

Plus Size Life – 8 Tips for Looking Great in Pictures

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When I was a kid, I had no problem getting in front of the camera. Any camera. It was my natural habitat – my Dad almost missed my birth because he wanted to run out and exchange a faulty camera lens. I have a dozen pictures of me walking away from the stage at my 8th grade graduation because he was acting like a paparazzo. Yet, there are probably less than 12 pictures of me that have been taken since my wedding



One of my favorite pictures, taken on my wedding day.

<http://abbeypost.com/blog/plus-size-life-plus-size-bride/>), almost 7 years ago. So what happened to make me so camera shy?

It probably started sometime around college. I didn't gain the Freshman 15, I gained the Freshman 30. And like any college kid, I dressed in jeans and baggy t-shirts which only made me look shapeless and bigger than I actually was. Especially in pictures.

In pictures with my friends, I fit in with the gang just fine. We were all a bunch of sloppy college kids, after all. But when my large extended family got together, I had to pose for photos with however many of my 15 first cousins were there. Some of those cousins were athletes. and some were adorable tots. I'd stick out like a sore thumb – wearing a shirt two sizes too big meant that my body created a big splotch of pink in a sea of people. And with that many people posing for the camera, it's unlikely you'll get one shot where everyone has their eyes open, so if only one or two people look bad in a photo, it's considered a good one.

The candid photos were worse. Bad angles, poor lighting, snapshots taken while I was chewing – no wonder I became camera shy.

At some point in my 20s or 30s, I started being somewhere else whenever a camera appeared. I'd stand aside while people started posing. I couldn't escape the big group shots, but when we started passing around a new baby so everyone could have their picture taken with them, I'd go see if anyone needed help in the kitchen.

This meant that I didn't have to look at unflattering pictures of myself, but it also meant that I disappeared from photo albums as thoroughly as the cousins who moved away and never looked back. I erased myself from the family history. Everyone knows I was there, but the photo albums say otherwise.



Can you find a picture of Mommy? (No, I can't either!)

I really need to stop being so camera shy. I'm not going to live forever, and I don't want to be remembered with pictures taken at other people's wedding receptions. I'm living a great life, in a time when photography is ubiquitous. So I should have loads of photos showing how much fun I'm having and how good I look while I'm doing it. Especially now that I know [how to dress](http://abbeypost.com/blog/queen-style-tips-dress-like-ideal/) (<http://abbeypost.com/blog/queen-style-tips-dress-like-ideal/>) for my body.

I know it's not just me – so many women use pics of their kids as their Facebook photo that there's been a whole movement to [get moms back in the picture](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/allison-tate/mom-pictures-with-the-picture) ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/allison-tate/mom-pictures-with-](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/allison-tate/mom-pictures-with-the-picture)

So how can we stop being so camera shy?

Here are the top tips I came up with, for looking great (or at least better!) in front of the camera. No surgery or weight loss needed. Just a few simple changes.

Change What I Can

1. No Face Hugging – That thing where we lean in and press our cheeks against someone else? We're just putting ourselves at an unflattering angle.
2. Makeup – I've fallen into the habit of putting on lipstick and leaving it at that. I know I look better in pictures if I take as little as five minutes to put on my face, so I'm going to start doing it when I know a camera will be around. Our [Pinterest boards \(http://www.pinterest.com/abbeypost/hair-beauty/\)](http://www.pinterest.com/abbeypost/hair-beauty/) have some awesome makeup tips and tutorials, if you're as clueless as I've been in the past!
3. Squinching – Not quite squinting, [squinching \(http://gizmodo.com/how-squinching-will-make-you-look-good-in-photos-1468833714\)](http://gizmodo.com/how-squinching-will-make-you-look-good-in-photos-1468833714) is a way of holding your eyes so your whole face projects self confidence. I'll be practicing this one in front of my webcam until I get it down.



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ff7nltdBCHs>)

Now that's what I call a squinch! (Photo courtesy of Peter Hurley)

4. Be Silly – Instead of trying to look “prettier”, I’ve found that I look better in pictures if I wear oversized sunglasses or a tiny hat. No wonder photo booths with loads of fun props are so popular. How you can worry about how you look when you’re holding a mustache on a stick up to your face? And when you stop worrying, you look better.

5. Stick Your Chin Out – Another Peter Hurley trick: Holding your face a little farther forward than usual can keep you from looking double-chin-tastic. See the [video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ff7nltdBCHs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ff7nltdBCHs) linked above for details on this one!

6. Look Up – Looking up at the camera is a universally flattering angle.

7. Don’t Say Cheese – Everyone’s face looks weird when they say, “cheese.” Instead say, “hello,” and your smile will be more natural.

8. Accept What I Can’t Change

This is the most important tip of all. ACCEPT yourself. Wrinkles, rolls, spots and all.

In a family as large as mine, there are going to be photos where 25 people look great and I look terrible. Those pictures will even make it into scrapbooks. We see unflattering snaps of celebrities all the time, and they have stylists and hairdressers and makeup artists helping them look good.

If Beyonce can’t destroy all the unflattering pictures of her, then you and I certainly can’t either.

And I’m okay with that. Because photos truly are all about making memories, not about the way you look.

Are you Camera Shy and ready to give it up? Talk to us!

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