

Planning Your Headshot Session & Selecting Your New Headshots

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Having a current headshot is a top priority for an actor. It is your calling card and the first step in the casting process. Not only is it a big investment, but as an actor, your headshots will be instrumental in generating new opportunities. Your headshot is one of your most important marketing tools. It needs to stand out for all the right reasons and none of the wrong ones. The purpose of a headshot is to showcase that special quality that makes you unique in a natural and straight-forward way. You will need a new headshot when your look has changed, either due to hair style, outdated wardrobe or when you look older than your current headshot.

There are two basic types of headshots: commercial and theatrical. Commercial headshots should be attractive, warm and open. Always smile for these shots, with teeth showing, if possible. Theatrical headshots can be more "natural," and should try to represent your characteristics as a person. Theatrical headshots are non-smiling. It is a good idea to have both so you can be submitted for different types of projects. Do your research and find out what type you are and the roles you are most likely to be cast in. Reflect those types of looks in your headshots. You can shoot as many looks as you want which will give you and your agent plenty of options when submitting you on projects. Make sure the photographer shoots a headshot only. No $\frac{3}{4}$ or full body shots. Request portrait/vertical photos only and not landscape/horizontal.

Plan out your outfits according to the different looks you are going to shoot. Bring a variety of wardrobe to your shoot. It is better to have too many clothes than not enough. Use layering to create depth and incorporate bold colors and neutral tones. Shirts with collars work best. Avoid turtlenecks and shirts with patterns and brand name logos. Stick with solid colored clothing with a clean, simple look. Textured clothing can also work because it adds a unique touch to photos without taking the attention away from your face. Make sure your clothing is clean and ironed before you arrive. Take a lint brush or lint roller with you since lint can show up on dark clothing in photos. There are no rules about what colors you can and can't wear in your headshots but, you should try to avoid colors that are distracting. A good choice is to remember what color you are wearing when you receive compliments. Bring three to six changes per look so you can see what the photographer recommends and what will complement the background being used. Choose only articles of clothing in which you feel confident and comfortable, and that fit you perfectly. Brights, pastels and earth tones work well for commercial headshots while subdued darker colors are better for theatrical headshots. Stay away from fur, velvet and bulky winter clothes. Non-seasonal choices work best for actors in the Southeast. . Makeup can be lighter for commercial and heavier for theatrical. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum. Simple stud earrings for women and no jewelry for men. Hair should be clean, healthy and shiny. If you have colored hair, make sure your roots aren't showing. The day before your shoot drink plenty of water, stay away from sodium and alcohol, and get plenty of sleep the night before your photo shoot. Arrive fresh and ready to go.

Make sure you discuss what looks you want with the photographer before your session begins. Go to www.reproductions.com where you can research headshot photographers in Los Angeles and New York so you can get ideas for your headshot.

Choosing the right headshot can be overwhelming. How do you start narrowing down hundreds of photos to choose from? Start by trusting your instincts and your initial impression. It takes a lot of time to edit your session down to your top choices. You can ask your fellow actors or friends to help you. Your agent will not have the time to edit your entire session, whether on a cd or online. After you've narrowed it down to your top choices the photographer will photo shop your selections and send your final images so you can have them reproduced.

If you would like me to help select your new headshot(s) choose one of the options below. Together we can select the best choice for you to get reproduced;

- Option 1: Narrow down your choices and select your favorites. You can email up to ten per look of your top pictures.
- Option 2: Narrow down your choices and select your favorites. Print 4 x 6 pictures, mark the photo number on the back of the picture and mail them to me. They will be returned if you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- Option 3: Print out the contact sheets on 8 x 10 paper and mail them to me.

For a list of recommended photographers and reproduction companies go to www.brevardtalentgroup.com and click on the fountain