

Using your home photo studio: portrait lighting explained



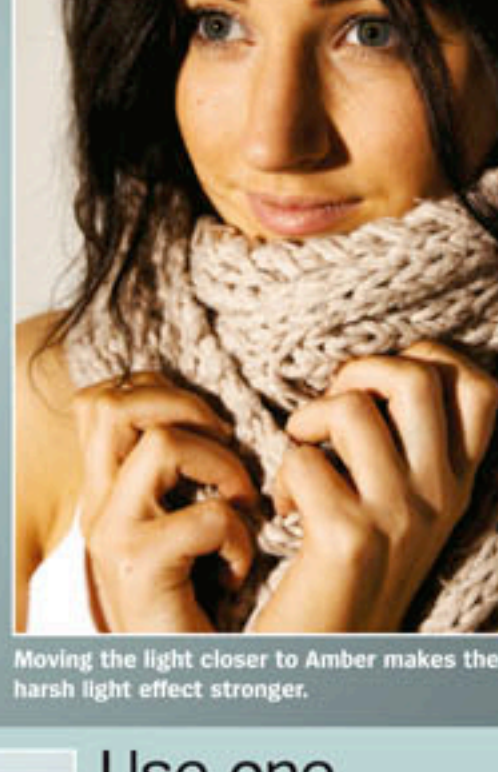
Start with a simple setup

Bold lighting

The results that you can get from just one or two studio lights are quite amazing.



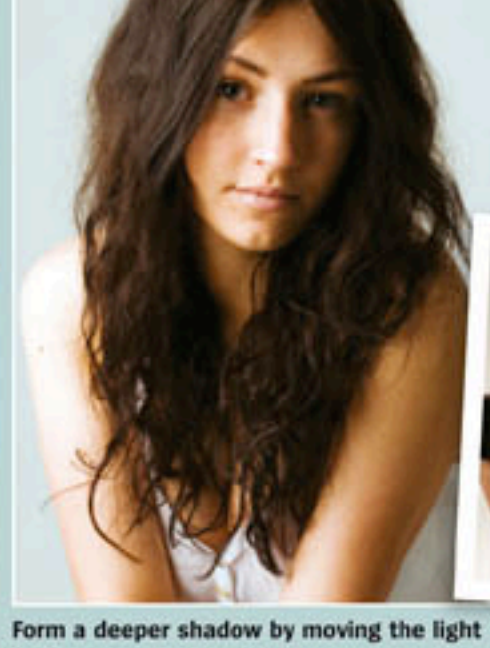
Shot at distance with one honeycomb light for an impressive shadow.



Moving the light closer to Amber makes the harsh light effect stronger.



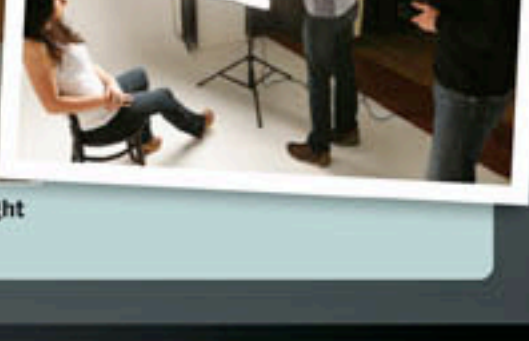
Here, one soft box is positioned slightly to the left of us and facing the model.



Form a deeper shadow by moving the light further round to the side.

