

# 1,000+ Fashion Poses

A Complete Reference  
for Photographers









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# 1000 Fashion Poses for Photographers

Are you stuck for inspiration?

Are you not quite sure how to show off an item of clothing?

Do you need to show a client a pose?

This guide will show you over 1,000 poses which you can copy, or use as a springboard for new poses.

The posing section is broken down into various types: casual, formal, elegant: dresses, suits, shorts, swimwear: standing, leaning, sitting.

We have covered all the bases for you.

Each section is laid out in sequence; you can see the full flow of poses, noting how the model has made simple moves to get from one pose to the next.

Guiding your subjects through similar sequences will maximise your posing, minimise your time and increase your professionalism.

# 10 Questions and Answers About Fashion Posing

This section will take you through the core features of any pose.

Firstly you will learn what makes a pose a "fashion pose".

Then you will learn the core posing elements.

You will start with the basic "S" structure pose, the core pose for any woman.

Then you will learn how to pose feet and legs.

Next we will look at hands, both on their own and as they interact with other parts of the body.

Finally we shall look at the face, which direction to point the face and where the eyes should look.

# Question 1: What is Fashion Posing?

As a lovely Transylvanian model once put it to me:

"In glamour, the pose says 'I want you to f\*\*\*\* me.'

"In fashion, the pose says 'I want you to f\*\*\* off!'"

If you look at fashion editorial images in the top end magazines you'll soon see where that statement comes from. There is an aloofness, a superiority, which is often shown in fashion images.

But, there is a lot more than that. In editorial images (where there is no direct selling) then the images are more likely to present a story or an idea. The clothes may represent a lifestyle or attitude and the posing reflects that.

In advertising images, where there is a context of selling, then the imagery is far more aspirational, and usually cheerful. The girl who is looking for an elegant prom dress wants to see it presented in a way that is cheerful and gorgeous.

Whether shooting for yourself or for a client you need to understand the look you want to capture.

## Question 2: What is the basic "S" Structure pose?

This pose is the starting point for everything else.

When posing any girl or woman, always go to this pose first and then build on it from there.

The whole purpose of this pose is to reveal the female form rather than hide it and give a more flattering shape for your subject.



Let's start with everybody's starting pose - the wrong one!

This is the standard: face the camera, everything dangling, slouching pose that everyone does.



The first thing to do is turn the body a quarter turn away from the camera. In a group, the natural turn is to the centre of the group. In a couple, it is a turn to the partner. As a single person, then the turn is usually away from the main light - though this is less strict.



Next we must position the legs. The weight goes onto the back leg - the leg away from the camera. The sitter is standing solely on that leg. This is called the "Work" leg. This immediately tightens up the muscle tone in the leg and more crucially gives a more feminine kick to the hip.

The front leg - nearest to the camera - is the "Show" leg, this needs a little bend to it.



Finally, we need to position the hands. The hands should come to at least the top of the hips, if not actually onto the waist. The elbow should turn out from the body, so there is a space between the inside of the arm and the waist.

In our example we have done this on both sides, so you can see the affect when either hand is at the top of the hip.

In practice you generally don't want the hands at the same height.

## Question 3: How do I pose feet and legs?

The basic S pose has the sitter standing on their back leg (furthest from camera) and their "show" leg (nearest the camera) is essentially free to move.

This is where all the following poses build from; we can move the show leg to many positions, each with different characters and styles of their own. As we do so the body shape will change as well, so it is important to see the pose as a whole, even though the feet and legs may well determine the whole figure's position.



Firstly, let's move the show leg out a little, this will help thin the legs and shape a dress or skirt. Note the foot still flat on the floor is not elegant, we'll fix that next.



By raising the heel and bringing the foot up on to the toes we create much better line.

Even if your sitter is wearing shoes or heels, you still are trying to achieve this same look and position. By pointing the foot it makes for a longer looking leg, a slimmer leg and a more elegant position.

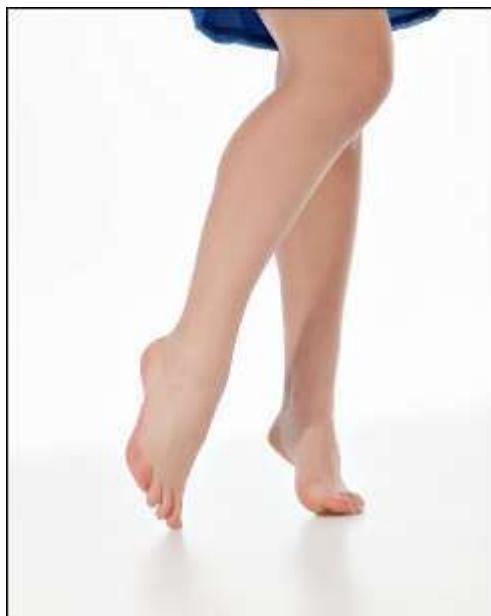


Pay careful attention to the toes; try not to mash the toes backwards as in this picture.

In the next two variations we have the show leg crossing the work leg (front crossing back leg). In the first the toes are squashed and less elegant, in the second the toes are to a point and much more shapely.



Toes are squashed.



Toes point and are more shapely.



You may also want to bring both feet up on the toes - this will make the subject look taller and thinner.

Of course, high heels shoes do automatically. That is the principle reason why high heels are so commonly worn. They may be as uncomfortable as hell, but they add shape to the legs, increase muscle tone through the legs and bottom, the legs will longer and the wearer appears taller.

Just a couple of other "do's and don'ts".



Don't show the sole of the foot unless you can help it. The first image shows a big fat square sole, and a somewhat awkward position in both feet.



Swinging the heel back in to join the other foot improves the positioning and removes the sole of the foot.



Bringing one foot up to the calf of the other again can be very elegant, and can really help show clothes off well.

But don't push the flat of the foot against the calf as in this picture:



Instead point the foot across the calf for a more elegant line.

## Question 4: How do I pose hands?

Hands facing away or towards the camera always look like bunches of bananas, so the first element is always to try and get the hand side on to the camera, ideally showing a thin and graceful edge.



In the example above, the hand is flat, the fingers spread - it's not actually an unnatural position for many people to assume with their hands, but it looks very bad.



Whereas bringing the fingers together, keeping them relaxed and moving the hand round so that only the edge of the hand is showing results in a much more appealing look as seen below.

Here are more examples of bad hand shapes to watch out for.



Clawed hands.



Fingers too spread out.



Hand goes right into pocket, making it look amputated.



Even with fingers only in the pocket, it still looks like the hand is missing. If something has to go in the pocket then it should just be the thumb,



In fashion you often need a grip on the clothing to pull its shape into something interesting, but it should be a light pinch, not like this heavy grip.

Better hand posing looks like these images.



The fingers are together and the hand is relaxed. Notice also that the wrist is bent which gives a more elegant lead into the hand.

While we are here, notice that the hand is resting on the top of the hip, adding shape to the waist and hips. Don't rest the hand lower on the hip as this tends to widen everything.



Here we see just the very tips of the fingers pointing to the pocket, it is clear the pocket is there, but the overall hand is not lost. As I said above, using the thumb is better, but that can be inappropriate where a more elegant look is required.



The other hand can be brought over to join the first. But notice these key factors:

- 1) The hands are still separated to avoid "clumpy" hands
- 2) The top hand still retains an elegant, pointing hand shape
- 3) The top hand follows and points along the length of the arm it is touching, not across it.

## Question 5: How should I pose hands on the hips?

It is a common expression, "put your hands on your hips", I still say it even though I know it's not what I mean.

When you say "hands on hips" here's what most people do,



The hands are low down on the hips and the backs of the hands are facing to camera. This makes the hands, the hips and the waist all look larger, the opposite of what you really want.



