



## PREPARING FOR PHOTOGRAPHY ACTOR HEADSHOTS AND PORTRAITS

It is our goal to produce the finest photographs possible, both artistically and technically.

However, the time available for photography is limited to the session and venue booking. Your actor headshots, combined with your actor showreel, are the foundations of your actor profile. They are without a doubt a key marketing tool for your acting career. It's important to prepare yourself in order to get the most out of your session.

### Clothing

The clothes you wear in your headshot are crucial; the type, colour, and style can make the difference between having an effective headshot that gets you noticed and one that's ignored. But figuring out what to wear is the third step in prepping for a headshot session.

The first thing you need to do is figure out your "type." How are you realistically going to be cast? Are you going to get work as the doctor or lawyer, are you a spy or a private detective?

Once you determine the roles you'll realistically be submitted for, practice creating the right emotions and expressions, so you come across as that type in your photos.

Only after you are clear about your "type" you can think about wardrobe.

### What to Bring?

For actor headshots, please bear in mind that you are selecting your outfits to create a character (the more different looks, the wider range for castings). Don't select your clothes solely just because you look good in them, rather think about which outfits will help you portraying those characters the best.

Please remember to bring a range of different outfits.

A top with a vivid colour also helps to make the headshot stand out from the rest and "pop". It is also a good idea to make this colour match your eyes.

Make sure everything is ironed and looks neat. Unless casting is after “wrinkled shirt guy,” it’s not a good look.

## Black and White Tops

A white or black t-shirt is always a safe bet and I always recommend having at least one headshot in this simple outfit. Potentially, but bring interesting black tops, vests for people happy with their arms can look great, a shirt can look great, white, or black blouses.

Make sure you bring at least one black and one white t-shirt when you prepare your bag for actor headshots.

## Dark and Jewel Colours

I personally prefer darker colours on most people unless you have a really rich skin tone or loads of dark hair. Other colours that look great on camera are mustard, dark greens, blues, maroon, burgundy. Be bold and surprise me!

Your shots need to look good in colour. The way the colours work together with you and your hair is important.

## Dresses

Girls don’t forget you may have some nice dresses in your wardrobe where the top half and neckline are great. you can even wear them over your jeans.

## Vests and Off-The-Shoulder

Yes, they can look lovely, skin is a great way to bring colour and a natural tone to the image, and necks and shoulders are a lovely feminine feature to show off.

## Layer up with Jackets, Blazers and Coats

It’s also great to layer up clothes: Denim with a t-shirt is a solid casual young look. A leather jacket and t-shirt is “instant rock & roll”.

Blazers are fantastic if you’re a little older and can play corporate or cop/business type roles, or smart mums. Coats are really good but avoid big furry collars or oversized collars.

Smart and simple is best... duffle coats and bombers look too casual.

I rarely recommend turtlenecks. In my opinion, it makes your neck look shorter and sometimes we end up having “floating head effect” in which your top blends too much with background making your head appear like its floating in the middle of the frame, not cool!

## Patterns and Logos

Avoid crazy patterns. Some light patterns are fine and can be great for character shots, but mad neon tie-dye is out I’m afraid! Try and avoid heavy logos as well, as they are distracting sometimes.

## Hair

Let’s talk about hair, and this is really important: Do not get your hair cut or coloured the day before or, worse, the morning of the shoot.

Why risk it? It could go horribly wrong. Give it some breathing time so you know you’re really happy with it and you can control it.

## Hair Layers

Layers can be tricky, if you stand in the mirror, tilt your chin down 10 degrees, and your hair falls in your face, it will probably do that for the whole shoot. So do you need to use some hairspray to keep it back open up the face a bit? Does it look good with sections gripped back?

## Hair up

Also have a think beforehand about what ‘hair up’ works best, if any? Very high ponytails and high buns often get lost off the top of the photo as we crop the top off a little bit. Does it look nice a bit lower? or even anything to the side or platted? just thinking out loud.

## When to wash you Hair?

This sometimes takes military precision! Wash it first thing that morning and it can be too soft and not hold any shape or style, leave it too long and we don’t want greasy dirty hair either. Only you know your hair, but too clean can be a problem.

## Shaving

You can shave during a session, but wet shaving doesn't always work out. You can cut yourself, the skin can look a bit raw and aggravated and for guys we normally want to make the jaw look nice and strong, so baby face clean leaves no detail to hold some shadow. Of course, if you're always clean shaven, don't grow a beard for the shoot!

## Makeup

Prepare your make up before coming for actor headshots. Bring your kit with you for touchups.

Come with the same amount on as you would wear to a normal audition for you. If you're a dancer may be a little less, as full dance make-up will probably be too heavy.

Most people like to start very neutral, just covering up blemishes, and a little around the eyes.

## Fake Tan

Generally, no. If it's super subtle and you know what you're doing fine. If your neck is a different colour to your face, it will look stupid.

## Fake Lashes

Normally a bit too much, but if you wear them all the time, then we need the photos to look like you so fine, but it's probably a bit over the top for most people.

## Lipstick

A tinted gloss is normally a good way to start, it gives a little shine and colour whilst being subtle. A nude colour works nicely. You might want to do one look with colour on your lips if a more dramatic and sassy look is useful for your bracket. I can't think of ever getting a good shot with dark purples or browns.

## Rest and Recovery

Preparing your skin and lips before the shoot as much as you can is also advised. Sleep, lots of water, no late nights, cut out fatty foods and chocolate if you can.

Spare a thought for your lips as well, dry cracked lips can be quite noticeable, lots of Vaseline and lip salve to moisturise them leading up to the shoot might help.

Guys

I rarely think you need any make-up. If it's a spot, we can clean it up easier in the retouching stage. Don't do anything unless you're really confident with what you're doing.