WHAT TO WEAR

BY C. PHELPS PHOTOGRAPHY

What to Wear

A Guide For High School Senior Portraits

You are part of a generation that documents everything. You have the power to share and create memories at the tips of your fingers. You've mastered the art of the selfie but now it's time to master your senior photos. These are the tips that we've found helpful – we want your photo shoot to be fun, comfortable, and we want to capture exactly how you want the world to see you.

General Don'ts & Their Solutions

WRINKLED CLOTHES

Using the nicest adjective possible, wearing a wrinkled shirt, skirt, or pants is sloppy. Even if you slept past three alarms, you're 5 minutes late and eating a bagel in your car on the way in – you can still make it appear like you took the time to iron your shirt.

BUSY PATTERNS

The focus of the photo should be you – not the polka dot shirt, floral scarf, and printed skirt combination. In general, try avoiding patterns like plaid or stripes. If you love a certain pattern, focus on that and pair with solid colors.

See style pages to learn how to wear stripes if you just can't stay away from them

SHORT SKIRTS

We want to be able to share these photos with your grandparents. Style is certainly a way of self-expression but if your skirt distracts from the beautiful face your mama gave you, then the focus is lost. The best rule of thumb is actually the one you dread following in school – if your skirt reaches the tips of your middle finger when you have your hands down at your side, you should be in the clear.

REVEALING TOPS

Again, we would love it if you could share your senior photos with your grandparents, uncles, cousins, etc. And as much as we want you to love and embrace your body, we also want the focus to be on you… not your friends who are climbing out of your shirt to say hello to the world.

UNDERGARMENTS THAT DON'T MATCH YOUR OUTFIT

Red bra straps and a white tank top look distracting and take away from what the viewer is actually supposed to be paying attention to – your gorgeous face.

Some of our
favorite places to
shop for unique pieces
include:
Etsy
Earthbound
Anthropologie
ModCloth
BaubleBar

GENERAL DO'S

NUDE UNDER GARMENTS

You really can't go wrong with nude undergarments. Because it's usually similar in tone to your skin, it doesn't appear like a white bra under a white shirt would. Nothing ruins an outfit more than when you can see what you're wearing underneath your perfectly planned outfit.

LAYERS

There is a fine line between cute and not being able to move your arms, because you're wearing so many layers. Layers can be a key part of your outfit because they're so versatile.

See style pages to learn how to create the illusion of a defined waist line with layers

JEWELRY

Remember the rule you learned in school, a little bit goes a long way? That is a lesson that can be applied to many things and jewelry is one of them. Keeping your accessories simple but noticeable is not an unattainable goal. If you feel beautiful and comfortable in a simple, clean-cut T-Shirt, add a little something to your photo with a statement necklace.

PATTERNS TO MIX

This isn't easy but it's certainly achievable. Keep in mind to coordinate colors, not patterns. Some say leopard print counts as a neutral – so it's easier to pair if that's your style.

Stripes with floral

Stripes with leopard print

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR BODY TYPE

Fruits, geometrics shapes, or inanimate objects – choose one to determine your body type. Oh, wait – you're human? Maybe it's not that easy to put your body type in a box. We understand and appreciate that everyone is different, so what might be eye-catching on one person, might not flatter you in the exact same way. We hope these tips help you determine how to compliment your body best, so you can wear what inspires you as well.

Body types, explained. These are the most generally used terms to describe body types.

STRAIGHT. With a straight body, your shoulder and hips are relatively the same width and your waist doesn't have a noticeable definition to it.

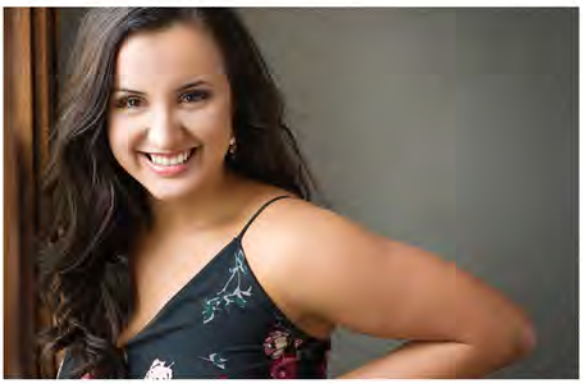
PEAR. Also known as a triangle body shape. You notice that your hips are wider than your shoulders and your waist has declared itself present and noticeable.

HOURGLASS. If you have an hourglass figure, your waist is defined like a word in Webster's Dictionary and your hips and shoulders are relatively the same size.

Top hourglass figure is also a term – you're bust is slightly bigger than the width of your hips, but your waist is still very defined.

INVERTED TRIANGLE. You have noticeably wider shoulders, in comparison to your waist and hips.

OVAL. In general, your waist is equal (sometimes a little more) in width to your hips and shoulders.



STRAIGHT

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. Snug clothes, not skin tight clothes, like a bodycon dress are easy ways to achieve this look. Color blocking is also a simple trick to consider.

