

# YOUR GUIDE

TO A SUCCESSFUL PET PHOTOGRAPHY SESSION





# WELCOME!

**Thank you so much for trusting Sarah Beth Photography to take beautiful portraits of your adorable pet(s)!**

While my photo sessions are very relaxed, and your pet will ultimately shape how things progress, there are a few things that **you** can do to set everyone up for success. I hope this guide helps you prepare for an amazing photo session!

Both in-studio and on-location sessions average about an hour, but there is no time limit. I'll shoot until I know I've got some great images, or until your pet lets us know he's done.

Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or concerns.

I look forward to meeting you soon!

# PREPARING FOR YOUR SESSION

With any session, there are a few simple things you can do to help both you and your pet have a fun, successful shoot. Here's some tips for getting your dog into the right state of mind for a session:

## PRACTICE **COMMANDS + TRICKS**

Brush up on any commands your pet knows. While it's not required that he be perfectly trained, **a solid “sit,” “stay,” and “down” goes a long way** in the success of your session.

If he knows any special tricks, like shake or roll over, practice them ahead of time to stay fresh in his mind.

## GET SOME **EXERCISE**

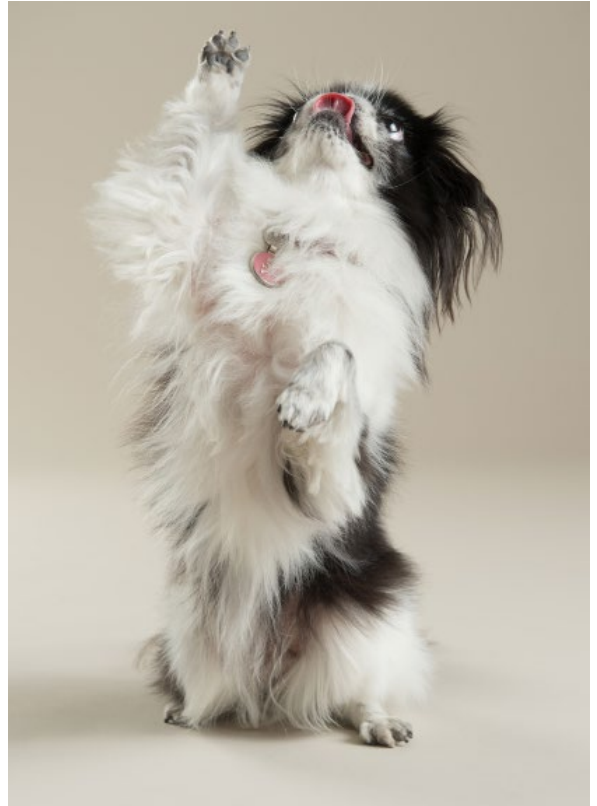
Be sure to exercise your dog before the session with a quick walk or a few hours at daycare. This will help him be relaxed and focused, and not bouncing off the walls with excitement.

\*Be careful not to overdo the activity, so he still has energy for the shoot, and not overheated or panting.

## READY **YOURSELF** FOR THE SESSION

Animals are very sensitive to our emotions, demeanor, and attitude. If we humans are going into the session with a calm, upbeat state of mind, it'll set the stage for how your animals might behave.

Photo sessions can be really fun, so don't worry or get upset if things aren't going exactly as planned. Go with the flow, and your pets will, too!



# PREPARING FOR YOUR SESSION

We want your pet to look his best for his photo shoot, and there's a couple things you can do to get him ready:

## GET 'EM GROOMED

Be sure to get a bath and brush the day before or morning of your session. Baths tend to lead to shedding, so you'll want to brush him right before the session to eliminate those stray hairs.

Trim your pet's nails to the proper length a few days ahead of time. Overgrown nails are quite noticeable.

If you have a breed that requires professional grooming, schedule the groom with enough time before your session so their coat is the ideal length. Just like with humans, sometimes a fresh haircut needs a little time to grow out and look its best.

