

Modeling Professionally

The Portfolio

Always have your portfolio, business cards, and comp cards nearby (if not on you -- in your car). You never know who you might meet who might be a prospect or contact needing to see your work.

Always keep your portfolio updated with your best work. You are only as good as the portfolio and composite cards you keep. As soon as you get a new print for your portfolio, add it in. If you have more than 25 prints -- then instead, pull out your worst photo (the one you like the least) and replace it with your new one.

Finally, when your photos in your portfolio receive criticism -- try to think of it constructively as ways to make your future photo shoots better. Remember that a large part of the photo has NOTHING to do with you and EVERYTHING to do about the photographer. While you don't always have to take the advice offered -- if several people give you the same advice -- it may be well worth listening.

Accepting Jobs

As a professional, you have a duty to thoroughly investigate the jobs offered to you BEFORE saying "yes" or "no." You need to ask lots of questions to make sure that you both WANT the job and that you CAN DO the job.

If you say "yes" it will mean that people will spend money, time, and energy preparing for YOU on the shooting set. If you back out after saying yes, no excuse will be good enough -- and you'll get a reputation as a "worthless flake." Depending upon the nature of the shoot -- you may even be sued for breach of contract and "shoot cancellation" fees.

It is YOUR responsibility to find out precisely what you will be doing and what is expected of you. For instance, a shot may require that you stand on the roof of a building. If you have a fear of heights -- but haven't found out what the shots required -- you may find yourself in a very awkward position.

At a minimum, you should request to see the "roughs" the advertising designer or photographer has worked out. If this is a "test" shoot rather than an advertising shoot -- then request to view work from the photographer which is the same (or near the same) type of work that you will be doing.

Carefully consider your decision. Once you say yes, you have an ethical and professional duty to follow through no matter what. It's far better for everyone concerned (and especially for YOUR REPUTATION) to say "no" at the initial meeting if you aren't comfortable with the assignment. If you feel you can't give an answer right on the spot -- say "probably not, but let me think about it until tomorrow." Again, if you say "probably yes..." the photographer or client may only hear the "yes" and start making plans assuming that you'll do the shoot.

The ONLY time you don't have a duty to complete the shoot is if you are lied to about the nature of the shoot. If you have asked to see the roughs and portfolio photos (for shots similar to what you will be doing), and then on-set you are asked to do something completely different -- simply say "that's not what I agreed to, so I'm sorry, but I have to leave." The client or photographer may dislike that you are walking out -- but they know it was their fault for your departing.

Arriving Prepared

Arriving to a shoot prepared means a lot more than showing up on time with your make-up on. It means getting a good night's sleep and being well rested and "energized" for the shoot. It means researching and preparing for the "role" you will be portraying. It means gathering up make-up, clothing, props, and accessories needed for the photographs. It also means getting directions ahead of time along with phone numbers -- so that you can call if you get lost or have a flat tire.

[Click here for advice on preparing your body for the shoot.](#)

Once you arrive, it's not "social hour." You should get ready as quickly as possible. If there is a make-up artist -- let him/her know immediately about any problem areas on your body and some methods for "covering them up" if you've received advice before.

You SHOULD NOT wash your hair right before a shoot. Newly washed hair doesn't have enough natural oils on it to be "manageable." Wash your hair at a minimum at least six hours before the shoot, and if you must sleep on your hair -- wear a nightcap to keep it clean and less tangled.

For most fashion shoots -- do not wear underwear, socks, or tight fitting clothes to the shoot. Anything that presses on your body will leave red "pressure marks" which often take up to an hour to go away. Because the skin is actually "dented," they are nearly impossible to cover up with traditional make-up. Also realize that bras are usually never worn for fashion shoots, and that the only underwear most models can use are "nude" colored thongs. Anything "more" will leave undesirable lines in the fashions.

Also, on larger shoots, there are costumers and dressers which help dress the model. If this is the case, you should mentally prepare yourself to be nude in front of several people as they help outfit you for the shoot.

Professional Courtesy

Professional Courtesy has a lot to do with the Golden Rule of "Do Unto Others as you would like them to do unto you."

Always arrive on time (or early) completely prepared and well rested for the shoot.

Never cancel shoots regardless of reason or other offers that you might have.

