



WHAT TO WEAR
• GUIDE •
TOM CARR PHOTOGRAPHY



OH, WHAT SHOULD I WEAR ... ?

This is probably the number one question we get asked before a photo shoot. It can be pretty confusing and stressful trying to decide what outfits would be best for your photography session ... but worry not! This guide will help you with styling tips and tricks to select clothing options for a perfect outcome on photo day.



FIRST AND FOREMOST, BE YOU!
YOUR CLOTHING CHOICES SHOULD
ALLOW YOU TO BE YOURSELF AND
REFLECT YOUR FAMILY

COMPLEMENTING FAMILY OUTFITS

Gone are the days of 1990s family portraits where everyone in the picture would wear the same outfit. A good way to start planning a photo session is to choose a color scheme. Try to choose a palette that has a mix of neutral shades and a bright color. Another option is a color scheme with one main color and different variations of that color.



CHOOSE ONE PERSON TO STAND
OUT FOR CENTER STAGE

Instead of having everyone in the photo compete for center stage, you may want to choose one person to stand out from the others. They can wear one impactful piece that inspires the accessories and colors in everyone else's outfits. Typically, it's easier to have a woman's or girl's outfit be the focal point of a picture.

Once you've chosen one person to be the focus of the photograph, use a bright color to draw viewers' eyes in. Everyone else in the photo can have accessories that match the bright color, making the photo look unified and complete.



MAKE A PHOTO INTERESTING & UNIFIED WITH ACCESSORIES

Accessories are often just what a photo needs to take it from drab to engaging. Don't limit yourself to jewelry when you think about accessories for photo shoots. There's plenty to choose from for both sexes and all ages—outerwear, jewelry, hats, headbands, flowers in a girl's hair, scarves, and more.

You want to use a light hand when it comes to accessorizing. Too many accessories, especially if they are big or bright, can overwhelm a photo and take the focus off what is really important—your subjects! This is particularly true for little ones. Their unique personalities and beauty need to be allowed to shine through, not be overshadowed by a gigantic headband or overdone accessories. Remember, accessories are just there to enhance what your subjects are bringing to the photo—their personality and beauty.





After you've chosen your color palette — discussed above — choose one or two bright accent colors that you can use for accessories throughout the photos. If you've chosen a toddler girl to be take center stage in the photo, look at the colors that are in her outfit. Her outfit might feature a pattern with gray, teal, and salmon colors. Mom can wear a bold teal necklace and matching earrings, Dad can sport a salmon tie, and the big brother can wear a funky bowtie or some fun teal socks. The possibilities are limitless!

Consider using multiple accessories for each subject throughout your photo shoot. Depending on how many accessories you have, you can do one or two changes throughout the shoot. This is much easier than doing full clothing changes, but it's enough to give photos a whole new feel.

Rather than making accessories a static part of the photo, get subjects interacting with them! Baby can grab Mom's necklace during a photo, a child can hold their hat in front of them for a picture with a little bit of attitude, or you can have someone drape their jacket over their shoulder as they turn towards the camera.

Look into parents' wardrobes for accessories that kids can use. This plays on the jubilation of youth and creates a link in the photo between a parent and the child. A little boy looks adorable with his dad's hat balanced on his head, and little girls often love playing with mom's jewelry.

