

Michael Fotheringham Portraits

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Preparing for your children's portraits

The following suggestions are not strict rules, but provide some ideas to consider for your children's and babies' portraits.

Children's Portraits and Babies' Portraits

Children look great whether they are sparkling clean or have cake smeared on their faces. The best advice that can be given is to let children be themselves. I always try to photograph children laughing and having fun, as well as more serious expressions. That not only ensures getting some dramatic and often humorous photos, but it is often the way to get those angelic photos parents love most. Light rich colours give the impression of youth, humour, and happiness.

Consider what to wear to best capture both age and personality. You will also want to consider bringing in personal items that have special meaning or highlight the occasion. It's a good idea to bring several different outfits for kids — different clothes give the impression of different moods in the portraits, so a couple of quick changes can give you much better value from your photoshoot!

Choose a time and day that considers your family's schedule and habits. Be sure to try on any selected outfits the day before the session.

Favourite toys or possessions that are meaningful to the young ones are a great way to make the kids comfortable, and create great memories to treasure.

Even if you don't plan on taking family portraits, be prepared to get your portrait taken on the day too — if your child is unsettled, sitting with your child, cuddling, or reading a favorite book while I snap portraits of the interaction between you is a great way to get your child comfortable (and get some great photos at the same time). I don't just give up on the portrait if your child is not ready for a solo portrait sitting! Sometimes children just need the extra security of having you with them during the toddler years.

What to bring:

- Wardrobe choices
- A brush or comb
- Any significant possessions that might help tell a personal or family story.
- Some toys or books for children

Consider your hairstyling and cosmetics needs.

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Preparing for your family portraits

Colour coordinating your family always looks good in photographs. You don't need to match entirely, but try to avoid clashing patterns or colours. This works best if you all choose clothes from a single colour range.

For pants and skirts, darker works better than lighter ones, which distract from your face. Longer skirts work better than short ones for the same reason. Wearing long sleeves can be more flattering — bare arms can distract attention away from your face. Try to avoid shirts with logos or brand names (unless your portrait is for advertising the brand). Excessive jewellery can be distracting — choose accessories that bring out the colour in your eyes or complement your clothing.

It's usually a good idea to wear dark colours against light backgrounds, and light colours against dark backgrounds. Bright, rich colours give the impression of youth, while dark muted colours give the impression of maturity. Solid colours or plain or subtle patterns work better than decorative prints and patterns, and go out of style less quickly. Avoid bright reds and orange (they'll battle with your face for attention). Depending on your skin tone, colours like white, yellow, and pink can be over-powering and can make you look pale. In general, the best colours are medium shades of blue, green, burgundy, and rust.

If you have a group of family portrait, everyone should wear complementary colours. The outfits don't have to be identical or all the same colour to look good; however, you don't want everyone in light blue and one person in bright red.

What to bring:

- Wardrobe choices
- A brush or comb
- Any significant possessions that might help tell a personal or family story.
- Some toys or favourite possessions for children

Consider your hairstyling and cosmetics needs. Women, and sometimes even men, can enhance their portrait with the proper application of makeup, but don't use too much and only where it is deemed necessary.

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Preparing for your maternity portraits

The following suggestions are not strict rules, but rather ideas to consider for your portraits.

Maternity Portraits

If some of your portraits will include the baby's siblings, make arrangements for someone to look after the children after their portraits with you are taken. That way, you will have the remainder of your session to do individual or couple portraits without distraction.

Maternity sessions are all about capturing your beauty during your pregnancy, and the miracle of the baby growing inside you. It's critical that you are relaxed and comfortable during your session. So make this day about you. Be sure to schedule yourself a very light day. Eliminate distractions, and pamper yourself. Manicures and pedicures, whether done professionally or at home, will not only help you get a little of that pampering, but they will also be important because proper grooming will be necessary for the portraits. Hands and feet do show up in some of the images.

A few hours prior to your session, please remove anything that may cause lines on your body such as socks, maternity pants, jewellery, undergarments, and belly supports. Wearing a loose-fitting nightgown or robe prior to the session is best. And because most pregnancy sessions do include some nudity, the robe will come in handy.

I usually recommend some clothing basics for your session: yoga pants, tank tops, and jeans. Jeans with panels are not recommended, but jeans that sit below the belly, and even jeans from before your pregnancy will work even if they can't be zipped up. As long as they can fit up over the hips, they'll work. Clothing that bares the belly work well, such as shrugs that we can tie above the belly. I also recommend that if you have a maternity outfit you really love, have that prepared too. It might be great for your portraits. Also we will bring some cloth that we will use to cover you or wrap you.

Bring along any particular clothing you want to be photographed in — and bring additional clothing, as well.

What to bring:

- Wardrobe choices
- A brush or comb
- Any significant possessions that might help tell a personal or family story.

Consider your hairstyling and cosmetics needs. Women, and sometimes even men, can enhance their portrait with the proper application of makeup, but don't use too much and only where it is deemed necessary.

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Preparing for your executive portraits

The following suggestions are not strict rules, but provide some ideas to consider for your portraits.

Executive & Professional Portraits

Dark and muted colours can give an impression of authority and respectability. Colourful accessories (ties, jewellery) highlight your features and give a sense of creativity.

For pants and skirts, darker tones work better than lighter ones, which distract from your face. Longer skirts work better than short ones for the same reason.

Wear long sleeves. Larger patterns work better than tight patterns, but oversized patterns can distract the viewer. Solid colours or simple, subtle patterns are generally best.

Most of all, wear what you feel looks good on you. If you feel good in what you are wearing, you will exude confidence that will come through.

It's a good idea to wear what you think you like best and bring two alternate choices.

For both clothing patterns and jewellery, simple is better.

What to bring:

- Wardrobe choices
- A brush or comb

Consider your hairstyling and cosmetics needs. Women, and sometimes even men, can enhance their portrait with the proper application of makeup, but don't use too much and only where it is deemed necessary.

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Preparing for your headshots

The following suggestions are not strict rules, but rather ideas to consider for your portraits.

Headshots

For headshots, the clothes you wear (mainly your collar line) provide a frame for your face. Light rich colours give the impression of youth, while dark muted colours give the impression of maturity. Colourful accessories (ties, jewellery) highlight your features and give a sense of creativity. Plain or subtle patterns work better than decorative prints and patterns.

What to bring:

- Wardrobe choices
- A brush or comb

Consider your hairstyling and cosmetics needs. Women, and sometimes even men, can enhance their portrait with the proper application of makeup, but don't use too much and only where it is deemed necessary.