• What to avoid: Shapeless, flow-y tops and dresses. With a straight body, it's very easy to loose your shape.

• If stripes are a pattern you want to incorporate, look for pieces with differing thickness – it can help define your body shape

HOURGLASS

Your waist is what you'll want to bring attention to, so look for shirts with v-necklines or that are more form fitted. You'll lose your shape in baby doll tops or a shirt with a high neckline. Pencils skirts are also an easy and classic way to play up your features.

- What to avoid: Loose fitting clothes that don't bring attention to your awesome waistline and curves. Don't look for skin tight clothes but look for shirts and dresses especially that play up your waistline – i.e. a skirt that cinches at the waist.

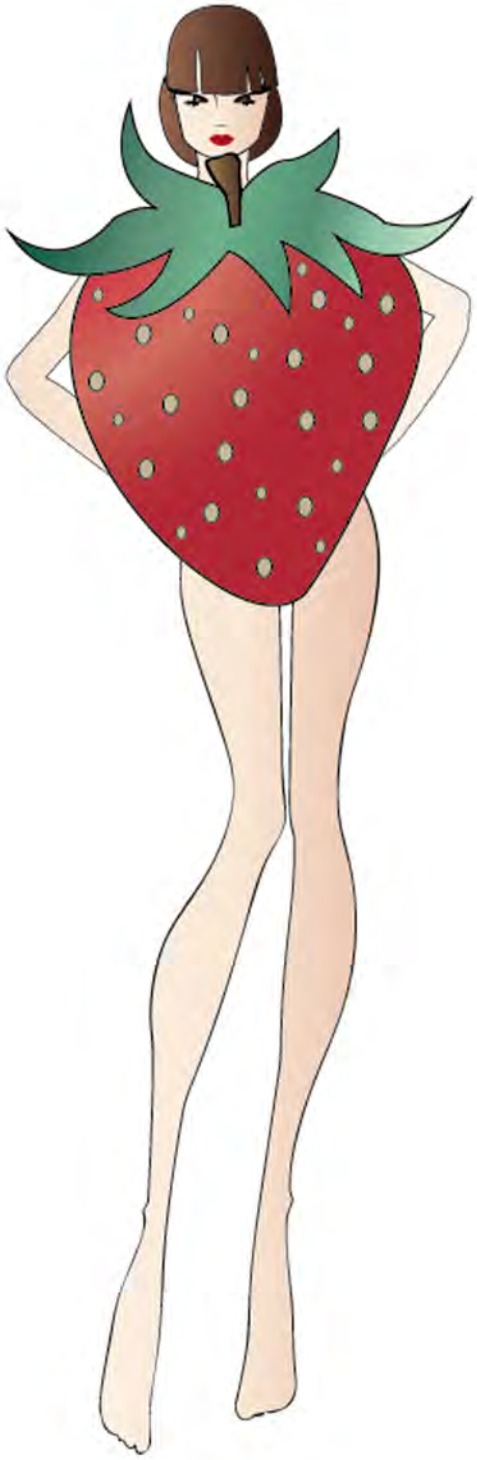
- As long as the stripes are the same direction, it will emphasize your natural curves.

PEAR

With this body type, you'll want to be mindful of which part of your body your emphasizing and which part you'll want to tone down, just a bit. Since your hips seem wider than your bust and shoulders, you'll want to bring more attention to the upper half. A-line dresses, higher cut tops, and bottoms that don't bring attention to your hips will be your best assets.

• What to avoid: Anything that brings attention to your hips – flared skirts, baby doll style shirts that flare at the waist.

• Horizontal stripes create an illusion of a broader upper body – which can help balance out the lower half of your body.



INVERTED TRIANGLE

It can seem a bit like a balancing act at times but creating a look that sculpts your body is surprisingly simple. Look for pieces that play down your shoulders while simultaneously adding some definition to your hips, like pairing an A-line skirt with a simple tank top with narrow straps.

• What to avoid: Bringing more attention to your broad shoulders – i.e. shirts or dresses with high necklines.

• Vertical stripes can be your best friend – they create a slimmer silhouette.

OVAL

For this body type, everything for the most part seems to be in equal width across the board. Look for dress with a deeper v-cut and add a belt to help create the illusion of a more defined waist.

• What to avoid: Skin tight clothes that don't do your body justice. It will be easier to create a defined body shape with more loose fitting clothes than to start with tight fitting pieces.

• Vertical stripes can be worn with this body type as well

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR SKIN TONE

Luckily there are a couple 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. When you look at the veins on your wrist do they appear more blue or green? If you're seeing a green tint, it's because the melanin in your skin has a more distinct yellow tone to it, creating a "warm" appearance. If your veins appear blue and everyone can see in your face 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 category of fair skin. Which leads us to the next test.

The sunshine test. Are you the friend who can stand outside for 5 minutes and come back inside looking like you've spent a week on a tropical vacation? If that's the case, chances are you have yellow to olive tone skin, also classified in the "warm" category of skin tones. If you're the friend who gets sunburned, more than likely you're in the "cool" category.

