

# Glamour Notes

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## **Glamour Notes**

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### **Introduction**

These notes are best used after looking at the techniques given in 'Posing Secrets – The Photographer's Essential Guide Vol. 1'. Use what you have learned from Posing Secrets and remember that this is a system for creating poses. What I am giving you here are guidelines, not rules written in stone. Your model, location, and personal preference are just some of the factors that will influence the best glamour pose and how you achieve it.

As with other types of portrait photography you will get many ideas by collecting and analyzing photographs in magazines and elsewhere.

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### **Preparing to pose**

The key to every shoot is preparation. It is important that you have a clear set of objectives agreed with the model beforehand and know how you are going to achieve them. Leave the clothing and style of poses to the model if she is a client. It's a good idea to have a portfolio of glamour shots available to help her select ideas if she is unsure of what she wants. You must have an absolute understanding of the type of picture required. If you start setting up a pose that the client thinks is too suggestive the shoot may come to a premature end.

If you are paying the model you still have to set the boundaries of the shoot clearly before you step into the studio. Make sure you have a model release form signed before you start shooting. Consult a professional photographers organization and take legal advice before starting your glamour photography career.

Always ensure the model is accompanied at the shoot so there is someone present to witness that your intentions are completely honorable and photographic. Also ask your model not to come to the shoot wearing clothes that are tight or elasticated. It can take up to an hour for elastic marks to disappear from the skin.

On the day of the shoot make sure your studio is prepared before the model arrives. Remember to ensure the studio is warm enough. Glamour shots full of goose bumps don't usually sell well.

Often it is best to ask your model to try some poses while fully clothed so you can get an idea of lighting and other practical issues. If there is

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anything you want to rearrange you can be attending to this as your model gets changed.

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### Basic Poses



There are various basic or ‘classic’ poses used in glamour photography. ‘S’ long-line poses are often used in glamour photography. Horizontal and diagonal ‘C’ and ‘S’ poses also work well. The first decision you have to make is whether to have the model standing, kneeling, or in some reclined position. You should have already decided on the features of your model you want to emphasise so that may help your decision.

When posing your model look out for any unattractive folds or creases in the skin that might appear as your model adjusts their position. Try some of the ‘classic’ poses to start with then become more experimental. Try shooting from different heights and angles. Photographing a reclining model from a low angle can produce an intimate shot while your subject looks relaxed. The direction of your subject’s gaze will also change the intimacy of the shot.

Many classic poses have the models legs in slightly different positions. One leg is often straight and the other slightly bent at the knee. This can even be used when the model is in a seated position.

The model sits with one leg raised and bent at the knee. She can be touching her ankle, rolling on a stocking or sock, or adjusting a shoe. The

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positioning of the arms will emphasise the cleavage while hiding some of the bosom.

Another seated pose has the feet apart and the knees touching. This can be quite a suggestive pose. The model can rest a hand on each leg just above the knee.

Another classic pose is the ‘wrapped arms’ pose, where the arm nearest the camera crosses the chest and the arm furthest from the camera crosses the stomach and has the hand placed on the hip nearest the camera. If the model is nude and standing the pubic area can be hidden if the model steps forward using the leg nearest the camera.

A classic reclined pose has the model leaning backwards with only the hands (perhaps elbows too), bottom and feet in contact with the surface taking the weight. The legs are bent at the knee. The model can look down and backwards at her hands, into the distance, or even challengingly at the camera.

If you want your model positioned low and facing downwards she can rest on her knees and hands or elbows. If you want her lying on her front ask her to rest on one extended arm and an elbow, with the wrist of that arm resting on the elbow of the extended arm. You may want to try this position with her legs bent at the knee and crossed at the ankles.

There are many standard positions for the hands. Hands on thighs can be an opportunity for the model to lean toward the camera. Hands on or near the chest can emphasise or conceal the breasts. Poses to consider include:

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- Hands on hips or thighs.
- One hand on one hip and the other hand at the upper thigh.
- The thumb of one hand hooked through a bra or negligee strap or at the front of the garment.
- Hands resting on the opposite shoulders to cross the arms over the chest.
- A hand placed between the breasts, perhaps holding a top or bra that the model has apparently just removed.
- The hands held in front of the model, holding a garment's straps that have been removed from the shoulders.
- Hands placed flat on the torso just below the breasts, or placed just above the breasts.
- One hand behind the model's head, the other at her chest or hip.

