

THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION

*Style Guide*

FOR A STRESS-FREE EXPERIENCE



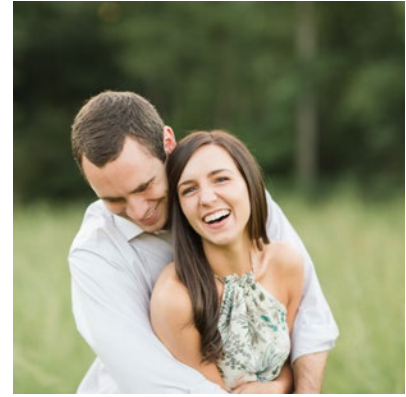
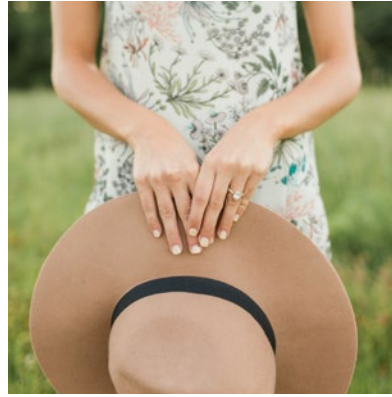
# YOUR Engagement SESSION

I love engagement sessions because I truly believe that they are a VITAL part of the entire wedding photography process. During your engagement session, you'll have the chance to get to know me, experience how I shoot and how I handle posing and lighting. This session will make a big impact on how the wedding day flows. I'll arrive on your wedding day already knowing how you two interact, what your best poses are and how to photograph you in a genuine way! What I will learn about you during your engagement session is invaluable. You will feel like such a pro on your big day because of the great practice you had during your engagement session, and that's how it should be! Your engagement session can be

scheduled anytime before your wedding day. I suggest booking a session March through May or September through November to take advantage of the most enjoyable weather times of the year. Because our weekends are filled with weddings, I shoot engagements on weekday evenings, normally 2 hours before sunset. As you start to plan for your engagement shoot, you will need to start brainstorming about location ideas. I LOVE it when couples pick a location that is special or sentimental to them in some way. As long as the light is great, I can make ANY location look awesome... even a dirty downtown alley. Let's make this fun, and the more creative, the better!

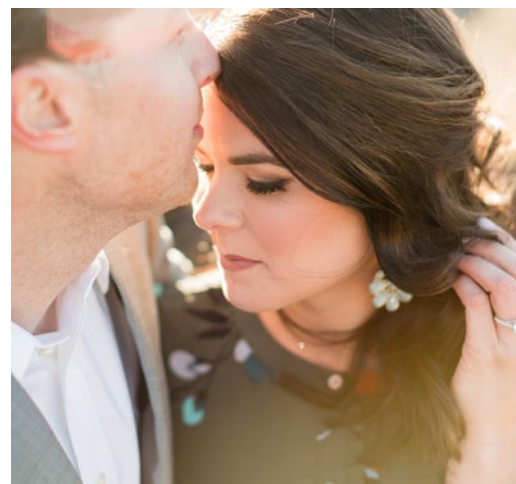
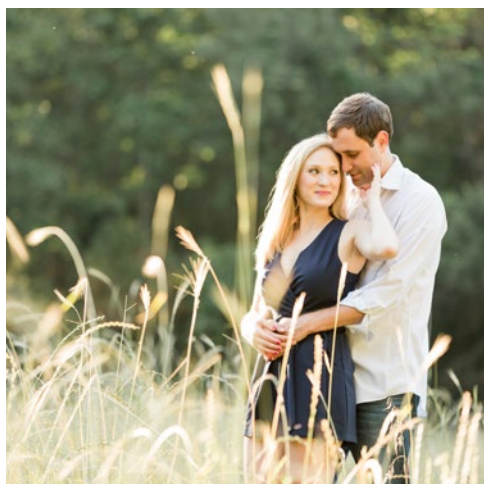
# ENGAGEMENT TIPS

It's always a little intimidating to have your picture taken .... even if it's just a photo on an iphone that is taken by a friend. We still want to look nice, make sure nothing is in our teeth and that our hair is behaving! I realize that preparing for your engagement session can be a little overwhelming. Here are some tips for outfits and accessories that will make the session preparation a little more manageable!



