

DOG PHOTOGRAPHY CHEAT SHEET

BY FIVE FREEDOMS PHOTOGRAPHY





well, hey there!

I'm Joanne. I am a Dog + Rescue Photographer in Raleigh, North Carolina that specializes in soulful pet portraits for dog obsessed pet parents in Raleigh, North Carolina and beyond.

It is one of my greatest joys teaching other pet parents, fosters, shelter staff and volunteers, and other people involved in rescue learn how to take better photos of the animals in their care to increase adoptions or simply grow their social media influence.

In this simple, quick-read cheat sheet, I round up some of my top tips that you can apply right now, today to your personal pet photography whether you are a professional or amateur.

Have questions about anything in this cheat sheet? I'd love to hear from you! Feel free to reach out to me directly at fivefreedomsp photography@gmail.com. Without further ado, here are the tips I've promised!

joanne wetzels

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LET THEM SAY HELLO!

Cameras are scary for most dogs and for some dogs, people are, too! Give the animal time to greet you on their own before you start snapping photos.

Allow the dog to sniff you and your gear while praising them with a treat or two. I promise by giving them time to meet you on their terms, you'll quickly become best buds (*the treats don't hurt either*).

UP THE ANTE

Ever try getting your dog to pay attention with the same boring treats you give them daily? Yeah, same. Try upping the ante by giving them something absolutely scrumptious, stinky, and coveted. This could be peanut butter, cheese, stinky liver treats, fish, boiled chicken, etc (*as long as it meets their dietary restrictions, of course!*). I promise you with a high-reward treat like that, they have to stop and pay attention for photos.



GET LOW

The most captivating photos I take of dogs are from their perspective, so next time you are trying to capture a cute photo (*or ten thousand*), get on their level. Squat, crouch, sit, lay down, etc, whatever it takes to get the shot. By doing this one thing, you very well might surprise yourself with the dynamite images you'll be able to capture of your pup.



BE EXCITING

We all do things because they are fun, right? Same goes for dogs. If what they are doing currently is more exciting than you, well it's going to be hard to capture and keep their attention. Instead, be exciting. Make lots of noises (*as long as they are comfortable with that*), utilize noisemakers, break out fun toys, praise and reward them often, and the like. Not only, will the pup have the best time at their session, but you'll capture some pretty magical images, too.



USE BURST MODE

While you're doing your song and dance being all exciting to get great photos, be sure to take advantage of burst mode on your phone. This way you capture every silly expression and get them in focus, too!

Simply pull your shutter to the left on your camera app and burst mode will be activated. For older phone cameras, simply hold down the shutter.



CHOOSE SHADE

Lighting can be tricky even for the most experienced of us! If you're trying to take a great photo, find shade! Open shade could be off the side of a building or underneath a dense canopy from a tree. Either way, it create gorgeous even lighting that will give you even exposure over an adorable, floofy face.

CATCH THE CATCHLIGHTS

When there isn't enough light in a pet's eyes, their face looks dull, dark, and almost lifeless. So, when taking photos, be sure to look for a little ring of white light in the eyes as seen in the photos across this page. This one simple, easy tip can make all the difference in creating magical photos that stop people in their tracks. If you can't find the light in their eyes, try facing them in the opposite direction towards the light source near you (such as the sun!).



DON'T FORCE IT

Whatever is meant to happen at your session is meant to happen. I always let the animal set the pace and never, ever force them to do anything they don't feel comfortable with or can't do! By taking this approach, it will help your sessions go smoother and be more enjoyable for all parties involved.

READY TO TAKE AMAZING PET PHOTOS?!

Okay, so maybe you aren't a professional photographer *just yet*, but I do hope the tips you've learned help you to take the most endearing photos of your pets or adoptables.

Just remember, each animal, situation, and day is different. Some days will be much easier than others, but at the end of the day remember to have fun! When you and the animal are enjoying yourselves, that's when the magic will truly start to happen.

Be sure to tag me on Instagram [#fivefreedomsp photography](#), so I can see your photographic creations.

Be kind & rescue dogs,

joanne

OTHER RESOURCES

1. [Watch our many free photography tutorials over on YouTube.](#)
2. [Shop My Kit](#) for the best equipment and photography education we recommend!
3. Check out our [available education on our website](#) to take your knowledge deeper.

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