against the back of the chair - arms kinda wrapped around it. Kicker light to camera right and behind him gives added separation.



**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



**Comments:**

I need to use this background more because I like it in the image.

One set of bifold closet doors painted yellowy gold first, craquelure coat and then dark green paint. They stand by themselves and give a nice vertical line to the image.

He's sitting in a dark green leather chair that I picked up at the Salvation Army thrift store for ten bucks.



**Background:** Distressed closet door

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Sitting backwards on a chair with right arm resting on chair back.

If you have lots of wild funky back-grounds, as I do, make sure you do some of each kids images plain and simple like this.



**Background:** Blue seamless paper

**Lighting Setup:** # 3 but no background light



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

What - you don't think color harmony is important?!?!? If all else fails make it black and white.

He sat like this and I snapped the shutter - but I filed the pose away in my mind and have used it since.



**Background:** Parisian Chablis

**Lighting Setup:** # 2



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Sitting In-studio**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

**Comments:**

Remember what I said about telling them, "just sit like you would sit."

Would I have posed his fingers that way? No. Does it look like him? Yep - which no doubt is why they ordered from this pose.



**Background:** New England Autumn

**Lighting Setup:** # 2



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

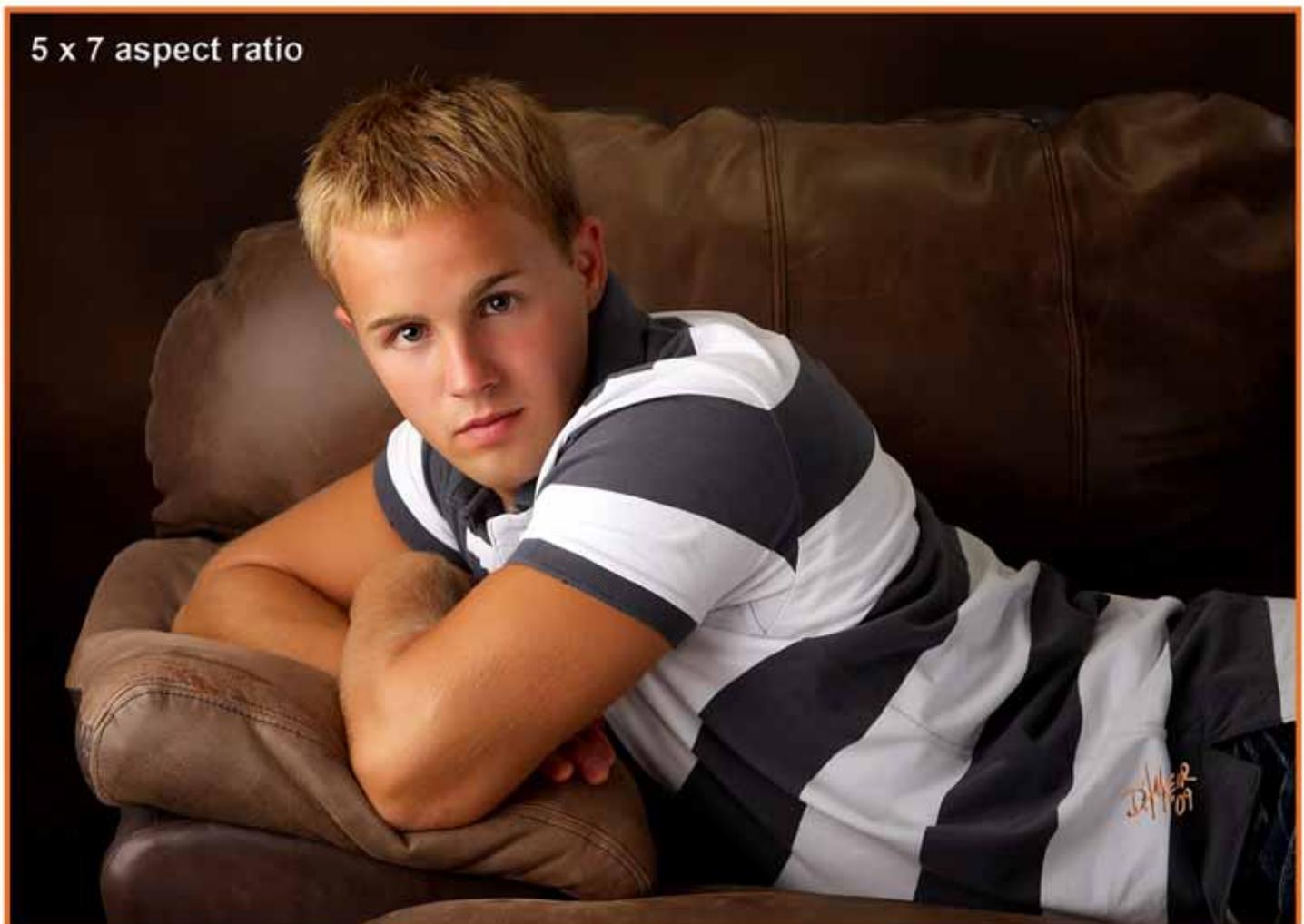
**Comments:**

Laying on their tummy with their arms crossed is a pretty standard girl's pose. Doing it like this from the side with this expression definitely makes it a guy pose.



**Background:** New England Autumn

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 with no background light

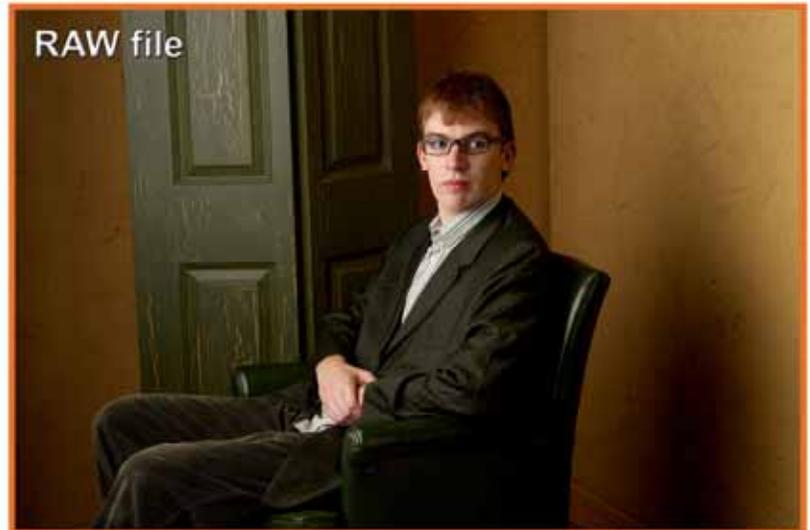


**Comments:**

Give me your tattooed, pierced, original kids any day of the week; they make the absolute best photo subjects

This guy marched to his own drum and was game for anything - as long as it wasn't normal.

Kubota filter to bump the color and texture.



**Background:** Closet doors and textured wall

**Lighting Setup:** # 1



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Popular pose, especially for tall guys.  
A little break in the elbow of the left arm  
would have improved this.



