

Mary Berg  
PHOTOGRAPHY



# WHAT TO WEAR



# GUIDE

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Dressing yourself in the morning is hard enough when you don't have to stand in front of a camera and be your best self. Choosing what to wear for a photoshoot can trigger even the most confident, fashion-ey fashionista to pull their entire wardrobe out onto the floor in search of the perfect outfit.



So if your nerves start to fizz when you think about what to wear, don't worry. This is SO normal! Before you lose sleep to late nights spent online shopping – putting articles of clothing in your cart only to take them out again – let's talk about what works and what doesn't.

Number one thing I want you to remember? **Being comfortable is EVERYTHING.** You should look and feel like yourself, first and foremost.

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# Be comfy

*please*

It's not uncommon for people to want to shop for new, sparkly, fabulous clothes to wear to a photoshoot. And that's totally fine - if that's your jam. But let's talk about comfort a little more. Do you think you'd be more comfortable in your favorite T-shirt and jeans or a new clingy little black dress?

The best route is to go with something that's tried and true. Something you know moves with you and hugs you in all the right places. Don't get me wrong - it 100% does not have to be jeans and a T-shirt.

You can glam it up a bit more if that's what you fancy. But if authenticity is what you're after, you're going to have to show up as yourself. And if you want to capture this time of your life in all its glory, then it's about the feeling of being in your own skin.



# Match your outfit

## TO THE LOCATION AND SEASON

If you're wearing a fancy ball gown in your living room, the viewer might assume you're going to prom. Do a little sundress number in a snowy field and the viewer might suffer from a crippling amount of pity for you. You and I will be collaborating on telling your story together, so let's get this right.



Plan your outfits around what you know about the conditions at the location we'll be shooting at. You'll want to be warm enough (or cool enough!), have pain-free feet, and look relatively native to your environment. For at-home sessions, slip into your comfiest comfies and rock that (pants optional). The idea is to authentically capture you wherever you are.

Think through your clothing choices logically based on location, vibe, and comfort level.



# Bring multiple outfits



Gather up two or three outfits that you feel amazing in and we can play around with different combinations on the day. I'm not trying to photocopy trends in all their boring hues, I'm looking for the you-est you. Bring things that help you express yourself – I want you to grace my lens with your true, full personality!

Providing options helps me to make sure your threads complement the environment - keeping the focus on you, where it should be!

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# Lead with *personality*

I'm up for it all. If you're in a heavy metal band and want to smash some things and scream at the sky, throw on your best concert attire and count me in. If you're a drama kid at heart and live for the spotlight, I'll help you turn your front porch into a stage and feed you the lines you've forgotten.

If you're a jeans and a t-shirt kinda person, let's work with that. I want your shoot to be different from everyone else's. I want it to be you.



# Incorporate texture & movement

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Pick fabrics that move and flow with you. Ones that add a cozy texture, or get picked up by the wind, filter the late afternoon sun and glow in the morning light. Natural fibers like linen, cotton, or wool are amazing. Avoid stiff-seeming garments with collars as they look a bit too formal and often get tucked in weird spots and need adjusting.



# Colour scheming

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A rule of thumb here is to choose to either complement your natural environment or contrast it. A mustard dress in a deep green forest will look epic, whereas a bright pink, patterned dress doesn't really fit in with your surroundings. It totally depends on what you're looking for!

For families, it's best to keep your color scheme limited to four colors. You can choose one person to wear a feature color and have everyone else's outfits complement that.

Aim for neutrals, earthy tones, and metallics. These colors compliment the outdoor environment almost anywhere you go and look fine as a printed framed photograph.



Don't get me wrong, I'm not advocating for a beige world of quiet and inoffensive colours. By neutrals, I just mean softer tones. Primary colours are incredibly striking, but can sometimes have the effect of detracting from the main subject (which is you).

