

A QUICK GUIDE TO

WEBSITE images



INTENTIONALLY DESIGNED

How to curate the right images

Photography is a key part of your website and one that can make or break a good design. It is crucial to ensure that you have quality photos used throughout your website that create a cohesive look with your brand and style. If you think about it, the photos on the site are half of what makes a design look good.

It could go without saying, but you want to make sure that your images are professional, clean, clear images that align with your brand style. You also want to curate a variety of images that can be used in different ways on your website. You will need some large, horizontal images in some places and smaller, vertical style images in others. While some images can be cropped and manipulated, not all images will look good in every application. You also want a variety of image styles. You don't want 20 pictures of yourself in the same outfit at the same desk all over your site. Be sure to gather several different types of images that showcase your brand, your work, and your style.

SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF IMAGES YOU MAY NEED:

- Headshots or styled brand photos
- Portfolio images
- Shop products photos or mockups
- Press logos (I strongly suggest adjusting each one to black and white and finding them without backgrounds if possible - you can do this in Canva. This will allow you to add them to your site, lower the opacity of each, and create a more uniform and streamlined look)

One area of your website that will house a lot of images is your portfolio and needs to be top-notch. If you are building a portfolio of your work, you want to feature your very best work that showcases the type of client you want to work with. Just because you've done the work, doesn't mean it has to go in your portfolio.

You want to put your best foot forward and attract your ideal client with the work that you show. Displaying 4-5 high-quality projects is better than showing 10 not-so-great ones. It's not about showing that you've done tons of work but that you do quality work. If you're just starting out and don't have much to show in your portfolio, don't worry. It takes time to build a strong portfolio but even if you just have one good project to show what you can do, that will show your quality of work. If you don't have anything to show, it may be best to leave off this page until you build more work to show and display your style and quality through your brand and message instead.

Another area of your site that will be image-heavy is your shop. If you are including a shop on your site, the quality and style of your product images is key. The image of the product typically sells the product more than anything else so you want to be sure that those images look good. If you can get high-quality images that are styled to match your brand and site, that is best for maximum impact.

Planning an on-brand photoshoot

If you've got the resources to put together a branded photoshoot, I highly recommend it. Branded photos can truly elevate your website more than stock photos. While stock photos can definitely make your site look amazing (I use them!), branded photos can just take it to the next level. Being able to include yourself in images and match them to your exact brand can make a huge difference. Plus, you can plan shots specifically for your site and what you need for certain places.

If you've got the time and money to invest in a branded photoshoot, here's some tips to help you plan a successful photoshoot:

Find your photographer:

Finding the right photographer is vital if you want to consistently communicate your brand style to the world through your imagery. You can start by searching online for someone in your area or get referrals from others. Check out their portfolio and editing style to make sure their style aligns with yours. You want to make sure you get a photographer that understands your brand and your style and can make you feel

comfortable in front of the camera. It's also important that they understand brand photography specifically and how to get lifestyle headshots that work for your brand.

Gather inspiration:

Pull images from Pinterest, Instagram, and other websites of the style of photos you like and ideas for poses or props. Put together a mood board that will act as a reference guide for your photoshoot. This will look a lot like your overall brand mood board but be more focused on the shoot itself. It's important to think back to the core of your brand so you keep everything consistent and aligned. Knowing how you want to be perceived will help you keep a clear theme for your mood board and shoot. Then, send your mood board to your photographer so that you are on the same page and she knows what you're thinking. It's your job to cast the vision and their job to make it come to life.

Pick a location:

Work with your photographer to find a location that both fits your brand and works well for photos. Think about what kind of photos you need and what will communicate your brand well. Does it need to be dark and moody, corporate feeling, or bright and fun? The background can greatly influence the overall style of the photo.

Plan your outfit and props:

Preparation is key for a successful photoshoot. You want to be prepared with 2-4 different outfits that will both look good for your brand but also go along with your location. Most photographers will be able to assist you with this, but you want to make sure your outfits and props are as on-brand as everything else. You also want to think about hair and makeup too. If you need someone to do hair and makeup the day of the shoot, be sure to line that up in advance as well. And don't forget about models. If you want to include other people in your shoot, make sure you have models that represent your ideal client so they can see themselves in your photos.

Create a shot list:

You can work together with your photographer to plan out some of the shots you want to get. This comes in handy to guide the shoot so you stay focused and get what you need. Plus it gives you a starting point and eases the awkwardness. Be sure to plan your shoot around the goal that you're after. Are you needing basic brand photos, something for a specific promo or offer, or a stash of social-ready shots for future use?

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Get a variety of images:

Think about what you'll actually be using these images for and get a variety of shots that can be used in different ways. You'll want photos that are good for social media as well as your website which means you'll be cropping them differently. You'll need both horizontal and vertical crops for different applications. You also want to consider white space in photos so that you can have some images that can be used with text overlays. And don't forget to get a mix of both posed and candid photos - both work well for any brand!

Utilizing stock photos

Most people aren't able to invest in custom branded photos right away. There are several great resources available for stock photos that can flow seamlessly with your brand and style. It helps to find similar photos or images from the same photographer to maintain consistency. Also, if you are going to use stock photos, be creative and resourceful and utilize them in different ways by cropping them or overlaying text or images on them when possible.

Stock photos have come a long way over the years and there are some great resources to get high-quality images that don't look like "stock" and even some great ones that are free.

MY FAVORITE STOCK PHOTO RESOURCES ARE:

- MOYO stock
- Haute Stock Photo
- Social Squares
- Haute Stock Photo
- Creative Market
- The Humble Lion
- Editorial Stock
- Unsplash (free)
- Pexels (free)

PREP YOUR IMAGES

How to prepare and save images for your website

This is easily one of the most overlooked steps in building a website. Once you curate and collect all the images you want to use for your site, whether stock photos or custom branded photos, you need to save them a certain way for your website. You want to make sure that each image you add into your template is fully optimized to keep page load times as low as possible and so that visitors can browse your website with ease.

Most photos will be a larger file size and too many of those can slow your site down. Lowering file sizes while maintaining acceptable quality is the primary goal of optimizing images for website performance. Smaller files lead to faster page loads and improved user-experience & SEO. Plus, now is a good time to rename your images for SEO.

The best way to do this is to start by organizing your images in a folder on your computer. I would recommend putting them into sub folders and categorizing them by type of images so they are already organized when you upload to your media library. For example, you might have folders for stock photos, headshots, branded photos, portfolio, press logos, shop items etc.

Once they are all in the right place, you can resize them for your website. There are 2 different sizes to consider here - the actual image size, and the file size.

A good rule of thumb is to have the image size be between 2000 and 2500 pixels wide. Images smaller than 2000 pixels may appear blurry or pixelated when they stretch to fill containers, such as banners.

You can resize them in something like Photoshop or Canva. Your website platform will automatically resize your images to fit the area and screen dimensions that are needed, but you want to make sure your images are at least 1500px and no larger than 3500px on the long side (any bigger and you may experience load speed issues) and have an RGB color profile.

You also want to make sure the image file size is under 500 KB for best results. You can compress the image file using a resource like tinypng.com or tinyjpg.com while maintaining the quality of the image.

The last step is to rename your images for SEO. I know this can be tedious, but it's better to do it now so everything is ready to go when you are building your site. You want Google to know what the image is about without even looking at it, so use your SEO keywords in the image file name. If you know where you will be using specific images, it's best to match those to the page they are on, but even general keywords are better than an image name with a bunch of letters and numbers.

Once your images are saved and sized appropriately, you can upload the same folders to your media library and implement them on your website.