Firstly move the hands upwards, either to the very top of the hips or on to the waist. This image is exaggerated for affect, but see how this reduces the size of the waist and gives a better line across the hips.



We now need to just shape the hands and elbows to a better position as below. Notice how the whole shape looks more relaxed and graceful.



A good tip for getting the hand pose right is that the thumbs should be just about touching behind the back. Depending quite on how wide the waist and how large the hands you might need to adjust a little, but if the thumbs are close to each other you will be about right.

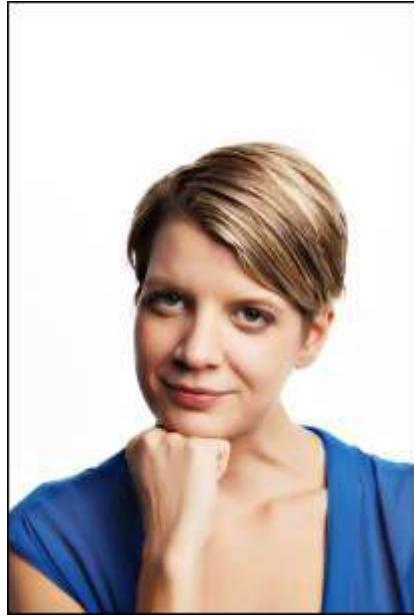
#### Question 6: How to pose hands around the face?

Hands near the face immediately bring a whole new set of problems. Now you have to worry about the way the hand interacts with the face, the relative shapes and positions, the composition of the face and hands.

In my experience photographing hundreds of members of the public the natural way people bring hands to their faces is not artistic!



The first basic point is that the hand should only ever just touch the face, never push it out of shape as above.



Next, if the hand is curled, don't let it become a fist either facing towards or away from the camera.



Don't let the palm of the hand show towards the camera



It is also easy for the hand to obscure the face, or for the hand position to be spread and awkward,

All of these failures have really simple fixes to them. As the photographer, it is your job to see and correct these mistakes. The model is often not aware that there is a problem.



To begin with, the hand should be edge on and just delicately touching the face, as in this example.



Instead of the fist under the chin, turn the hand sideways and allow a delicate curl to the fingers.

You can bring both hands to the face in different ways, notice in each case the hands are in line with each other, forming a slim, edge-on view, rather than a clunky fist or palm.





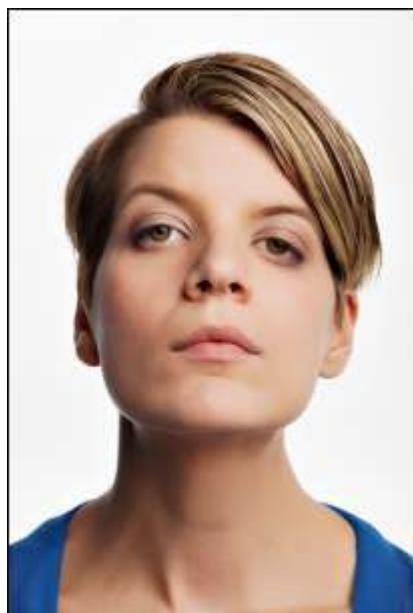
## Question 7: Where should I look?

Sounds simple, just look at the camera and smile! If only it was that easy.

Firstly let us look at when the face is direct to the camera



The direct to camera look is fine, though it may not be the most flattering or interesting image.



But if the face goes upward then things quickly go wrong. The eyes are half closed and we have a wonderful view up the nostrils. In a headshot this is not something you would deliberately setup, but it is easy to fall for this error when a subject is sitting or lying.



Dropping the head down improves things a lot. Firstly the whites of the eyes form an Indian canoe, the so-called "Canoe Eyes". Secondly notice how it helps the face shape too, making it less square.

## **Eye Direction**

So, if the face turns away from camera, then the eyes must track with the nose. Wherever the nose points the eyes look. If the eyes track further than the nose then you get what I call "Mad-Eyes".



Eyes tracked further away than the nose



Eyes off-centre from the nose.



Eyes have looking further away than the nose.



You can turn the face and have the eyes look back to camera.



Eyes looking to camera are okay.

You can also turn the face and have the eyes follow the nose, looking away from camera, but not further than the nose.



Eyes following the nose are okay.



Eyes following the nose are okay.

## Question 8: Which way should the face turn?

The classic lighting setup for photographers and artists is for a single main light to be to one side to the face.



If the lighted side of the face is to camera this is called "Broad" lighting, because it makes the face look broad.

As you can see in the example above, the face looks flat and fat. There is too much flat white skin to camera.



The face should be turned so that the shaded side of the face is turned to the camera.

This is called "Short" lighting, because only a short part of the face is lit. The shaded side to camera makes the face look both thinner and more three dimensional. It will reveal cheekbones and structure.

Hang on though, which side should you light in the first place?

In a straight headshot you do have choices, essentially you want to shoot into the side of the face that is going to give the most flattering image. In particular when shooting an assymetrical face where for example the nose is slightly off-centre, or one eye is slightly larger than the other.

In a fashion shoot you may have a lot less choice, since other factors such as the environment, clothes, act directors requirements and so forth may override any preferred direction.

## Question 9: How do you lean on a table?

Again it sounds so simple, but the untutored sitter will always fall into standard difficult shapes.



The first classic mistake is to clump the hands together.



The hands are now separated but go into a folded, closed, defensive position and the hands are out of shape.



You want the hands lying flat to the table and flat to the arm, these hands are still a little tense and need to relax. But look at the slumped shoulders first.



Now the posture is better, the hands are presented as slim shapes and we have a strong triangular composition.

## Question 10: Are there any other rules?

Rule 10: There are no rules!!

What? We've just spent pages looking at different pictures which show exactly how to work the rules of posing. Now you are saying there are no rules!?

Fashion posing is very often about breaking the rules. The body shapes are not easy, relaxed shapes but instead deliberately awkward and unusual.

In portrait photography you would normally look for a relaxed and happy face and pose, working direct to camera.

In fashion photography you typically want a gaze away from camera and a pose and expression that has drama and heavy emotion attached.

A big part of this is that by taking the gaze away from camera, you change the image from being a portrait to being something the viewer can see themselves as (and in). That is to say it becomes more aspirational rather than literal.

# My Secret Weapon Revealed

Do you want to know what my most powerful "secret weapon" of posing is?

"Direct your models like a film director, not a photographer."

If you want your sitter to be happy, don't say "smile", instead give them something to smile about. Give them a quick story for them to live in. "You are on your last holiday, enjoying the sun and having a laugh with your friends".

This kind of direction gives the sitter a way of inhabiting the whole pose, then their whole body will reflect the look you are trying to achieve.

Just think of the difference between "Look down" and "Look sad". Although in both cases the eyes will drop to the floor, only in the second case will the body language, posture, and facial intent and expression really follow the look and feel that you want.