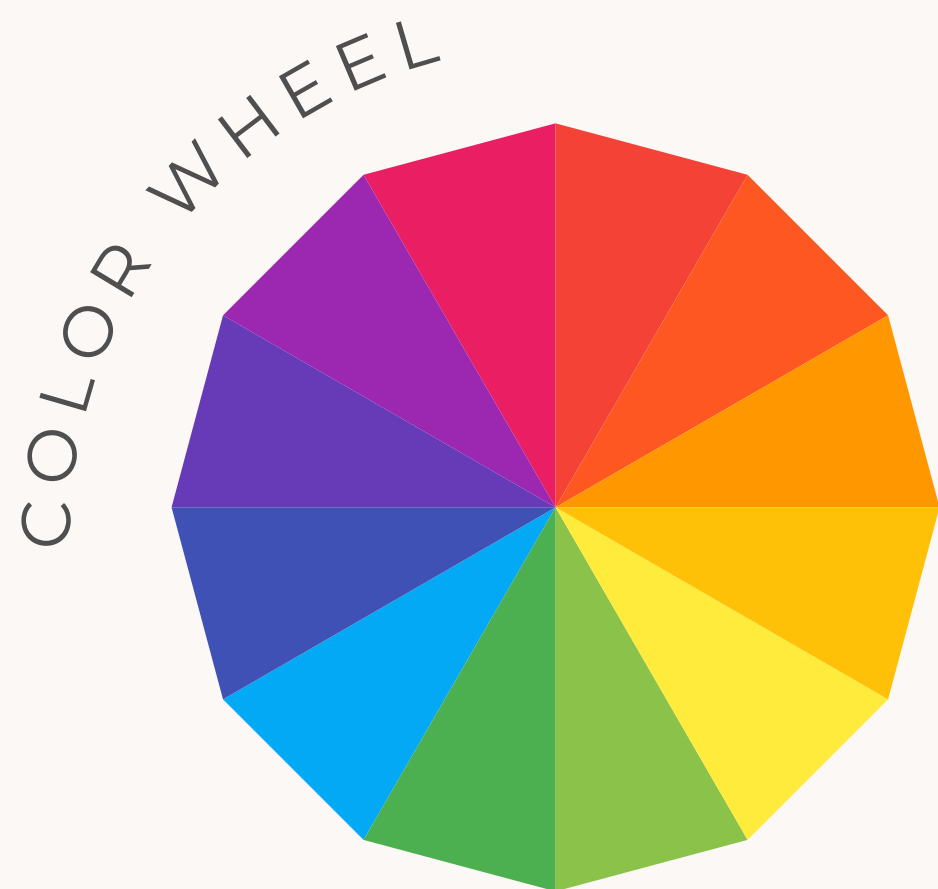
So for example, instead of electric blue, go for something closer to sky blue. Instead of bright orange, opt for ochre or apricot.



# Colour Theory

*in action*

Remember the colour wheel from the 6th-grade art class? Maybe you've gladly left your middle school days in the past, but the colour wheel comes in handy when making good color decisions (aka planning what to wear). The colour wheel is a great reference point when trying to figure out what colours look a bit weird together and what colors are a match made in heaven.



# Complementary Colours

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These colors, the ones that look incredible together, are called complementary colours. They complement each other and create a visual harmony. They're salt and pepper, Bonnie and Clyde, peanut butter and jelly. Complementary colors sit across from one another on the colour wheel (i.e. blue and orange, red and green, yellow and purple).

Below are some examples that show us how complementary colours do special things for the big picture.



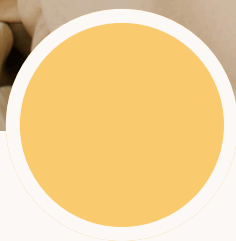
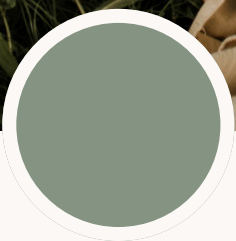
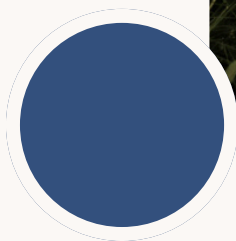
The peach shirt pops against the teal.



The pink top pops against the blue and green in the background.

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# Example of a complementary colour palette



# Analogous Colours

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But it's not all about contrast. We're all built so differently and respond to color combinations differently.

For those less taken by the 'pop,' analogous colors could be the way to go. Analogous colors are next to each other on the color wheel and can be quite soothing to the eye.

Think of the jungle and all of the lush variations of green, or the ocean and the infinite hues of blue. Below, we've rounded up some photos that illustrate how analogous colors work together beautifully.



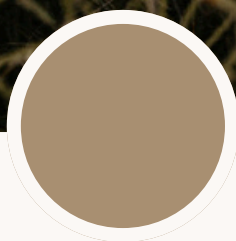
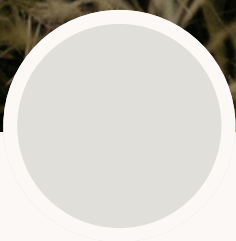
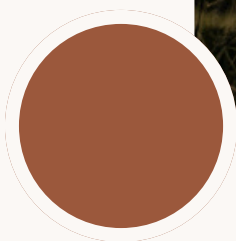
The mustard compliments the varying shades of red.