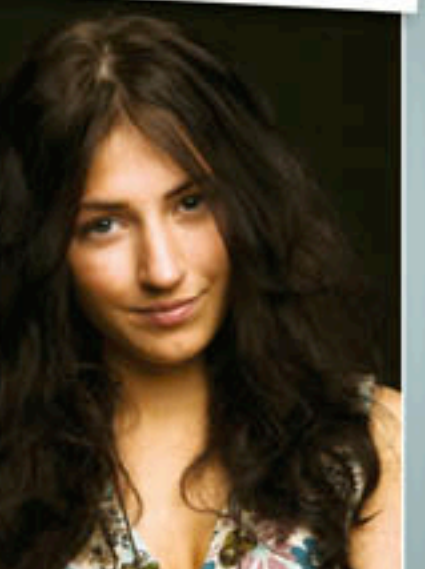
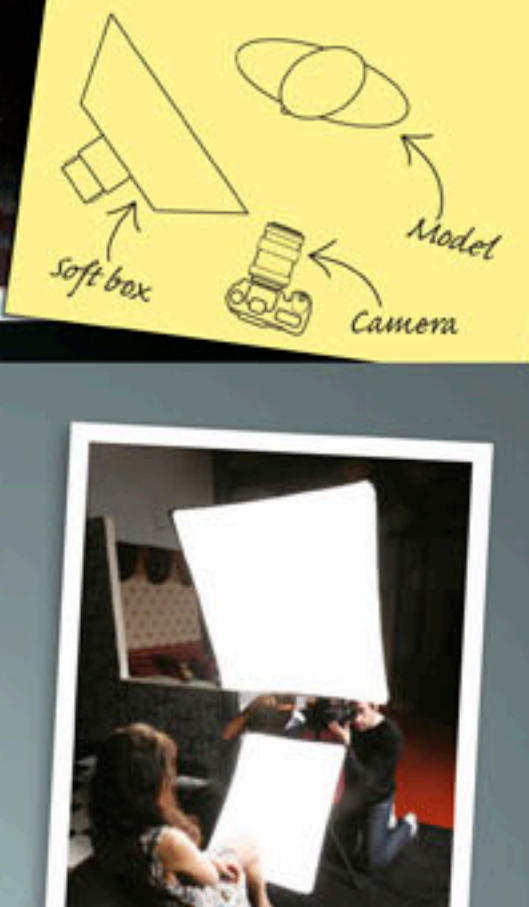
Use one soft box

This is the simplest, but sometimes the most flattering, of lighting setups. Place the light side-on for deep shadows and great depth or almost head-on for an even coverage of light. The soft box is a must-have accessory for any portrait snapper.



Backlighting

Another simple way of making your model stand out from a black background is to use a backlight. This shot was taken with one soft box facing Amber and a light with a grid on the front placed directly behind her head, about four feet from her. By getting the exposure correct with just the one soft box, then making sure that the backlight was completely hidden by her head, we were able to create a halo effect and light the hair.



ONE SOFT BOX
The soft box from above has lit up the face but left a deep shadow under the chin.



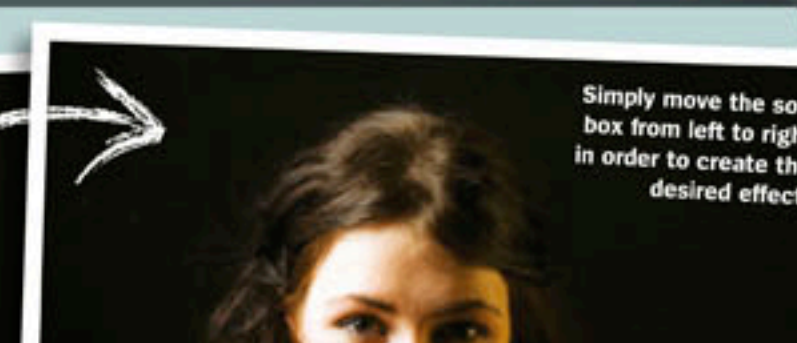
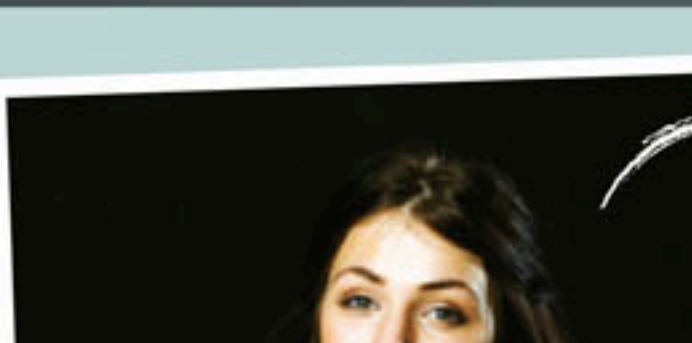
TWO SOFT BOXES
Now evenly lit, a great spread of light gives the face a really bright glow.