- Either **two or three outfits** seems to be the perfect number. If you choose two outfits, I suggest you bring one “wow” dress, and then another slightly more casual option that has a “date night” feel. But if you want to bring two or even three “wow” options and forgo the more casual options altogether, give yourself permission to do it!
- Depending on our location route, I suggest you **wear your most favorite outfit second** during the session to allow everyone to get comfortable before getting to your favorite look.
- **You don't have to bring more than one look** if it's too stressful to coordinate or if you'd rather just stick to one fabulous option. One outfit that you love will be so much better than one outfit you love and another you're not very excited about.
- **Don't try to match, try to pick outfits and accessories that coordinate** instead. I suggest picking accent colors or accessories to tie the outfits together.
- **Don't be afraid to be bold!** Accessorize and make your outfits your own! Scarves, bold necklaces and fun shoes are always welcomed!
- **Think about your setting when choosing colors.** If we're shooting in nature, more natural and neutral colors are best, but those colors also look good in a city setting! Bold or bright colors however, look good downtown, but not as much in nature.
- If you're unsure of what to wear, **feel free to bring options** to the shoot and I can help you decide what will photograph best!
- **Be true to who you are.** My favorite sessions are where the couple feels confident and beautiful together, so use this time to choose an outfit that *excites* you and you feel most attractive in.
- **Plan for success! Have all accessories ready and together the day before and your clothes ironed** (even if they don't seem to need it - it makes a difference!)
- **Relax!** You don't have to be a pro at this. I'm going to help you along the way and it's going to be fun! Enjoy this time together, and make a date out of it. Plan dinner afterwards and celebrate!!





## for her

- Have you thought about rocking a romantic gown, tulle skirt or flower crown but just never had an occasion for it? This is your chance to do it up! Don't be afraid to have some fun!

- If you don't want to add a new permanent piece to your collection, look into **Rent the Runway** for the session because it's such an affordable way to look and feel great about your style. Of course it's also fun having a perfect excuse to bring a new permanent piece into your closet!

- Dresses and skirts look most stunning because they really flatter every female body. Long, full-length, flowy dresses and skirts look amazing on camera because they bring extra movement to the photos.

- When considering the length of your dresses or skirts, think about at least one option that is comfortable to sit in if needed. Cute, shorter cocktail-length dresses photograph beautifully, just think about a variety so you won't be restricted to standing in all of your outfits. (The same idea goes for low-cut tops)

- Heels look fabulous in photos and make your legs look great! Do be sure to bring a pair of flats for navigating nature or walking to other spots throughout the session.

- Accentuate features you enjoy about yourself and not the ones you don't! If you don't love your arms, wear some layers, bring an accent wrap, or be sure to stay away from skinny straps or strapless outfits.



GO PRO

## HAIR & MAKEUP

I always suggest professional hair and makeup! Your engagement session is a great time to try out your wedding day makeup artist, so see if you can coordinate a trial on the day of your engagement session. My only regret from our wedding day was NOT having professional hair and makeup, so I really can't suggest it enough! I have a list of SUPER talented hair and makeup artists that I would trust to do my own engagement or wedding day look - so please ask me for a reference. These are amazing artists that you can totally trust to do a wonderful job and leave you feeling gorgeous. It's such a worthy investment!

If you don't use a professional, make sure you wear heavier makeup than your everyday look, and definitely wear lipstick! (*And if you do use a professional, know that a little more defined makeup is needed on camera! So, it may seem heavier in the mirror, but will look stunning in your images.*) I also suggest fake lashes to everyone. I used to think they were just for pageants... then realized they look AMAZING and natural if done right! If you wear fake lashes, I suggest going with the ones that look like real lashes in the box. The lashes should be varying lengths and longer on the outside edge. If you need a tutorial on how to put them on yourself, you can definitely check out youtube!

Lastly, we recommend that you do not get a spray tan before your session, even a few days prior, because it tends to photograph orange even when it's applied subtly and by a professional. Your actual skin tone will photograph the most beautifully and naturally. Our favorite makeup artists also agree!



# for him

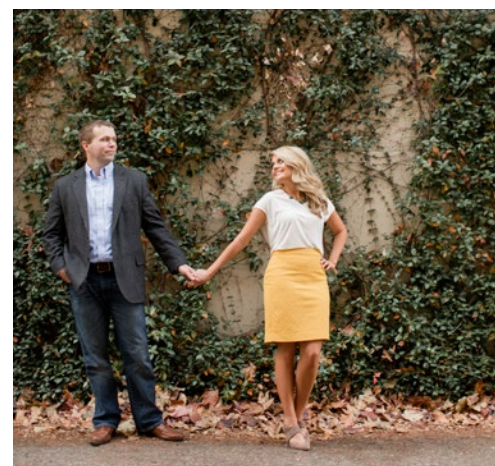
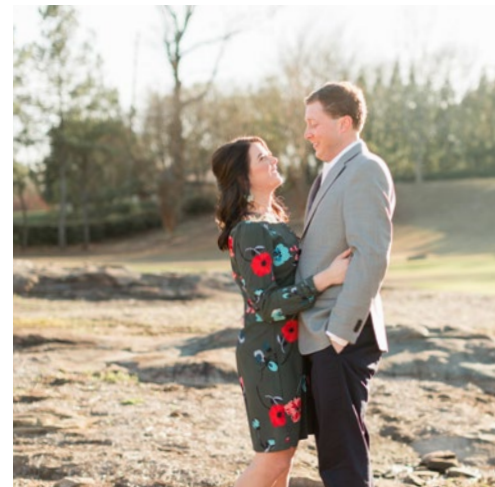
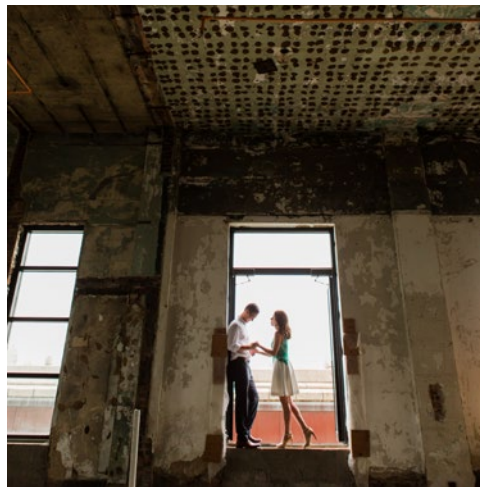
- I typically suggest long, fitted pants and closed toed shoes as a nice, masculine look for men. In general, it's usually best to leave the shorts and sandals at home, as well as any pants that are loose or baggy. Fitted dress pants, colored pants, or jeans work best on camera.

