

PROJECT 1

It's a man's world

Annabel Williams gives you top tips and shares her secrets to capturing perfect portraits of the hairier sex...

The world of portrait photography isn't totally reserved for images of female subjects. Men make great models too and there's huge potential to capture some great photos – whether they're for the family album or just for themselves.

However, like any other portrait situation, some techniques can be used wisely to maximise your chances of bagging great images.

From setting up the camera, to picking the right clothes for your subject, to helping the nervous

sitter overcome their shyness – giving these factors a little thought and consideration can make the difference between a successful shoot or an average one. So then blokes, time to man-up and face the camera...

What you'll need

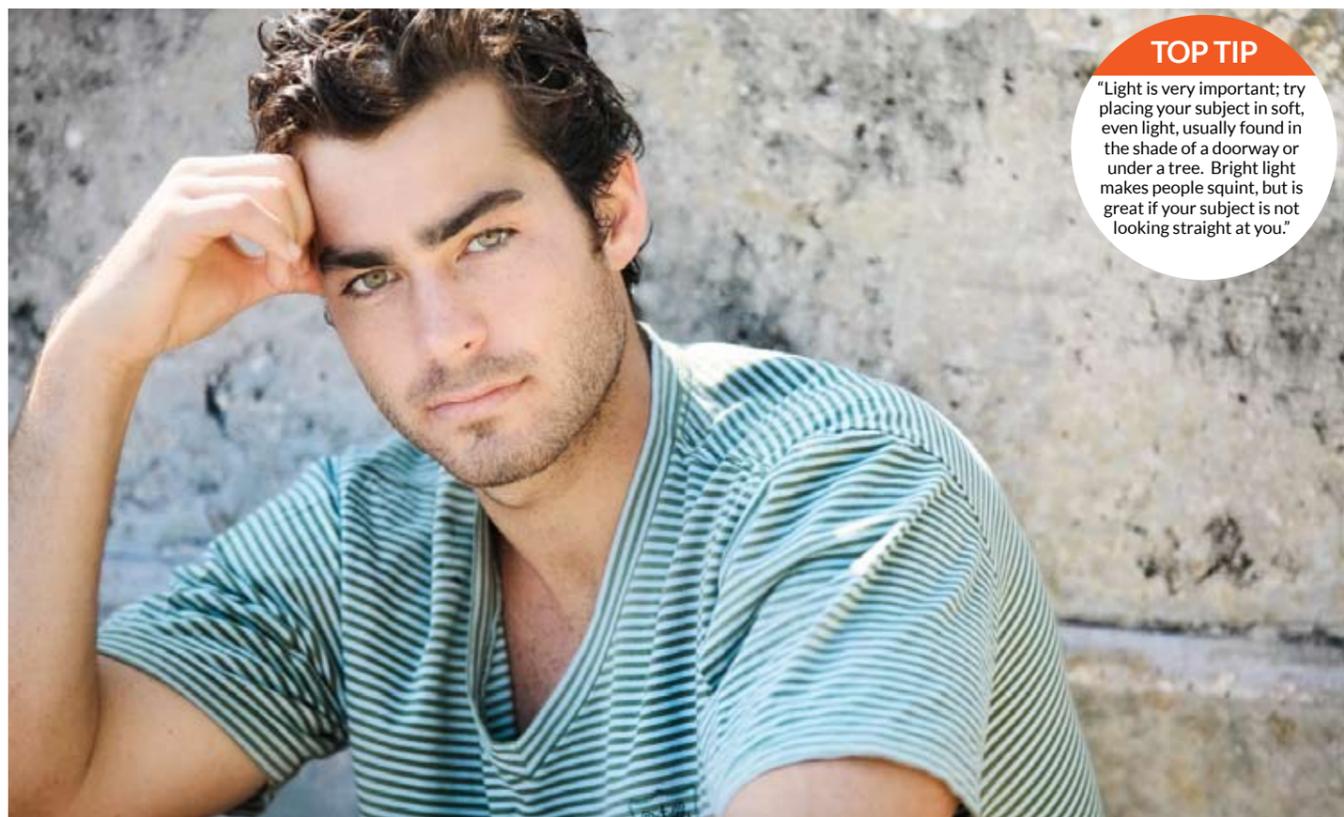
- > Camera
- > Lens
- > Willing model

DIFFICULTY RATING

Medium

TOP TIP

"Light is very important; try placing your subject in soft, even light, usually found in the shade of a doorway or under a tree. Bright light makes people squint, but is great if your subject is not looking straight at you."