"You are at the best party ever"

"You are dancing in a club"

"You are missing your boyfriend"

"You have received the best news ever"

"Your best friends have just arrived"

"You own the street, you are in charge"

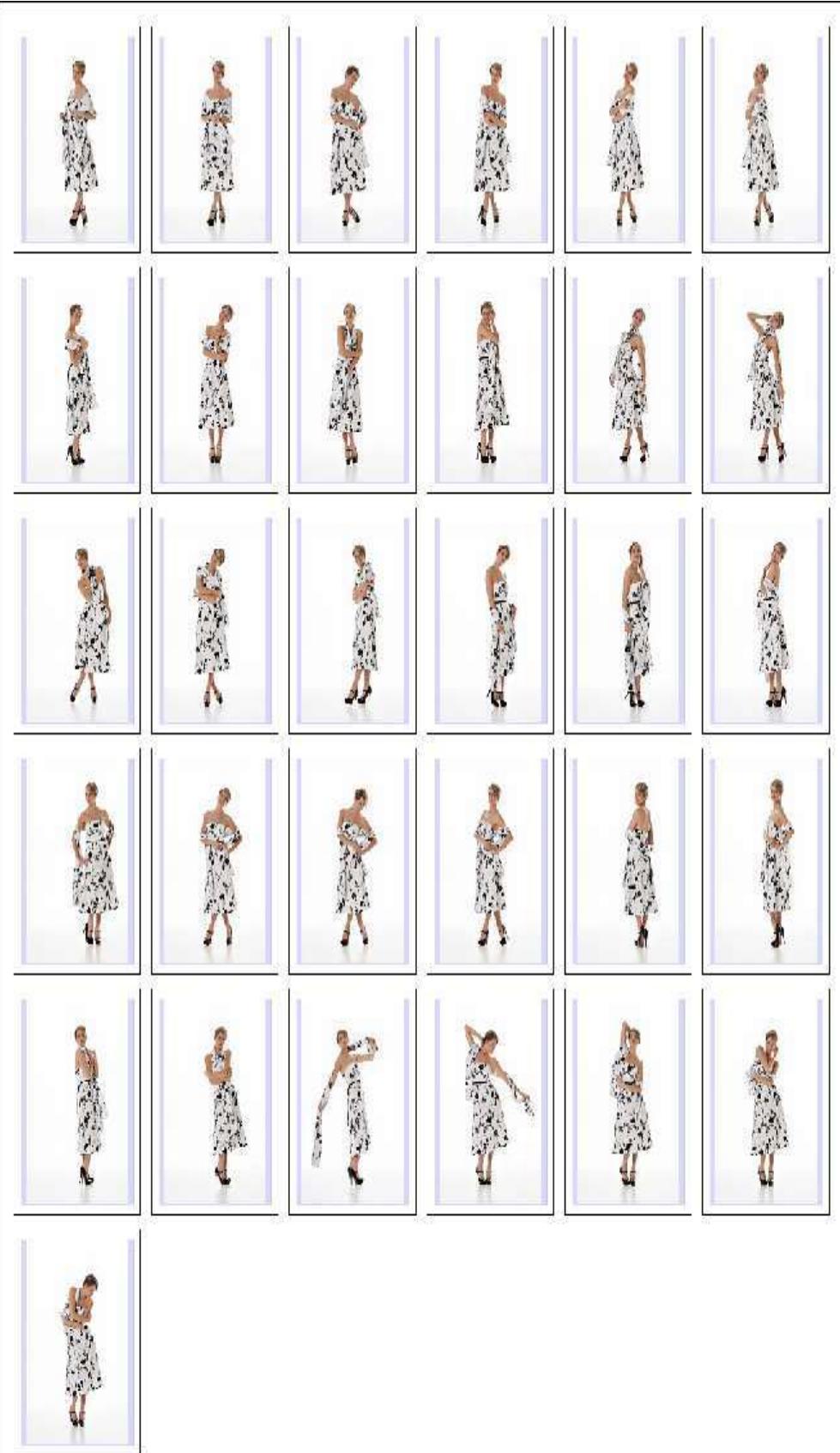
The best models are really acting, not modeling; in fact actresses often make the best models.

