How to Look Good in Pictures

Author Info

Last Updated: September 15, 2021   References   Approved

Anyone can look good in pictures by figuring out how best to pose in front of the camera. Even if you feel like you aren't photogenic, learning some simple tricks can make a huge difference. These techniques include positioning your body in better ways, changing the lighting or scenery that you're in, and practicing confidence so that you can come to love any photo someone takes of you. Once you get these methods down, you'll be ready to strike a pose at any moment!

Part 1

Preparing For Taking Pictures

1.

1

Determine why you look good (or bad) in pictures. Study photos of yourself. When did you look good? When did you look bad? Can you spot the difference? Look at pictures of other people and find out why they look good. Some problems might be:
- Lighting of your photo
- Squinted or closed eyes
- Wrong angle on your face
- Not using your best smile
- Cosmetic issues, such as blemishes and black heads, or a hairstyle or clothing choice that doesn't suit you

2.

2

Practice posing in front of a mirror or a camera. The best way to find out your best angle or smile is to practice. Decide what positions you look best in.
- Decide if your right or left side looks the best. Our faces aren't completely symmetrical, so one side generally looks better than the other.
- Try angling your body so that you will be familiar with how to position yourself when you get in front of a camera. You need be turn about 45 degrees for the most flattering pose.
- Your hair style usually helps determine which side looks better, especially if your hairstyle is asymmetrical.[1]

3.

3

Wear the right clothes. Wear clothes that you know look good on you. Dress in flattering cuts for your body type. Know what colors look good with your complexion and hair. This is important for looking your best in photos. As a general rule, solids look better than patterns.[2]

- When wearing patterns, make sure to choose them carefully. Patterns can make you look bad, depending on your body shape. Smaller patterns can look busy and messy in a photo. Instead of wearing patterns from head to foot, pick one patterned element in your wardrobe.[3]
- If you want to look thinner, wear darker clothes. If you're thin, try wearing a light dress or light-colored sports coat.[4]
- Most importantly, wear clothes that you are confident in.

4.

4

Smile naturally. A fake smile can make you look bad in a photo. It looks forced and doesn't meet your eyes. When you take a photo, you need to give your best, most natural smile so you look your best.

- To give your best smile, you need to feel some kind of emotion. If you aren't happy in the moment, think of a happy memory, your favorite meal, or something that makes you laugh.[5]
- A real smile engages the eyes. Try squinting with your lower lids. This can help you look more natural.[6]
- Put the tip of your tongue on the back of your top teeth. This can help you smile naturally and avoid a too-wide grin.[7]
- Get someone standing out of the picture frame to make you laugh.
- Practice in a mirror. Learn to feel the difference between your natural smile and your fake smile.

5.

5

Get the right makeup. For women, makeup can help make you look great (or terrible) in photos. Learning how to highlight the right areas can help make you look good in just about any photo.

- Use concealer instead of thick foundation. Use concealer for those trouble spots on your face, like red areas around the nose or dark circles under your eyes. Place concealer on the shadows on your face, which can be found by tilting your chin down while looking in the mirror. Then place translucent powder on your T-zone - the forehead, nose, cheeks, and chin. These areas can look greasy.[8]
- Line the eyes with eyeliner to help them not disappear in a photo.[9] Pair that with mascara to help your eyes pop.[10]
- Place some blush on your cheeks to make them look less flat. Try a medium pink, coral, or peach shade on your cheeks.[11] If you don't have blush, pinch your cheeks right before you take a photo to give them color.

6.

6

Give your hair some life. Before posing for a picture, flip your head over. This gives some volume if your hair has gone flat. You can also try running your hands through your hair to fix your part or fluff it up.

- Go easy on the styling products. Hair that looks wet or crunchy from too much product won't photograph well.[12]
- Control frizz so you don't see flyaways in your photo. Put some pomade or dry oil on your hands to help sleek down your hair.[13]
- Also think about posing your hair. Don't have it on your shoulders. Instead, have it in front of you, behind you, or over one shoulder. Practice beforehand and decide which placement flatters you most.[14]

Part 2

Learning How to Take Good Pictures

1.

1

Tilt your head. When you look at the camera, don't look straight at the camera. Look slightly above or slightly below. Then, tilt your head up or down slightly.[15]

> To get a stronger jawline and reduce the likelihood of a double chin, elongate your neck and tilt your chin down. It might feel funny, but it'll help you look great.[16]

2.

2

Find the light. Lighting is important when taking good pictures. If there's no flash, find a light source that shines on your face, not on the side of your face.

- Lamps, streetlights, windows, and doorways can give good light sources when there's no flash.[17] They also can produce nice soft light for more flattering photos.
- Move around rooms to find the lighting. Try putting the lighting behind you, above you, and in front of you to find the best placement.
- One hour after sunset and one hour before sunset provides nice lighting for photos.[18]
- Avoid lighting which places harsh shadows on your face. This can accentuate imperfections and give you unflattering dark areas. Bright lighting can also emphasize wrinkles and other trouble spots. The sun or bright, harsh overhead lights can cause this unflattering light.[19] Look for lighting that creates an even glow from the forehead to the cheeks to the chin.[20] Try taking photos on a cloudy day or using a lamp or softer light.