The model can also grasp her top with her hands positioned as if she is about to raise the garment over her head, or hold the material gathered together in her fists as if to lift the clothing revealing her torso. Alternatively the model can pull down on the hem of the material or bunch it together at the stomach to press the material against the chest.

The fingers are usually kept together and follow the curve of the body. A model resting her hand on her body has a suggestive, psychological effect, implying she is not averse to being touched. However, you will probably find that poses with the hands seen from the side are often better than those with the hand viewed from the front or back. Fingers can be splayed if the arm is fully extended.

One way to show sensuousness is to tilt the model's head back slightly, perhaps with her eyes closed and mouth slightly open. However, if your

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model is tilting her head back decide if the appearance of her nostrils spoils the effect you are after. You may also want to use a diagonal tilt to her head to help reveal her long hair.

The usual ideas of composition still apply in glamour photography. A model posed in the entrance (interior door or French windows) to a darkened bedroom can act as a good frame. Drape your model against the frame or have her make a star shape in the center of the opening, reaching to each corner.

You can also place your model in a frame that will require her to fold her body into a zig-zag pose (e.g. inside a large box open at the front). Her knees could be drawn up to shoulder height and her hands or elbows rested on her knees. Placing her hands on her knees moves the arms into a position where they will obscure her chest.

Dynamic poses that give the impression the model is about to move often work well. You may decide that instead of posing your model exactly you will just let her move and suggest poses she can move into or through. You can ask her to 'freeze' in a certain position that you like or be ready with your camera to capture the moment as she moves.

As I have already mentioned, you can get many ideas for poses by studying magazines or websites. Take a look at the appropriate sections in my Photography Directory to find a number of websites you can visit for inspiration. You can also get inspiration from paintings of the human form, and from sculpture. People working in these media generally put a lot of thought into the poses used in their work.

### **Presenting Your Model At Their Best**

Glamour photography is the photography of women (usually) using poses, lighting and costume to enhance the beauty and sensuality of the subject. Sometimes it is about using a model to produce images of an apparently ideal woman. It is a large part of your job to make the model look her best. You will want to accentuate her best features and keep the observer's attention from those aspects of her appearance that you do not want emphasised. You need to study your model and decide how you will achieve the best possible image.

Now you may be thinking of a solution to this. Today manipulation of digital images means you can produce almost any image you want. But that is not the art of the photographer. You might only use software to remove blemishes and wrinkles, but I think it is more of a challenge to leave the software alone and produce a good photo in the studio.

Light and shadow can be used to emphasise or cloak features. Camera position can also make a difference. The pose you use will also have an effect. For example, you can use a side or three quarter pose to make your model's hips appear smaller. Having the model seated and leaning toward the camera will have the same effect.

#### **The face**

If your model has a prominent nose or a thin face photograph her full on. A wide face can appear slimmer with a three-quarter pose. If you want to emphasise the mouth try the head tilted up slightly. To emphasise the eyes tilt the head down and have your model look at the camera.

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If the model appears to have a double chin in some poses position the camera above her eye level as she looks downwards. Alternatively tip the head upwards. You might also be able to use a high collar, scarf, towel, her hand or her long hair draped across her neck to hide the extra chin.

If the model has a small mouth or thin lips use a pose with the mouth slightly opened. You can also try holding a hand in front of the mouth, perhaps as if hiding a laugh. If your model has poor teeth try the mouth slightly opened, covered by a hand or prop, or smiling with the mouth closed.

Decide on some words that you can suggest your model says to produce the shape of mouth that you want. “Porridge” is quite good for getting a pout and is silly enough to get a hint of a smile too.

### **Arms**

If your model has sagging upper arms you can drape some material across the shoulders and over the upper arms. Alternatively the model could hold a shirt or jacket wide open so the upper arms are hidden behind the material.

