



# GRAEME HOUSTON PHOTOGRAPHY

## YOUR SHOOT PREPARATION

If you are having a portrait, head shot or portfolio shoot done, there are several things where some pre preparation can be a real advantage. Failing to address things, and what would otherwise be a perfect photo might end up with something distracting that draws the eye towards any imperfection. Obviously in post shoot edits we can try and fix things, however it might not be possible. The main areas to prepare are your: Face, Hair, Skin, Wardrobe, Nails and Hands. Your eyes will tell your story, they are very important. Men, well, you won't need to worry so much about make up.

Plan a good week in advance, unless this is a short notice shoot, in which case we will do our level best to make everything work out. Know what outfits you plan on wearing, plan what beauty treatments you want to use, and schedule the appointments (even if they're just with yourself). I can arrange a make up artist and hair stylist, which will obviously incur an added fee. We can discuss these prior to the shoot. Not everyone will require all the preparation, it's an individual thing. These are only tips and so I would suggest you choose what fits your budget, lifestyle, and current beauty regime, and we can take it from there.!

One thing that is often not considered is what you wear to attend the shoot. If you are changing from one outfit into another, be mindful of tight clothes. If you arrive wearing tight jeans as an example, and you want a shoot in a skirt, seam lines might be seen on your legs, similar to sock lines. This also applies to bra straps, so if you have a top that is an off the shoulder number, there will be a line. I can remove some in post shoot edits but not always. (I hope this won't apply to men).

### FACE

Your smile. A good clean if you plan some big smiles. I don't think you need to pop to the dentist for a session of whitening etc, I can fix you in post editing. I use AI technology in edits that will assist on making your smile clear and dazzling.

If you wake up on the morning of the shoot and there is a pimple or spot, don't hack away at it, that will make things so much worse. Make up can cover a multitude of things. Scabs, flesh wounds and dry flaky skin patches are a little more problematic. (Again, I use AI technology in editing to remove things that we don't want to see).

Beauty treatments. Exfoliation, you know a nice, soothing session using a piece of sand paper or a brillo pad (or better still, gently rubbing your skin with a washcloth) on your face and body is a little self indulgent way to spend an evenings before the shoot.

If your going to go for facials, do so well in advance because they can cause a little redness and time is needed to let the skin recover.

If you are on a budget, chill at home with one of those bright green, gooey things that scare all the children away, and don't forget the cucumber for the eyes. I don't know if that is for real, I saw it on a TV show..

Now, the eyebrows. Plan to have them done about a week before your shoot. Avoid stick on monstrosities, trying to hide the glue lines in the post edit is a nightmare. Perhaps an eyebrow trim or touch up can be done in the days prior to your shoot.

### HAIR

Touch Up Those Roots. If you dye your hair, I would suggest touching up any re-growth a few days before your photo shoot. Please don't decide at the last minute to go for a different look, colour wise, it will maybe be the worst decision if you don't like the results.

A little trim can make all the difference and make your hair look more vibrant and makes you feel better in yourself.



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## HANDS

Have a manicure or your fancy nails done. While you're at it, a pedicure is advised if you plan on having your feet on show. Nothing worse than unkempt yellow, crusty old toenails. If you're keen on your manicures, try and book your mani/pedi for a day in advance of your shoot.

If you are a little more minimalist, you can stick with neatly shaped, clear nails. Soft, neutral colours will work well for your fingertips. Toes can get away with most colours but consider colour clashes if going bright. (Be mindful about what outfits you're bringing along and be sure to choose a colour that will match and compliment your choices.)

If you are wearing rings, give them a little TLC so they are sparkling.

## DO I WAX OR SHAVE?

If your preference is the waxing route, give yourself a few days to heal before your shoot. If you are shaving, it can be done the night before. Legs done, don't forget your underarms, and if you want to wear a swimsuit or lingerie, remember the bikini area also.