# 1000 Fashion Poses

**Midlength Dress**

**Style: Elegant**

**Pose: Standing**







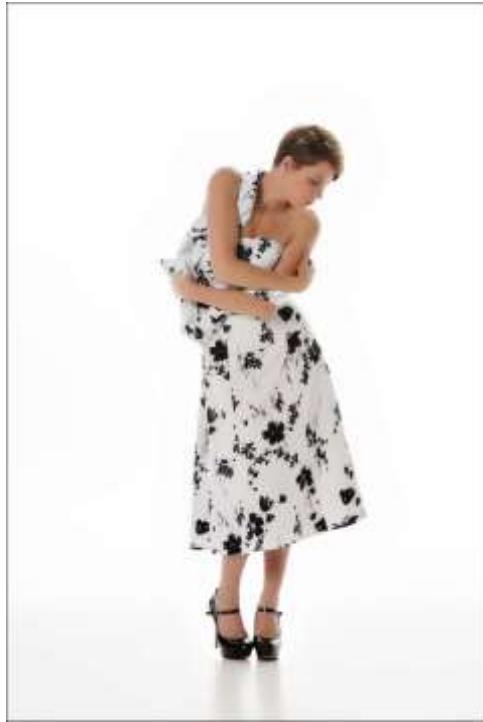








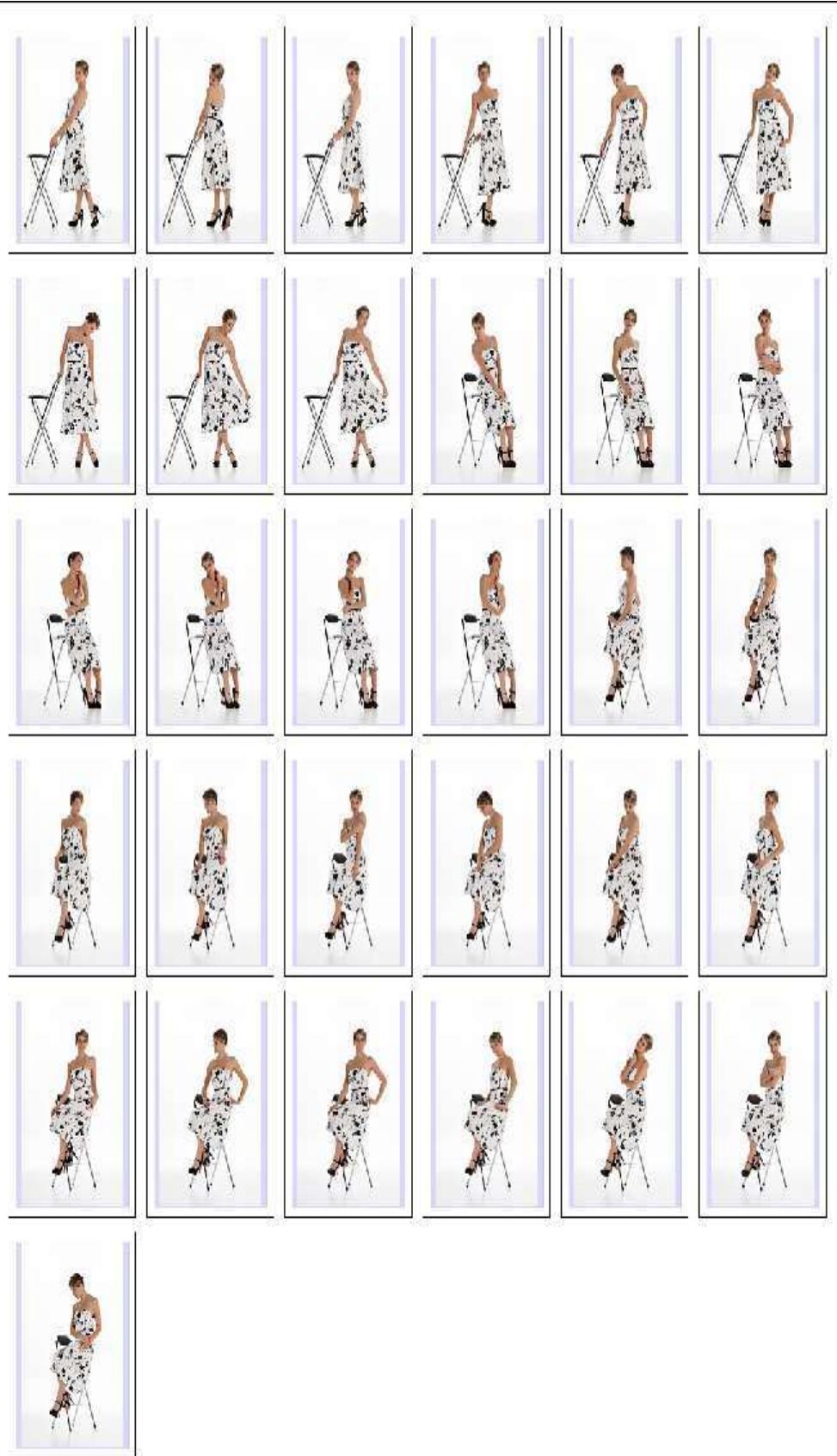


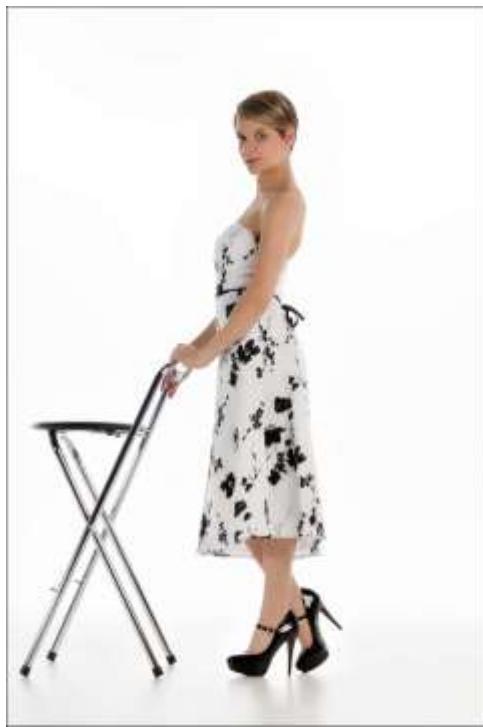


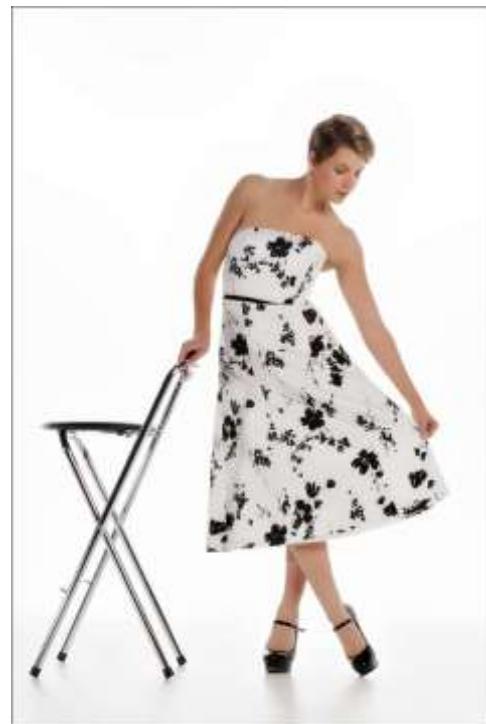
**Midlength Dress**

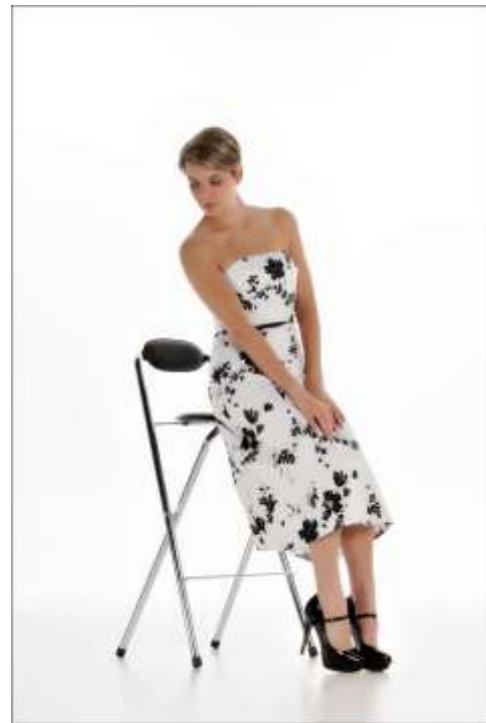
