**A quick guide and advice for models.**

**(Photographers and MUAs included)**

**Simple Advice for models, MUAs and photographers**

Let me dispel a few myths.

Not all photographers are perverts.

Not all models are happy to strip off.

Not all photographers are competent, confident and awesome

Not all models are natural and will be amazing professionals

Not all MUAs are insured

Not all photographers are male.

Not everyone in the industry has a sense of humour

Not every photoshoot is fun

Not all MUAs are qualified or competent.

Not all model sleep with photographers

Not everyone involved are financially stable

Not all models are female

Not every studio is warm and has tea/coffee making facilities

Not every photoshoot is successful

Not everyone knows what they are doing.

Not all models have a massive wardrobe of amazing designer clothing

Not all studios have a massive wardrobe of amazing designer clothing

We all hear stories, we all know someone that knows someone with a story to tell. I am not saying ignore everything you have heard, what I am saying is, you need to form your own opinions, create your own good experiences and always be careful and stay safe. A few simple precautions, checks and questions should help.

I have written the following as a simple, basic guide, it can apply to Facebook or any other social networking or modelling/photography site as all are very similar. Some of the guide is repeated, its not because I am lazy, its just that some advice falls into the various categories. The majority of the advice is aimed at models, but some is equally important for MUAs and photographers.

I agree, there may be some points or comments I have made that will be controversial, some may seem politically incorrect or stereotyping, but this is the industry. Its not all perfect and correct.

**Remember** – It can take years to earn a good reputation, can take seconds to earn a bad one.

**Contents**

How to get started

Do’s and Don’ts of Casting Calls

Creating a casting call

Replying to a casting call

Pre shoot and post shoot arrangements

Collaborations

Photoshoots (what to expect)

No Shows

Model Release forms

Agencies

Safety advice

Beware the scams

Chaperones

The day of the shoot

Posing tips

Law/Copyright

Abbreviations/glossary of terms

Modelling/Photography/MUA sites and groups.

**How do you get started**

There are various ways to get started, to be successful you need some luck and you have to be willing to work hard at it. You may hear of someone being spotted and then becoming an international super model, they were the lucky one in a million. If it was that simple, everyone would be a success.

I am not going to say any of the following is the right way or the wrong way of getting into the industry. One of the methods may work for someone and not for another. You have to make the initial choice and see how it goes.

Some studios/photographers offer model experience packages or portfolio shoots. Obviously these have to be paid for by you and you get a preset number of images. Check out what they offer and the images they provide before committing yourself. Decide if the pictures contain the variety and the look you want. If not, find another that suits what you want.

There are some professional photographers that offer free shoots. They like to keep their portfolios upto date with new faces and styles. These are sometimes advertised on various modelling sites.

A lot of amateur and semi professional photographers are always looking for models to practice new techniques and their skills on. Some many offer to cover your expenses, some may offer it as a TF shoot or collaboration (see collaboration section)

Search the internet for local camera or photo clubs, some use models and like new faces, plus its a good source of experience working with a selection of people.

Does not matter if you have had one photoshoot or a thousand, you still need to network, join various sites, get involved in groups (on social networking sites) Getting to know people, even if online, it can be a major benefit. Ask about meet ups and group shoots in the local area and join in.

**The Do’s and Dont’s of casting calls**

Are there rules when posting a casting call? What about when replying? Well yes and no, its not always as obvious as you think and some common sense should be used. Remember, the casting call is similar to a job vacancy, so you need to apply for that job in a professional manor.

**Creating a casting call**

Remember what, where, when, general details and contact details.

* What is the casting for (ie wanting a model or MUA for...)
* Where – obvious but sometimes forgotten
* When – date and times start/end
* Details – expand on any of the above points, include incentives, ie paid, keep any clothing, images, lunch included, bring your own biscuits, etc.
* Contact details – helps if they know who to contact.

**Replying to a casting call**

First of all, read the casting call, then read it again, note any instructions and follow them. If it says ‘send me a message if interested,’ then do that, do not reply on the forum or thread asking for more details. This may seem odd, but some agencies or photographers do not want to give away any details incase someone ‘steals’ the idea or concept of the shoot, or a customer is asking for some secrecy for a specific reason. Also some may think, if you cannot follow a simple request/instruction, then you could be difficult to work with.