**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



**Comments:**

Sitting straight on to the camera is something photographers my age were taught to never do. I wonder why that is because I really like this image.

Cropped so he was in the center - not nearly as powerful.

Saturated the colors in his clothing.



**Background:** White vinyl in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 7

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

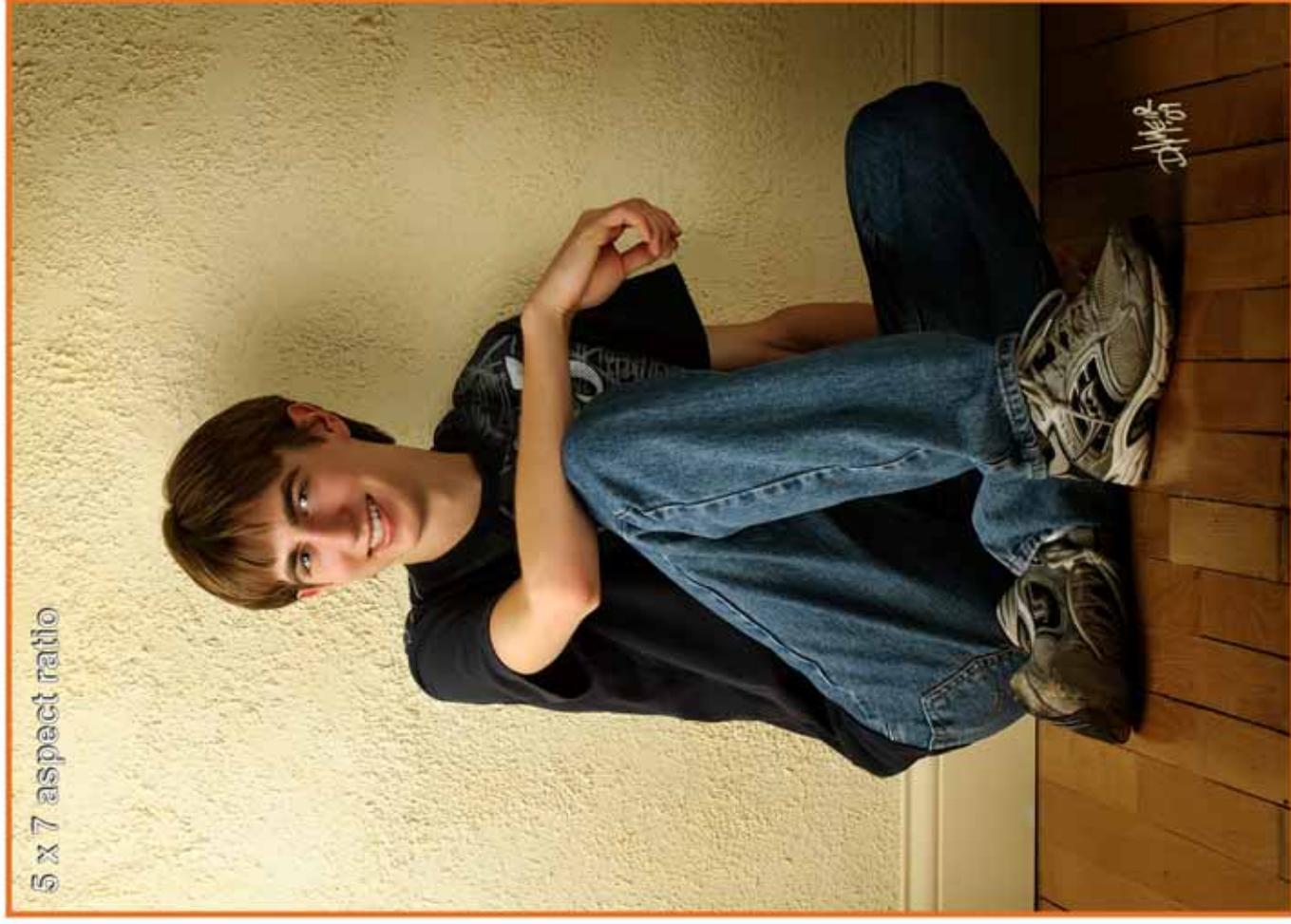


## Comments:

Could have been standing on his head - what Mom is going to pass up this smile.  
Nice natural relaxed pose.

Background: Brick wall in studio  
Lighting Setup: # 4

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Would this have been better with different tennis shoes? Probably. But then senior portraits aren't always about perfection - they're about showing this person at this age.

If I were doing a family portrait would I want these shoes - no way, and I'd tell them we have to do something about it. Not here.

**Background:** Beige stucco wall in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 1

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

First of three sitting in a chair poses.

From a series on this chair - one would have been a close up with his arms on the back; maybe another with his head resting on his hand. Simple easy variety.

8 x 10 aspect ratio



Background: Monet's Garden

Lighting Setup: # 2

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



**Comments:**

You saw this pose earlier in the close up section. It was a different guy and it was cropped horizontal.

Shoot 'em both. You can't win if you don't enter.

**Background:** Monet's Garden

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 with no background light

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



**Comments:**

Here he's sitting on a stool with his feet on the upper pegs raising his knees higher.

**Background:** Monet's Garden

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 with no background light

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Go home - whenever possible - it personalizes the portraits. But make sure the air is on - it was about 150 degrees that day.

Natural light with off camera fill flash.

Background: Client's home

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Standing In-studio**

[www.the-portrait-expert.com](http://www.the-portrait-expert.com)

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

A higher than eye level camera angle looks good on just about everyone. I'm 6'4" but I always have a step stool handy for these images.

I used to fret about blowing out the high lights on the metal tubes - don't worry about it anymore and no one has ever complained.

Background: Swinging wall metal tubes

Lighting Setup: # 5

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Body away from the light and face back towards it. Camera angle helps to accent his slight lean. Color harmony between shirt and background.

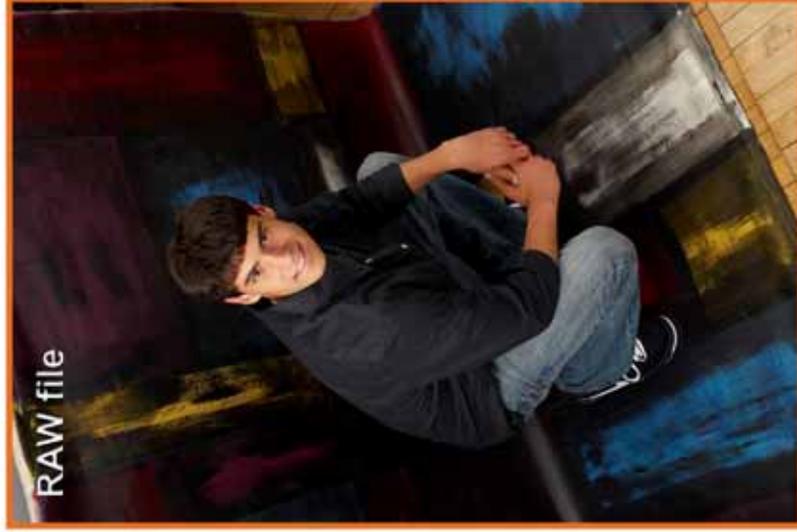
Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 2 with no background light



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio

## Comments:

Very popular pose.