Always act polite and courteous to the photographer, client, and all other personnel.

Provide your input where appropriate, but never argue with the photographer, client, or other personnel.

If you are asked, ONLY SAY POSITIVE things about the photographers, clients, and other models they've worked with. If you have nothing positive to say, simply decline to comment. People who here you say bitter things about others - will assume that you will say bitter things about them as well. By acting positively - you will actually get a lot more work. Everyone loves to work with a "happy" person -- especially if they can find something nice to say about a photographer or client whom everyone knows is a horrible wretched person.

Never talk about PAY or personnel issues to anyone except your direct report (usually the photographer), and NEVER within earshot of anyone else. ("Professionals" only discuss pay and personnel issues during initial negotiations with the clients or photographer).

Put in 100% energy into each shot, and act "happy" even if you aren't.

A Few Last Tips

When possible, send thank-you cards with a few kind words to the photographer and client. The "extra touch" may mean the difference between getting rehired and not.

Where appropriate, volunteer your efforts or talents to local charities. They often need local celebrities to draw attention to their cause, and the added publicity and print which you receive will help your public image (make you look more like a "professional model").

Let other people know what you're working on. You don't have to monopolize conversations or constantly name drop, but when people ask you "what's new" -- talk about the "great photo shoot I just had with _____." The more people know about your career and the types of work you are looking for -- the more they will feel at ease "passing your name along" to people they know who might need your talents.

PROFESSIONAL VERSUS WANNA-BE

A **PROFESSIONAL** has

- 1) an attitude/character and set of working relationships which increases the level of respect that his/her peers and clients have for him/her,
- 2) extensive experience in his/her occupation, including specialized training or apprenticeships with other established professionals, and
- 3) a majority of his/her income (more than half) from his/her selected occupation.

Without all three, you are NOT a professional

If you have two of the three, you are a "**Working Model/Photographer/etc.**"

If you only have one of the three, you are a "**Novice / Apprentice**" (or you are "Damn Lucky" if you're financially supporting yourself in a profession that you have little training or experience in).

If you have none, you are a "**Wanna Be.**"

If you do it only for fun, you are an "**Amateur.**"

MODELING and TAXES

disclaimer: this is NOT legal, financial, or tax advice. It is merely opinion based on my education and experience. Consult a professional attorney and accountant for help in understanding your own tax situation.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

By the nature of the work that models do, they are independent contractors, rather than employees.

Independent contractors --
-- have control over the hours and jobs they accept.
-- are not "long-term" in employment (often they are only used a few hours).
-- are not entitled to unemployment benefits when the job ends.
-- are responsible for how they perform the work required.
-- are responsible for their own tax issues.

1099-MISC

The federal government requires that any party you pay more than \$400 in a tax year to be issued a 1099-MISC form from your business. This 1099-MISC income form is submitted to the person you paid for services, as well as a copy to the IRS so that they can ensure that people are reporting the income that they've earned.

For this reason, ALL MODELS must give those they work for their social security number, or an EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (for their agency if all bookings through there).

For models who would prefer to keep their modeling tax information separate from their other employment information (social security number), they need to declare themselves a business (file a fictitious name certificate with the secretary of state and get a sales tax number) and file for a federal EIN.

All pay to a model is INCOME

When paying models, the money that a photographer pays a model is ALL considered model income. So, if the modeling fees were \$200 and the travel & lodging expenses were another \$120, then the model income is \$320. The photographer is not allowed to deduct any expenses except "modeling fees" -- so there is no "double dipping" of writing off expenses.

WARNING -- you also need to include any "prints for time" trades. Prints have to be valued at "something" -- and you need to keep track of how many prints a model earns so that you can correctly issue a 1099-MISC form.

Again, a model must provide you with either a social-security number or an EIN so that the IRS can track how much in "income and barter" the model has earned.

SCHEDULE C - FEDERAL INCOME TAX

After the model has collected all of her modeling fees for the tax year, with the federal income tax return -- he/she will file a self-employed SCHEDULE C form. In that form is where the model "expenses out" such things as

- travel and lodging expenses,
- wardrobe & make-up (but only those which are required for shooting (personal daily-wear make-up must be kept separate and is not deductible)
- special training classes (try to avoid those modeling school scams anyway),
- books and magazines required to "keep current" in the industry,
- office and mailing expense,
- telephone and internet expense
- (must be pro-rated based on how much is strictly modeling and how much is personal),
- advertising and self-promotion expenses (including comp card reproduction, headsheets, etc.),
- fees paid to agents, attorneys, and accountants,
- and others (see an accountant for more info).

