



## *Practice Tips -- Make Your Photo as Pretty as a Picture.*

By C. Marie Swift / January 1, 2005

Your professional photograph is absolutely critical to the success of your advisory business. If your photo is more than two years old or wasn't that good to begin with, it's time to reshoot.

**Choose a quality independent photographer with a small studio.** Look at examples of previous work to determine quality. Avoid franchises and glamour specialists. Don't pinch pennies on this critical marketing piece. Your high-quality photograph initiates the client relationship, giving people the opportunity to look into your eyes and find a person they can trust.

**Prepare a month ahead of time.** Get extra sleep, drink extra water, and exercise daily. Get out in the sun (skip the bottled tan--the orange tones will make you look silly). Practice your nicest smile. A forced smile makes your eyes look small and emphasizes wrinkles. Generate happy energy; clients want to see a confident, enthusiastic adviser.

**Grooming matters.** Whiten your teeth but not to excess or your smile will look artificial. Get your hair cut two weeks before your camera session. Style your hair as you usually wear it; don't be self-conscious with a new hairdo. Men should shave one hour before the sitting. Wear your glasses; people need to see you just as you are, but use frames with the lenses removed to eliminate glare. Apply your makeup as if you were going out for a special night on the town. Glossy lipstick is best if you have thin lips.

**Be ready for the shoot.** Schedule your session between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.--faces firm up as the day progresses. The digital process captures every blemish, but translucent powder counteracts harsh effects, so dust your face, neck, and under your eyes to soften circles and wrinkles. Wear clothes that are both fashionably current and business-appropriate; pointed collars and a jacket (and tie for men) are best. Keep jewelry and flourishes to a tasteful minimum.

**At the studio.** Choose a white background if you have a smooth hairstyle; it can be digitally tinted any color that you'd like. A dark background tends to be better for formal looks. Take some "personality shots"--you can always crop a body shot to head-and-shoulders. Lick your lips before each shot. Relax and smile. Ask your photographer to fix common problems digitally, such as circles under eyes, neck rolls, and stray hair.

**Stay current.** Women should update their photographs every two to three years due to fashion and hairstyle changes. Men can go three to five years. Hip "profile people" and business leaders should get their photos updated more often.

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