Choose your props carefully

>> If you want to use props, try using the subject's car, or motorbike – sounds a little like a stereotype, but men do love their cars! It can be subtly in the background, or you can use the colour and shape of part of it, out of focus behind them in the scene, or around them to frame the shot. Try shooting at a slight angle so the car becomes part of the picture rather than "a man and his car". Alternatively, why not try shooting through the car window to frame your subject?"



Choose flattering clothes

>> Choose clothes which are flattering – if the guy has a great body with ripped muscles, then tight t-shirts will look great. If he doesn't, then the clothes should not be too tight. Really baggy clothes also make people look much bigger, so try to avoid these. Think about how the clothes will work with the background. Contrasting colours look great, such as bright yellow against blue doors. Blending colours also works too, such as pastel shades against grey.

Overcome shyness

>> Men are not so different to woman, especially when the lens cap comes off and this can result in your subject clammng up and feeling awkward. To help him relax it's important he knows you are working together; and that you will tell him exactly what he has to do, so he won't feel he has to "pose". Choose clothes and backgrounds together before you get your camera out. It also helps with creative block, because you know where you're going next.



Look for shape and form

>> Just as you would when shooting a female model, the key to successful images is to think about the shape and form of your model. I see everyone as a shape, it's important to position people so they look good. It's best if you start by asking them to lean against a wall or sit on the floor – and then see how they look, rather than pose them. They will look more natural if they do it themselves, and then all you have to do is move the parts that don't look their best – by moving their shoulders, or their hands, or turning their face until you see where they look good.



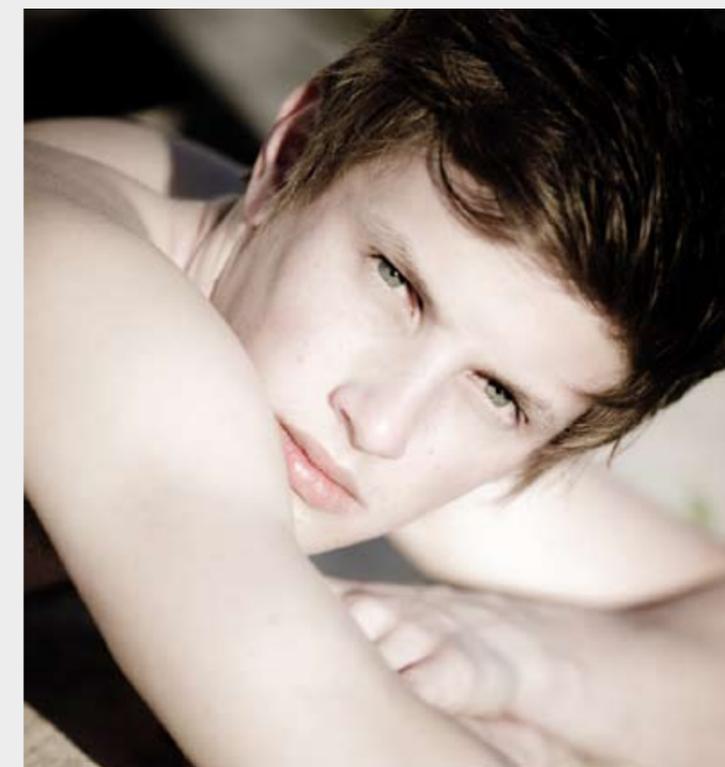
TOP TIP

Finding a subject!

You may wonder where to start when it comes to finding a willing model, but there's no need to worry. Start by asking friends and family, then once you've got a little more experience and some more confidence, sites like www.net-model.com and www.modelmayhem.com can help find suitable subjects in your area. See more of Annabel's portrait tips at www.annabelwilliams.com

Stick to aperture-priority

>> When shooting portraits, controlling the depth of field is key to producing creative images. Try setting your aperture at f/5.6 which will knock the background out of focus provided your subject is not too close to it, but still keep the face in focus. Don't be afraid to up the ISO if light levels are low, which will give you more speed and stop your picture from blurring. Most DSLR's are very good at suppressing digital noise, even at ISO's of up to 1000.



Vary your images

>> Take a series of shots in one area rather than swapping backgrounds every few minutes, as this will result in more relaxed pictures, because you spend more time on the subject rather than on the background.

Create a variety of images by changing your angles, close and wider shots, changing expressions and turning the face – and don't forget to move your feet – move around and look at your subject from different sides whilst he stays still.