

Perfect Dog Photos

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Nearly every time I walk into a pet boutique to talk to the owner or just to shop, I see a wall of pictures of customers' dogs. A few quality shots pepper the display here and there, but the large majority of those photos feature bad lighting, glowing eyes and other detracting factors. There's a very good reason for this; pets are hard to photograph, especially dogs since most of them are in constant motion.

With that in mind, I spoke this week with an expert to get some tips on photographing your dog so I could share them with you.

Gina Cioli is the assistant manager of our manufacturing department here at Bowtie Inc., which means a lot of things, but one of the things her job entails is setting up and executing the fabulous photo shoots for all of our pet magazines. If you've seen any of her photo spreads in Dog Fancy, Pet Style News or other publications, you know she's good at what she does. Luckily for us, she was kind enough to offer some tips for people who want to take really great photos of their dogs.

1. A calm dog is a photogenic dog. Get your dog nice and relaxed before you start snapping photos so you can avoid a blurry result.
2. Outdoor pictures on a partly cloudy day are the easiest to photograph. This way you have tons of light without a lot of harsh shadows on your model or your dog's face.
3. If you must take your pictures indoors, make sure you have enough light. Open all the windows you can and open your blinds. Indoor shots usually require more light than you think. If you are going to be using lamps, try to make sure they produce light that is as neutral as possible. Don't use that yellow tinted light bulb in your table lamp unless you want a yellow tinted picture. Creating custom white balance can solve this if you know how, otherwise, just use the automatic white balance feature. If you still don't have enough light, consider using a tripod to help eliminate camera shake for those slow, low light shutter speeds.
4. If you are inside at night and you have to use a flash, use your camera's red eye reduction mode if you have it.
5. Pay attention to the background. To bring the focus of the photo to your dog, make sure there aren't any distracting, cluttering elements behind him.
6. For close up shots, zoom in so your dog fills as much of the frame as possible. For scenic, wide-angle shots, try to create an interesting composition by placing your dog in the foreground, off to the left or the right side.
7. Mix it up, take a picture from standing on a chair looking down, or lie on the ground and photograph the dog at his level.
8. Take a lot of pictures. That's the great thing about digital cameras; if you take a lot, you are bound to get that perfect shot!

With all of that in mind, you should be able to get a great photo of your dog, whether it's to hang on your wall, to make a Christmas card or just share with your friends. Thanks so much, Gina, for sharing your expertise!