PROFIT and LOSS

If a model makes a "profit" on their modeling (many won't after considering all their expenses to be "in modeling") -- they are also subject to paying "social security" taxes on their earnings, in addition to the federal income tax. Form SE will have to be filled out to calculate how much the model must contribute to the social security system from their earnings.

If you have a loss on your "business" of modeling, you can reduce your income tax by taking the "loss" out of any other earnings you have (from a "day job" waitressing, etc.).

WARNING -- There are LOTS of rules regarding your ability to deduct your modeling business expenses against your other income. For instance, you must be pursuing modeling in an active and professional manner for the purpose of making money. A "general rule of thumb" is that you must show a profit at least 2 out of every 5 years of an activity -- otherwise the IRS generally considers your "modeling" a "hobby" -- and you can only deduct expenses to the point where they zero out your modeling income.

A Basic Photo Kit

You should assemble a large bag which you bring to every photo session and which you keep well stocked. This basic Photo Kit will help you be instantly ready to go out on any job (you just grab the bag and it has everything you need in it). The items in this photo kit should ONLY be used for photo shoots, so that you know that you will have plenty on hand, and that items of clothing will be in "like new" condition for the photos. Also this is important because if you plan on deducting these expenses on your taxes, these items can ONLY be used for modeling work.

Skin Care:

Moisturizing Cream, Facial Toner, Skin Conditioner, Sun Screen/Lotion

Bathing and Hygiene:

Facial Cleanser, Facial Tissues, Mascara Remover, Nail Clippers, Nail File, Scissors, Tweezers, Towel, Vitamin E Stick (for sunburn & wounds), Wash Cloth

Make-up:

SKIN: Foundation, Blushes, Blush Brush, Concealer, Cosmetic Sponges, Cotton Balls, Cotton Swabs (e.g., Q-tips), Cover Sticks, Translucent Powder, Powder Brush, Powder Puffs

EYES: Mascara (water proof), Eye Liners, Eye Shadow, Eyebrow Brush, Eyebrow Pencil, Eyelash Curler, False Eye Lashes,

LIPS: Lip Balm, Lip Brushes, Lip Gloss, Lip Pencils, Lipsticks, Pencil Sharpener

NAILS: Nail Polish, Nail Polish Remover

Hair care:

Bobby Pins, Brush, Comb, Curlers, Curling Iron, Duck-bill Clips, Hair (blow) Dryer, Hair Pins, Hair Spray, Scrungees or hair bands, Styling Gel

Marketing/Photo Supplies:

Appointment Book, Comp-cards, Lupe (photo magnifying eyepiece), Portfolio, Voucher Book (always bring to every job)

Clothing/Accessories:

Bath Robe (to wear in between photos, especially for lingerie or nude shoots), Panty Hose (several pair in variety of colors), Shoes & Shoe Polish (get a "bring list" to find out type and style), Underwear (toned to match skin, thong-type preferred), sneakers (for comfort while getting ready or waiting between photo sets), Assorted Inexpensive Jewelry (especially earrings, bracelets, necklaces).

Miscellaneous:

Round Band-Aids (to cover nipples), Clothes Pins (to tighten loose clothing), Small Mirror, Mosquito/bug Spray (for location work), and Safety Pins.

Practice walking, posing, and depicting different facial expressions/moods on a regular basis.

Pick out clothing ahead of time which will give you a variety of looks and which flatter your figure. Avoid distracting patterns which lead the viewer's eye away from you. All black or all white outfits are always good choices. Similarly, clothing with simple and classic "lines" also are beneficial. It's best to bring a much wider selection of clothes than what you will need so that the photographers and have choices to pick out what they feel will work best.