### **Hands**

If your model has unattractive hands you can use gloves (elbow-length or lace gloves can work well) or drape a semi-transparent material over them. If you do not have these available try poses that hide the hands. For example, have your model stand facing away from you and ask her to look over her shoulder toward the camera. The hands can be positioned at

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the front or side of the body. A classic pose is to have the model's hands at her underwear or bikini bottom as if she is perhaps just about to remove it. At the least remove any jewellery that would attract attention to the hands.

### **Breasts**

If you want to emphasise your model's breasts try using a higher camera position. Your model may also squeeze her arms together, or she can lean forward so the breasts hang down.

If your model has large or sagging breasts she could support them with folded arms, her hands, or a prop like a cushion or pillow. Try raising the arms over the head to raise the bust line, but be aware of the armpits. You can try this with the model lying on her back. If she has long hair fan this up so her raised hands rest on her hair. An open meshed top can help support and reveal the breasts.

If your model has small breasts she can squeeze her arms together to produce cleavage. Alternatively she can hug her knees. This may seem an odd suggestion, but the rounded characteristics of the knees and their positioning in front of the chest means they mimic the breasts on a psychological level.

If your model has uneven breasts try draping material over one breast or posing the model in a three quarters position.

If you want to hide your model's nipples you can use material or there are many poses that do this and look natural at the same time. Have your

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model place her upper arms at her side and hold her clenched fists at the base of her neck, or perhaps toying with a necklace. If she has long hair she could hold or appear to stroke this as an alternative. If the pose does not have to look like a natural movement, one arm can cross in front of one breast with the hand resting over the nipple of the other breast.

### **Stomach**

If your model has a protruding stomach get her to hold a prop like a pillow or a garment in front of her. This pose shot from the side can be quite successful. Sometimes a slightly protruding stomach can be lost if the model arches backwards or lies on her back. A small cushion or pillow under the small of the back can help with this. Alternatively a towel or other material pulled tightly around the waist is another solution.

### **Legs**

If you wish to accentuate the legs, shoot from a low angle.

A classic pose for the legs is to have one leg straight and the other bent. The bent leg is often angled to cover some of the thigh of the straight leg.

If your model has large, bulky legs try a pose with the model lying down and position the camera at a low angle near the head, looking towards the feet. Perspective will make the legs appear smaller, or you can use the model's torso and arms to hide part of the legs. Thin legs often look best when the knees are pulled up or when viewed from the back.

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### **Body**

If your model's body is too thin pose her in a zig-zag position. If the legs are drawn up and held by the arms with the head resting atop the knees her thin torso will be completely or at least partially covered.

If your model's body is quite large you could use the aforementioned pose for disguising large legs, or shoot directly downwards as she stands and looks up at the camera. Arrangement of long hair or a material with her hands resting on the opposite shoulders will hide much of her torso.

Body scars can be hidden behind a semi-transparent material, or behind a prop or a hand. In fact many problems with the torso and limbs can be solved with a draped material, a slightly repositioned hand, or a change of camera position.

### **Props**

Ensure the props you use are in a suitable condition to be photographed and that you have a range and variety of props available and relevant to your shots.

Chairs, books, pillows, a towel, or a delicate wine glass can all be used in glamour shoots. A tall object that your model can just touch the top of gives your model a reason to stretch upwards. A long object that reaches to chin height when the model stands or kneels can be used for many poses. A guitar, a garden implement, or an umbrella would all be fit for this purpose. Your model could drape the prop suggestively, lean on it, or try to hide behind it. Alternatively she can hold the prop balanced over

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the shoulder so her arm is positioned to cover her bare chest. A prop held out at groin height can be suggestive.

A ladder can offer many different posing possibilities. You can also use a wall as a prop and have your model lean or push against it.

Lipstick, a toothbrush, a stick of candy, a pencil, or even one of the model's fingers at or approaching her mouth can help produce a picture with impact. Other props associated with glamour photography include fans, large feathers, long necklaces, wide brimmed hats, cheerleader pom-poms, sunglasses, and of course the motorbike. A ball or motorbike helmet can be placed in front of a kneeling model for her to rest her hands on.

In addition to the usual off-camera equipment you might also want to use a fan to blow and move your model's hair. If you want a shot with water formed into beads on the model's skin keep some mineral or baby oil in the studio. Have the model rub this into her skin to produce the required effect.