If the casting is for a 6ft female model with sized 4 feet, don’t reply saying you are 5ft 6 but can stand on tiptoes, feet are size 7 but you can wear trainers, etc. If you don’t fit the requirement, don’t reply.

Be polite, introduce yourself and do not use text speak, use clear precise English. Some of the people posting castings are from a different generation and don’t follow text speak or cant be bothered to translate it, the casting may be an agency or someone representing an agency, could be a studio wanting people that are clear with communication so to avoid any problems or misunderstandings. We all understand English, not all of us read or understand slang, text or street speak.

If the casting asks questions, answer them honestly.

Do not keep hassling the person that posted the casting. It makes you sound desperate (not keen) and you will be rejected/ignored if thought of as a pain, it sounds harsh but you have to remember, there may be loads applications, they can afford to be choosy.

If you are not successful, don’t go round bad mouthing them or slagging them off, you never know who knows who, plus you may have been short listed for another job yet to be announced. Once the word gets back that you have an attitude or do not take rejection well, your potential reputation could be ruined, that job and others may become someone elses. Its a competitive world out there, regardless of what you think, there is little originality anymore. So there are loads of photographers that can do a specific style, there are loads of models that can look like someone else or pose in a certain style, etc. Make the most of what you have and can do, keep learning, keep improving, keep trying.

Some casting calls are just for experience, can be a new model or photographer wanting some practice, so nothing is listed or any suggestions to a theme, style of what is required. Chat to each other before shoots, decide on what you’re doing, levels, boundaries, all the essential details. Make sure everyone understands and agrees with what is required, don’t want any nasty surprises on the day. Never compromise on your levels because a photographer refuses to shoot you unless you change them. You decided your levels for a reason, never feel pressured into changing them.

Being enthusiastic is good and highly recommended, you must also realise not everyone understands your way of doing things or approach, so you can be seen as over the top or you are on an ego trip. Be aware of yourself and the impression you give, adapt to the situation.

**Pre shoot arrangements**

You have done your homework, happy with the arrangements and accepted the shoot.

The following is useful and can save a lot of further problems.

Send an email or message accepting the shoot, include the details

Where it is

When it is

Any specific details, ie what levels have been agreed, how long the shoot is, etc. How many edited images will be given, etc

Travel arrangements, are you travelling by train (do you need collecting from the station) car, walking, taxi.

Also make sure you include your contact details ie mobile phone number.

Approx 3 days before the shoot, contact the person you have been talking to about this shoot, confirm your still good for it and it is still going ahead.

The day before the shoot, one more message as a final confirmation.

Depending on the photographer/studio, some like a text message when you set off from home to the shoot. It confirms your on the way and they can be ready (heating on, kettle ready)

**Post shoot arrangement**

A message or email thanking everyone involved for the shoot is a nice touch. Some photographers and models do this everytime, it only takes a few minutes and can be the difference between being forgotten or getting more shoots. Dont forget we all like to be praised if we do well. Some photographers/models are happy to give feedback and references either privately or on various sites. Its also a good way to ensure you are noticed by others. Not all networking is face to face or intentional.

**Collaborations**

What are collaborations? Basically its when people work together for mutual benefit and a common goal. It can be paid, but more often its on a TF basis. Before accepting, check the details of the shoot.

These shoots can be fun and a great experience building exercises. A local jewellery maker or fashion designer may have some new items they want photographing. A hair stylist might want some images of their latest hair creations. Can be almost anything, so its all about the details. There are no limits on numbers of people involved, can be just a model and a photographer, may be a whole team of people and a selection of models.

The result of a collaboration (everyone hopes) is a selection of images all involved can use for portfolio use.

Please note - I mention its for portfolio use and not for advertising purposes as this can be a hot topic for debate. If images are used for advertising, then in theory someone is making money from those images, so its expected all involved receive some financial benefits. Check out the details before the shoot as its too late after.

**Photoshoots**

**What to expect from a photoshoot (in no particular order)**

Expectations vary from person to person, shoot to shoot.