Most beginning models are only concerned about "what they will be wearing" and whether or not they have to pose nude. What they really should be asking is why are the photos needed, and how will they be used. It is very foolish of a model to base their decision to pose simply on the type of clothing (or lack thereof) required for the photos. In order to be considered serious/professional, the model should be open to all ideas and concepts and base his/her decision on the "total project." Many models have benefited from posing nude for tasteful projects and assignments (cosmetics and bath products, fine artwork, postcard / calendar projects, and even high-quality magazines like Playboy).

In relating to types of modeling there are three areas which need to be considered. These are INTENT, USE, and STATE OF DRESS.

INTENT asks "what is the model needed for?" These can fall into several categories, including just a handful listed here.

runway for clothing display

- photography for commercial advertising, promotion, catalogs, or product use
- photography for photographer's portfolios
- photography for personal projects (model's, photographer's, or art director's)
- acting or performing for commercials (film or TV)
- acting or performing for theatrical or film productions
- spokes modeling at tradeshow and conventions
- photography for personal entertainment (followed by a 976 number)

Since the money for most models is in the arena of Commercial Photography, the next issue that needs to be addressed is what is the USE of the resulting photography?

- photography for editorial / story illustration (newspapers, magazines, newsletters, etc.)
- photography for product promotion (geared again toward "stories" in print -- these photos are created by the manufacturers rather than by the newspaper or magazine staff & contributors).
- photography for printed advertising (which can be anything from postcards to billboards)
- photography for catalog / product guides (where product is key -- model's face may not even appear)
- photography for paper or "novelty" products (posters, postcards, greeting cards, calendars, T-shirts, advertising promotions, etc.)
- photography for fashion 'tests' of outfits by designers (to see how the clothes look "on print").
- photography for packaging (boxes, labels, containers, etc.)
- photography for illustration guides (used by commercial artists and illustrators to draw and paint new work)
- photography for stock use (can include any of the above uses)
- photography for gallery-oriented artwork
- photography for artwork books (coffee table and collector's editions of prints)
- photography for private sale to collectors (generally glamour & erotic pix)
- photography for adult entertainment magazines and advertising (anything from Playboy to hardcore)
- photography for computer publications (actual content, not just pictures!)
- photography for computer photo sales (most often nude and hardcore)

Most beginning models (and those who think they "aren't" beginners) are confused by terms that photographers and industry types use regarding a model's STATE OF DRESS. Also, many models mistakenly state that they "will" pose nude or "won't" pose nude without first finding out about the INTENT and USE of the photography. This is a bad mistake, because good, well-thought out artistic nudes can be helpful to a model, while tasteless photos in a national publication may severely hurt a model's career.

I like to use the following terminology when it comes to STATE OF DRESS.

- Casual (t-shirt & jeans types of clothing)
- Evening wear (gowns and tuxes)
- Business (suits, skirts, and conservative dresses)
- Beachwear/Swimsuit (swimsuits, bikinis, thongs, cover-ups, etc. -- in other words, anything appropriate and "wearable" in public at the beach)
- Lingerie (all types, whether sheer or not; after all a large share of lingerie is sheer to begin with -- use Band Aids on nipples if you're concerned about them showing)
- Glamour (partial clothing, so take any of the above -- but topless, female breasts & male chests fully showing)
- Nude Glamour (now, bottoms come off, so bare backside, or top without bottoms, or completely nude -- but with "props," etc.)
- Nude Art (no clothing, although model may be allowed to cover up parts with fabric materials, models' faces need not appear in images)
- Erotica Art (genitals exposed -- perhaps more than one model in the pose, models' faces need not appear in images)
- Adult Glamour (genitals exposed -- models smiling directly at camera)
- Hardcore (sex and penetration)

Self-Promotional Copyright Release

Since most professional photographers will give a model a copyright release to use the images for self-promotion, models should always send out copies of the images rather than the originals. It's much easier and cheaper to send out a copy. If

you send out the original and it gets damaged or lost, it will be worthless. However, it doesn't matter if copies are damaged or lost -- since you can always make more.

Similarly, you should always keep your portfolio with you. If an agency needs your portfolio, then give them a portfolio filled with copies of the prints from your actual portfolio. Again, it's all too easy for a portfolio to get lost at an agency (and since you are paying for the prints, you should hang onto the originals).