- Again. Iron or take guy's shirts to the cleaners before the session. Clothes look best when they look new and fresh! Be sure to pay attention to collars as well and be sure they're in good shape.

- Solid shades are a strong compliment to most women's outfits, whereas pinstripes or plaid patterns tend to distract the eye - so be subtle when pairing with the lady's outfit and only have one person in a pattern or print at a time! I also recommend staying away from graphics and logos.

- Feel free to layer with blazers, vests, coats, suspenders, etc.

- Empty your pockets! Literally. You don't want to have key chains or phones showing through your pockets.



# Logistics

- We are most available for sessions on Mondays and Fridays but can work out other weekdays as well. Weekends are reserved for weddings, but sometimes we can fit in a session as needed, just keep in mind the \$150 additional weekend fee.
- We can do sunrise sessions if you'd prefer! A sunrise shoot can be best for those who want to take portraits in a location that can easily be crowded later in the day.
- Your portrait session includes travel time anywhere in the Birmingham area. If you'd like to go somewhere farther away or even a destination session - just let us know and we can talk about travel costs! We love new and exciting locations!
- Yes! You can bring a pet to the session! Just let me know before the session. Also, have someone that can bring your furry friend to walk around early and get acquainted with the area, along with being able to take them back home after their photo time.





# SELECTING THE location

THIS IS THE TIME TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!

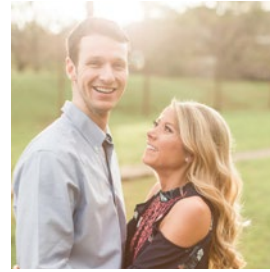
We encourage you to brainstorm unique locations that you might have special access to that most people don't. For example, maybe you, or someone in your personal or professional network, can secure permission to a location that would otherwise be off-limits, like a beautiful private estate, country club or resort. Maybe it's a family farm, upscale hotel or even a boat, airplane hangar or a rooftop view. The sky is literally the limit! Spend a few minutes thinking about it and checking around. You'll be surprised with what you come up with. Plus, if something seems out of reach, just remember: you never know until you ask! Our clients have secured permission to some pretty amazing places in the past. (Like the top of the City Federal Building in downtown Birmingham or inside the Alabama Theater) If you get stuck or need inspiration, check out our blog and keep browsing through this guide.

We always love shooting somewhere fun for the two of you; a coffee shop, college campus, your favorite date spot, doing an activity together that you love - the options are endless! Let's make it fun and YOU!

We have some great go-to locations around town that we can always hit, too. Just let us know which type of session you'd love and we'll help make a plan from there! I usually try to have one "anchor" spot that you're most excited about (hopefully somewhere fun and perhaps special or most eye-catching for the two of you!) and then branch out to a couple of other spots that may be nearby to provide some variety.







PREPARING YOUR GROOM &

## managing expectations

I feel like 9 out of 10 sessions start with the couple telling us, “You’re going to have to tell us what to do because we’re not good at this!” Not to worry, we will do just that! Your engagement session is supposed to be fun and relaxed, not forced or awkward. As you prepare for your shoot, there are a few things that you can do to help everyone know what to expect. First of all, I highly recommend sitting down with your groom and showing him 2-3 favorite engagement sessions that I have photographed. Spend some time together scrolling through a few of our blog posts or galleries, this will allow him to gauge what his expectations should be. I also recommend

that you allow for plenty of time to get to your shoot! There is nothing worse than when a couple shows up late and they have been arguing in the car! That is definitely going to put your groom in a bad mood! Last but not least, remember to have patience with him, and don’t assume that he’s not going to have a good time... I think you’ll be surprised how much you will both enjoy your session with us! One of our most frequent comments at the end of a session is, “That wasn’t as bad as I thought! It was actually fun”. Boom! Mission accomplished! When the groom says that taking pictures was FUN, we have done our job well!