## LITTLE TOUCH-UPS

Check to make sure your pet's eyes are clean and clear of debris before your session.

If you have a breed that gets tear-stains, ask your groomer to freshen up that area, or wipe them clean as much as you can before you come in.

If your pet has a lot of dandruff or tends to shed, do as much as you can to eliminate those bits from their fur. Sticky rollers work great, and I do keep one at the studio.

Try not to get too nit-picky about the little details; every animal I've ever photographed has needed some touch-ups in Photoshop, and I'll always do my best to make your animals look their best in your finished images.

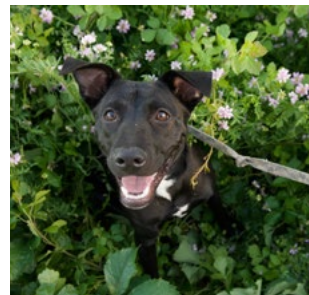
## LEASHES + COLLARS

Many clients like to remove collars for their studio sessions, but others find that their pet looks "naked" without it. If your dog will be wearing a collar throughout the entire session, be sure that it's one you really like and want to see in your images. Clean up an old favorite, or consider purchasing something new and fun.

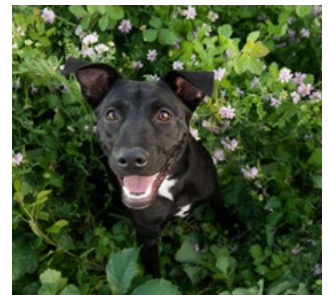
Tags can be distracting in photographs, so it's usually best to remove them. (Just don't forget to put them back on afterward!) It's also ok to include one or two special tags, maybe with your pet's name, an image, or a funny saying.

For outdoor sessions, safety is our first priority. Unless we're in your backyard, I prefer that collars and tags stay on.

Keeping your pet on-leash for outdoor sessions is totally fine, sometimes preferred, and often the law. If you don't want to see the leash in the photos, we can try to minimize it while shooting, and it can be removed in the images you purchase.



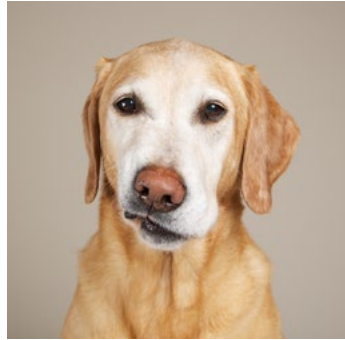
BEFORE



AFTER

*All standard editing is included in purchased products.  
Extensive leash removal or complicated changes may  
incur additional editing fees.*

# EXPRESSIONS AND INTERACTIONS



Animals look great with very little effort; it's us humans that tend to make or break a great photo!

Cameras can make many of us tense up and feel self-conscious, (including me!) but, if you can stay relaxed and natural, you'll have more fun, and love your images much more.

## SMILE!

It's surprisingly easy to forget, but try to be aware of your facial expression, and conscious of always returning to a pleasant, relaxed look. I promise, you'll want images that look happy!

## GET COMFORTABLE

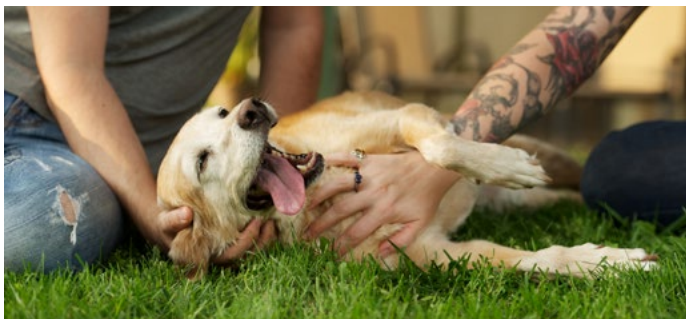
Getting down to your dog's level can either look very natural or very, very awkward. I usually recommend sitting on your hip, with legs to one side.

Remember that squatting is flattering for almost no one, and kneeling can look like your legs are missing.