The orange looks stunning against the pink wall.

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# Examples of analogous colour palette



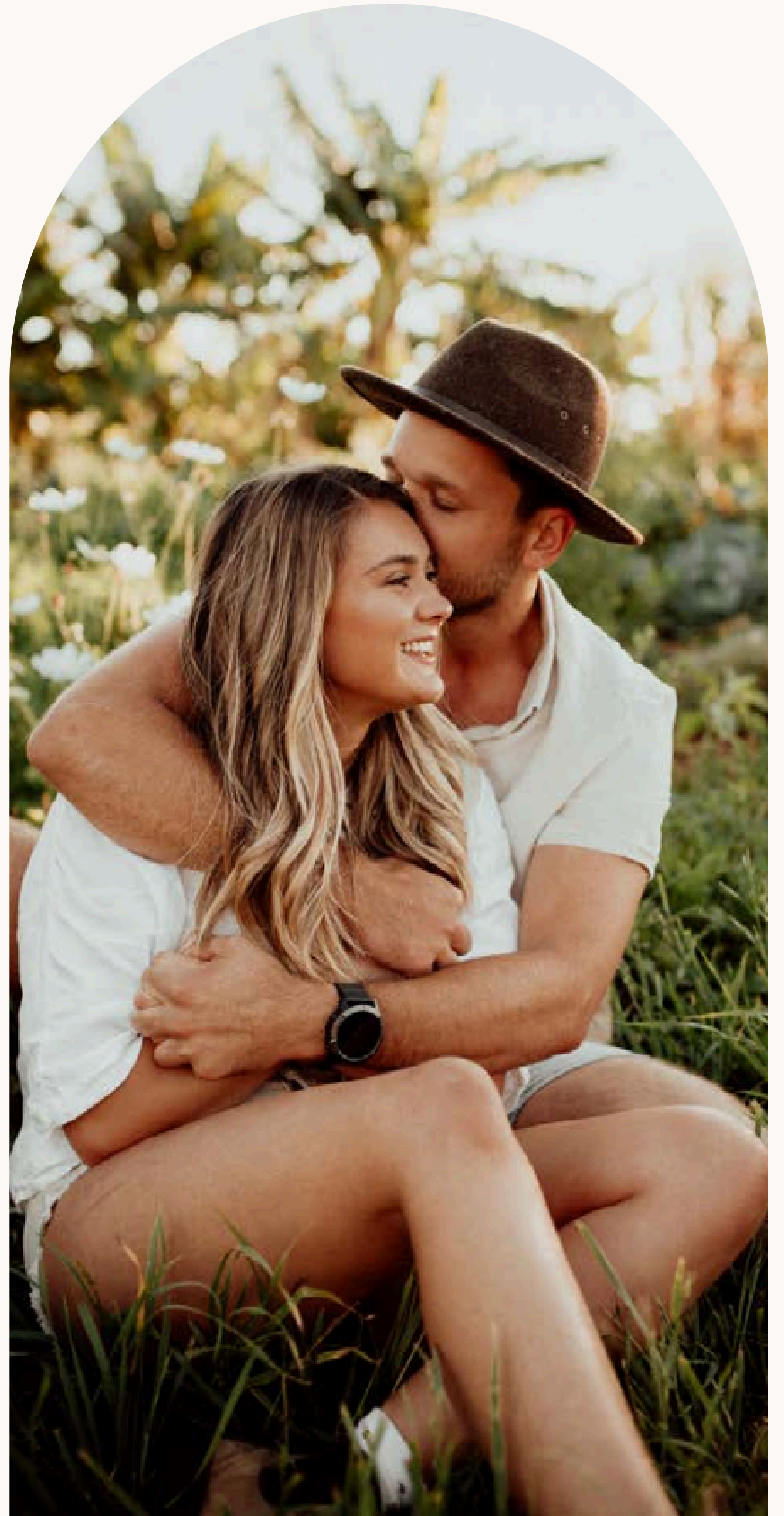
# Complimentary, good!

## Matching, bad.

COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER,  
DON'T MATCH EACH OTHER.

You don't want to create the illusion of being your partner's Siamese twin. When multiple people wear the same color, sometimes their matching outfits blend together so much that you can't really see any of them properly. The viewer can't tell where one person begins and another one ends. They turn into one uniform blob.

