

The Engagement Session



Jamie Lee
PHOTOGRAPHY

TRUST + COMFORT = BETTER WEDDING PHOTOS

Having the right wedding photographer is one of the most crucial determinants of a successful wedding day. Along with capturing the most important memories of your day, the photographer also dictates the logistics, pace, and vibe of the event.

Because the itinerary of each Wedding Day is always packed to the brim, there's almost never enough time for me to get to know you well enough before we start with the most important photos. The best way to remedy this is through our time spent in an engagement session.

Unlike your wedding, think of your engagement session as a day free of schedule, formality, and expectation. Here, you can express your fashion and personality just the way you are, be it silly or romantic, dramatic or comedic, high energy or serene.



During our engagement session, we will have all the time we need and our sole purpose will be to create images that showcase your relationship in a way that is authentic to you and your loved ones. I will get to experience you and your partners' particular blend of chemistry and see the ways in which you communicate with each other physically.



You and your partner will experience the vibe and pace of my shooting style and become familiar with its particular movements and poses.

After your engagement session, we will look through your engagement photos to see which images/angles/vibes worked best for you.

This will help to solidify our shared vision of your wedding day and will be a North Star for us to work towards.





And when your wedding day comes around, you won't have to think:

"Do my poses look weird?"

"How are we coming off?"

"Will these photos turn out okay?"

You will already have experienced my process, from beginning to end, and thus will be able to better visualize the final product.

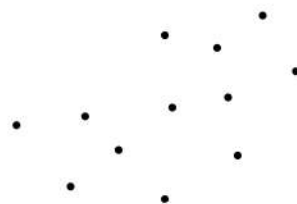


With our familiarity, we will
have built the trust necessary
for you to just relax and enjoy
your wedding day!



THE MINDSET

Rest assured, I'm dedicated to creating a comfortable atmosphere during our session. But if you've never done a photoshoot before, It's common to feel anxious beforehand. Many of my past clients have benefitted from doing their favorite relaxation techniques before their session such as: a massage, meditation, breathing exercise, or for those who indulge, you can bring along a flask and take a short or two of your favorite liquor.



LOCATIONS

For most of my engagement shoots I like to photograph two separate, nearby locations. I can give you recommendations for each, but the final decisions are always up to you.

For our first location, a picturesque space—either architectural or in nature—would be ideal! This location can be somewhere meaningful to you or just a sexy vista that you've had your eye on.

For the second location, I like to do something a bit more candid and casual where activity or food/beverage are first on the agenda. To help you choose, consider your favorite recreational activities. Mini-golf, batting cages, bowling, tennis, can all be considerations. Also think about what you like to eat or imbibe. How about a brewery, whisky bar, coffee shop, ice cream shop, pizza place, and/or boba?



WARDROBE

In the wardrobe planning phase, we want to work together to find just the right color, style, fit, and texture, for your locations. For some of my clients, they might know exactly what they want to wear, which is fantastic. For those who aren't sure, I'm here to help, so continue reading!





RECOMMENDED SELECTION PROCESS

Whether you're shopping for something new or going with a tried and true look, I recommend my clients put together three favorite outfits that they like the most, per location. Try out as many looks as you want, but narrowing to three should be your goal. When putting these looks together consider what level of dress you want: formal/ semi-formal/ casual/ wild. You can keep it at one level for all three or mix it up.

Then, after that, you will want to pair each of your three looks with corresponding looks for your fiancé. You will want to make sure that what you pick for them will harmonize together in terms of color, style, and levels of formality.

Now, having three different pairs of looks, we will want to choose your favorite. To help you decide, you can send me photos of your choices (wearing the outfits would be most helpful as fit plays an important factor). I'll give you my personal opinion on what works best.

Once we have your favorite, we can choose one more as an alternative, or second, look.



WARDROBE MISTAKES TO AVOID

PATTERN

Small and high contrast patterns (ex: small black and white polkadots) can be a problem as they will draw too much attention away from what we want the focal point to be—your faces. However, Loose patterns are fine and can add a lot of visual interest. Texture is also great and should never be thought of as a pattern.

WEARING WHITE

White is often a default tone that most couples choose, but in terms of photography, pure white doesn't photograph well. Consider Off-white/beige/tan instead.

BLENDING INTO EACH OTHER

Try to stay away from wearing the same colors as this will make you blend together when you are standing close. In all your photos we want to create distinct individual silhouettes.

BLENDING INTO SCENERY

Speaking of blending, Match color accordingly to location. If we are shooting in a mountain-scape with lots of darker earth tones, wearing similar tones will make you blend into the background. If we are shooting in a architectural location with beige walls, wearing a similar tone of beige will do the same. choose color that will distinguish you from your scenery.



