

Preparing for your shoot

Five Days Before Your Shoot

- * If you wax, do so a few days before your shoot to avoid any bumpiness or redness.
- * Make sure your eyebrows are nicely shaped and groomed.
- * If you're planning to visit the salon for a haircut or color, then give yourself a few days to make sure you are happy with it.
- * Be sure to get a salon manicure and pedicure for a flawless finish.
- * Stay out of the sun - while a base tan will be nice in photos, red, blotchy skin will not.
- * PLEASE DO NOT SPRAY TAN.
- * Drink plenty of water for luminous skin.
- * Lower your salt intake and avoid alcohol if you're worried about retaining water.
- * Try on your outfits and lingerie to make sure they fit properly; remove all tags and labels. Steam or iron your ensembles and hang them properly so they keep their shape as you travel to the studio.

The Day Before Your Shoot

- * Bathe, shave and moisturize.
- * Double-check everything is properly packed and ready for the shoot: heels, jewelry, accessories, props.
- * Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the shoot location without stressing. Check weather and traffic reports to ensure you have allotted enough time for unexpected delays.
- * Enjoy a relaxed, quiet evening.
- * Plan for a good night's sleep - eight hours is ideal.

The Day of Your Shoot

- * **DRINK WATER.** When in doubt, have yourself a sip of water.
- * Do a little bit of exercise - some stretches, yoga, a quick run, whatever. Get the blood pumping and your muscles warm, get everything awake and limber.
- * Exfoliate and moisturize! you may not have a firm idea of your poses or the exact outfits you'll wear before you arrive at the photographer's, so it's best to be prepared. Make sure your skin is very clean, and put lotion on EVERYTHING. I normally hit my legs and elbows with lotion and call it a day, but give your shoulders and hips and belly and butt and feet and hands and basically everything else some love too:-) your skin will look fabulous on camera.
- * If you're doing your own hair and makeup, make sure to wear something that either has a wide neckline or that zips or buttons, so you don't mess up your hair and face. Give yourself plenty of time - rushing can make you feel anxious.
- * Some photographers recommend not wearing underwear or tight clothing while you're traveling to the shoot location, so as to avoid red marks on your skin. I am a strict bra-wearer so I did not go commando, but I did wear a looser-fitting, older, broken-in bra, non-digging knickers, and very soft leggings and tops. If you're very worried about red marks, bring a robe with you to wear while you and the photographer are setting up, or while your hair and makeup's getting done, so your skin has a chance to relax and lose the color.
- * **EAT SOMETHING.** Eat light and clean beforehand so you are not bloated. Your adrenaline will be all fired up, and you need fuel. Bring snacks, like an apple and some granola or something along with you.

During your shoot:

- * **DRINK WATER.** Bring water with you - getting your picture taken can be weirdly tiring.
- * Remember to breathe. I am notorious for forgetting to breathe when I'm concentrating. Your face and body tense up when you do this, so even if you're holding a pose or facial expression, try to make your brain say "hey, are you breathing? Try it, you may like it!" And then do it. I can totally see it in pictures when my clients faces freeze up and they've mentally checked out. The pictures where they're remembering to breathe, or genuinely laughing or smiling, look so, so much better.
- * Move around between poses. Shake your head, smile really big and goofily for a full 10 seconds, do a few jumping jacks, roll your neck, stretch your arms over your head, touch your toes, and point your feet and roll your ankles. It's surprisingly easy to stiffen up, so making an effort to stay loose and limber will give your pictures a more relaxed, effortless feeling.
- * Music! I'll have something playing that makes you feel happy and/or sultry and/or relaxed.
- * If you're self-conscious, start slow. We all have our own little bugaboos, so while I do recommend being a little daring and challenging yourself to step out of your comfort zone, don't feel pressure to do anything that makes you feel miserable. My bugaboo is my stomach! as long as it's covered, my brain is all "Nicci, you are now fully clothed. Carry on, sister", even if all I'm wearing is underwear. Ease into it and remember to breathe! the pictures may pleasantly surprise you!

Pro Tips From Nicci...

So, thinking of booking your first boudoir shoot? Yay! Now here's a list I've compiled of Do's and Don'ts of how to prepare for your boudoir photo shoot:

SKIN - let's talk about your skin. For the love of God, please DON'T over-use self tanners and stay out of the sun. A photographer's nightmare is having to Photoshop weird skin tones and sunburn/tan lines. DO moisturize your skin for a natural glow. Glossy, shiny skin photographs well and also brings out muscle definition and tone. As a general rule, don't do anything too crazy beforehand (i.e. don't get a facial or your eyebrows waxed for the first time the day before your shoot), because if anything goes wrong you will be a total stressball during your session.

HAIR & MAKEUP - DO get your hair and makeup up professionally done, get a natural mani/pedi, and most definitely get false eyelashes put on. They may feel too large, but they photograph well, especially when you are looking down and off to the side. You always want to exaggerate your features for the camera, especially your eyes and lips.

WARDROBE - Wear loose fitting clothing the day of so that you don't have markings when you strip down. Bring clothing that makes you FEEL sexy, not what you THINK is sexy. Don't purposely go out and buy lingerie that doesn't make you feel comfortable or is over the top. It will read in your photos, on your face, and in your body language. The sexiest clothing items to bring are fall-off-the-shoulder tops, cropped soft sweaters, a man's button down shirt/tie, lacy underthings, simple black and white bras/panties (they can pair with other things), sheer slips/teddies, anything vintage, stockings/thigh highs/soft over-the-knee socks, sexy heels and subtle jewelry and hair pieces/flowers. Layering items is always a good thing to keep in mind. I tell clients to bring as many clothing options as they can.

DIET & SLEEP - One week before your shoot, cut out as much sugar, carbs and processed foods as possible. Your skin will thank you, as well as keep you from looking bloated and puffy. Get as much sleep as you can the night before and eat something light the day of your shoot.

HAVE FUN! - Remember to enjoy the moment. "When we have boudoir shoots it is a party . . . and it should be! Everyone is having fun. I encourage my clients to bring their favorite playlists, fun props, and of course, we provide the wine!"

THINK SEXY - "Before the photo shoot, practice looking sexy in the mirror," "Find your best angles, features, and looks. "Make sure your outfits and poses showcase your best features," "I provide each client with very detailed information and tips for their shoot, including their day-of preparation for getting ready. This makes you feel more comfortable and ensures you show your best side in your photographs."

BE ADVENTUROUS - Take risks! You will only regret the risks you don't take. Go places your man would not expect you to go. It is important to always feel safe, but taking it just a tad beyond your comfort zone will surprise you and your guy. It is your photographer's job to push you, but also ensure that you feel safe and comfortable at all times."