When you have copies made, make sure to place the photographer's copyright notice on the print (or on the back). Without the notice, someone finding your photo may think it's "public domain" (why they would use that excuse is beyond me, but it's saved many "butts" of pilferers of photographer). That means that they might scan in and post the image. If they have your copy of the image without the notice, then you might be held responsible for "distributing" the image in violation of copyright laws

Negatives and Copyrights

Models need to understand that in almost all situations, the photographer or his client owns the copyrights and negatives or other media of a photo session. Do not expect to be given any negatives, nor should you have copies made of any photos you receive unless you have the photographer's written permission to do so.

Negatives and prints (and the right to use those photos) are the "product" that photographer's sell. Most photographers will not give away their negatives (be wary of those that do -- they may be more interested in "dating" than "photographing" the model). However, most professional photographers also recognize the need for models to send out their photos to agencies and new clients. That is why many will give a model a copyright release statement which allows the model to make copies of the print for non-sale, self-promotional purposes only. This release allows the models to have the original photographic print they purchased to be "laser copied" or reprinted on headsheets or composite cards.

If you receive such a release, be sure to follow the terms of the agreement. Many photographers will allow you to have prints reproduced inexpensively, but there may be issues which they feel strongly about.

For instance, many photographers will require that you only get photographic copies of the prints from negatives to ensure that all the prints you are showing are of the highest possible quality (a bad looking reproduction of a print makes the photographer look bad). These photographers will charge you only for their actual lab costs for having multiple extra copies made (at the same time you order the main print).

Another demand many photographers make is that if the work is reproduced that a photo credit appear on ALL pieces in a legible type size and style. This is only fair, since otherwise you would be required to pay full retail prices on prints to send out.

Yet another demand many photographers have is that you don't charge any fee to people seeing your image (for instance if you have your own website -- the site must be completely free to access). This stands to reason, because if the only reason people are paying to access your site is to see the photographs, then this is not a self-promotional activity -- you are actually "selling" the images.

Modeling Kit

A professional model should have a kit that is taken to every session. This kit should include an appointment book which you use to organize all your appointment, go-sees and sessions. You should also keep addresses and phone numbers of all the contacts you make along the way. Every photographer, makeup artist, or client could be a source of future work. Also, if your agency uses a voucher book, it should be in your kit. The

following items belong in a professional model's kit:

Makeup (minimum)

1 Moisture stick

2 Bases or tinted moisturizers

1 Concealer

2 Blushes (one pink, one red)

3 Eye shadows

2 Eyeliner pencils

2 Eyebrow pencils

1 Mascara

2 Lipsticks (one pink/mauve, one coral/red)

1 Colorless gloss

1 Compact powder

1 Brow brush

1 Nail file

1 Pair of tweezers

1 Mirror

Hair products

Brush

Comb

Curling iron

Hot curlers

Hair dryer

Hair spray

Styling gel or mousse

Hair pins

Hair bands

Other

Panty hose - several pairs in a few colors.

Underwear - light and dark colored (maybe push up bra).

First aid kit - a small one with bandages and burn cream.

Music - something you like (just in case).

Clothes pin - to resize the clients clothing.

Safety pins - can repair almost anything.

Zed cards or composites - just in case you meet someone.

The most important preparation will not go in your kit. You absolutely must have a good night's sleep before you go in for the session. Do not party all night and show up with a hang over or stay up too late. You must look fresh and cheerful at the shoot

Male's Model's Bag

Your Model's Bag List: In addition to what is discussed at your consultation, you should prepare a model's bag containing the following essential items.

Shoes:

Dress shoes - Black, brown, etc.

Casual shoes

Sneakers

Proper shoes to match each of your outfits.

Belts:

Matching belts for your shoes (Black, brown, etc.)

Belts for Jeans

Socks:

Black, brown, white dress socks

White tube socks

Colored socks to match your outfits

Ties: Several conservative and casual ties.