## CHECK YOUR HANDS

If you don't know what to do with your hands, a great rule of thumb (*pun intended*) is to **pet your pets!**

A gentle, relaxed hand on your pet always looks great and is a very natural gesture.



It may sound silly, but **try not to grab your pets too tightly around the neck**, or clench your fingers. Tight grips look aggressive and forced in photos, and a gentle, relaxed touch will look much better.



# EXPERT TIPS

*for a successful session*

## DRESS FOR THE **OCCASION**

For owners, I generally recommend wearing neutral, darker colored clothing. Solid colors or subtle patterns tend to look best.

Definitely dress up a bit, but there's no need to go extra-fancy, unless that's what you normally wear. My photos are casual and I really want to capture you and your pets as you are.

Wear something classic and flattering, that you'll want to see yourself wearing for years to come.

Consider the season if we're shooting outdoors. Rich, natural colors look great in summer and fall. Blues and grays accentuate the winter chill, while more bold colors really stand out against the snow. Pastels can be sweet for springtime.

Colors that match or coordinate with your pets and / or your surroundings makes for a lovely, cohesive image.



# CLOTHING + ACCESSORIES

*The focus of these images are your beautiful pets, so think of yourself and your clothes as accessories to them.*

## WHAT **NOT** TO WEAR

**Please don't wear white.** Our eyes are drawn to the brightest object in a photograph, and we want that object to be your pet, not your shirt. Clothing with loud patterns, words or logos can be distracting. Stick to solid colors or subtle patterns.

## CONSIDER **LAYERS**

Layering different colors and textures looks great! Browns, blacks and grays are classic, and help keep the focus of the images on your pets. Bold colors can be fun, especially when used as accessories, but be careful not to get super bright with your choices. With multiple people, try to coordinate your clothing without being too “matchy.” (For example, don't have everyone wear jeans and a black t-shirt.)

## THINK ABOUT **MATERIALS**

Some fabrics attract pet hair like crazy. If you have clothes that you know are fur-magnets, it's best to wear something else that might stay a little cleaner.



## **SHOES** AND BOOTS

Pay special attention to your footwear, as it will likely be in the images as well. I do ask that everyone take their shoes off in the studio, except when they're needed for photos.

## **GLASSES** ARE OK

Don't worry about glare from glasses, I'll watch for it and direct your gaze accordingly.

## FOR THE **LADIES**

Low-cut tops and dresses can lead to embarrassing wardrobe malfunctions! Remember that I'll be moving all around you and your pets, and you'll be leaning down to be at their level. If you do wear a skirt, it's nice to have leggings underneath.

## FOR THE **GENTLEMEN**

If you're not wearing shoes, (in the studio) black dress socks look nicer than white sports socks. If you have a large wrist-watch, consider taking it off for the session. Hats can be fun, or consider dressing things up a bit with a tie.

## FOR THE **PETS**

If you plan to keep a collar on your pet, consider getting a new one for the shoot. Most pets have “their color” that looks great on them, but if you're unsure what to use, I'll help you pick out one or two that will work well for the session. Fun, simple accessories like bows or bandanas can be useful too.



# FINISHING TOUCHES



## HAIR + MAKEUP

Some clients may choose to get their hair and makeup professionally done before their session. It can give you a more polished look, and it can also help you feel more confident and relaxed in front of the camera. Certainly don't feel obligated to do anything extravagant; we want to capture you as you are!

## HAIR + MAKEUP TIPS

- \* Keep makeup natural looking.
- \* Avoid using makeup with glitter in it.
- \* A little matte powder can go a long way to help reduce shine, even for the guys.
- \* If you're unsure what to do with your hair, it's hard to go wrong with just lightly styling it down with some curl. Ponytails and up-dos aren't quite as flattering.
- \* If you color your hair, take note of your roots, and consider a touch-up before your shoot.



## TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Above all, I want your session to be a fun, exciting experience for both you and your pets!

Making thoughtful choices about your clothing and hair beforehand will help you be prepared for your session. And the more prepared you are, the easier and more fun your session will be!