Spray Tanning. If you are no stranger to the faux glow, get your spray tan a few days prior to your shoot. As a photographer, I would so much prefer natural skin tones. If it's done well, it can look wonderful. If it's a few tones towards tangerine, I need say no more on the matter! Those with naturally darker skin, you need not worry, you already got it going on.

Where we can work wonders with post editing software, hiding all manner of blemishes, you will feel so much better in the knowledge that what you are looking at is a real and true reflection of your wonderful, perfect self. There will always be some things you may not want to change, they are a part of you after all. This could be scars, birthmarks or the results of an illness. For some, these markings may define them for others, they may prefer that they are removed as best possible in the editing process. This though, is your shoot, it's your face, your body and therefore your photos. The main thing is that you are happy.

## CLOTHES

Bring about half a dozen outfits. Your portraits should be a reflection of you, perhaps just a little more polished. Choose outfits you are particularly fond of. Those special pieces you might not wear often because they're impractical for day-to-day use will maybe just be the thing, or that go-to outfit you always wear when you're going somewhere special.

Bring something at least one thing that's dark. Black, Navy or Charcoal are the best options.

Something Light. Think angelic for light outfits. Soft, silky, or perhaps layered and sheer. You don't need to just go for white, try light pink, nude or cream, they will work just as well.

Bring along something that is a little fun/funky/out there. It's a chance to really show your personal style, your personality, your sense of fun. If you tend to lean to more conservative tastes, try choosing a different way to describe it all. Try a little Funky, maybe Structured, Soft, Elegant, or go full on formal.

The Sexy you. This is entirely your call, it is a very personal thing. You can completely skip sexy, that is absolutely up to you. If you'd like to, you can try an understated sexy look in a backless formal dress, or a more overtly sexy pretty pinup-style swimsuit. Beautiful lingerie is lovely and empowering, it is amazing how women change when they bite the bullet and decide to opt for this in their shoot. (If this is something that you want to try, please make sure you have company with you. A close friend will be there to support you and at all times, you have complete access to to view all images taken). For some people, this might be a way to bring back their confidence after illness, loss or a relationship break up. Everyone has a story and I will discuss all of this in advance of your shoot. I know from personal experience how things can change



and strip you of confidence. I was left with a minor disability and scars following a serious road accident. I have fought my inner demons ever since but taking photos of people gives me my confidence back.

Consider Necklines. It's nice to be able to see your collar bone, so boat, scoop, square, deep V necks and off-the-shoulder are great to show off your neckline. Try and choose something to make it more interesting than just a basic T-Shirt neckline. Feel free to bring whatever floats your boat. Mix it up, don't bring all of the one style.

Sumptuous textures can lend a rich, tactile element to your photos. They can look amazing.

Patterns and prints can be a bit messy and a little bit distracting. This is about you and we must think about the people who will be seeing your images. Keep it clean and simple, every time.

Keep it fitted. Clothing that is fitted shows your shape and tend to work best for photographs. Avoid anything that is billowy, blouse tops, or anything with dangly sleeves. Whilst they might be flattering in person, they aren't going to be that slimming in your photos. This will apply to any body type. Pick the outfits that will hug your curves, most importantly your waist, hips, arms, and your chest.

Don't worry about shoes, unless there is that pair of killer heels you want to show off. Most images won't actually show your feet and if they images do, bare feet often look that bit more relaxed and organic.

So, there we go, hopefully this will make you more relaxed and excited about your shoot. Just go for it, enjoy it.

## YOUR DAY-OF SHOOT CHECKLIST

Arrive wearing loose clothing to avoid marks on your skin

Natural face (wash and apply your usual moisturiser)

Clean, dry hair (very short hair should leave it wet)

Comfortable loose outfit (to sit in if you are using a make up artist/beautician)

5-6 fitted outfits to wear in photos

Pretty nails (Neutral fingers, fun toes)

Clean any rings ring

Touch up your eyebrows

Relax, Smile, Laugh and most of all.. ENJOY!!