Regardless of reputation, experience or shoot agreements, its all about mutual respect.

Always be on time, if you cannot due to delays, let the photographer/model know immediately. Punctuality is very important.

Studios vary in size, some are a simple set up in the corner of a lounge or garage, others are massive and you can literally drive trucks in and out.

Not all models are experienced enough to do freestyle posing, sometimes direction from the photographer (or someone else attending) may be required. Also its fair to say, not all photographers understand posing, so there are often moments of confusion or wondering what to do next.

Having a hangover at a shoot is not recommended, its unprofessional, plus with the lights, the posing, stopping and starting, you will likely suffer more.

Hopefully the shoot will be good fun, the majority are, make the most of it, learn what you can. Even the top end professionals are still learning.

If during the shoot, the photographer or any other person attending makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened, you are perfectly within your rights to tell them the shoot is over and leave. If they try to prevent you leaving, call the police. I would suggest once home, writing down why you stopped the shoot, include as much detail as you can remember. Save the information somewhere safe. Memories fade or change over time, if you ever need to remind yourself or report it, then you have an accurate record. I should also add, there is always a possibility a situation could have been misinterpreted, discussing it with someone not involved or associated with you or the shoot may be of benefit. Some Facebook groups have admin people that are more than willing to help, discuss or advise if required. They may also be in a position to take action if appropriate, especially if this is not the first time someone has been reported.

**No Shows**

A no show is frowned upon and causes more problems, hassle and damage to a reputation than almost anything else. Its not only models, but also photographers and MUAs that have done this, much to the annoyance of all involved. Many excuses have been used, some are genuine, some are obviously not. If you are not interested in a shoot, don’t accept it. If you need to drop out of a shoot, make sure you give plenty of notice (hence the 3 day suggestion in the pre shoot arrangement section)

We all understand genuine emergencies, illness or family problems happen, but almost everything else is avoidable with a little planning. Remember what I said, people talk, only takes a few seconds on social networking sites or modelling sites and your reputation is tainted.

**Model release forms**

Not all photographers use them, some are not aware of them.

There seems a lot of confusion about model release forms and they do vary from person to person, but in simple terms they are a form models may be asked to sign. The form may (as I said, they vary) contain info such as your name, address, proof of ID, what will be done with the images, what the models rights are, if payment was made, possibly details of the shoot. Some will emphasise the copyright issues involved with images (see the section about law and copyright)

Always read and understand before signing.

**Safety Advice**

**General info, precautions and checks**

If approached by a photographer you haven't worked with, always check for references. Most photographers would have already checked out your work, your style(s) and levels, maybe read any reference. Use Google, a quick search may show any profiles they have on different sites. Feel free to contact any of the models they have worked with, ask them for their feedback.

Dont be afraid to ask for advice from reliable sources, I don’t mean your mates, parents or the guy that runs the corner shop. Contact reputable professional models (some are happy to help, some are not) and speak to recommended photographers, maybe ask questions on appropriate forums. But be prepared, not all advice is good advice, so you will have to use a little common sense and use what you feel is appropriate to you.

Prior to the shoot, let someone know the details of where you are going, what time you should finish, who you are shooting with, etc. You can always text or call them upon arrival to let them know you have arrived safely. Nothing wrong with calling again during a break to say everything is okay.

If you are under the age of 18, always try to have an adult accompany you. The law is not very clear about this as certain poses, styles and looks can be misinterpreted. A good photographer will refuse to shoot an under 18 model unless accompanied. Having the ‘adult’ there is for your legal protection as well as the photographers.

**Beware the scams**

Avoid companies and agencies that do not have a contact number, an address or use a PO box address. Think about it, if they were genuine, they would have nothing to hide.

Agencies want to make money, thats how they survive. They make their money through commissions so never pay to join an agency. Always check and double check their legitimacy and reputation, read all documentation thoroughly before signing anything. Some contracts are very restrictive, this means you cannot do any photoshoots unless with them, not even for friends.

