



Erin Braden
Photography
www.ErinBradenPhotography.com

What to Wear for Engagement Photos

12 expert tips to help you nail your engagement look

Stumped on what to wear for your engagement photos? You're not alone. As these sentimental snapshots will appear on everything from your save-the-dates and wedding website to the walls of your first home, it's important to put together looks that feel 100 percent you. Before you shop your closet or hit the mall, consider these 12 expert tips from stylists and photographers regarding what to wear (and what *not* to wear) for your upcoming engagement shoot.

1. Wear Clothes That Make You Feel Like You

If you're strictly a T-shirt and jeans kind of couple, now's not the time to pull out a beaded ball gown and tux. "The couple should feel comfortable in the outfits they choose," "They should still look like themselves, but at their best. Wardrobe choices that are extremely outside their level of comfort will make them look and feel awkward in photos."

2. Complement Each Other, But Don't Match

Complementing your partner's look is one thing, but "matching outfits and patterned prints aren't ideal for portrait sessions," "When deciding how you and your partner will dress, look for complementary colors and solid prints. Try to stay away from anything too busy, as it can be an unnecessary distraction in photos."

3. Choose Pastels, Cool Colors, and Neutral Tones

You'll want to avoid anything neon, lest you'll end up looking like a hot, blinking sign, "I also find orange is the least photogenic color, while red is the color your eye is drawn to

immediately—and you don't necessarily want your shirt or skirt to be the focus of your photograph. You want your faces and the love between you to stand out." We suggest wearing pastels, cool hues, or neutrals, then adding a bright accent with your accessories.

4. Tie Everything Together With a Color Scheme

Once you have an idea of what colors you'll be wearing in your engagement shoot, consider how that color will translate throughout the entire album. You want to create synergy, rather than have the final result look like a jumbled collection of images. "For example, if you love light blue, you can wear this as a dress or a jumpsuit, Then have your partner incorporate the same hue in a later look during the shoot to tie everything together without being overly matchy-matchy.

5. Incorporate at Least One Accessory

Accessories, such as a stylish scarf or chunky necklace, can lend oomph to any engagement look. Plus, they're easy to slip on and off, which means you'll be able to style a variety of looks. "Adding in at least one accessory per outfit for the ladies, and wearing layers of clothing for the guys, are two things that photograph well because it adds more visual interest to their looks and, as a result, to the images,"

6. Opt for Classic Rather Than Trendy Looks

You may love that black-and-white maxi dress now, but next year you may only be reminded of a referee when you see yourself in head-to-toe stripes. "I always

recommend looks that will remain timeless, rather than outfits that could make your images feel dated a few years down the road,"

7. Stick With Two Outfits

Don't fall victim to treating your engagement session as a full-fledged fashion photo shoot. "You're going to have a million wedding photos where you're all dolled up and looking gorgeous," "These are the pictures where you get to remember who you are at the end of the day when it's only the two of you. Two outfits are more than enough to reflect this in couples, and it ensures you won't spend your entire engagement session in a rush to change into the next set of clothes."

8. Flatter Your Body Type

Clothing looks best when it fits properly and accentuates your assets. "When selecting outfits for clients, I first and foremost pay attention to their body type," "Then I [ask] what areas of their body they like to accentuate." Check out her go-to tips below:

Pear-Shaped: To show off your curves, focus on cinching the waist with an A-line silhouette that flares at the bottom.

Apple-Shaped: An A-line style with a gradual flow from the waist to the legs is always flattering. This shape is also great for a dress with texture and/or a deep V-neck.

Busty: Scoop and sweetheart necklines offer support and open up the décolletage so the focus is on the face rather than the bust.

Small Chest: Look for textured or ruched styles to create fullness in the chest area.

Plus Size: Engagement photos featuring an empire-waist dress are Martini's go-to. They're super flattering and emphasize the smallest portion under the bust, creating the effect of a slender silhouette from top to bottom.

9. Garner Inspiration from Throwback Photos

Browse through old photos of you and your partner together, as well as individually. Now pick out the absolute best aspects of those pictures (perhaps, it's a pose you love or a gorgeous backdrop) and create a mood board on Pinterest to start planning the direction of your engagement shoot. "Seeing what makes sense and what you're into will help give you some guidance,".

10. Create Visual Interest With Striking Fabrics and Unexpected Pairings

Smith loves incorporating attention-grabbing fabrics (think: lace, fur, leather, etc.) into a couple's engagement shoot outfits. "These elements add a ton of visual texture, which in turn brings more warmth to your images," "Plus, they'll work well with whatever scenery you decide on."

11. Use a Rental Subscription

On a budget, but want to snag a designer wardrobe? We get it. These photos are meant to last the test of time, and your engagement is deemed special enough of an occasion to warrant the purchase of a gorgeous designer piece. If you're really just buying the piece for the photoshoot, however, you might consider renting from a site/subscription

service like Rent the Runway or Le Tote. Both options make it easy (and more affordable) to access high-end looks that you may only wear once.

12. Think About the Season

Bikinis won't work for a winter engagement, and a cowl neck scarf doesn't work in the summer. Take advantage of the season you're in by styling a look that's in tune with the climate and location.

Winter and Fall: Don't be afraid to bundle up. "My favorite tip is to wear fleece-lined tights under jeans or pants," she says. "Winter accessories can be really cute. Plus, it makes more sense visually to be dressed for winter if you're being photographed in the snow." Not in the Rockies or Adirondacks? Winter sessions downtown can be just as stunning.

Summer and Spring: Wondering what to wear for engagement shoots that take place during warmer seasons? Channel summertime vibes by going barefoot on the beach or sharing a cone on the pier in sandals and shorts. With flowers in bloom and love in the air, you can't go wrong with subtle floral prints and spring-approved pastel hues that speak to the season.