

Engagement photos basics



photo studio in the afternoon. Factor in some in-between time for damage control on the off chance that the salon results aren't as great as you hoped. If your trials are successful, this time period can also serve as a test for the durability of your makeup and hairstyle.

-- Up to one month before:

Planning to feature your smiling faces on the wedding program, the favors, or plastered on the hot air balloon in which you'll be leaving the reception? Schedule pictures with plenty of time to see proofs, select your favorites, and print everything you need.

Who Calls the Shots?

Many photographers include an engagement photo session as part of the overall package, which presents a good opportunity to see yours in action. It also gives him the chance to experiment with flattering angles, poses, and lighting levels before the wedding day. If you haven't booked your nuptial shutterbug yet, look at engagement photos as a chance to audition your top choice. If you haven't found a photographer yet, go to theknot.com/photography to find one in your area.

Take Aim

Before you call a single photographer, have a heart-to-heart with your fiancé about what kinds of engagement photos you would like -- posed or candid, formal or casual. Again, let your decisions be guided by how you plan to use the pics: Will they be hanging on grandma's wall, reproduced in black-and-white newsprint, or shrunk down to the size of a quarter for personalized favor stickers? A little planning will help you make the most of your pictures. Some photo-friendly options to consider for your engagement shoot:

-- **Bring it outside:** There's no need to spend a day cooped up in a

photographer's studio if you don't want to. Visit a nearby arboretum or botanical garden, or hit your favorite downtown landmark. Your photographer may be able to suggest local sites that make great backdrops for pictures too. Talk about places you like when you make your appointment.

-- Make yourself at home:

Your home is your comfort zone, and when you're comfortable, you look better on camera.

-- Around your world in a day:

Create a meaningful backdrop for your engagement photos by revisiting nearby sites that are significant to the two of you: the restaurant where you had your first date, the ice cream shop you frequent on Sundays, the bus stop where you shared an umbrella -- you get the idea.

Ready, Dressed, Go

An engagement photo doesn't require you to shop for matching outfits, but clashing doesn't make a pretty picture. Here are some of our basic guidelines for dressing the part:

-- **The duds:** Whether you're going formal or casual, solid colors are a must. Try to avoid plaids, florals, patterns, and head-to-toe black or white clothing. Keep the silhouettes streamlined. Some couples coordinate their clothing palettes to the point of looking a bit matchy, but there's no need to go overboard.

-- **The details:** Keep your jewelry simple to avoid flashy distractions in your pics. For men, that means leaving your watch and pinky ring on the dresser. Women should stick to unfussy earrings with a simple necklace or bracelet (or one statement piece), and your engagement ring.



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