In order for the aesthetics of your photograph to really sing, you want to find complementary outfits that showcase a variety of colors, textures, accessories, patterns, and tones. Complement the other people in the photograph as well as your surroundings. The idea is to have everything look good together without everything looking the same.



The white shirts looks  
very similar

# Examples of *unintentional* matching

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# Examples of *intentional* matching

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For the rebels - rules are meant to be broken. Here are some examples of intentional matching...





# Be careful with pattern & prints.

Avoid large bold patterns as they often dominate the photograph and detract attention from your beautiful face.

Usually, subtle smaller patterns work best. Flannels or a light floral print are great when they complement the location. But less is more with this one, try to limit yourself to one pattern at a time.



Matching patterns is a tricky task, and it's super difficult to do well. If you're not quite sure what category your patterned clothes fall into, shoot me an email or send me a text and I'll be happy to weigh in.

The examples shown here are a good way to incorporate patterns

# Layer up!

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Wearing layers is great form (and function). Not only does combining layers and textures create more visually interesting photographs, but it preps you for all sorts of weather conditions, too!

Think jackets, cardigans, hats, scarves, tights, and headbands.



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# What to do about brand logos

Much like crazy patterns, clothing with writing or logos on it tends to be a bit distracting. We're not getting paid for Adidas' not-so-subtle product placement.

However, if the logo or phrase is tasteful (read: not tacky), in theme with the shoot, and fits your personality, I'm all for it. Here are some examples of logos that work.





# The Fine Art of *accessoring*

Hats, sunglasses, socks, and jackets are a great way to jazz up your accessory game. Throw some fun extras into your bag but avoid large distracting pieces. If you couldn't tell by now, I'm interested in shooting you (not your clothes or your bling).

Watches are a bit of a weird one, especially in couple sessions. The big fat circle face of a watch is particularly apparent when people are holding each other's faces and bringing them in for some sugar. Best to leave the watch at home unless its sentimental.



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Watch faces can draw the eye in and distract the viewer from your faces.

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Shoes.

Shoes.

Shoes...

Leather is great for boots, and know that sandals win over flip-flops by a long shot.

Always consider the context when choosing footwear for both aesthetic appeal and practicality.

Select the right shoes based on the location, and consider what you'd normally wear if I wasn't following you around with a camera. Being barefoot makes sense on the beach, and boots are beautiful in the mountains.

You can't have come this far, painstakingly planning your outfit, only to stop at your ankles. Shoes are a key part of a look and ideally, complement the rest of the outfit.

If you wear heels like a pro, I definitely don't have the authority to tell you not to do that! But if you, like the rest of us mere mortals, find heels to be moderately uncomfortable, then do yourself a favour and ditch 'em. In most cases, we'll be stomping around on some relatively uneven terrain and I don't want you spraining an ankle \_ not on my watch. I'll probably be giving you some energetic prompts to follow, too, so you'll want to be ready for action.

Let's talk

*props*



BIKE



UMBRELLA

Props don't have to scream 'PROP!' Go for the subtle things that accentuate your personality and help to tell a story about your life. Think pets, an instrument, surfboards, an umbrella, a bike, or even a beer. Avoid the cheese as much as possible.

FLOWERS



WINE



FARM ANIMALS



PETS

# Makeup and hair

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## DO'S (AND DON'TS).

So this is totally your call! But, if I may... I would suggest cultivating a bit of the French *je ne sais quoi* that balances elegance and ease so well. I want you to look like you. So do whatever you need to do to feel confident and beautiful.

Hands tell such a story about who you are and where you've been and play a crucial role in portrait photography. Sometimes photographs magnify bright nail polish, chipped manicures, and dirty fingernails. And once you see it, you can't un-see it – your eye just keeps on zooming in on that one bit of the photograph. It's really distracting. Treat yourself to a subtle manicure or ensure your nails are neat and tidy before the shoot.