“ These are fabulous!! I was laughing one minute and almost in tears the next! You do incredible work and I have no clue how I am going to decide on these images. ”  
- Robin R.



# IN THE STUDIO

## SET THEM UP FOR **SUCCESS**

Most pets have never set foot (paw?) in a photo studio, and some of the equipment may be a little intimidating at first.

Many dogs do great, but some are unsure about the paper backdrop, the flashing lights, or even the camera. We'll help your pets settle in with some positive reinforcement, like encouraging them to walk on the paper, or flashing the lights, all while giving lots of praise and treats.

## **PRACTICE** AT HOME

You can help prepare your dog at home by getting him used to walking on different types of material, and to your own camera and flashes. Let him sniff and explore the camera, click random pictures with the flash (not directly at him) and give him treats and praise immediately. Make any experience with cameras be positive ones.

## LET THEM BE **DOGS**

It's wonderful if your dog has a solid sit-stay, and reliably follows commands, but not every dog has that in his repertoire. I'm most interested in capturing your pet's personality in a variety of images, not a hundred shots of a perfect "sit."

## STAY **CALM** AND **RELAXED**

Animals are very sensitive to our energy and behaviors. A big part of my success in working with pets is my relaxed demeanor and confident control.

**Unpredictability is half the fun of pet photography!** Don't worry if he's not doing everything we ask right away, or if he's being stubborn – at the end of the day, what matters is that he had a fun, new experience, and that you'll soon have some great images of your best friend!

I won't put animals under undue stress or push them beyond what they're willing to do. If your pet is too nervous to have a successful studio session, we'll stop everything and I'll recommend a session at your home, where he'll be more comfortable.

***Never force your pet into any position; keep the session a positive experience, not a punishment.***

## A NOTE ON **CATS**

Playful, confident cats can do really well in the studio, but most do best in their own homes. Know your cat's personality and what will be best for him.





# EXPERT TIPS

*for a successful session*

## CASUAL AND FUN

From the minute you walk into the studio, we want your pet (and you!) to have a good time. We'll give him a chance to explore the studio while we discuss more in-depth about what your pet knows how to do, and what you're looking to accomplish with the shoot. The animals really dictate how things progress, so letting go of some expectations will help everyone have a more enjoyable session.

## A COUPLE OF TREATS

At the beginning of your session, feel free to give your pet some treats if he's acting nervous, and allow me to give him treats to help gain his trust.

However, we want his full attention for the shoot, and some dogs are VERY treat motivated. If we break out the good stuff too early (or too often) it could actually work against us.

If we're shooting in the evening, maybe skip dinner or just give him a light portion, so he's extra excited about treats, and not too full to enjoy them.



# TREATS AND TOYS

## BREAK OUT THE GOOD STUFF

Delicious, high-value treats are crucial for almost every session. **They need to be exciting enough that your pet wants to work for them, and small enough that he doesn't fill up too quickly.**

I have Zuke's all natural treats on hand. They work great with most dogs, but if your pet requires (or prefers) particular treats for any reason, please bring those along.

Cats are more finicky, but will often respond to canned tuna or wet cat food. Fresh or dried catnip is also a great tool, if your cat responds to it.

## SMALL, SOFT + STINKY. NOTHING CRUNCHY!

Besides their bland scent, the dry, crunchy treats are messy and take a long time to eat. We don't want him scrounging for crumbs when we could be capturing great images! Similarly, treats that are too large will fill him up and we'll quickly lose his food drive.

## FAVORITE TOYS

Bringing some favorite toys along helps give your pet something familiar to focus on, and be more "himself" at our session. Some toys may have special meaning for you, as well, and it's fun to include that in your images.

As with the treats, ***don't offer the toys right away***; wait until they're needed for the photos. Some dogs are VERY toy motivated, and if that's the first thing they see, we may quickly have lost any other method of getting their attention.