Make-up for Touch-ups:

Base (make sure it matches your skin tone exactly)
Loose translucent powder and big brush
Concealers
Lip gloss
Eyeliner
Mascara
Blushes (for contouring)
Sharpener

Hair Accessories:

Ponytail holders (for long hair)
Gel
Hair spray
Water sprayer bottle
Blow drier
Bandannas
Hats and/or caps

Miscellaneous Necessities:

Underwear (white, black, etc)
Swimsuit/trunks
Shorts
Bodysuits
Masking tape
Safety pins
Q-tips and cotton balls
Small sewing kit

1. Always try to be on time, if you cannot be let the Photographer know. Punctuality is very important."safety tip": If you are not taking anyone with you to the shoot, let someone know where you are and with whom. And be sure to tell the photographer that someone knows where you are.
2. Always go prepared : ie...clothing changes that you know will fit you. Don't always think that he/she will have everything that is needed for the shoot.
3. Always take your own make-up; even if he/she has told you there will be a make-up artist there. Always think of the could be's.
4. Get references as many as you can. That would include other models and/or assignments that the photographer has had. Check and double check. And be sure that a legitimate photographer is doing the same with you. Never take anything for granted.
5. Get phone numbers and addresses if possible, if he/she is hesitant. You might want to rethink the shoot.
6. Make sure that you know exactly what the shoot consist of, and never feel pressured to do anything that you do not feel comfortable doing. If nothing else go by your gut feeling.
7. Always take along enough "cash" for cab fare etc. In case the photographer cannot provide adequate transportation. Most will, but always be prepared for the "just in case".
8. There should always be a modeling agreement"release" signed before the shoot, some might prefer after. As long as you get one it should be ok. Make sure in the agreement that you have knowledge of where and how your images are going to be displayed. Try to have full say in this.... If at all possible.
9. Don't ever do anything that you might be sorry for later. What you do today can affect your career later down the road. "If you pose for a photo that you cannot show your family and friends, and be proud of it, it wasn't worth doing". Mainly YOU should be proud of it.
10. If you have a verbal or signed agreement on traveling expenses etc. Make sure that it is followed up on. Written is sometimes the best.

11. Home studios are fine, just make sure that there is a separate changing area, with a lock. Always check your surroundings. Check for exits etc.
12. Remember your body is yours, and if anyone comes within your safety zone, be sure to let them know. I have found that more reputable photographer's will NOT touch you. If you feel uncomfortable as stated before, tell them so. That is your right.
13. Always try to be rested before a shoot, especially if alot of travel is involved. The best shoots are ones where you feel rested and fresh.
14. Time for Prints is just that, your time in exchange for prints.
15. Always remember you are not considered a professional after one or two shoots. It takes alot of work to get to that point. Nothing comes easy, most of the time.
16. Always present yourself in a very professional manner whether it be your first of 100th shoot.
17. Never assume that one image is going make a career. Try to keep up with styles, clothing trends etc.
18. Keep your portfolio updated with new looks etc. We all change from time to time, never present yourself as something that you are not.
19. Remember there are modeling opportunities for almost everyone. Make sure that you fit into the one that best suits you and your goals. Marketing today is very diversified, different looks, shapes, sizes, ages, etc.
20. Be you, and be the best you can be. You will have times when this business will get you down and that is ok, if this is what you really want....reach for your goals.
21. Communicate, with the photographer, as much as possible. If he/she writes to you answer as quickly as possible. Communication is very important.
22. Ambition. A model goes after her goals. You won't become a model by sitting at home and waiting for agents to come to you! (Note: Never sign with the first agency you visit. Always go to at least five before making a Decision!)
23. Confidence. Clients are looking for someone who is self-assured and whom they think can sell their product. A model must be able to sell herself before she can sell a product. It is also important to be able to handle the rejection that every model must face. No model could meet the expectations of every possible client. It is always best to go into a casting not caring whether or not you get it. That way it's a pleasant surprise if you get the job but you aren't let down if you don't get it.
24. Independence. Because models must sometimes travel away from their Friends and family for a job, or move to a big city to pursue a full time career, it is important to have a great deal of independence. You must be comfortable being by yourself for long periods of time.
25. Organization. A model must be organized in order to keep track of the different dates, times and locations of appointments so that she can show up at appointments and go-sees on time.
26. Stamina. A model is sometimes on her feet all day in the freezing cold or the hot sun. She must be healthy and in shape to be able to work all day and still look good. Eating healthy, going for walks/jogs and working out at a gym three times a week is a must.
27. Will-Power. Unfortunately, the international modeling scene does often involve drugs and partying. A model must have strength of character and will-power in order to stay away from drugs and too much partying. An agency will drop a model very quickly if it becomes known that she takes drugs or parties a lot.