**Style: Elegant**

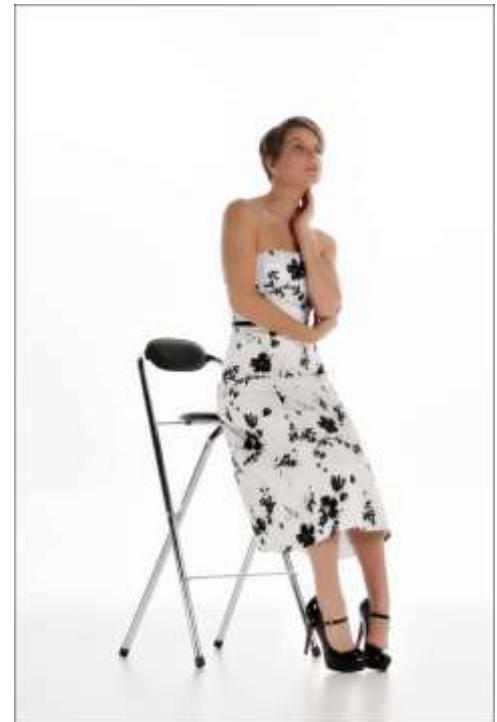
**Pose: With Stool**

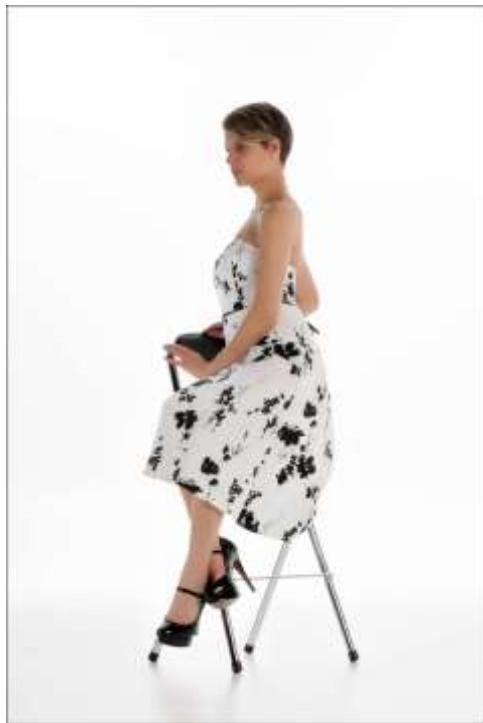


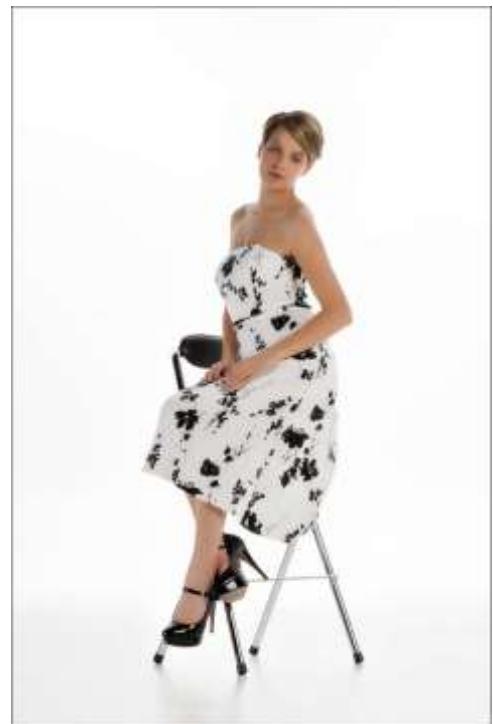
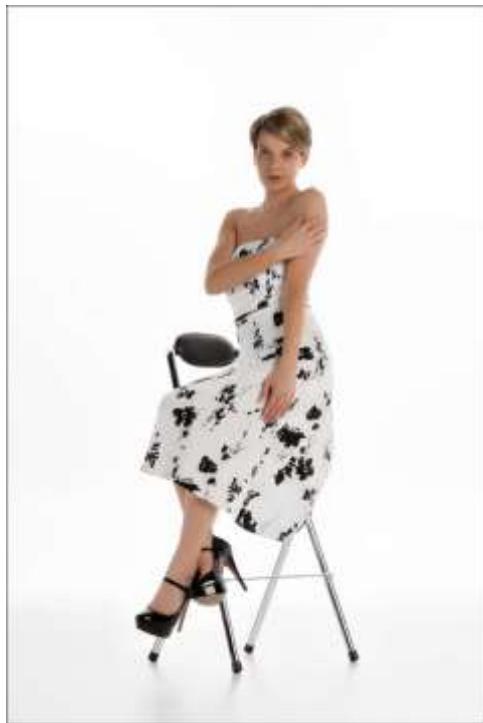


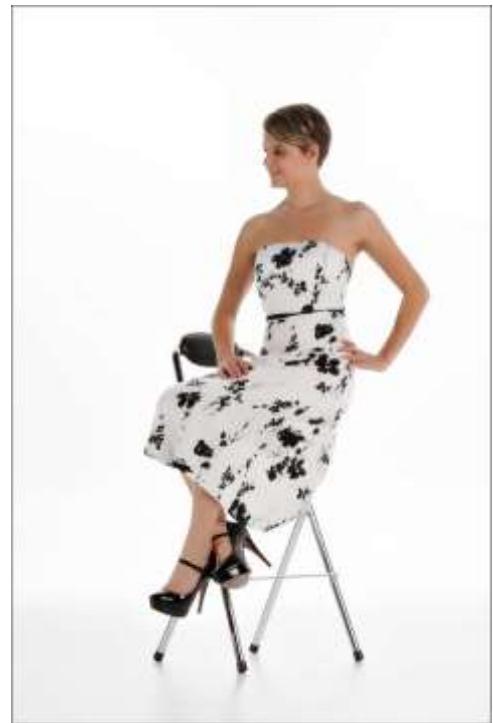


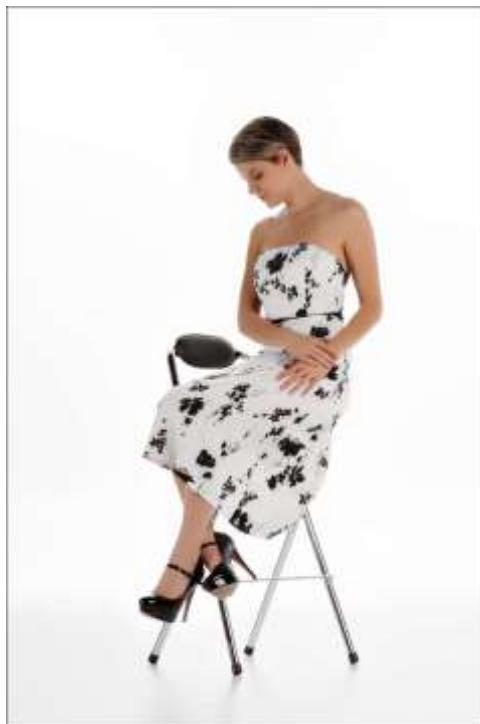
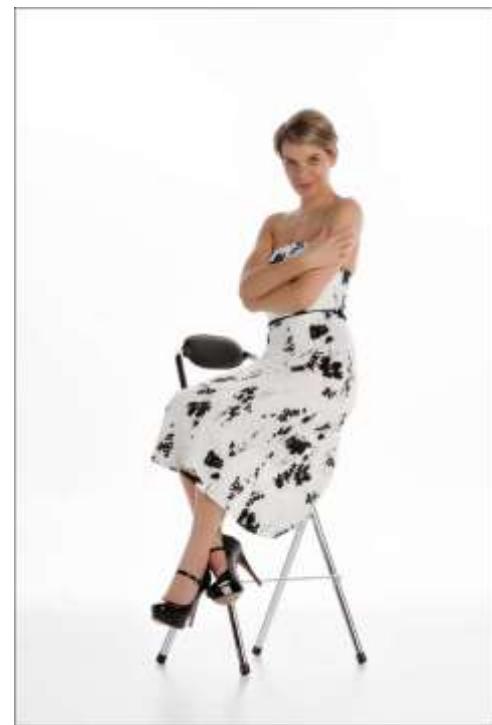