Gold or silver? The jewelry test is one other option to determine your skins dominant undertone. Silver is considered a metal that pairs well and highlights cool undertones, while gold compliments those with warmer undertones. Even if you haven't noticed it until now – you probably have more gold jewelry or silver because you naturally pick what looks best on you.

DRESS FOR NEUTRAL SKIN TONES

DRESS FOR NEUTRAL SKIN TONES. Neutral skin tones tend to be the more common – which is why finding make up that fits the distinct color of your skin isn't incredibly difficult. If you've done the skin test – you checked your veins, did the jewelry test, compared your skin to your friend's – your skin does not reveal obvious tones of olive or pink.

WHAT'S YOUR SHADE? Since your skin doesn't lean more towards warm or cool, you're lucky enough to be able to pull off most shades. Some suggest wearing colors like blush pink to subtly enhance your features. Pairing dark navy with whites or tans, even colors like lilac can compliment your skin tone.

DRESS FOR WARM SKIN TONES

DRESS FOR WARM SKIN TONES. The amount of natural melanin your skin creates, allows for yellow-to-olive undertones to be present in your skin. If you're still not completely sold on which category you're in, think about the words that seem to repeat when you buy make up: warm beige, honey, and golden.

WHAT'S YOUR SHADE? Dark reds, berry "wine" tones, and even metallic colors like bronze not only highlight your skin tone but bring out the color in your eyes as well. Not feeling the dark shades? Don't fret – vibrant colors like fuchsia can be incorporated in to your wardrobe. With a warm skin tone, pulling off bright colors, like corals or even yellow's are easy for you – they highlight your features perfectly.

DRESS FOR COOL SKIN TONES

You're the friend who gets sunburned and you can never hide when you're feeling embarrassed. We hope you embrace your ivory, porcelain, or pale skin – you can pull off colors others just can't. If you have cool undertones, the words "pale, porcel ain, or ivory" aren't new to you.

Some of the best colors to compliment your beautiful light skin are colors that have a soft shade with just enough pigment to make your eye color pop – a pastel blue is always a solid go-to, especially for people with blue eyes.

STYLES, EXPLAINED

This is your chance to dress exactly how you view yourself – whether that is boho, glam, classic, or in your face flamboyant – we welcome your true personality. Have an idea but not exactly sure what you'd call it? These are some of the most popular styles, explained.

CASUAL. Your go-to outfit does not take very much prep time and the majority of definitions confirm that jeans and a T-Shirt are what people mean when they use the word casual to describe their outfit. It's important to note the power of statement jewelry with this style. If skinny jeans and a white fitted t-shirt is your go to outfit, add a statement necklace to give your photo just a little extra.

- Jennifer Aniston
- Jennifer Lawrence
- Places to shop: Gap, Forever21, Target

CLASSIC. If you want a little more than jeans and a T-shirt but you are not ready to button your collared shirts up all the way, a classic style is more likely your beat. Blazers paired with jeans or even pairing colors like white and black is probably the most "classic" way to achieve this style.

- Naomi Davis (not a celebrity, but an adorable motherhood/lifestyle blogger with the best style ever)
- Places to shop: Gap, Forever21, ModCloth, Old Navy (they've really upped their game with some styles)

STYLES, CONTINUED

PREPPY

You worship Blair Waldorf's style and prefer clean-cut pieces to loose fitting and busy outfits. A preppy wardrobe can easily fall on the more casual side – dark, fitted jeans paired with a button up and pull-over sweater or just as easily dressed up with a statement necklace. Minimal and classic make up pairs the best with this style.

- Blair Waldorf
- 2015 / early 2016 Taylor Swift – use as make up inspiration as well
- Emma Watson
- Places to shop: Gap, ModCloth, Anthropologie

FLAMBOYANT

If your personality is loud and colorful, let your outfit reflect that. It's easy to overwhelm the photo however, so we suggest that you pick one or two bold pieces and pairing them with something slightly more muted. For example, if you have pants with a pattern, try pairing with a solid shirt and incorporate a statement necklace.

- Lady Gaga
- Nicki Minaj
- Places to shop: Urban Outfitters,

BOHEMIAN

Layers, intricate designs, and flowing pieces are your staple. A style that started commanding attention in the 1960s and 70s, it is a look that is equally easy to achieve, as it is to overdo.

- The Olson Twins
- Almost anyone who attends Coachella
- Places to shop: Urban Outfitters, Forever21

STYLES, CONTINUED

GLAM

By definition, glam is over the top. We're talking gowns, jumpsuits, and heels. In some ways, you pull inspiration from flamboyant styles but you pick softer colors. It's almost expected to go a little over the top.

ALTERNATIVE

We define it as alternative but this could mean punk, edgy, or artistic. You enjoy sticking out from the crowd and you relish being different. Achieving this look could involve using your statement look of black jeans.

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WARNING
AVISO

c. phelps photography

12402 S. 234th St
Gretna, NE 68028
cherie@cphelpsphotography.com
www.CPhelpsPhotography.com
402-212-8418