I always try to get them to have one knee - here his left knee - higher than the other. Gives them - as a photographer friend of mine puts it - less of a "taking-a-dump-in-the-woods-look". It's not as obvious in this pose as it is shooting straight on at the same level.

Background: Custom painted by Dave

Lighting Setup: # 1

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I think it looks more masculine to have a guy cross his arms with his fists tucked in and no hands exposed. This was a case of, "cross your arms", take the picture and then tweak it. But they don't always pick the tweaked one. While the other image probably technically looked better he probably always crosses his arms like this and that's why Mom liked it.

Moral of the story - the more relaxed your subject is, the more they trust you, the more they will be themselves which will yield better images.

**Background:** Brick wall in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 4

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Color harmony - you definitely improve your chances of having it if you can paint at least some of your own backgrounds.

I try hard for relaxed and natural poses with guys. With girls you can be a little more posey - they're usually into the whole senior picture thing more. You'll score points with Mom and the guy if you just let them be themselves. With a little guidance

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 with no background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

## Comments:

Earlier I said a low camera angle can make your subject look menacing. Low camera angle definitely does it here combined with the high light angle casting shadows over his eyes.

Oh my goodness what would the judges say - "There's no light in his eyes, there's no detail in the shadows. Off with the photographers head!"

Except they can't lop off your head because your clients pay you lots of money for creating images they like so you have plenty to pay your "portrait-judge-body-guard"!

Nay, Nay a Boo Boo!!!

**Background:** Brick wall in studio

**Lighting Setup:** # 4 with light raised high



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Look for the light Grasshopper.

Big set of patio doors to his left/camera right. Filled it a little with off camera flash. On a tripod with a shallow depth of field to throw that background into softness.

Background: Client's home

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

You saw this guy earlier with the profile cello image. Top of his class, cellist, going to the Air Force Academy. Went on the class trip to Germany and came back with this. I forgot about the outfit 'til the session was over, he was on the way out the door when I noticed the hat. "No, no, no, no," I said, "you get back in here and let's do that outfit." Some times you gotta push those guys. He was glad I did.

Stone wall - all made from two inch thick pink polystyrene that I hand carved and painted.

**Background:** Swinging wall stone house set

**Lighting Setup:** # 6

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Harmony in color and pose and background is important, but whenever possible I also try for contrast.

"Would you wear that shirt and tie with the tie loose and the sleeves rolled up?" - "Yeah I guess." Let's do it.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 1 with background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Remember that triangular patch of Rembrandt lighting I've been harping about - here's a good example of how it should be.

The kicker light however, on his left cheek, is a little strong. Difficult with dark clothing and dark hair to provide separation against a dark background. It's there, just pretty subdued.

Background: Parisian Chablis

Lighting Setup: # 2 with no background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Loud striped shirt - seamless paper to the rescue. Seamless paper is a cheap easy way to have a background that goes with anything.

This is nice lighting. Different than the last one - the kicker on his left cheek is just right. Gold-locks would be happy.

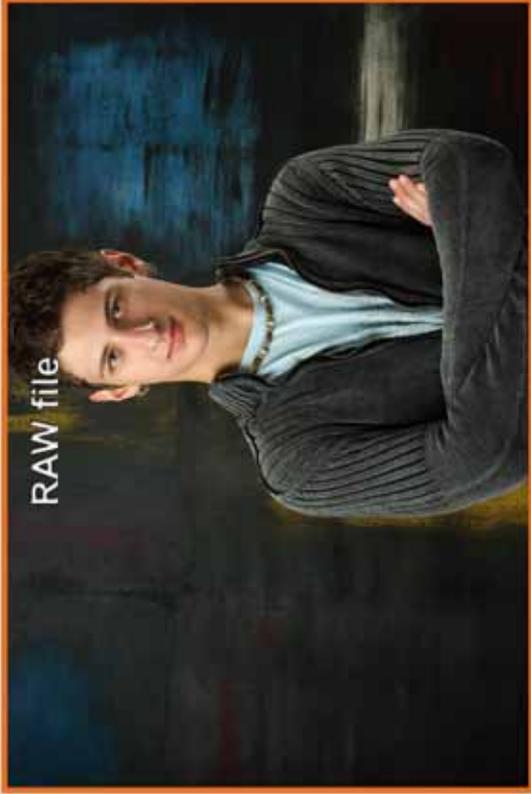
Background: Blue seamless paper

Lighting Setup: # 1 with background light

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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8 x 10 aspect ratio



#### Comments:

I'm showing you two images at right to illustrate a point I made earlier about crossed arms on guys. The bottom and the RAW image are how I shot it and how they bought it. As I was putting this together I did a down and dirty quick retouch job to remove his fingers.

Your mind initially will say it looks funny - because you know his fingers were there. So cover the other ones up or something. You eyes go to his - there's nothing else - no fingers - to distract your attention. Sure it's natural to have his fingers there - I just like it the other way. And I'm Gumby dammit!

**Background:** Custom painted by Dave

**Lighting Setup:** # 2 with no background light

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Formals**

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

If you're wondering why you see so many images of this guy it's because his first name is Aaron. As I was pulling images for this guide he was the first one up.

Parents really like this pose - their boy all dressed up but looking casual. Notice I removed the spot of white shirt that was showing at the waist. Would have been nice to see some shirt cuff.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Pretty standard formal head and shoulder pose. His right arm is on a posing table that has been lowered to make him lean a little bit. Head could have been a little more to the light.

8 x 10 aspect ratio



Background: Brown/blue formal background

Lighting Setup: # 2

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I have three formal painted backgrounds; this one which is mostly blues; another that is all grays and the last one you saw in the previous image - brown and blue. I do 90% of my formal portraits on this background.

I always try to get their shirt cuffs pulled out for this pose but then they usually slip back in.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

From year to year depending on my mood I flip back and forth on the main light I use for formal portraits. Go back to the last image and look at the light on his face - in particular the softness of the transition line from high light to shadow. That image was done with a 4' x 6' Soff-Box.

Now look at this image. This is done with a 14" x 48" Strip Soff-Box. Notice the hardness of the transition line and the stronger light ratio. Also how much "sharper" this image appears - not focus but sharpness of light.