Soft lighting

To create a more natural, almost daylight appearance we used two soft boxes. Both were facing Amber directly from the front – one from high looking down and another low, tilted up – with a small gap for us to shoot through.

Use a second light to create highlights

These four images show the dramatic differences that can be created by moving just one soft box around the model. By using the second light to catch Amber's shoulder and produce an outline of her hair, she doesn't blend into the black background.

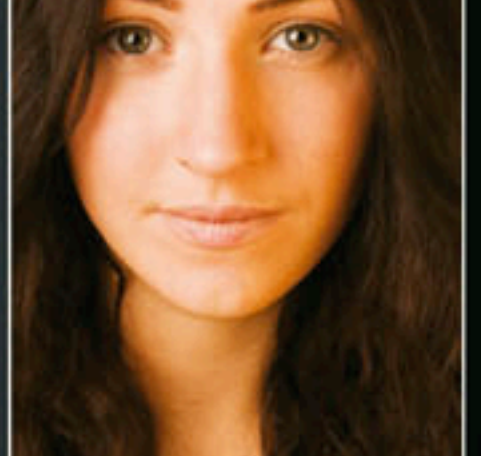
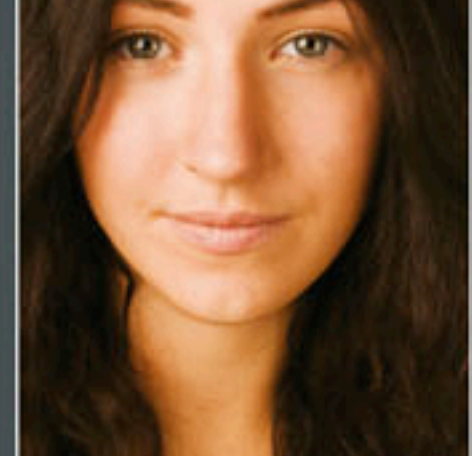


Simply move the soft box from left to right in order to create the desired effect.



Using reflectors

When additional light is required, using a reflector is ideal. Used to simply bounce light from the flash onto your model, the reflector can easily eliminate shadows and add much needed light to areas that the flash doesn't cover.



One soft box from the left lighting up the side of Amber's face and giving the right side a slight shadow. This shadow gives the image increased depth.

To lose the shadow we again used one soft box from the left with a silver reflector bouncing light to the right side of the face, giving an even spread.

One soft box to the left with a gold reflector bouncing light to the right side of the face, warming up the whole face – especially on the right.

Strike a pose... for a great selection

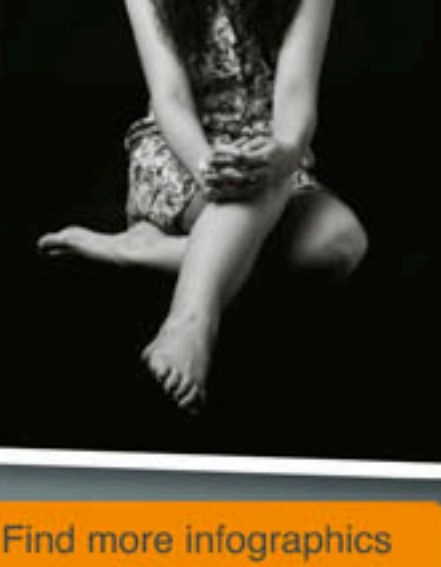
1 Try dynamic angles

Get down on the floor for a low viewpoint shot with impact. Add a wide angle and a tilted crop for interest.



2 Lying on the floor

From bolt upright to laid back, the floor is a great backdrop, which enables the model to look relaxed.



3 Be original

Try to create fresh and active poses by leaving the creativity in the hands of the model.



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