

## 8 Tips for Looking Your Best in Photos

How to look slimmer, younger, and more natural in front of the camera.

By Sara Schwartz



### How to Pose for Pictures

Think some people always look good in photos because they're "born with it?" Maybe. Or they may already know some of the time-tested, photographer-approved tricks that can make everyone look slimmer, younger, and more natural in front of the camera. We asked award-winning wedding photographer [Bambi Cantrell](http://www.cantrellportrait.com/) (<http://www.cantrellportrait.com/>) how to look your best in photos — use one or all of her top tips to look great every time.



Bambi Cantrell

### Problem: Double Chin

When the photographer is positioned below you, beware: Double chins and fragile neck skin will be the first thing people see. "People think they need to bring their chin up, but if you bring your chin up, you expose more of the double chin area," says Cantrell.

### Fix: Keep the Camera Up High

**The No. 1 trick for looking better in photos:** Make sure the camera is positioned higher than your head, pointing slightly down at you. Once the photographer is in position, Cantrell advises that you:

- drop your chin a little
- look slightly upwards
- lean forward a bit



Bambi Cantrell

"This is a very flattering way to photograph anyone," she says. "You minimize [and effectively hide] the appearance of a double chin, and raising your eyes upwards makes your eyes appear larger and minimizes the little bag of skin we all have above our eyes that can make them look hooded."



Bambi Cantrell

### Problem: Appearing Wider Than You Are

*"Did I gain 10 pounds overnight?"* We've all had that thought after looking at photos of ourselves, but rest assured -- the camera can play some mean tricks. "If the camera is pointing straight at your body, you'll look bigger," says Cantrell.



Bambi Cantrell

### Fix: Angle Your Body a Bit

By utilizing a few subtle angle tricks, you can **slim the entire silhouette of your body**, Cantrell says:

- turn your body 45 degrees to the right or left
- slightly bend the knee that's closest to the camera
- shift your weight to the hip that's furthest from the camera
- position your upper body so that the area between your bust and your arm faces front

You may have noticed that celebrities have this pose down pat on the red carpet, and for good reason. "Facing straight into the camera makes you look

bigger," Cantrell says. "When you push your back hip away from the camera, it also pushes your butt, our biggest part, away from the camera. Shifting your weight to the leg that's farthest from the camera also makes you look more relaxed."



*Bambi Cantrell*

### Problem: Thick-Looking Thighs

Facing the camera directly or placing your weight on your forward leg are two no-nos guaranteed to make your legs look thicker.



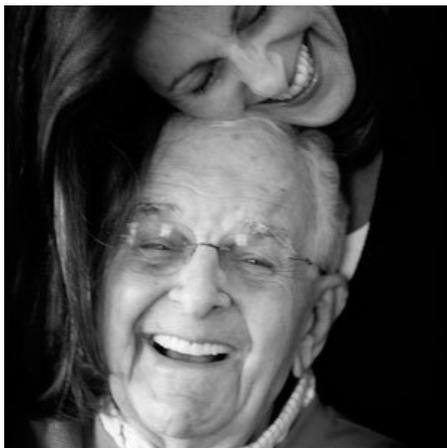
*Bambi Cantrell*

### Fix: Turn Your Knees Left, Toe Forward

A note about posing your legs for **thigh-slimming effect**: After you've turned your legs 45 degrees and bent your knee, turn the toe of your bent-knee leg back towards the camera. That way you show only the front of the thigh, not the fuller-looking broadside view.

### Tip: Embrace Your Face

You're born with your face, and whether or not you're always ecstatic about your teeth or your skin or your nose, they're yours. **"Having a genuine smile always looks best,"** says Cantrell. "When mature people don't smile, frown lines stand out more and they can look mean or severe." Have



*Bambi Cantrell*

trouble feeling comfortable in front of the camera? Cantrell suggests thinking about something that makes you happy, looking at another person who's in the photo with you, or engaging the eye of someone you like who's behind the camera.



*Bambi Cantrell*

### Tip: Indirect Light Is Always Right

"Without a doubt, small light sources and strong directional lighting are the worst — they accentuate crows feet and wrinkles," says Cantrell. "**You want a very large, soft light source.**"

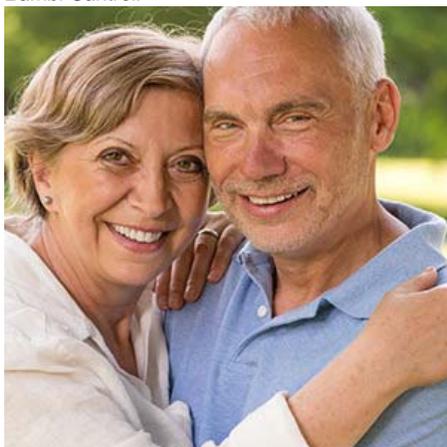
A small camera flash and direct sunlight qualify as unflattering light sources. If you're indoors, daylight coming through a window is flattering, and if you're outdoors, try to position yourself with the sun a little behind you (not directly overhead) and a light-colored wall in front of you. That way the sun will reflect off the wall and become a huge, soft light source for your face.



### Tip: Arms Away!

Want to make your biceps look less beefy? The golden rule of arms is to **always hold them slightly away from your body** and lean forward just a bit. "When you pull your arms in close to your body, they become an extension of the chest area and make you look bigger than you are," says Cantrell. "And if you lean forward slightly, your face will be closer to the lens of the camera than your arms, making them less predominant."

Bambi Cantrell



### Tip: Get Your Good Side

It's not a myth! Almost everyone has a "good" side, though determining that is a subjective task. Ask someone take two pictures of you, one from each side. "It'll be obvious," Cantrell says. "Especially for men, who often get their noses broken at some point and their nose is bent. Always photograph into the bent part. If the tip your nose points left, photograph from the left."



### Tip: What Not to Wear

Lots of different colors will look good in photos, but Cantrell advises staying away from bold stripes, large patterns, plaid, and bulky sweaters. "**Prints make you look larger** — I prefer neutral tones with no pattern," she says. "Think about whether the color or pattern will draw attention away from your face and where it draws attention to."



Bambi Cantrell

### Meet Our Expert

A professional photographer for more than 25 years, Bambi Cantrell has won numerous awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award awarded by The Wedding Portrait Photographers International organization, and was named one of the 10 Best Wedding Photographers in the World by *American Photo* magazine. She also has authored educational photography books, such as [The Art of People Photography](http://amzn.to/17myY7O) (<http://amzn.to/17myY7O>) and [The Art of Digital Wedding Photography](http://amzn.to/1cxPQzx) (<http://amzn.to/1cxPQzx>). Her philosophy: "I just love people, and believe truly great photographs are a reflection of who the client is, not who I want them to be."

For more information about Bambi Cantrell or to engage her professional photography services, visit [Cantrellportrait.com](http://www.cantrellportrait.com) (<http://www.cantrellportrait.com/>).

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