You may get approach by someone in the street, they have credentials, claim to be from an agency or represent a top magazine, they have a business card and a good line in chat telling you could be the next Kate Moss or Naomi Campbell. The follow up is a quick shoot at their studio or agency, then the hard sell trying to get you to buy the pictures. They make it difficult to say no.

Open castings for models are sometimes a front for the hard sell companies

Reality TV and other popular programmes usually use agencies and clients they have previously used. If you see advertisements claiming to work with popular TV programmes, they are unlikely to be true. As mentioned, always do your homework first, try phoning the TV company to ask if they use that agency or you can ask the agency for references from recent clients. You can always contact the clients as a further check.

**Chaperone**

Some photographers welcome chaperones, some don’t. The reasons are varied and cause many arguments within the photography world. If you wish to bring a chaperone, you must agree it when setting up the shoot, don’t just turn up with someone.

The chaperone should be aware of the following basic rules

What is the content of the shoot.

Be prepared to help if asked.

Stay out of the way.

Do not interfere.

Do not start taking pics unless agreed by all present.

**The day of the shoot**

Yippee, its the day of the shoot.

Make sure you arrive on time or early.

Make sure you bring all things previously discussed (clothing, props, etc)

Always take your own make-up, a MUA may have been arranged, but what if they do not turn up?

Make sure you bring ID even if not asked.

Bring enough cash for a taxi or transport just incase someone involved cannot provide transport.

Bring any medication you need if required. Depending on the medication, let the person organising the shoot know prior to the day. Can you imagine the shock if you get seen injecting insulin, have a seizure or a reaction to something if they were not aware.

Bring a print out of any agreements made concerning the shoot, ie expenses, fees, transport, etc. Its your backup in case of any problems and can possible prevent any confusion.

It might be tempting, but never ever steal anything from a session (as a souvenir) It may happen by accident that you forget to remove some jewellery or pick up an item of clothing. Contact the person in charge, let them know so it can be returned or people will assume you stole them deliberately. Models who steal are quickly black-listed and never work again.

**Posing tips**

The following are very generalised, depending on the shoot, may not be necessary.

When posing, try to elongate your neck for maximum extension.

This has two benefits, it helps your posture helping it create a tall lean pose. It also any possibility of a double chin, or the shadows from the lighting creating the effect. Even top fashion models can suffer the appearance of a double chin if not lit correctly or posed incorrectly.

When posing, try to put a little tension in your body from head to toe. Simple way to do this is to raise yourself as if going on to tiptoes. This adds to the elongated pose of the body and assists to your shape.

By putting your hands on your hips, it can give the illusion of a smaller waist. Slight twist at the waist, creates curves and shows off your figure. Look at actresses when posing on the red carpet at premiers, they have been shown this simple trick and use it. If you do not twist slightly, can look aggressive or as if you are annoyed

Unless the photographer says otherwise, change your pose everytime the flash goes off, otherwise you will both have a number of identical images. Its not easy trying to think of different poses, but a small change each time will make a big difference. Dont be afraid to exaggerate a pose, stretch, twist, go wild. That one over the top pose could be the winner.

If a MUA has been booked, its recommended you arrive at the shoot without make up, I know, some people do not like to be seen with a naked face. But time will be wasted removing it all so the MUA can work, also could take longer to apply the new make up as you may now have blotchy skin from the removal.

Unless otherwise told, ensure you have clean hair but dont style it or use hairspray. Some MUAs also do basic hair styling, they wont appreciate having to brush out the hairspray and then restyle your styled hair. Better for them to start from the beginning than having to work to get to an acceptable beginning. I do hope that makes sense.

Once the make up and hair has been completed, do not moan about it, even if you really dislike it. You agreed to the style and theme of the shoot beforehand, so this is what is wanted for the shoot. Be professional (even if not being paid) and go with it. You might not like it, but a publisher, talent scout or the person behind your next job offer might love it. We are always self critical and dislike change. Sometimes change is good.

Facial expressions can be a vital part to modelling. A smirk, a confident smile, a hard stare, a look of shock, a look of emotion, etc. Practice expressions in a mirror, it might seem simple and you might feel silly but being able to show different expressions means you are more versatile.

