

Preparing For Your Executive Headshot

MEN

Think classic. Pick your favorite suit that fits you well and is preferably a classic dark color like navy blue or gray. Choose a suit that doesn't bunch up when you button it or sit down in it and a shirt and tie that match each other and the suit.

Don't choose anything with bold, distracting patterns or colors. Clothing with tight grids or a small herringbone pattern can have a moiré pattern effect on camera, so stay away from grid-like patterns. Thin stripes that are a little further apart are okay. Ties look best when their tone lands between the suit and the shirt- so a light shirt, a dark suit, and a tie in a shade somewhere between them. Some ties are too shiny- try to stay away from really reflective, shiny silk ties.

If you don't wear a tie, choose a non-white shirt if possible: white shirts without a jacket and tie to break them up can lose detail in the color and folds. And if you wear a button-down shirt, it's best to wear a jacket or sweater of some kind to layer the look. If not, choose a darker color shirt or something with pockets or details to avoid it looking like a head floating on a blank, boxy shirt, and unbutton a button or two, or choose one without a collar and a medium or low neckline. And make sure we can't see your undershirt beneath the button-down shirt.

Preparing For Your Executive Headshot

WOMEN

Choose a professional suit or outfit that has a classic look: you shouldn't be able to tell what decade it is in the photo. Don't choose anything with bold, distracting patterns or colors, unless you can layer a blazer or sweater over it so not much of the pattern is showing.

Clothing with tight grids or a small herringbone pattern can have a moiré pattern effect on camera, so stay away from grid-like patterns. Thin stripes are okay.

Try not to wear stark white unless it's under something, such as a suit jacket, cardigan, or sweater. V-necks accentuate the neckline and generally look best on women. Just don't choose something with too low of a neckline: no cleavage. No turtlenecks. They tend to make people look like they have no neck at all in photos.

Stay away from short sleeves or tank tops: executive headshots look better without bare arms, but it can work for a model's comp card or an actor/entertainer headshot.

For jewelry, I always prefer a headshot with no jewelry at all, or something small, classic, and not very reflective or flashy. Earrings shouldn't dangle more than an inch from your earlobe. If I notice your jewelry before I notice your face, I may ask you to remove it.

Preparing For Your Executive Headshot

Makeup

If you do your makeup yourself, do your makeup how you usually wear it for an average day, or possibly a nice dinner where the steak is \$30 but not \$75. Do not wear heavy makeup; a close headshot will show clumps of mascara or dark lipstick. Choose light to medium eyeliners, eye shadows, and lipsticks that are only a shade or two darker than your skin tones. This brings your features out in a subtle manner without making it look like you're wearing lots of makeup. Avoid caking on heavy foundation, or wearing shiny eye shadows or lip gloss: too much shine is distracting on camera and looks wet.

Skin blemishes, pimples, and even wrinkles can be retouched. It's not cheating. I promise.

How much is too much? Everyone is different, so it depends on how much make-up you usually wear: you want your headshots to be easily recognizable as how you generally look in person. For some people, that means wearing your make-up exactly how you usually wear it, for others it's wearing a little more, for others a little less. If you don't wear much makeup every day, don't do your makeup like Kim Kardashian for your photos.

Preparing For Your Executive Headshot

Preparing for your headshot

Prepare for your headshot by taking care of yourself in the week leading up to your headshot. Avoid drinking alcohol or smoking, and drink plenty of water for a few days and on the day of your headshot. This will make your skin very hydrated to fill in lines and wrinkles, undereye circles, and give you a healthy glow. Get plenty of sleep the night before your photo so you're rested and ready to go.

Hair: Don't cut or dye your hair right before the shoot. Freshly colored hair can look too vibrant and unnatural on camera- drawing more attention to your hair than your face. A new haircut also looks its best after at least a week, and colored hair looks more natural after 1-2 weeks' worth of shampooing.

Teeth: If you want to whiten your teeth before your session, start as early as possible and use a natural whitening method, or have your teeth whitened with your dentist. A quick emergency whitening method that works for many people is to mix some toothpaste with about 1 teaspoon of baking soda, 1 teaspoon of food-grade hydrogen peroxide, and about 1/2 teaspoon of water. Polish your teeth with this mixture and it should quickly whiten your teeth a shade or two. But don't use this method more often than once a month- baking soda is abrasive and can wear away at your enamel if used too frequently. (And retouching is also a much safer option!)

Beards: If you have a beard, trim it evenly so it's nicely groomed. If you're going clean-shaven, get a good shave that morning. The best rule of thumb for facial hair is to commit to your look- either a beard, mustache, or nothing at all. Anything scruffy or stubbly in between is not advisable. Darker colored beards tend to be accentuated in photos- trim it well so it's not too thick.

And remember to have fun and not take it too seriously! A little difficult after all these do's and don'ts, I know... but I promise to make the experience as relaxing as possible!