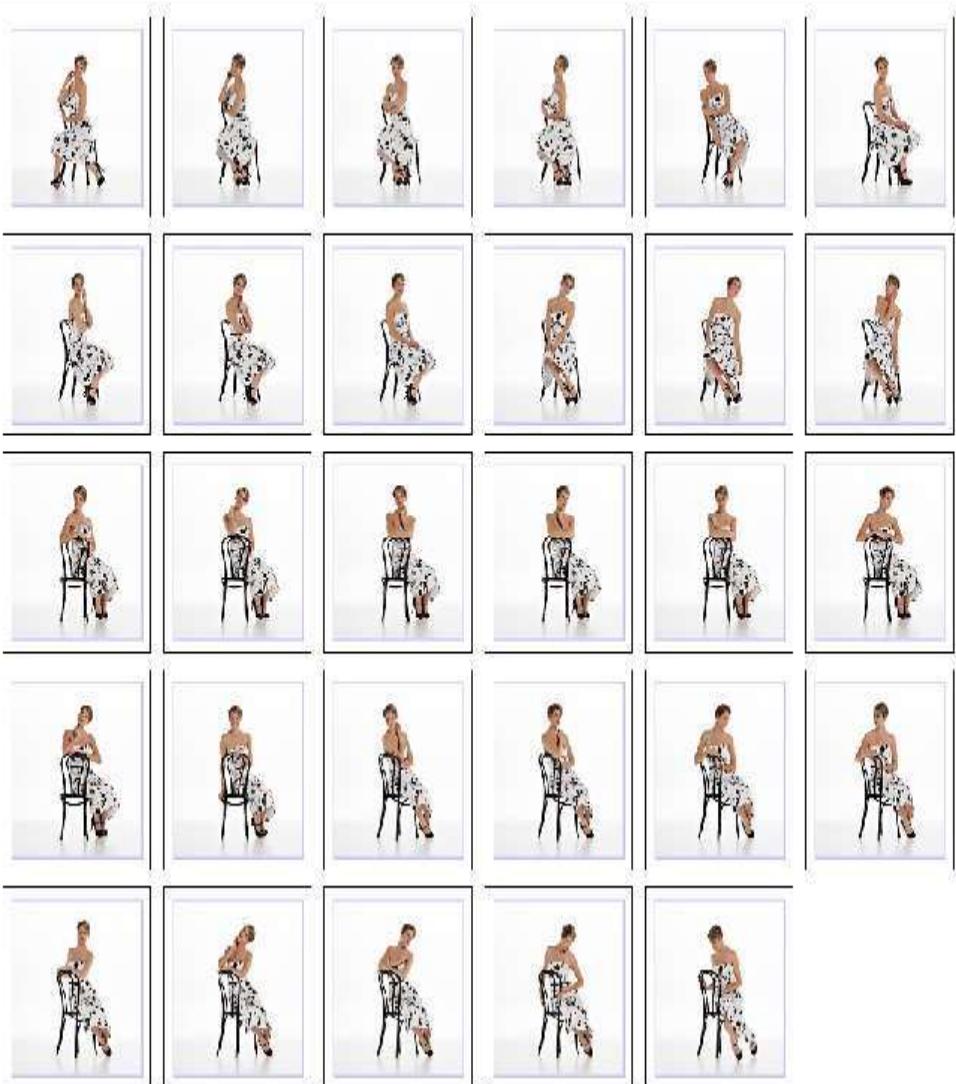




**Midlength Dress**

**Style: Elegant**

**Pose: Sitting**









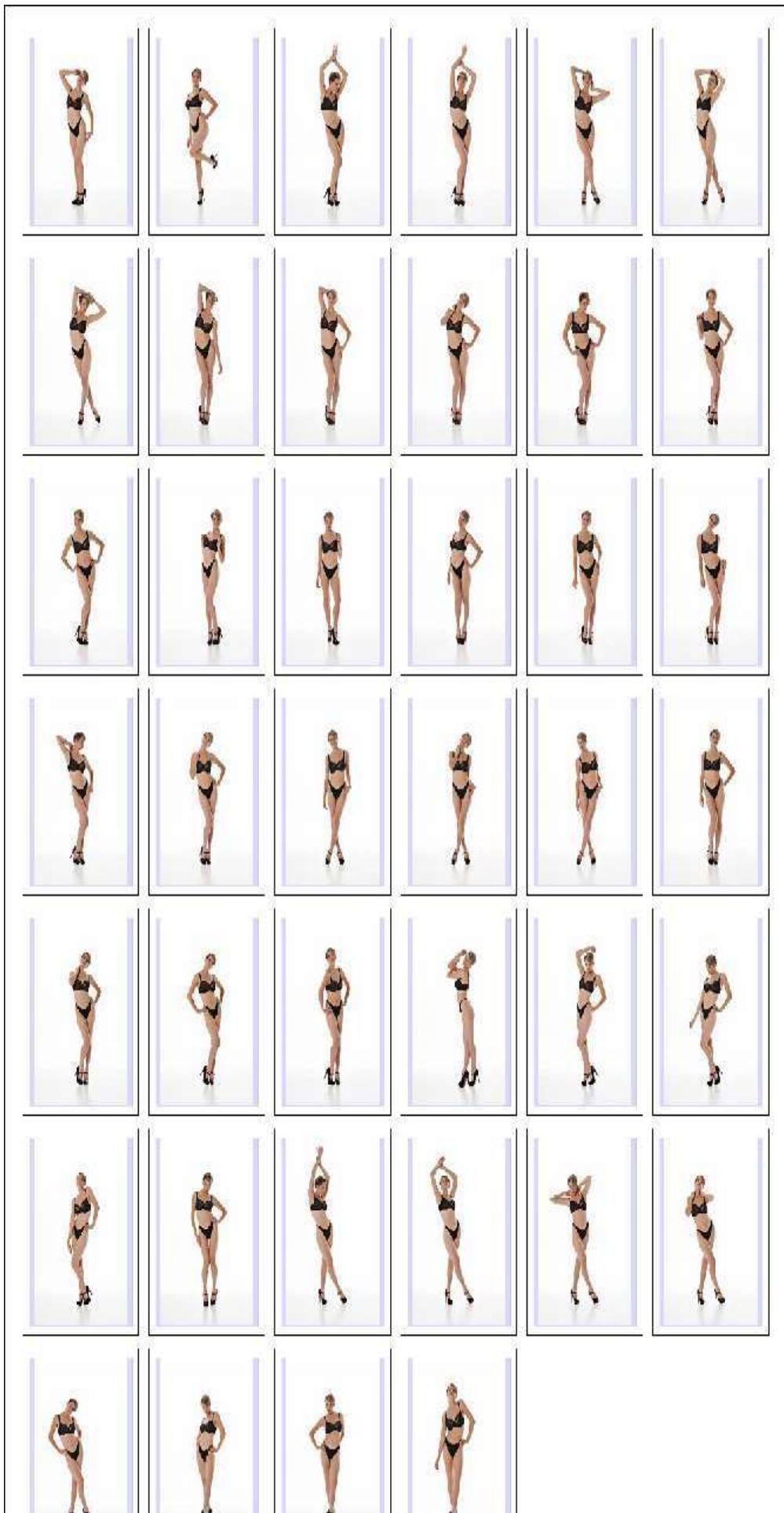


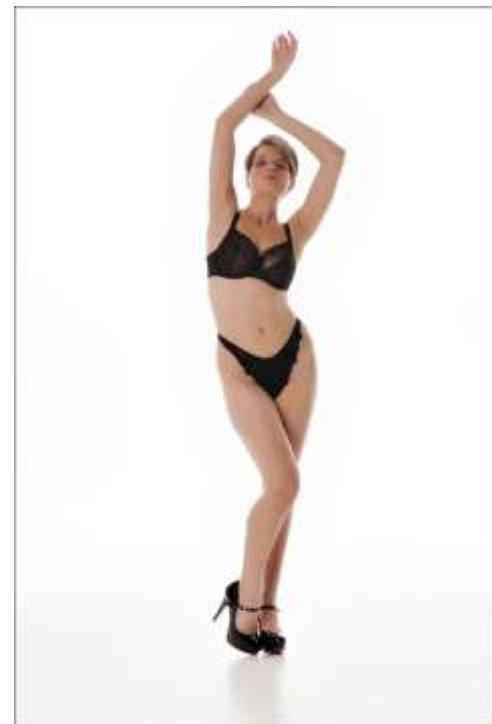
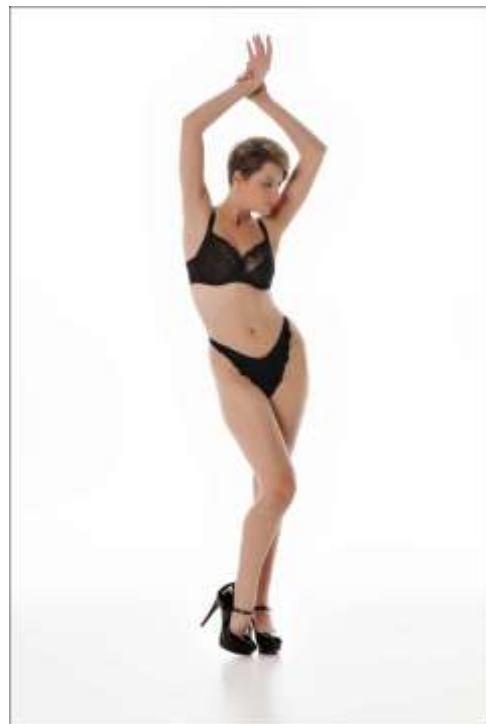
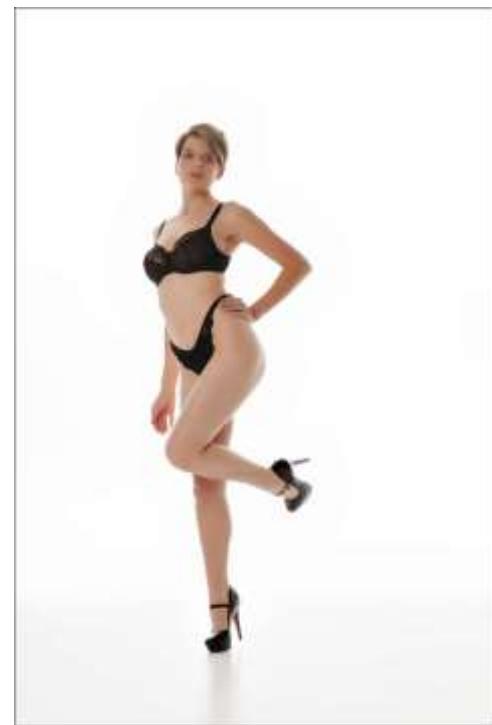