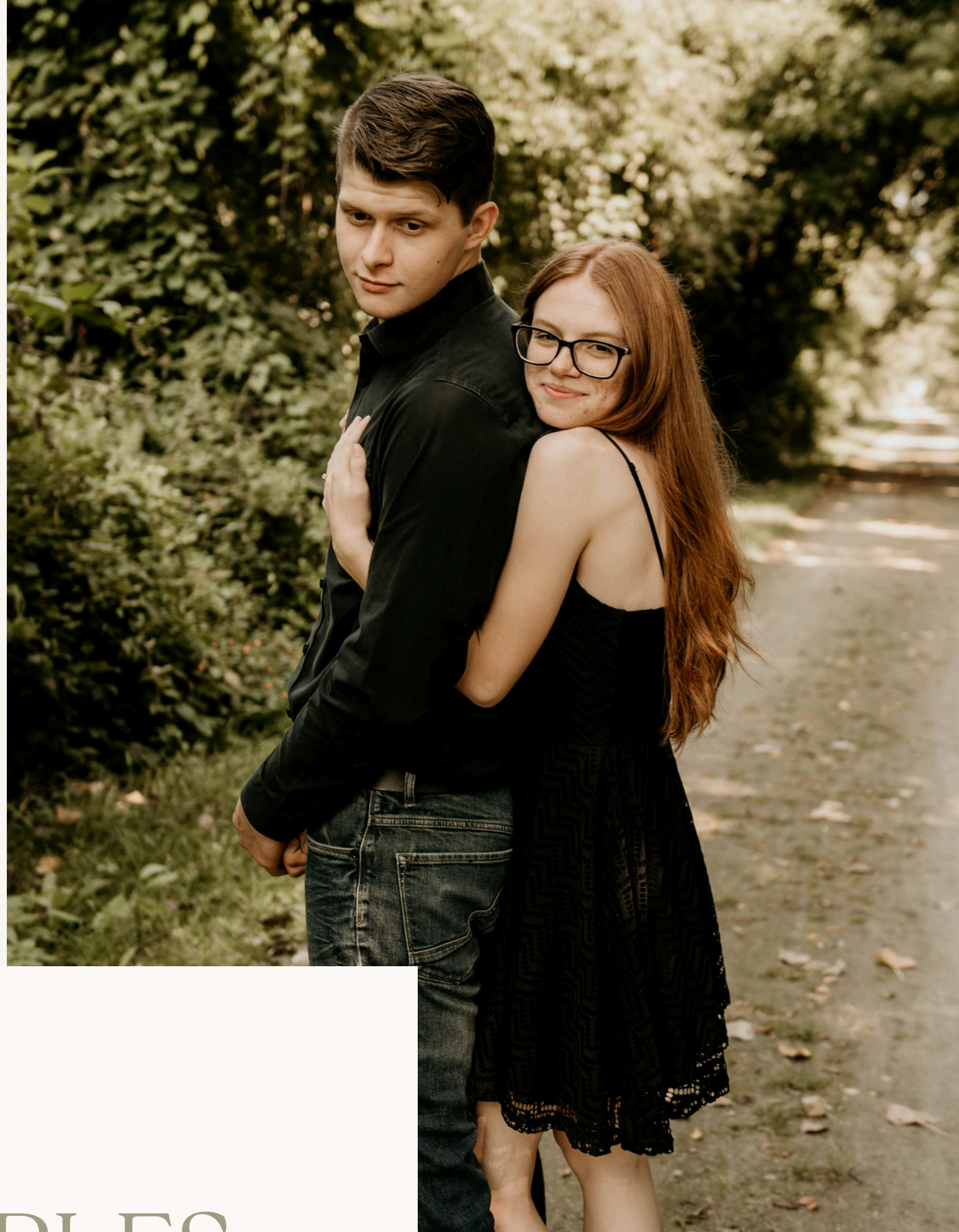
As for hair... Oh boy. I'm a sucker for the way a wild mane blows in the breeze. Up-dos are alright, and I totally get it--it's so easy to throw your hair up! But when it comes to saving a moment and putting it in your pocket, hair down is the way to go. With your hair down, you get movement, you get interest, and you get some perfect slices of imperfection in the best possible way.





A man and a woman are standing in a cornfield at sunset. The man is wearing a brown cowboy hat, a grey button-down shirt, blue jeans, and brown boots. The woman is wearing a black cowboy hat, glasses, a light blue floral dress, and black cowboy boots. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background shows a sunset sky with clouds and a rainbow. The text "CLOTHING examples" is overlaid on the image.

CLOTHING  
*examples*



COUPLES





FAMILIES





MATERNITY  
SESSIONS





KIDS





NEWBORN  
SESSIONS



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# LET'S RECAP

- Dress for the season.
- Dress for the location.
- Compliment - don't match (unintentionally).
- Wear something comfortable that you feel like yourself in.
- Natural fibers and earthy colors look amazing in most settings.
- Avoid large prints, logos, and patterns (unless it helps tell your story).
- Throw some accessories like a hat or denim jacket into your bag.

*thank you*

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