Background: **Blue Lord Nelson**

Lighting Setup: **# 3**

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file

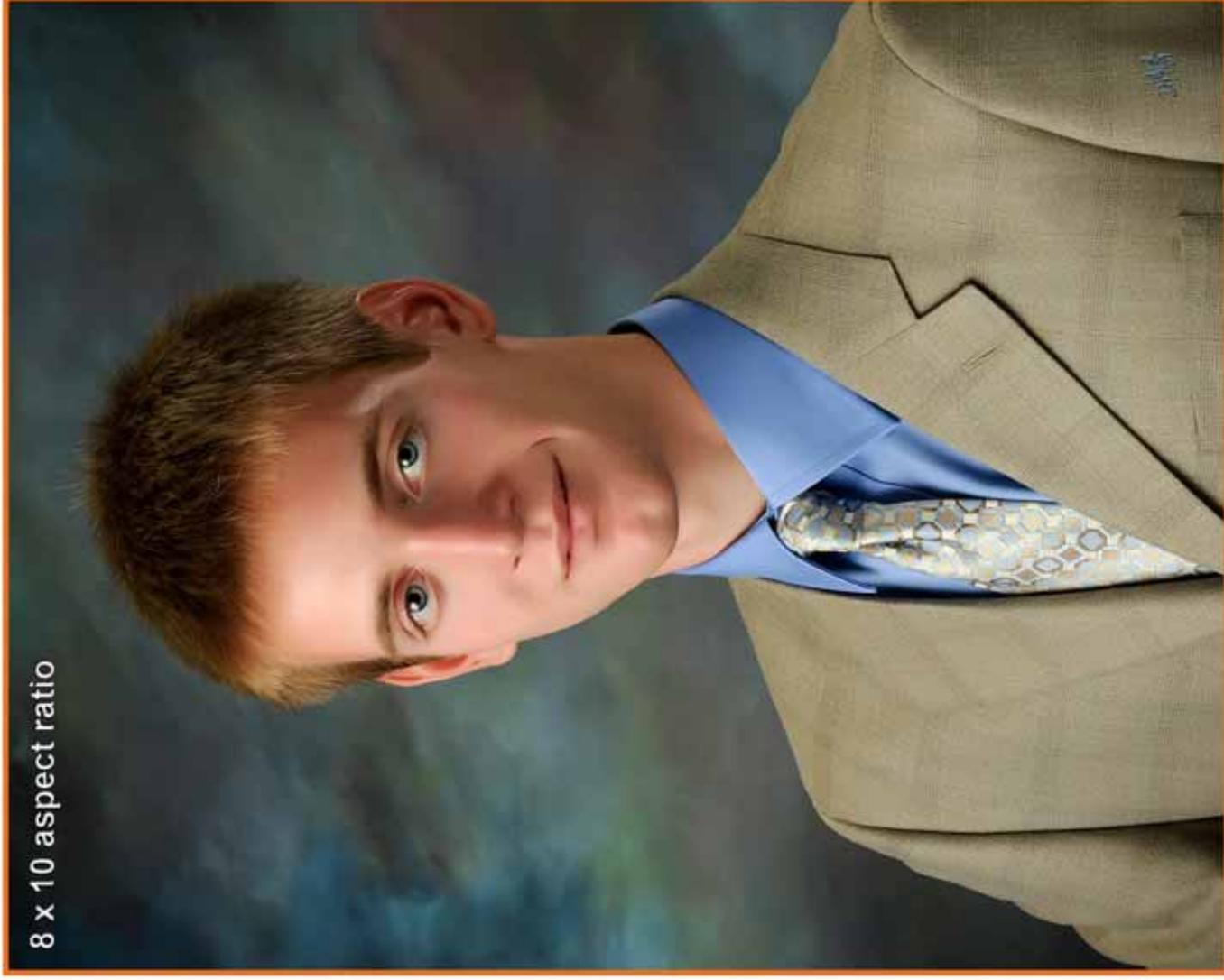


**Comments:**

Second standard formal pose. I like this one with guys but not so much with girls. It sells to both.

**Background:** Blue Lord Nelson  
**Lighting Setup:** # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Winner, winner, chicken dinner if you have someone going into the ministry.

You have to get to know your subject. I've had other kids bring in their bibles that would have thought this was cheeseborough. This guy and his Mom really liked this pose - as did I.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2 with main light to back left

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Just started doing this pose this last summer and I really like it.

Right foot up on a block, important they sit up straight. Little bit of weight on both hands.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson

Lighting Setup: # 2

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio

Comments:  
Formal/casual.

Background: Blue Lord Nelson  
Lighting Setup: # 2

**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Standing Outdoors**

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Ask them to put their shoulders against the wall and push their butt away from the wall - then tilt the camera a little.

Background: Stone wall

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

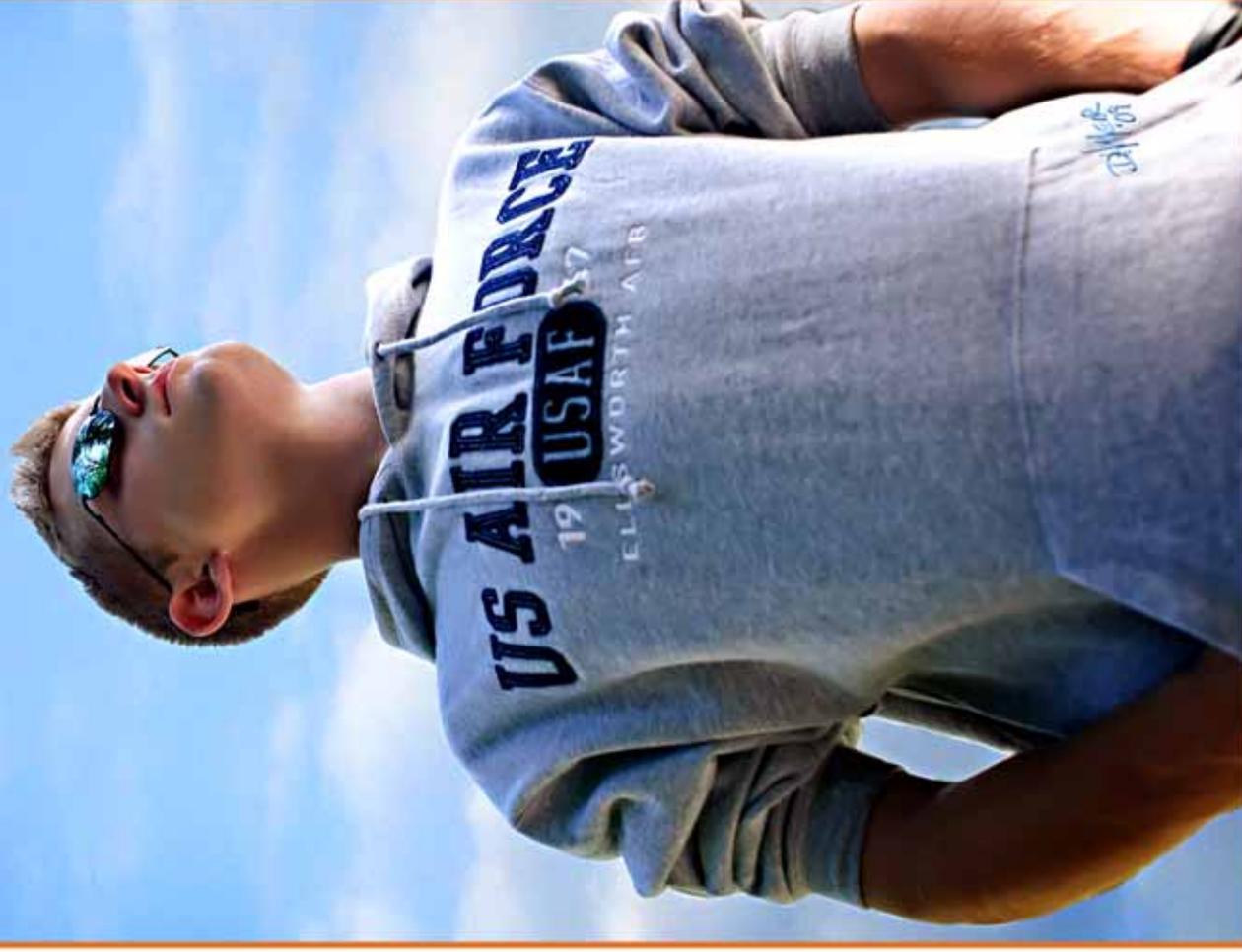
His idea and it really needed a deep blue sky - but there wasn't one that day. Every once in awhile I go out taking pictures of textures - to use as overlays on some images. This was an image of some clouds I had on file.