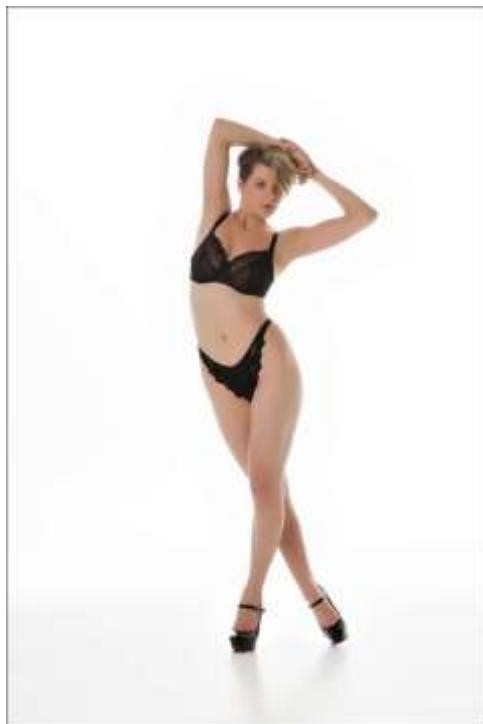
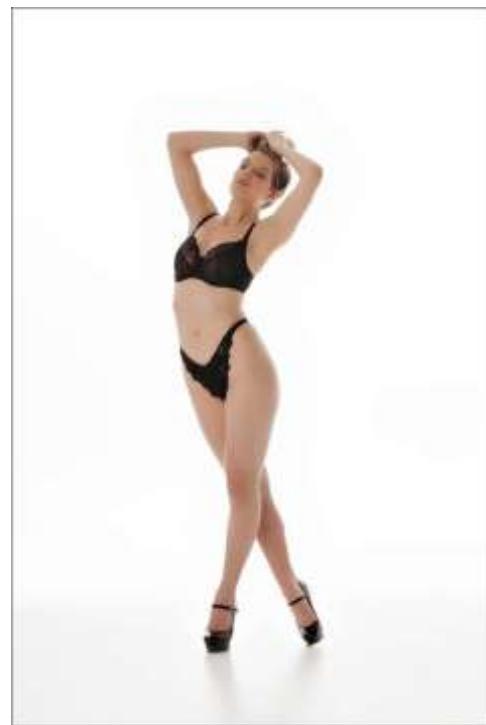
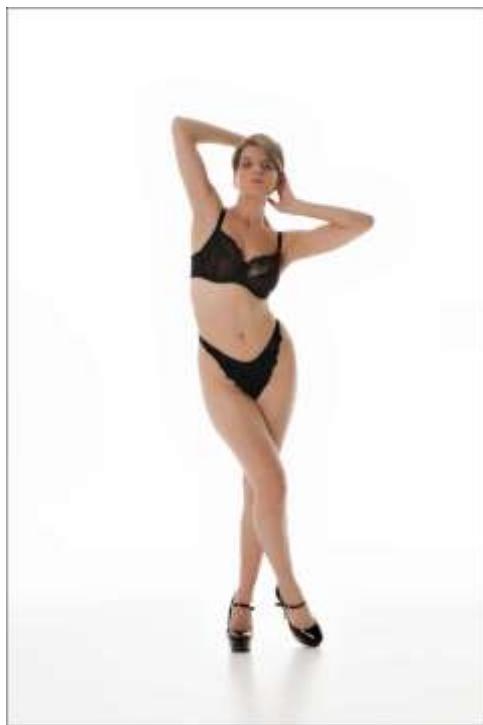
**Lingerie**