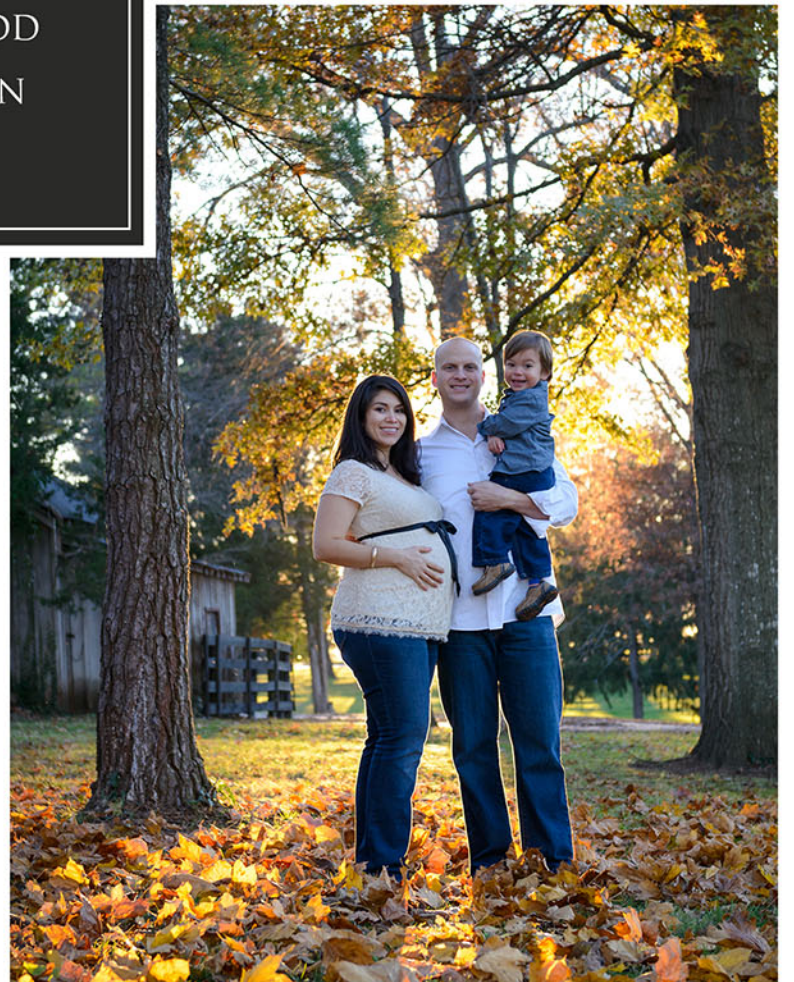
LAYER YOUR OUTFITS AND USE DIFFERENT TEXTURES

Nothing draws the eye to a photo like differences. Two easy ways to add fun differences to a photo are layers and different textures.

Layers offer different aspects to a photo in several different ways. Subjects can take on and take off layers for different looks in each photo, and layers add a nice bit of color variation.

THIS IS A GREAT TECHNIQUE FOR
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS TO ADD
DIFFERENT POINTS OF INTEREST IN
THE PHOTO.

Different fabrics and accessories can give much-needed texture to a photo. Look for pieces of clothing with embroidered details, lace collars or accents, ribbons, ruffles, and other fun textures. These types of different textures show up well in black and white photos as well as color photos, giving a pop of personality to each photo. Plan your outfits and layers to match your vision for the photo and what brings out your subjects' personalities and styles.



USE FUN PROPS TO BRING MORE PERSONALITY TO A PHOTO SHOOT

For a photo that focuses on the subjects and brings out their best traits, simple props are the best way to add some fun to a photograph. Look at the location of a photo shoot and the vibe of the shoot. Is it fun? Romantic? Nostalgic? Keep your props in line with the theme of a photograph so they enhance the photo, rather than detract from it.

A photo in a meadow can be enhanced with a handful of wildflowers. A romantic engagement photo is made even sweeter when a couple holds an object that's meaningful to their courtship. For photos featuring children, pick objects that are meaningful to them for the photo. A stuffed animal adds to the feel of a photo and will make you smile when you look at the photo years later. Just make sure that a prop fits in with the picture!



KEEP YOUR PROPS IN LINE WITH
THE THEME OF A PHOTOGRAPH



EVERYTHING MATTERS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM ... YES THAT INCLUDES SHOES !

Everything that is worn or used in a photo shoot affects the look and feel of each photo. This includes shoes. Don't let shoes and footwear be an overlooked part of your outfit planning. A pair of shoes that doesn't fit in with the rest of a photo can detract from the picture.

Unless you have tennis shoes that are unique and fun enough to fit in with the vibe of a photo shoot, you may want to consider other footwear options for your pictures. For women, ballet flats come in almost every color.

Choosing a pair of flats that fit in with the color scheme is a great way to make a photo look great and add a burst of color. Shoes, when matched with accessories that other subjects in the photo are wearing, can tie a photo together. Bright yellow ballet flats can match a man's yellow tie or a little girl's headband. This creates a unified feel in a photo without making it too cutesy. Consider going barefoot if the shoot allows for it. Bare feet can create a rustic, casual feel that better shows off the natural personality and interaction of the subjects in a photo.

KEEP IT CLASSIC FOR A TIMELESS LOOK

While your preferences may be different, many photographers and subjects alike prefer to dress in timeless and classic looks that will last through the years. Wearing clothes that are too trendy might mean that the photos will look outdated in a matter of months of years. If you choose clothes that have looked good for years, the photos will likely continue to look good and up-to-date for years to come. For a classic look, choose a soft color palette with a couple of bright colors that are repeated in accessories throughout the photos. Sticking to timeless looks will let your subjects' personalities shine through. However, if a family wishes to use trendy, modern clothing, that is their prerogative. Either way, you can make a beautiful photo!