So so.

Background: Sky

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

## Comments:

Here's that same tree you saw with a girl.

I remember reading about a very successful studio out in California - I mean like several hundred thousand a year successful. The guy had one background.

A good portrait is not about the fancy background or expensive prop. It's about expression on the subject's face. If you can do an adequate job of lighting and posing and an awesome job of making your clients feel comfortable - you will be successful. If you're a techno dweeb that likes photography for the equipment - best you stick to landscapes and flowers.

**Background:** Tree and greenery

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

RAW file



8 x 10 aspect ratio



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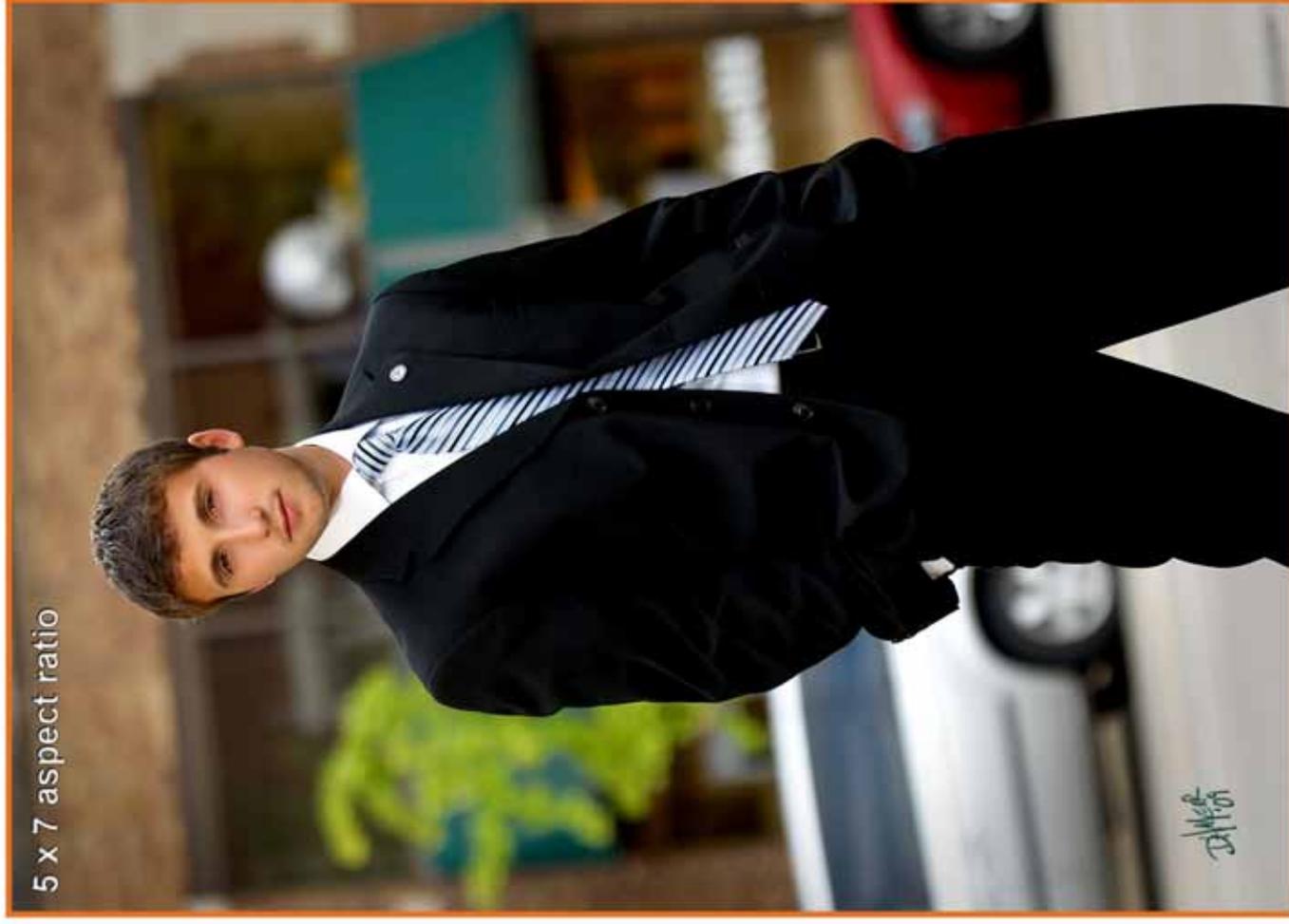
# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Look at how he "pops" off the out of focus background. Cool lean - he was comfortable in a suit.

This kid was selling cars he bought at auction from his Dad's backyard - and he was 17. If he's not a millionaire yet I'd be surprised.



**Background:** Alley behind studio

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Again with the glass blocks. You can see in the RAW file the color is not obvious so a little saturation tool helps pop the green.



Background: Parking ramp & glass blocks

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Another very popular spot. Guys request this image every year - and guys never request anything.

Leading lines, depth, overhang blocks overhead light.

**Background:** Side entrance to hotel - under overhang

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

You saw this spot earlier in the girl section. Girl with long curly hair and arms wrapped in a self hug.

The background was pretty bright so I increased the contrast in processing to make him darker. Obviously the framing by the arch is cool -it's just never in the right light to make a balanced image.

