

# WHAT TO WEAR

FAMILY PORTRAIT GUIDE  
BY ANGELA CLIFTON PHOTOGRAPHY



727-946-8129 | [angelacliftonphoto.com](http://angelacliftonphoto.com) | [angelacliftonphoto@gmail.com](mailto:angelacliftonphoto@gmail.com)  
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# What to Wear

## A Guide For Family Portraits

The most popular question we hear from clients is, “What should we wear?” Understandably, this topic brings up quite a bit of stress before a photo session. Everyone wants to look their best in front of the camera. Clients ask questions ranging from what style of clothing to what colors work best.

We’ve put this guide together with these questions in mind. Hopefully, after reviewing our What to Wear Guide, you’ll feel confident about your clothing choices and be able to enjoy your family portrait session. Stress free is our goal. That helps us capture the real you in *Moments that Last a Lifetime*.





# General Don'ts & Their Solutions

## WRINKLED/STAINED CLOTHING

Preparation is key. Planning your outfits in advance ensures you'll have everything ready and pressed for the day of the session. We all know getting ready can be stressful, so eliminating any guess work at the last minute is key. Picking clothing that is not easily wrinkled is helpful as well. If the kids will be snacking or drinking on the way to your session, make sure to have their clothes covered.

Having a lint roller handy is a great idea as well.

## BUSY/BOLD PATTERNS & COLORS

The best rule of thumb - if your outfit looks bold and/or busy in person, it will be even more so in photos. Once you have an outfit in mind, pose for a quick selfie. This will help you to determine if this is the look and feel you want. Solids are easier to coordinate, but a subtle pattern matched with a coordinating solid can be a great choice. Steer clear of clothing with logos or large branding. Bold, statement jewelry is a no-no. We want to be focused on you and your family, not the clothing or items you are wearing.

## SHEER CLOTHING

If something looks sheer in person, it will be even more so in photos. It is best to steer clear of sheer. Women, if you do choose to wear something a little sheer, remember to wear the appropriate color undergarments because they will show through. There is nothing worse than a white bra showing through a dark top.

## EYEWEAR

If you live in Florida, you know we always have our sunglasses within reach. However, please leave your sunglasses in your car during your session. Your photographer will ask you not to wear them, and if you put them in your pocket you will see a bulge or they may peak out of your pocket. Also, if your prescription glasses have transition lenses that darken when it is bright out, please leave those in the car as well. We'll angle you as best we can to avoid getting the sun in your eyes.



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# General Do's

## COORDINATING COLORS

It might sound daunting but trust us, it's easier than you think! Neutral colors are an easy go to; navy blue, tan, or white seamlessly creates a classic look. You can also consider where the photo session will be taking place. Is your session at the beach? Think of the color of the sand, the water, the sunset - this will give you a great palette from which to start. White, blues, yellows, and khaki are great colors; and you can also match the sunset with corals, pinks, light orange, lavender. If your session is at the park consider the color palette of the park - browns, khaki, greens, yellows, burgundy, and denim (blues) are all nice colors for the park. We love shades of purple for the beach or park.



## BE PREPARED

Whether your shoot has props, multiple outfits or you have a two year old – having everything you need handy eliminates the stress of forgetting to bring the favorite blanket or that cute sign you made. Also, use a mirror to help keep an eye on stray hairs or errant bra straps.

## INCORPORATE FAMILY MEMORABILIA

Has there been a necklace that has been passed down from generation to generation? Did Grandma have a favorite sun hat you'd love your daughter to wear? Whatever the item, we can always find a creative way to incorporate it into your family portrait.



# Considering Body Type

We want everyone to feel and look their best during their photo session, and we also want you to enjoy viewing your photos as they are adorning your walls or lovingly placed in a photo album. Considering body type is helpful to ensure you choose just the right outfit. Do you have questions about what looks best on each body type? Let us be your guide!





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# Male Body Types

## SKINNY

A “skinny” body type has noticeable lean muscle mass and they might find it hard to gain weight, no matter how often they eat.

The trick for dressing a skinny bod is to not wear “second-skin” thin shirts or something that will completely drown the guy in fabric.

Try wearing: Button down shirts that fit their shoulders and fall a little looser from the top. Straight leg jeans as opposed to skinny jeans, and jeans with a classic or lighter wash. Dark denim creates a slimming look. Layer like boss with chunkier knit sweaters or tailored jackets.

## MORE MUSCULAR

Their nickname might be Mr. Muscles or they have a hard time finding a shirt that doesn't make it look like they bought it at Baby Gap. Either way, they have more defined muscles and a rectangular shaped body and have no problem gaining muscle or fat.

Keep in mind that they already have an intimidating stature, so you'll want to choose items that don't add to their bulk. Avoid skinny/slim fit jeans and pants and try straight cut styles instead.