KEEP THE DISPLAY IN MIND

FOR A CLASSIC LOOK, CHOOSE A
SOFT COLOR PALETTE WITH A
COUPLE OF BRIGHT COLORS

As you plan out a photo shoot, remember to think about where and how pictures will be displayed. If you are planning on displaying photos on your living room wall, tie the colors and setup of your photos to the color scheme of the room. Photos that will go up in a child's room should emulate the fun, playful spirit of children and capture the age of your children. Pictures that will be used for invitations, Christmas cards, or announcements, keep the smaller display size of the photo in mind. Small details may get lost in a smaller photo, so use bold accessories that will show up in a 4 x 6 photo.



FREE-FLOWING CLOTHING FOR
KIDS WILL ALLOW THEM TO MOVE
EASIER AND STAY COMFORTABLE



CHOOSING CLOTHES FOR CHILDREN

Adults can be comfortable in just about anything for the length of a photo shoot. However, choosing perfect children's clothing is of the utmost importance for a good photo shoot. Kids can be made itchy or uncomfortable by the smallest inconvenience—a tag in the back of a shirt or a fabric that rubs against the skin wrong. Choose free-flowing clothing for kids will allow them to move easier and stay comfortable throughout the photo shoot. For outdoor photos, consider bright, free-flowing clothing that will move with the child and add movement and life to a photo. A dress that twirls not only enchants a little girl, it make a photo exciting and engaging.

A superhero cape has the same effect for a boy—they feel excited about the photo and that enthusiasm shows in the photo

To ensure that the children are happy and at ease during photos, let them pick their own clothing. They'll pick something that shows off what their preferences and interests are. If you are worried about what they'll choose, try selecting three or four main outfits that you would be happy with your child wearing for a photo. Let them choose from the outfits you've selected; they'll still feel like they got to make the decision.



PATTERNED CLOTHES

Patterns are like bright colors and accessories in photos — they are great when they are used with a light hand. One person wearing a patterned top or dress can break up the picture into visually interesting chunks. To avoid overwhelming a photo, have just one subject in a photo wear a bold pattern. In the rest of the photo, have small bursts of patterns to draw the eye through the photo. For instance, a little girl dressed in a bold patterned dress can look great next to her mother who is wearing a subtly patterned scarf.

PATTERNS ARE LIKE BRIGHT COLORS IN PHOTOS—THEY ARE GREAT WHEN THEY ARE USED WITH A LIGHT HAND

LOCATION ... LOCATION

As you plan your photo shoot outfits, keep the location in mind. You want the clothing choices and the photo setting to complement each other, not look like they don't match. Imagine a little girl with a vintage cotton dress, sporting pigtails and holding a handful of flowers she picked herself. This would look great in a meadow or a farm setting. However, the same little girl would look a bit strange in an urban photo setting.

You also want to make sure that the colors and patterns you choose fit well in the environment you've selected. If a subject's clothing is the same color as the background, she or he may blend in. It may be easier to first choose the location for a photo shoot and then plan outfits around that location. If you're shooting in an area with lots of patterns and visually distracting elements, bright, solid colors may be just what your subjects need to stand out.

DO'S & DON'TS TIPS & TRICKS

Avoid outfits that mean that everyone is wearing the same color or pattern. This makes a photo look dull and outdated, not to mention taking away from your subjects' unique personalities and preferences. Choose a color palette and let everyone have their own take on it. This will create a photo that is coordinated and classy without being cheesy or overdone.

Don't choose clothing that has large pictures, labels, logos, or words on it. This often looks too casual for a photo shoot and detracts from the overall feel of a photo. People who look at the photos will notice the logo on your child's shirt before they notice your child's beaming smile. Logos and graphics on clothing can work in some cases. Themed photo shoots may call for these items. In general, however, try to stick with more classic clothes that will show something other than what clothing brands you favor.

If you choose a stylish, modern look for a photo shoot, make your clothing choices wisely. Choosing something that is overly trendy and doesn't have any classic features will make your photos look out-of-date long before they need to.

Stay away from white socks and sneakers. Neither bring anything to a photo, and both can actually detract from the overall look of a photo. If sneakers or white socks are part of a modern look, they may have their place.

If photo subjects have jewelry or accessories they wear all the time, make sure that they fit in with the look of a photo before wearing them in a photo. Watches, earrings, necklaces, and other accessories may need to be removed for a photo shoot.

PHOTOS LOOK MORE NATURAL IF YOU LET A FRESH HAIRCUT GROW
OUT A WEEK OR TWO BEFORE TAKING PHOTOS.

• WHAT TO WEAR IDEA GUIDE •