THOUGHTS ON COLOR/STYLE

- Color harmonies vary and will change depending on the time of year, skin tone, location, fashion preference, time of day, etc.
- currently I'm obsessed with burgundy and gray as a combination, whether in nature or an industrial setting, it just looks amazing.
- Pastel tones only work for super airy, overly bright photos. This is not my style of photography. I prefer a deeper, richer cinematic palette. Pastel tones with my palette generally look washed out.
- Tight to the waist looks better for photos as it gives shape to your figure.
- A fitted look for men is more photogenic than loose, baggy clothes



PROP IDEAS



Incorporating props can be a great way to add a unique and personalized touch. Also, some props will give you something to do with your hands (people never know what to do with their hands). Feel free to go crazy with props. No matter how wild the idea, let's see if we can make it work! Here is a list of some common prop ideas you might want to incorporate.



- A scarf/ blanket.
- Hats
- Sunglasses
- Flowers/bouquet
- A car.
- Instruments (of music-like a guitar, or of death-like a sword)
- A champagne bottle- (for popping and spritzing at the proper location)
- Balloons (if allowed)
- A loaded picnic basket
- A parasol



BRING ALONG ITEMS



These are “good idea” items to have on hand during your shoot. To make things easier, stuff all of these in one bag for easy carry. Try not to carry too much as we’ll likely be doing a lot of walking.

- Makeup blotter for potential sweat.
- Hair brush for windy days (unless you’ve been hair-sprayed)
- Comfy, easy to change slip on shoes/sandals (only if your location requires lots of walking and you’re wearing heels).
- A compact/mirror for checkups.
- Water/Snacks
- A flask with liquor if you want to take the edge off.





FAQ

What days are you available to book a session?

Engagement sessions are booked on weekdays Monday–Thursdays and select Fridays. I do not book weekend engagement sessions for two reasons. The first being that I am booked most all weekends for wedding photography and second, because the most popular photo locations we will be PACKED during weekends (often with other photographers), making it a much more difficult shoot for the both of us.

When during the day do we start?

Start times for engagement sessions are approximated according to time of year and when the sun sets. For winter months, the sun sets around 5ish. So we will schedule our shoots around 2pm or 3pm. This will give us at least two or three hours to shoot, including a sunset. For summer months, sunset is later, around 8pm, so we schedule for to start around 4pm or 5pm.

We cannot schedule much earlier than these times as we need the sun to be down towards one side in order to have the direction of light that is flattering for portraits. Noon light, when the sun sits directly above, is notoriously harsh and unflattering, and should be avoided.

How long does an engagement session last?

The first location should last anywhere between 1–2:30 hours. The second location should last anywhere between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Though we schedule a start time, I don't usually schedule an end time. Yours will be the only engagement session I book for that day.

How far do you travel?

All local travel is included with your engagement session. Local travel equates to anything within 40 miles of Claremont, California and covers most of my favorite recommended locations. If you have a location in mind that is farther than a 40 mile radius from Claremont, CA, we will charge a small travel fee starting at 100 dollars. For places really far out, the travel fee will increase according to miles/hours.

Can I bring my dog/cat?

If you'd like to bring your pet, and a pet-sitter, feel free to do so for the beginning portion of your shoot. However, you must have a pet-sitter. When we are done with this portion of your shoot, your pet-sitter can then bring your pet back home while we continue with the rest of your shoot. We will not be able to include your pet for the entire engagement session. Trust me, it doesn't work.

SESSION POLICIES

Cancellation Policy

If you'd like to reschedule, we're going to need 48 hours (2 days) notice ahead of time. Also, on the day of your shoot, if you're over 30 minutes late, and I can't get a hold of you, I'll have to call it quits and drive back home resulting in the cancellation of your shoot without refund.

Location Policy

All location fees that include entrance, parking, photography permit, etc. are to be covered by our clients. If client is unable to cover costs at the point of purchase, they will be billed before final delivery of photography gallery.

Travel Policy

We have several local engagement locations that we mostly work from. if you have a location in mind that is farther than a 40 mile radius from Claremont,CA, we will have to charge a small travel fee usually between 100-150 dollars. For places really far out, the travel fee will increase according to miles/hours.



And that's it! That's all the information I have for you regarding engagement sessions. Hopefully it was just enough and not too overwhelming. So take it all in and if you have any questions about any of it, feel free to contact me at anytime. I look forward to photographing you and let's have an amazing shoot together!

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