## OTHER THINGS TO BRING

Feel free to bring any other objects, beds, or pet clothing (sweaters, bow ties, scarves, Halloween costumes, etc) that you might want in your images.

If your dog is particularly sloppy, or gets foamy at the mouth when excited, consider bringing a drool rag as well.





# EXPERT TIPS

*for a successful session*



## THE POWER OF THE **SQUEAK**

The key to capturing great expressions is timing, and a single squeak or other interesting noise at the right time is invaluable. BUT... **it only works if it's unexpected.** A constant squeaking will quickly desensitize him to the sound, and we'll no longer get those great reactions.

Try to leave the squeaking to me; I know when and where I want him to look, and how to best use the squeaks to our advantage.

## USE **TRIGGER WORDS** SPARINGLY

The same goes for "trigger" words. Many dogs respond to certain words and phrases, like, "Do you wanna...." "Where's grandpa?" or "Go outside" with an extra-adorable head tilt or perked ears.

It's best if I can say them, or if you say them right next to me, so we get good eye contact with the camera.

## **KEEP IN MIND:**

**What I'm seeing through the lens is different than what you're seeing!**

Something that's cute from your perspective can make for a great photo, but only if he's facing me!

# ON LOCATION

## AT YOUR HOME

Please tidy up any rooms we'll be shooting in (usually living room and bedrooms), near windows, and any other place your pet likes to be. **Be on the lookout for clutter:** unless you want something in your photos, try to move it or put it away.

Open up all the shades to let in as much natural light as possible, and be prepared that we may move some of your furniture to use that natural light in the best way.

Whenever possible, we'll take some photos outdoors as well, and **a poop-free yard is much appreciated.**

## OTHER LOCATIONS

You may prefer to meet at a favorite park, or location that's meaningful for you. Plan to bring along some treats and outdoor toys to keep your pets engaged and having fun.

**Dog parks** are great to give dogs the freedom to run, but they may also be distracting. There's a few in the Twin Cities that work quite well; lovely areas with opportunities to be secluded from other park-goers. Ask for details if interested.

**Busy, public areas** like downtown or around Lake Calhoun are not ideal; there's way too many distractions for your dog, we'll feel rushed, and you'll have a multitude of strangers in many of your photos. If you want an urban feel, we could try some quieter streets around the Warehouse District.



## SAFETY FIRST

### **Know your dog and which environment might be best for him.**

Is he dog-aggressive or reactive to noises or other people? Can he focus on you or is he easily distracted?

Be sure to keep your dog leashed when necessary, both for his safety and the safety of those around us. I have an extra long lead to keep dogs secure if needed.

## SUN AND SHADE

### **The best time of day for your outdoor shoot is 2 hours before sunset, or right after sunrise.**

The soft, low light makes for beautiful images with vibrant colors and flattering shadows. It's ideal if our location has some trees between us and the sun, providing some shade and filtering that fantastic light.

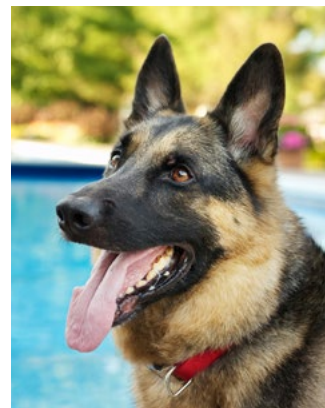
If we're only shooting indoors (like with cats) or your yard is heavily shaded, we can schedule earlier in the day.

## THE WEATHER

I want you to have the best scenario possible for a successful session, and if time allows, we should hold out for a nice day. We'll definitely reschedule if it's raining, heavily overcast, too hot, too cold, or unsafe driving conditions.

*\*Joy Sessions may take place regardless of the weather, per the urgency of the situation.*

**When on location, bring only the bare essentials.** I'll likely be carrying your things or setting everything aside as we're shooting, so you don't have bags, water bottles or jackets in your hands. I generally bring extra poop bags and water for the dogs, as well as sunscreen and bug repellent.