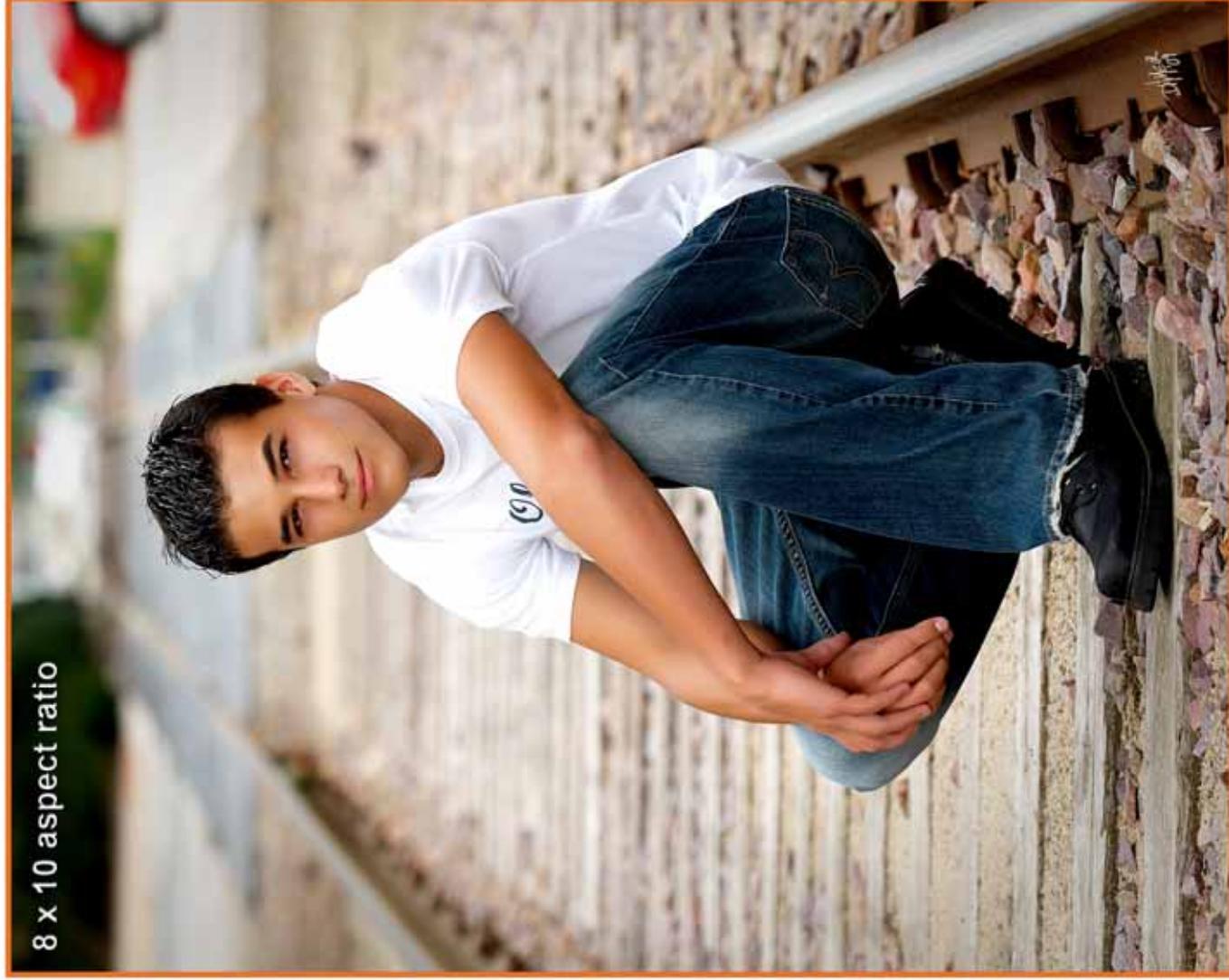
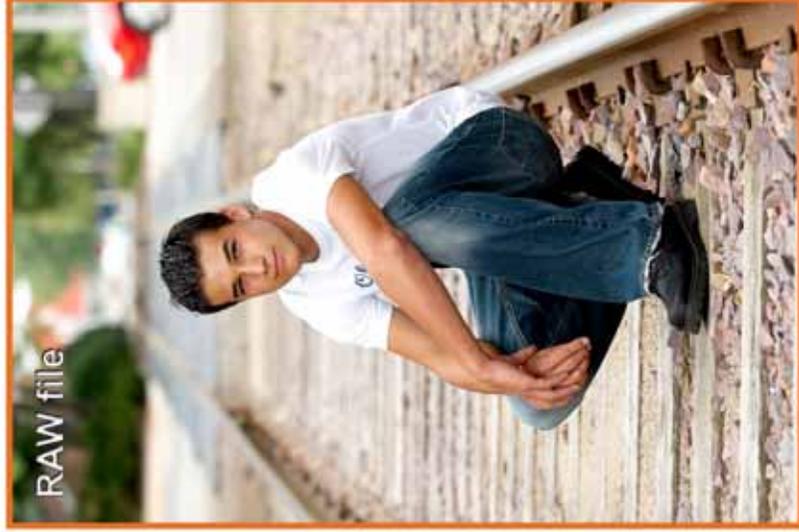


**Background:** Stone arch and bushes

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

One knee higher than the other knee - like this.  
You just can't lose with railroad tracks.

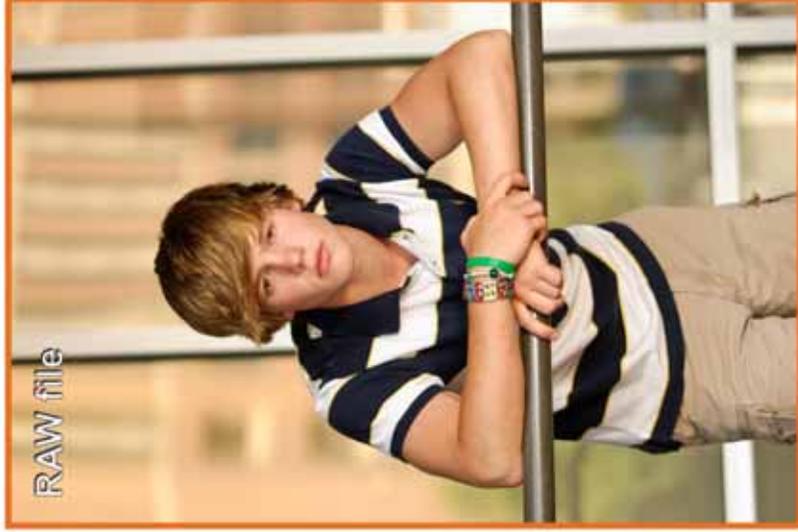
Background: Railroad tracks

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

You've seen this spot before - real tight close up of a girl, arm over her head.

This is the rear entrance to a new office building down the street from us. The building reflected in the glass is the courthouse which is across the river. Late in the afternoon the western sun bounces off the courthouse and creates amazing light in this spot.

**Background:** Entrance to office building

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

8 x 10 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

We have these big concrete planters on the sidewalk in front of our studio. I'm laying on my back on the ground and he's standing on the edge of the planter about three feet off the ground.

Something different and less normal. All work and no play makes Dave a dull boy.

Background: Sky

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Whereas the alley behind our studio is all nice and pretty this one is the exact opposite. You expect to find a dead body or at least some rats every time you go over there. (not really, this is Rochester, MN - we don't have rats;-)

Shallow depth of field makes the difference. That, and all the buildings on the opposite side of this alley are painted beige so the early morning sun bounces off of them creating great light.