Try wearing: Shirts that fit, you should be able to fit a finger between your neck and the collar of your shirt. There shouldn't be any tightness of fabric across your chest/shoulders/upper back.

## MORE TO LOVE

They have a more stocky build and tend to be a little softer and rounder. They gain muscle and fat just as easily but their muscles just aren't as defined.

Try wearing: Vertical stripes, jackets with structured shoulders, crew neck tees – really any stiffer, solid fabric that compliments your body type. Avoid wearing fitted polo shirts, bright colors and busy patterns, horizontal stripes and boots – especially if you're on the shorter side.

# Female Body Types

## STRAIGHT

With a straight body, their shoulders and hips are relatively the same width and their waist is not well-defined. The general rule of thumb for this body type is to look for pieces of clothing that really help create the illusion of a more shapely figure.

Try wearing: Snug clothes, not skin tight clothes – like a button down blouse that's slightly tailored at the waist could be a simple way to achieve this look. Color blocking also works well.

Avoid: Shapeless, flowy tops and dresses. With a straight body type, it's easy for the body to get lost in fabric.

## HOURGLASS

If you have an hourglass figure, the waist is very defined while the hips and shoulders are relatively the same size. Top hourglass figure is also a term – the bust is slightly bigger than the width of the hips but the waist is still clearly defined.

Try wearing: Shirts with v-necklines and form fitted shirts are flattering. Pencil skirts are an easy and classic way to play up the waistline.

Avoid: Wearing baby doll tops, a shirt with a high neckline, and loose fitting clothes.

## PEAR

Also known as a triangle body shape. The hips are distinctively wider than the shoulders, and the waist is noticeable.

Try wearing: A-line dresses, higher cut tops, and darker bottoms that bring more attention to the upper body.

Avoid: Anything that brings attention to the hips – flared skirts, baby boll style shirts that flare at the waist.

# Female Body Types, Continued

## INVERTED TRIANGLE

This body type has wider shoulders in comparison to the waist and hips.  
Try wearing: Pieces that play down the shoulders while simultaneously adding definition to the hips. It's as simple as pairing an A-line skirt with a simple fitted shirt.  
Avoid: Bringing attention to the shoulders with high necklines.

## OVAL

In general, with this body type, the waist is equal (sometimes even a little more) in width to your hips and shoulders.  
Try wearing: Deeper v-cut dresses or shirts and add a belt to create more waist definition.  
Avoid: Skin tight clothes that do not do the body justice. It's easier to create a defined body shape with looser fitting clothes, than tight fitting pieces.



# How To Determine Your Skin Tone

Something you probably never thought you would need to care about – determining skin tone. It's not just for ladies – figuring out your skin tone allows you to pick colors that look best on you. Luckily, there are a couple of tricks to figuring out what your skin tone is. There are three categories of undertones that affect your skin tone: cool, warm, and neutral.

- **Wrist Check.** Take a look at the veins on your wrist. Do they appear more blue or green? If you're seeing a green tint, this means your skin tone has a distinct yellow tone to it, creating a more "warm" appearance. If your veins appear blue and everyone can tell when you're blushing, most likely you have cool undertones. With cool undertones, you're more susceptible to getting sunburned, which means you have less melanin, placing you in the "fair skin" category.

Which leads us to our next test.

- **The sunshine test.** Who in the family can stand outside for 5 minutes and come back inside looking like they've spent a week on a tropical vacation? Chances are, they have yellow to olive toned skin, also classified as "warm". If you're the family member who gets fried like a lobster, more than likely you're in the "cool" category.
- **Wondering what jewelry looks best with your skin tone?** Silver is considered a metal that pairs well with cool undertones while gold compliments those with warmer undertones. As always, keep your jewelry simple so it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb in your photos. We want the focus to be on you - not what you are wearing.



# Dress For Your Skin Tone

## NEUTRAL

Neutral skin tones tend to be the most common, so it's fairly easy to find colors that look great on you. Your typical go-to shade could be dark navy with whites or tans. If you're feeling bold and want some color in your photo, try green.

## WARM

Warm skin tones tend to be most complimented by darker hues. Any color that you could really associate with fall – dark reds, burnt orange, etc. are great choices.

## COOL

If you're dressing for a cool skin tone, try choosing shirts that have a lighter, almost pastel hue to them. Light blues, greens, purple even! Do you have blue eyes? Pastel blue is a great choice.



# In Review

There are quite a few things to consider when choosing clothing for your photo session: Color, body shape, skin tone, style, etc. However, we always say the most important thing is to be comfortable and choose outfits that represent you and your family's style. So don't fret, and feel free to reach out to us if you need assistance. That is why we are here.

We look forward to working with you and your family and capturing *Moments that Last a Lifetime!*





*angela  
clifton*  
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