You might be asked to do catwalk, don’t panic, regardless of what you see on the television its not all about walking as if on hot coals or like a horse (although that can help) Walk tall, shoulders back, head/chin up, do not slouch, be proud, concentrate on what you are doing, walk with attitude. As you step onto the runway, fix a point to look at and keep looking at it as you walk, when you stop and turn, find another point and fix on that. Try not to walk and look at the audience or your mates, this will put you off and make you look amateurish. If music is playing, walk to the beat, do not sprint. Remember, you are the centre of attention, its all about you (yeah, ok, its really all about the outfit, but hey, make the most of it)

Treat every photoshoot and meet up as an interview, show that you have a personality, show you are friendly and adaptable. Be noticed and remembered for all the right reasons

Most (not all) studios and photographers have music playing in the background, if your getting stuck for posing ideas, use the music and the beat to help. Mentally you can dance to the music, some of those moves are good poses (we hope, just don’t start head banging or break dancing in the middle of a fashion shoot) If able, ask for your favourite music to be played during a shoot. Working with the music can lift your game.

The internet is a good source of ideas, search for images and video footage of models, especially in the style(s) you want to pursue. Observe what the models do, how they pose, how they move, watch the head and eyes, pay careful attention to what they do with their hands, (I will expand on the issue of hands and eyes shortly) you may be surprised how most of them do the same things but it seems different until you are aware.

Eyes can be a photographers nightmare depending on the style of the shoot. Simple rule with eyes, where ever your nose is pointing, they eyes must go the same way. So if asked to look up, tilt your head and look direct (nose should be pointing whatever you’re looking at) if asked to look left or right, move your head, then your eyes (eyes/nose direction) If you only move your eyes, it shows too much white of the eyes and can look sinister or just wrong.

Hands are also a problem. They can often look like sausages or a claw. Look at unposed pictures of friends or yourself when at parties or out and about, look at the hands, you may see what I mean. To prevent unsightly hand shapes, remember, no straight fingers, have a slight gap between the fingers, introduce a slight angle in the wrist. Do a search on the internet for professional models and their poses, look at the hands and the angles, observe, practice and use.

Once you have had a photoshoot or two, dont think ‘I have some pics, give me loads of money because I am now a model’ its not that easy. Keep looking at the internet, check out other models work, learn different styles and poses, the more variety of poses and looks you can do, the better your chances of work and success.

It really doesnt matter how you start or where you advertise yourself as a model, you need at least one good headshot. We all had to start somewhere, so the headshot does not have to be a high end professional image, but make sure it is not a grainy mobile phone shot or a slefie in the mirror. You may like those pictures, but someone wanting to use you for a project, photoshoot or an agency will not like them, It makes them feel you are not serious or willing to take time to get some decent pictures. Get a friend to take a few pics indoors and out, see which image(s) look good and use those.

**Agencies**

If an agency contacts you, do your research and homework first. Some are genuine; some are scams as mentioned previously. Remember, if they want money or payment type details, its likely to be a scam. (see the Beware of the scam section)

The agency will let you know what they want, might be some basic info, might be a chat in their office, don’t be afraid to ask questions. If they want to see you, then try to follow these simple points:-

Treat this as an interview (it could be, you just never know)

A good interview technique is to imagine everyone you see and meet from the moment you leave home until you arrive back home, is part of the interview panel. Anyone watching you could also be part of it. Be polite, confident and friendly to everyone, it will get you in the right mindset at the place your going.

Dont be late

Unless they state otherwise, wear the minimum of make-up to show off your natural beauty, and tie your hair back to show off your face and bone structure.

Do not wear coloured nail polish or have big false nails, keep it simple, clear, nude, or sheer.

Wear a simple and comfortable outfit thats practical, not jeans or your best clubbing clothing.

Bring a pair of heels in case they ask you to walk.

Try to keep a good posture: Stand up straight, shoulders back.

Be honest, they have met many prospective models and know all the answers already, so it is okay to tell them if you don’t have a lot of experience. Often they like new and raw talent, show them how good you are by your personality and enthusiasm.