**Background:** Brick wall and vines

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

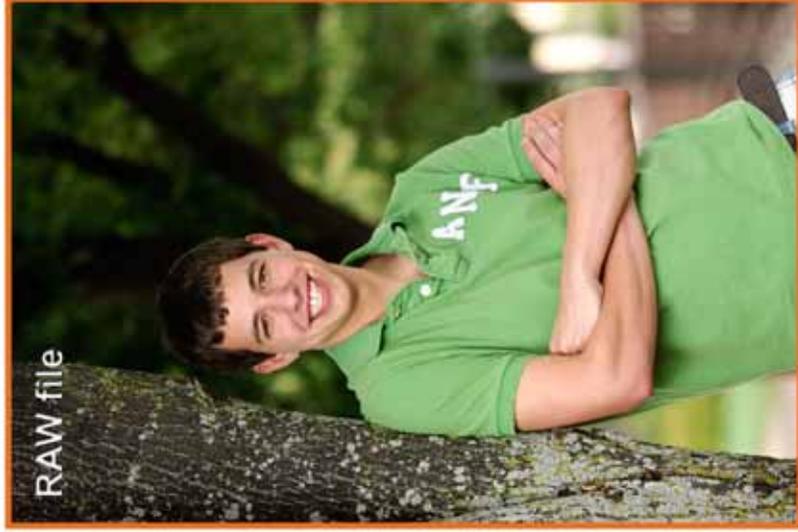
5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

He is within 15 feet of a parking lot full of cars. Our alley session is mostly urban grunge and is popular with guys - but Moms still want something natural.

A low camera angle and shallow depth of field take this spot out of the parking lot.

Background: Trees by parking lot

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



RAW file



5 x 7 aspect ratio

## Comments:

Did this for the first time last year and liked how it came out. Course I have to stand in a busy street to get the right angle - anything for the client! Umm K Mr. Garrison.

Background: Sidewalk and parking meter

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

Here's that nasty alley again. He is in fact standing on a gravel driveway covered with trash, broken bottles and a couple of decapitated naked baby dolls. There is a gas meter just out of frame to his right and the door to the back of the building just out of frame to his left.

And that is some seriously nice light hitting his hair. I don't care who you are, that's a nice pitcher right there.

**Background:** Vines

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

5 x 7 aspect ratio



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**Comments:**

Wheelchair ramp entrance to the back of the building next to us - so the railing is angled.



**Background:** Stucco wall in alley

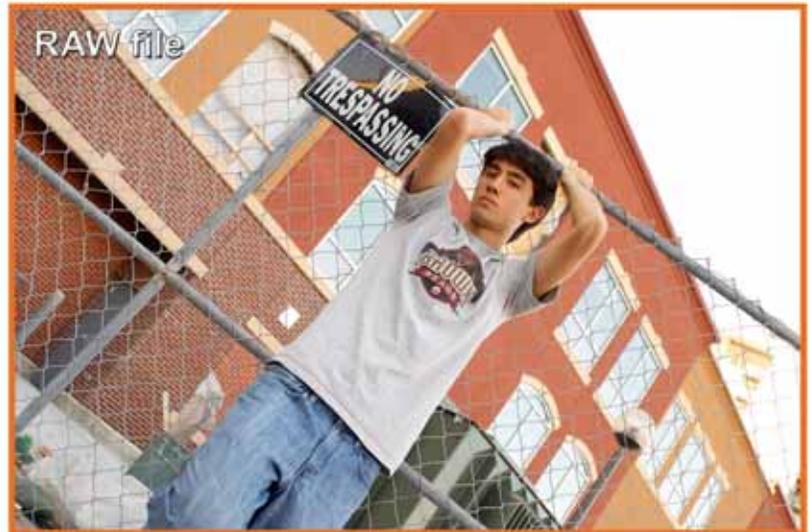
**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



**Comments:**

Some new buildings that were still under construction so there was a lot of trash around. Probably kinda busy but I had fun doing it.

163 +/- different filters - don't ask me which ones.



**Background:** Alley buildings

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

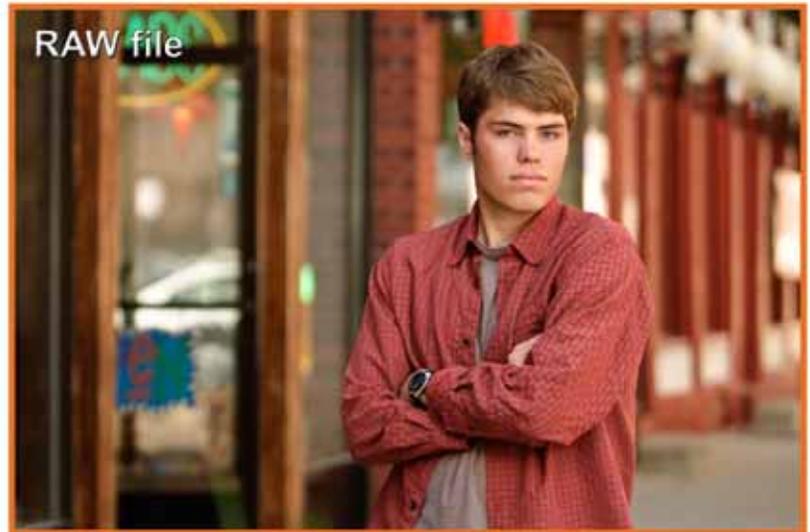


# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

I like this for the simple pose, leading lines and color harmony.

I removed the bright red light over his head as well as the green neon in the upper left.



**Background:** City street and buildings

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



**Comments:**

A different take on the popular hotel entrance. One of my favorite Kubota filters is called 300esque - and this is it.

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**Background:** Hotel side entrance

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Wide stripes on his shirt match the door.  
Huh, huh is that cool or what. Is it weird to get excited about stuff like that?



**Background:** Loading dock door

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

**Comments:**

Same parking meter as the other guy.  
Nice close up pose for an outdoor image.



**Background:** Parking meter and windows

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



**Comments:**

I like this one mostly because the Mom looked at me like I was nuts when I sat him here and then they bought this one and another one from this spot.

He's sitting on the floor of a deck with his arms on the bench seat. It was kind of hard to get him positioned just right but I really wanted to use the leading lines of the deck railing.