# PLAN YOUR DISPLAY



It's **never too early** to start thinking about the products you want for your home, whether it's a large wall portrait, a grouping of smaller pieces, or a keepsake album. If you have something specific you're looking for, we can tailor your session to help capture what you have in mind.

## THE FINE PRINT

### ACCEPTED PAYMENTS

We accept cash, check or any major credit card. The full session fee plus applicable sales tax will be due at (or before) your session.

Payments for products may be made in full at your ordering session, or in multiple installments. We're happy to work together on a payment plan that's right for you.

### PLACING ORDERS

In-studio ordering sessions are a big part of the Sarah Beth Photography experience. We ask that all decision-makers attend this session. Orders will begin production when at least 50% of the purchase price is received. No order shall be delivered until paid in full.

If you're not local to Minneapolis, or it is a hardship to travel here, we may complete an order over the phone or email.

### COPYRIGHT NOTICE

All images, original and processed, remain the sole property of Sarah Beth Photography, LLC. It is illegal to copy or reproduce any photographs, either physically or digitally, without permission. Violators of this federal law will be subject to its civil and criminal penalties.

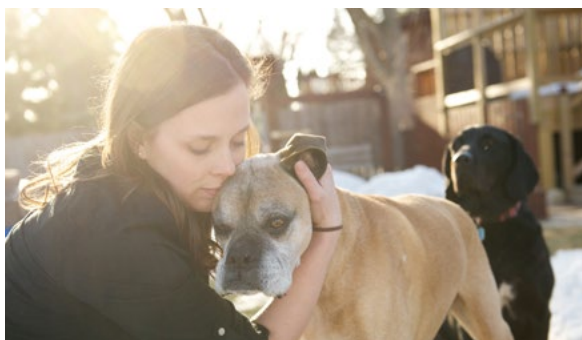
No images taken by Sarah Beth Photography may be used in contests or for commercial purposes without written consent.



# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

## YOUR ONLINE GALLERY

A week or two after your photo session, we'll schedule your **in-studio ordering session**, and you will receive a link to your private online preview gallery. Review the images, get input from family and friends, and start thinking about your favorites.



## IN-STUDIO ORDERING SESSION

**Sit back, enjoy some refreshments, and view your beautiful images on the big screen.** Your ordering session is all about creating the perfect collection of products for your style.

Be sure all decision-makers attend this session. Come in with a clear idea of how much you plan to spend, and which products you're most interested in.

If you're interested in storyboard layouts, we'll design those together with your favorite photos.

**Bring measurements and photos of your walls,** so we can create examples of wall hangings to accurate scale.

If your family or friends want some prints, bring along their desired image number(s) and size(s).

## BEHIND THE SCENES

After you've decided on your fabulous new products, the nitty gritty work begins! Each image will be meticulously edited for optimal color and clarity, and cleaned up of any crumbs, stray hairs, blemishes and slobber that might detract from the image. If you ordered an album, a layout will be emailed for your approval.

Production and delivery usually takes about 3-4 weeks. When they arrive, everything is checked over for quality and carefully packaged. You can choose to pick up your order at the studio or have it delivered to your home. *(Delivery fees may apply)*

## ENJOY YOUR IMAGES!

Once you've taken your beautiful new pieces of artwork home, get ready to love them every day! Whether they're on the wall or in a stunning album, these tangible memories of your best friend will make you smile for years to come!



**THANK YOU SO MUCH!**

**Sarah Beth Photography, LLC**

2205 California St NE, Suite 101  
Minneapolis MN 55414

[info@sarahbethphotography.com](mailto:info@sarahbethphotography.com)

612-804-2518

**WEBSITE**

***[sarahbethphotography.com](http://sarahbethphotography.com)***

**FACEBOOK**

[facebook.com/sarahbethphotography](https://facebook.com/sarahbethphotography)

**TWITTER**

[twitter.com/sarahbethphoto](https://twitter.com/sarahbethphoto)

**INSTAGRAM**

[instagram.com/sarahbethphotography](https://instagram.com/sarahbethphotography)