**The law**

The law can be a long complex subject regarding modelling, photography, and many similar issues. I have only listed a couple basic laws that I feel you should be aware of, could save a lot of hassle and problems later in your career. If in doubt do an internet search, only read official sites as others may give you false information. If still in doubt, seek legal advice from a professional.

Copyright – Photographers retain the copyright to all images taken at a photoshoot. It is illegal to manipulate (do any editing) or sell the images without permission.

Agency fees - From October 2010 it is illegal for an agency to charge any fees upfront. It should be mentioned, this only applies to photographic and fashion models. If you are neither, then the agency is entitled to charge a small fee to include you on their website or in a directory.

Tax - If you are being paid, you need to register yourself as either self-employed or having a second income, you are obliged to pay tax on earning or you could receive a hefty fine.

Age - It is not illegal to be photographed if under the age of 18. What is illegal for under 18 year old, is images that may include nudity, topless or ‘suggestive’ posing. Remember that suggestive posing is subjective and can be interpreted many ways. Because of this, the law can be a grey area and not worth arguing it. I would suggest, you just don’t do it.

Injury - It is not compulsory to have insurance, although most studios will have some form of insurance cover as its a business. Be aware, not all photographers, models or MUAs have insurance. What happens if the MUA is applying make up and you have an allergic reaction to a product? Imagine you trip, fall and injure yourself when on a shoot? If you are serious about modelling, I suggest you get yourself some basic cover, it’s not expensive and could ensure you are compensated if you get hurt. Hopefully you will never need it.

**Abbreviations/glossary of terms**

Mod – short term for model, can also be a moderator

MUA – Make Up Artist

Tog – short term for photographer

TF – Time/Trade for (non paid)

TFP – Time/Trade for prints/pictures

Meet up – Group of people meeting usually for networking purposes

Group shoot – Models, photographer, MUAs meet up and work together, can be all together or individually.

Casting call – advertising for models, photographers or MUAs

Levels

Fashion – Often wearing fashionable clothing (always find out what sort first) in a style that is wanted for advertising, editorials and magazine covers. Although the market is constantly changing, the general requirements for fashion models are between 5'9" and 6" tall (175 cm to 183 cm) or taller, extremely thin, 32-36" (81-91 cm) bust, 22-25" (56-64 cm) waist and 33-36" (84-91 cm) hips.

Editorial - Modelling for magazines usually fashion. Easy way to get published and seen, but poorly paid (often not paid)

Glamour – General term for modelling than can be anything from swimwear to ‘Lads Mags’ topless/nude.

Portrait – Usually head and shoulders

Parts modelling – Often refers to modelling hands, feet, teeth, etc. Usually a specific part of the body.

Implied topless – Topless but the nipples are hidden/covered by props, hands or the pose.

Topless – Boobs and nipples on show.

Implied nude – nude, but the pose or props will hide the area of the genitals and possible breasts.

Nude – Naked, in the buff, showing your birthday suit, starkers, basically, no clothes.

Adult – There are many adult styles, but they all feature your genitals or in sexual poses.

**Modelling/Photography/MUA sites and groups.**

The following are just a few of the general or what I consider important sites. You will have to decide which ones are useful to you. I have not included personal websites or suggested individuals to contact as this is not an advertising guide, it’s for networking and advice only.

**Facebook groups**

[Modelling Casting Call, Group Shoots, Model Days, Studio Days](https://www.facebook.com/groups/225255427493261/)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/225255427493261>

[Modelling Network – Castings, Events, Jobs and Promotions](https://www.facebook.com/groups/34353248006/)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/34353248006>

[TFCD/TFP Models, Photographers, MUA Network](https://www.facebook.com/groups/322498354429507/)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/322498354429507>

[Photographers, Models, MUA and Agencies.](https://www.facebook.com/groups/421164447927477/)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421164447927477>

**Modelling sites (they are free to join, but restricted use unless you pay to upgrade)**

<http://www.purestorm.com>

<http://www.modelmayhem.com>

<http://purpleport.com>

<http://www.net-model.com/homepage.asp>

**Useful advice groups and sites**

<https://www.facebook.com/SafeModel>

<http://www.albamodel.info/modelling_faqs.php>

<http://www.modelmanagement.com/modeling-advice/>