

So you want to be a fashion model!

Do you want photographs to submit to model agencies? Or do you want a portfolio of beautiful photos for you to keep - showing just how drop dead gorgeous you were in your late teens or twenties?

Fielder Photography receives a number of enquiries from potential customers asking if we produce 'model portfolios' and the answer is 'yes we do'.

However we want our customers to be completely aware that genuine model agencies only need three shots and snapshots taken with a reasonably good compact camera will suffice.

Now that might sound odd for a professional photography business to say that snapshots will be OK; but we want our customers to be aware of unscrupulous tactics that give genuine photography businesses a bad name.

If you want a personal portfolio as a record of how beautiful you truly are, then we will be happy to take top quality, professional photos for you and your family to treasure. If so please call us to book an appointment and we will talk you through the preparation including make-up, jewellery and clothes. Some of our clients have had such photos taken to celebrate an 18th or 21st birthday and some stunning photos are produced.

But if you want photos for modelling work read on and at the end, if you still want a professional photographer to take those 'three shots', then that is a personal decision and we can take those photos.

Some of our customers have been approached in the street or have responded to adverts purportedly searching for 'models'. When they have turned up for 'auditions' it turns out that the 'model agency' is nothing more than a photography company who want to charge girls hundreds of pounds for photographs which may be lovely to have, but are never going to help them find work as models in magazines, catalogues or as extras in film and TV adverts.

To give you an overview Fielder Photography has consulted with a representative from a top London modelling agency, who kindly gave us the following advice which we hope you find useful in making a decision about whether or not you want to have photos taken for a portfolio.

It is a sad but true fact that hundreds of young hopefuls attempt to break into the industry each year. But it is not as easy as some so called 'model agencies' would have you believe.

Disreputable agencies persuade girls to part with hundreds of pounds by promising them that the photos taken will get them recruited by top agencies. Some of these 'agencies' will promise to promote the model, but unfortunately the only communication they receive is a bill asking for a money to keep their details on record.

They will tell girls of all shapes and sizes that they are guaranteed work and the end result is a lot of very disappointed girls who have learnt a hard lesson that has cost them hundreds of pounds.

So, what do reputable model agencies expect?

Most model agents will politely say 'no thank you' if you are under 5ft 8in (173cm). Our contact said that she sees hundreds of would be models 'totter in' on very high heels saying they're 5ft 8in, when they are nowhere near and the conversation ends there.

She said that she knows it sounds harsh, but if you are less than 5ft 8 then forget it. Some model agencies may say shorter girls get lots of catalogue work but it's just not the case.

So if you are 5ft 8, or over, this is what you need to know;

- You only need three photos!
- They must all be colour. Black and white or sepia 'arty' shots are no good, as agencies want to look at your hair colour and skin tones
- You need two head shots one of which must **full face** with the other showing your **profile**
- You need one **full length photo**
- Do not plaster on the makeup. In fact make-up should be minimal and natural
- Wear simple clothes such as jeans and a vest top.
- Avoid bulky bomber jackets or big shapeless jumpers
- Don't worry unnecessarily, if you have tattoos as many models have them and they can be 'art-brushed' out. However some of the more discerning clients state 'no tattoos'.

We asked our contact if there was any other nugget she could offer and she said "yes, make it crystal clear that they must be over 5ft 8 !!!"

What to do if you are 'Scouted'

Many top model agencies still scout because it's a good way of bringing fresh faces into the industry so they are often on the look out for tall girls.

Our contact always carries a few business cards and will approach suitable girls. She keeps the conversation very short insofar she tells them that they are tall enough to model etc. She then hands over her cards and asks the girls to phone her if interested. She also asks how old they are and if under 16 she asks them to give the card to a parent, together with an explanatory leaflet.

And that's it! Reputable scouts do **not** offer to take your photos and sell them to you.

How to tell if the agent who has scouted you or the advert in the paper is genuine?

Contact the Association of Model Agents at 122 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JD
Tel: 020 7564 6466. Send a stamped addressed envelope for information and they will send you a list of agencies who abide the industry code of practice.

Or look at <http://www.albamodel.info/> for good advice recommended agencies and a list of those who have been 'named and shamed' in the industry.

Our advice is...

- Always check out the credentials of model agencies and companies which you approach or who contact you.
- Always be suspicious of agencies which offer to take your photos – and charge you for them.
- Remember The Association of Model Agents says that reputable agencies never charge up front fees.

Hope this has helped you. We are not trying to pour water on anyone's burning ambitions but want our clients to aware of the pitfalls. We are always happy to discuss our customer's photographic requirements so please contact us if you need more information.

Email: contact@fielderphotography.co.uk

Web: www.fielderphotography.co.uk

Tel: 01753 868414