3.

3

Angle your body to the camera. Turn your body 45 degrees away from the camera instead of taking a photo full on.[21] This pose gives a slimming effect and creates angles that look better in a photo.

- Pose like you're on the red carpet. Put your hand on your hip, angle your body away from the camera, and turn your face towards it.[22]
- Turn your torso so one shoulder is closer to the camera than the other. This helps make you look slender.[23]
- Whatever you put towards the camera looks the biggest. If you don't want to emphasize parts of your body, make sure they are not the closest to the camera.
- Pull your shoulders back and straighten your back. Good posture can make a world of difference when you are taking a photo.[24]

4.

4

Position your body correctly. Instead of having straight, limp arms and stiff legs, try bending them to give them life. Bend your arms and hold them slightly away from your body. This also helps create shape to your midsection instead of bulk.[25] Keep your hands relaxed and slightly bent.

- Bend your front leg and place your weight in the back leg.[26] Or try crossing your legs at the ankles.
- Pull your arm away from your body and bend it slightly to make it appear slimmer.[27]

5.

5

Take a lot of photos. One of the best ways to get the best picture is to take more than one! Even models go through numerous frames to get that one perfect picture. The more pictures you take, the better likelihood you will get a great photo.[28]

6.

6

Feel confident. Make sure you feel proud of who you are. You are unique and have great features. Focus on that instead of any faults you think you have. Being happy and giving a genuine smile in the photo can make a world of difference.

> Don't try to bend your body into uncomfortable or awkward poses. Pose to flatter your body, but make sure to stay natural. Being stiff will just make you look awkward, which will result in a bad photo.

Community Q&A

- Question

  What are some tips for selfies?

  Community Answer

  I have found using soft light and tilting my head helps. Or try angling your head upwards for more focus on the eyes. Try to highlight your best features. Take a lot of pictures, you're bound to end up with some you like.

- Question

  How can I look as if I am having fun smiling?

  Community Answer

  Think of something that makes you happy, or ask someone to be funny and make you smile.

- Question

  How do you not make your lips look like a zombie's?

  Alyssa

  Community Answer

  Use tinted lip balm or lip gloss to add moisture and color to your lips.

- Question

  I look chubby in photos when I'm very thin. What should I do? These chubby cheeks make me look a little weird.

  Community Answer

  Lifting up your your chin and raising your neck a little takes weight of your face. Sometimes tilting your head to one side also helps. It really just depends on the lighting and angle of the picture.

- Question

  I look stupid in pictures. What can I do?

  Alyssa

  Community Answer

  First off, keep in mind that a lot of people don't like the way they look in photos. There are a few psychological factors that play into this, including that photos often show you a flipped version of what you look like in a mirror, which is the way you normally see yourself. That said, you can just embrace the "stupidity" and make silly faces whenever you're featured in a photo.

- Question

  What poses are best for someone who is short?

  Community Answer

  Angle your camera when taking a selfie, and bring it to eye level. Don't show your whole body. If this doesn't work, sit down, as it is harder to tell your height when sitting down. Sit up straight and raise your head, or don't show the whole of your face.

- Question

  I don't know how to smile correctly.

  Community Answer

  Don't sweat it. There are some great tips in How to Smile.

- Question

  How do I fix my eyebrows that look evil or mad when I smile?

  Community Answer

  They might be too close to each other. When you look angry, you tend to pull your brows together, so if you look naturally furious, it may be because of the way you pluck your brows. Brows are very important for showing emotions.

- Question

  What are the right clothes to wear to look good in pictures?

  Community Answer

  Choose clothes that fit well and are not too light. Lighter fabrics may appear see-through in photographs.

- Question

  Why is my face reversed when taking a selfie?

  Community Answer

  On some phones, the front camera is set to take pictures in mirror mode, but this can usually be reversed. On other phones, the image you see on the screen when taking the selfie is a mirror image, but the actual picture you take will face the right way. It's designed this way basically to enable people to use the front camera as a mirror.

Show more answers
Ask a Question

Submit

Video

Tips

- Some people look good smiling showing their teeth but some don't. Observe what's best for you.

- Try out poses and see what looks best.

- Slightly pouting (if you are a girl)might improve your pics.

Always feel free to experiment.

More References (19)

About this article

wikiHow is a "wiki," similar to Wikipedia, which means that many of our articles are co-written by multiple authors. To create this article, 101 people, some anonymous, worked to edit and improve it over time. This article has been viewed 1,152,147 times.

8 votes - 75%

Co-authors: 101

Updated: September 15, 2021

Views: 1,152,147

Print

Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 1,152,147 times.

Did this article help you?