

9 ESSENTIAL PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS FOR AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Isn't it frustrating when you look at your photos and they don't look quite like you envisaged at the time you took the picture? Whether it's the light or someone closing their eyes at the moment you click the button, it doesn't take much to ruin a photo.

We asked Sheffield-based freelance photographer, [Charlie Barker](#) for some tips so that you can get the perfect shots to put on your personalised [mug](#), [canvas](#) or [photo prints](#).



FOCUS ON THE EYES

We're drawn to people's eyes. For the perfect portrait they need to be in focus. Consider using a small aperture to capture the eyes in sharp focus to leave the rest of the face in a softer, flattering focus.



NATURAL LIGHT IS BEST

Natural light can be as flattering as expensive lighting equipment. Early morning or later in the day when the sun is low is best. Shoot with the sun behind you, casting light across your subject to avoid unflattering shadows.



REMOVE CLUTTER FROM THE SHOT

A portrait should capture the essence of a person. Avoid cluttering the picture with a busy background or badly positioned props. Keep it simple.



TALK TO YOUR SUBJECT

Remember that you're photographing a real person. Many people tense up at the sight of a camera. Talk to them, bring out their personality and help put them at ease.



USE PROPS WITH CHILDREN

When photographing children props and toys have a real purpose. Get down to their level and make it fun. Be ready for the moment when it appears as they have a limited attention span.



TELL YOUR SUBJECT WHAT TO DO

Don't be afraid to assist people when posing. If something isn't flattering, help them change position. Show them what you want by doing it yourself.



USE GAMES & REWARDS WITH ANIMALS

For animals, get the owners in on the act and turn the session into a game with rewards. Don't hesitate and don't let the moment pass you by.



DON'T GET TOO CLOSE

Keep your distance by standing a few paces back and zooming in. If you're too close, lenses will distort the face.



SHOOT AT EYE LEVEL OR ABOVE

For most purposes, photographing people from eye level or slightly above is most flattering. Best to avoid shots from below, which emphasize nostrils and double chins.