



## 11 More Tips To Improve Your Portrait Photography

### 1) If it is cropped, crop deliberately.

No half measures on cropping, either something is in shot, or it is not.

### 2) Crop limbs, don't amputate them

If you need to crop a limb, then crop it at the mid-point, cropping near the end of an arm or leg will make it look like the hand or foot has been amputated.

### 3) Don't be afraid to lose the top of the head

Shooting a headshot with the top of the head in actually gives you quite an unpleasant composition with the eyes too low in the frame. Much better to crop off the top of the head and put the eyes about one-third down.

### 4) Lose the feet (and the legs)

When you take a photo of either an individual or a group then just make sure you get their faces in – you don't care whether their feet are in the picture or not. The interesting part are the faces. Zoom out (or step backwards) just enough to get all the faces in – don't worry about the rest. A standard 6 x 4 inch print of a standing person means their face is tiny in the print.

### 5) Focus on the closest person in the group

The way focussing systems work is that you generally get more in focus behind the point of focus rather than in front. If the person in front is in focus then the rest of the group will be sharper. If the front person is out of focus, then the picture will appear to be blurred even if it isn't.



## 6) Use higher f-stop apertures for groups

Basically, the higher the f-stop, the more is in focus. So when shooting large groups you need the highest f-stop ( $f/22$  you can get to make sure the range of sharpness covers from the front to the back.

## 7) Try to get heads at different heights.

When shooting groups it's very easy to end up with all the heads in a row, but a picture will better if you can get the heads at different heights. Get some sitting, some standing, some perched on the edge of chairs or sofa's.

## 8) Advanced head posing: circles or triangles

If you want to be really fancy, try and get the faces so they form a circle or triangle. Although most people will not see this trick, it makes a picture so much stronger because then tracks within the picture frame, rather than going from edge to edge.

## 9) Couples go eye to mouth

Conjures up a few thoughts in my mind... When posing a guy and girl together the ideal is to have the girls eyes at the same height as the guys mouth. That gives the most comfortable difference in heights.

## 10) Fill the frame

Too many portraits have too much space around the image that is not interesting. Get in close. In fact this is good advice no matter what your subject is, if you shoot flowers, get just the flower.

## 11) Give space in the frame for the sitter to look into.

Now despite what I said above, heads don't always fit frames. If the face is looking off camera, then it would normally want to look into a space in the frame, rather than looking straight out of the frame.