**Background:** Deck railing

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

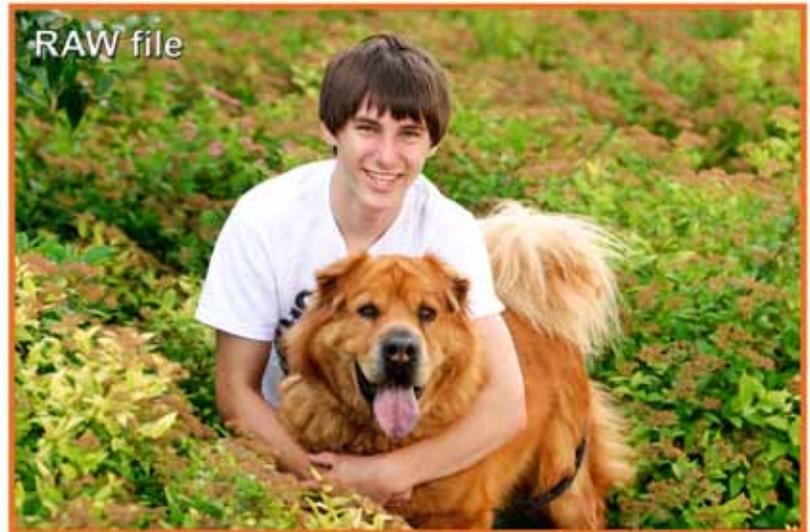


**Comments:**

Remember the girl in the coral colored sweatshirt? - tight head shot in these same spirea.

What a great dog, and now with the help of the saturation tool the spirea really go with his coat.

They are both just off the edge of a sidewalk. High camera angle to eliminate parking ramp that is behind them.



**Background:** Spirea

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



**the portrait expert posing guide**

# **Sitting Outdoors**

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

Just outside the back door of the studio so it wasn't too far to haul the chair.  
Normal is not always necessary.

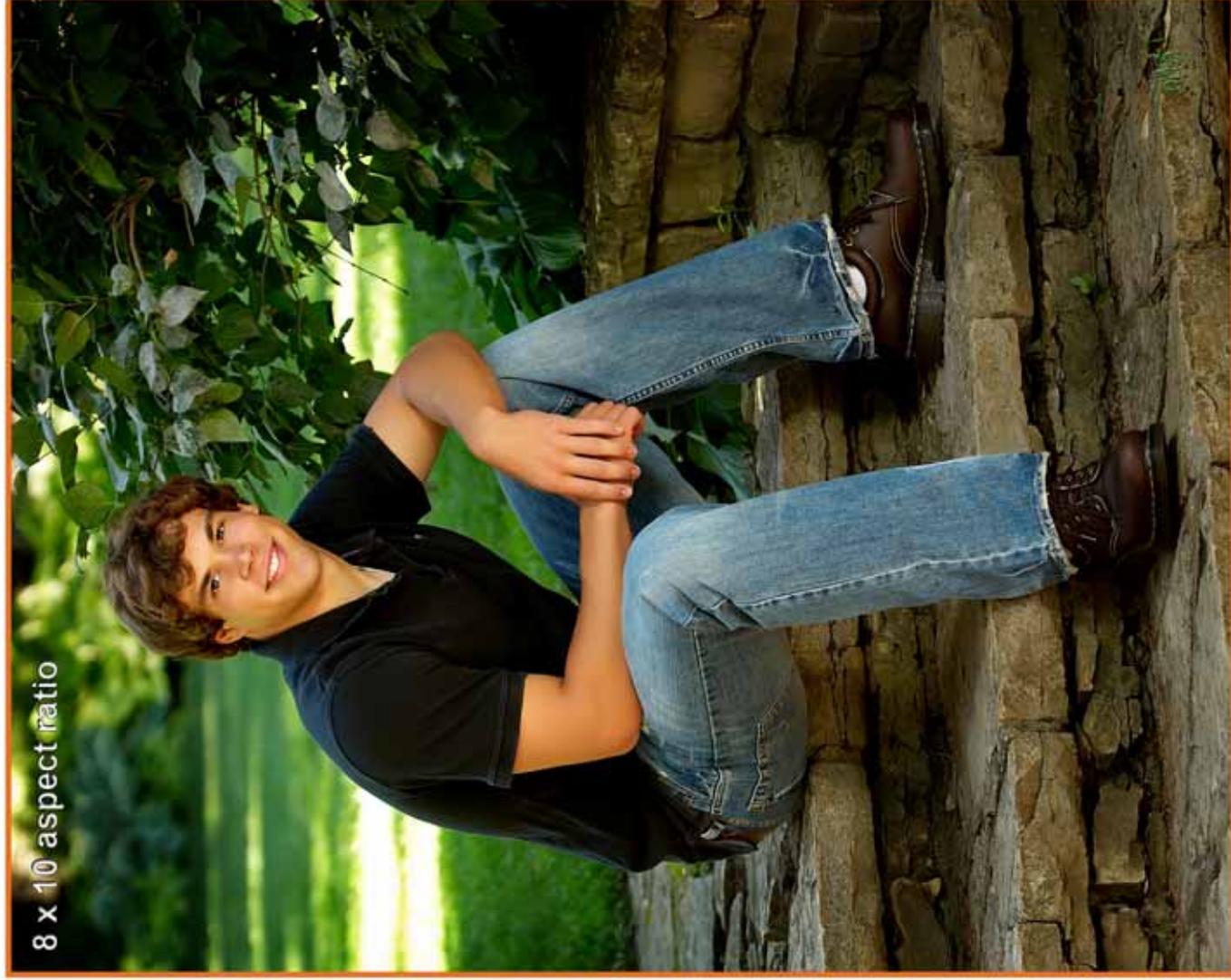
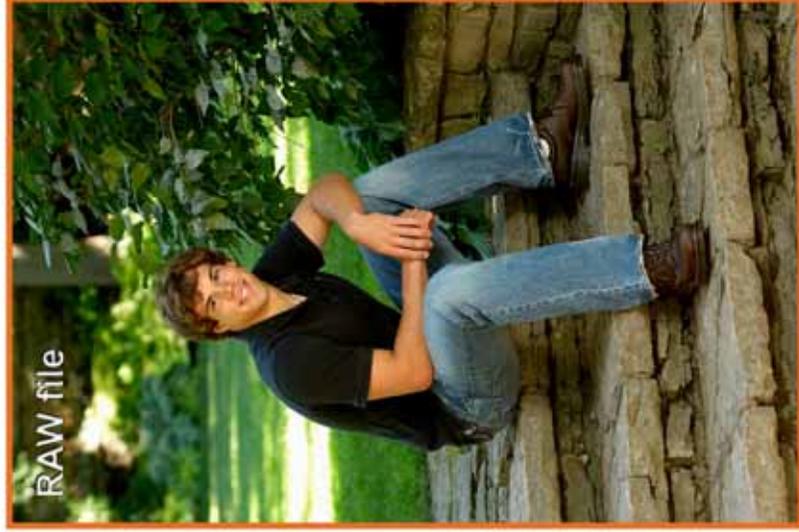
**Background:** Alley and construction junk

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash



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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

I really like this spot and for years fretted about the hot sun on the grass in the background. I finally just decided to live with it and nobody seems to care.

**Background:** Stone steps in garden

**Lighting Setup:** # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide



## Comments:

The RAW file is okay but I really liked it with this filter.



Background: Brick wall and steel stairs

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

# The Portrait Expert Posing Guide

RAW file



## Comments:

I use park benches a lot and I never have them sit on the seat. This spot had good open shade providing nice light on his face.

8 x 10 aspect ratio



Background: Park bench, grass and trees

Lighting Setup: # Natural light with off camera fill flash

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