**Style: Elegant**

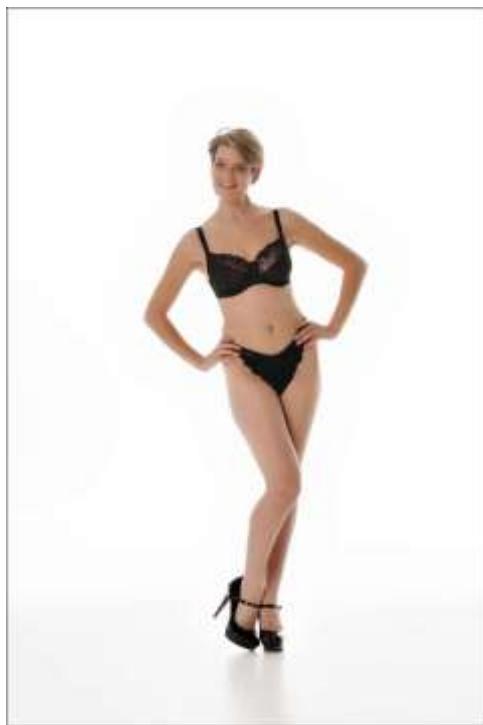
**Pose: Standing**

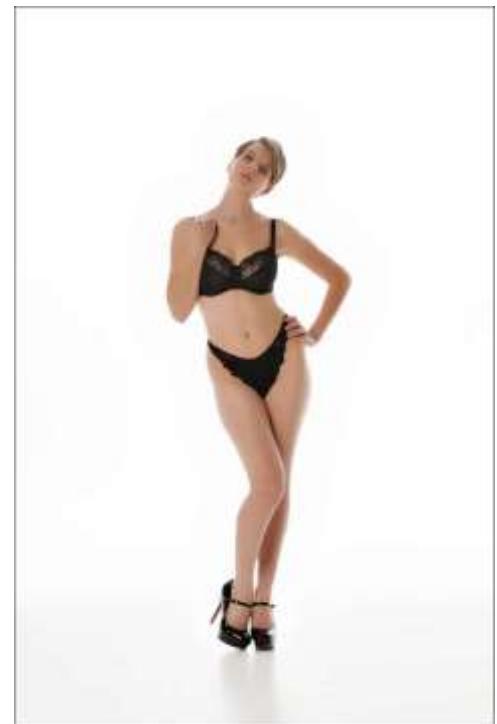


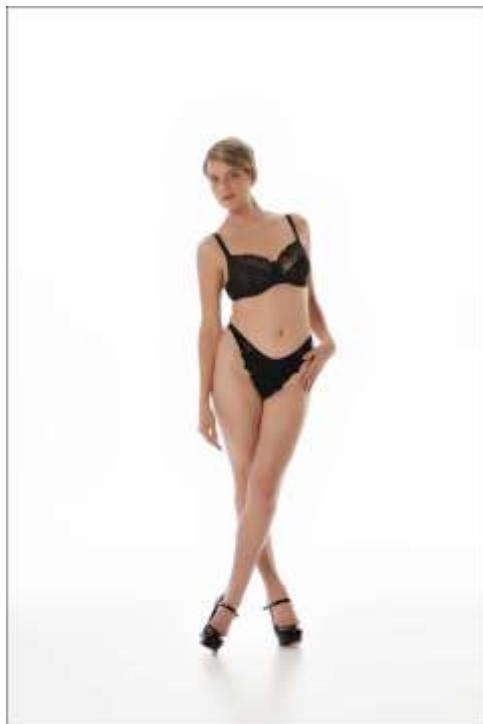




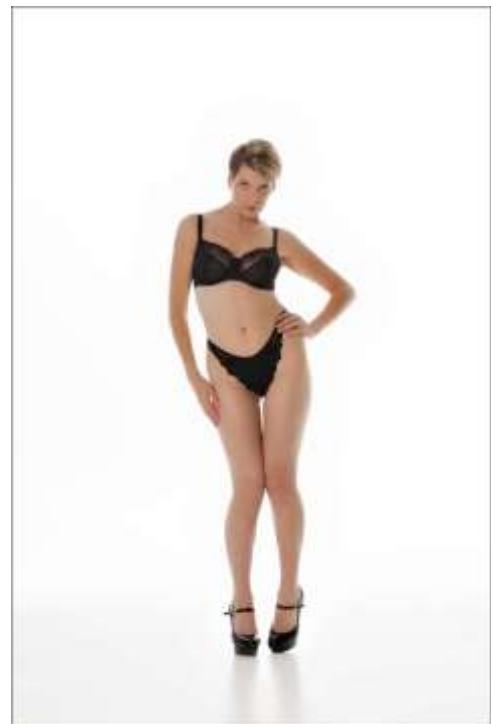


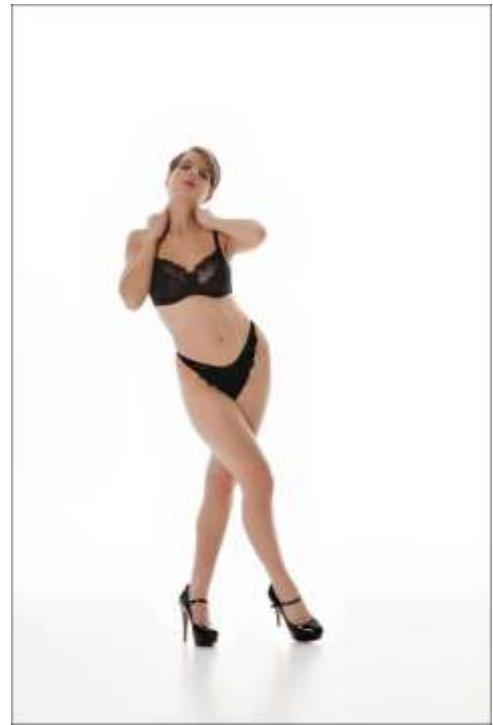
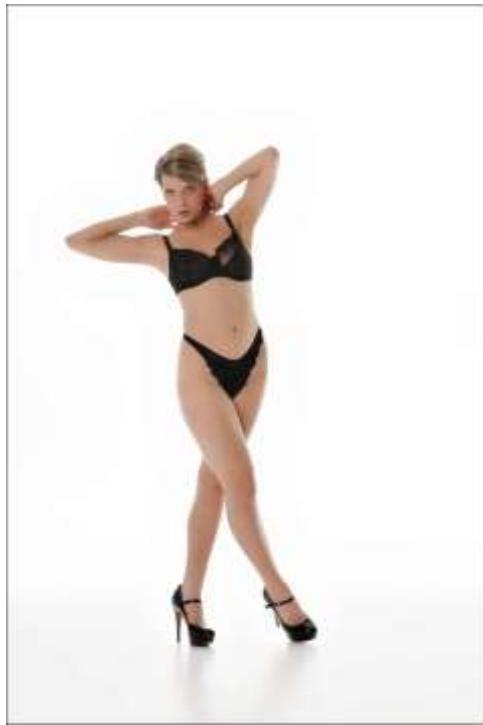
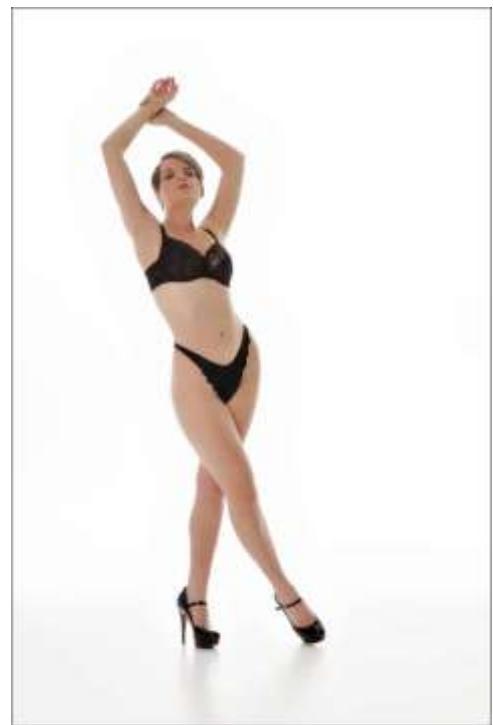
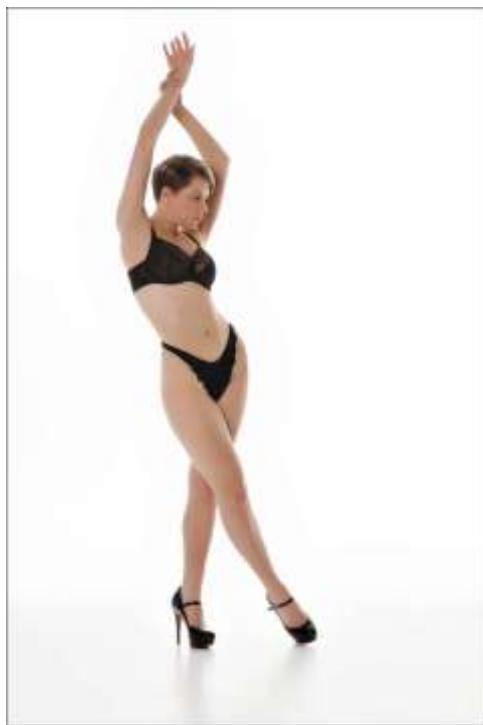


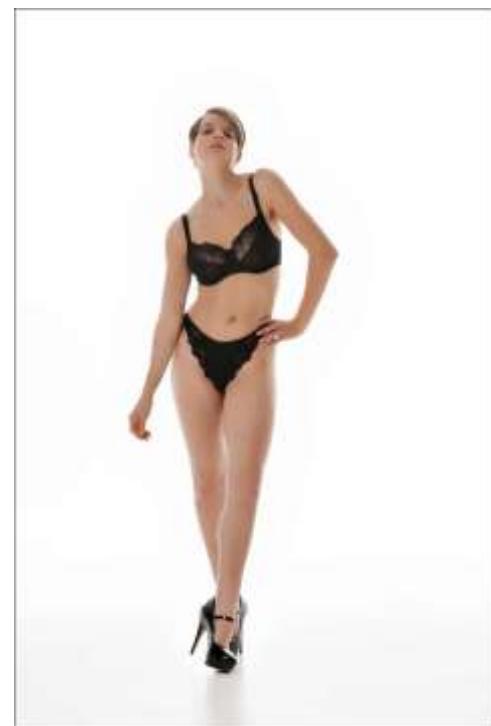
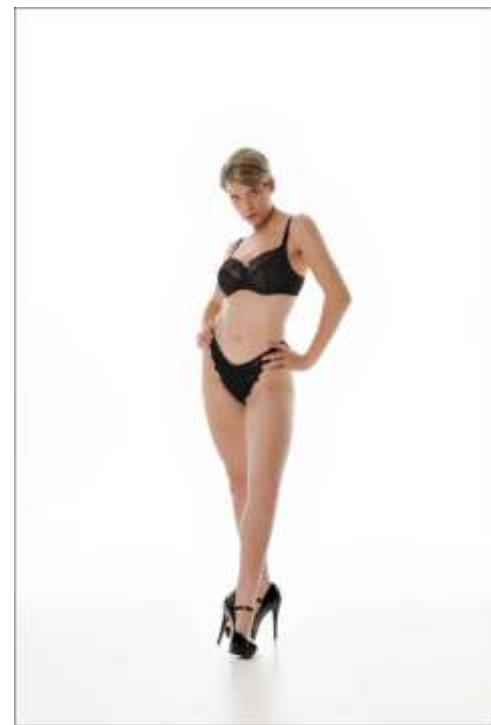








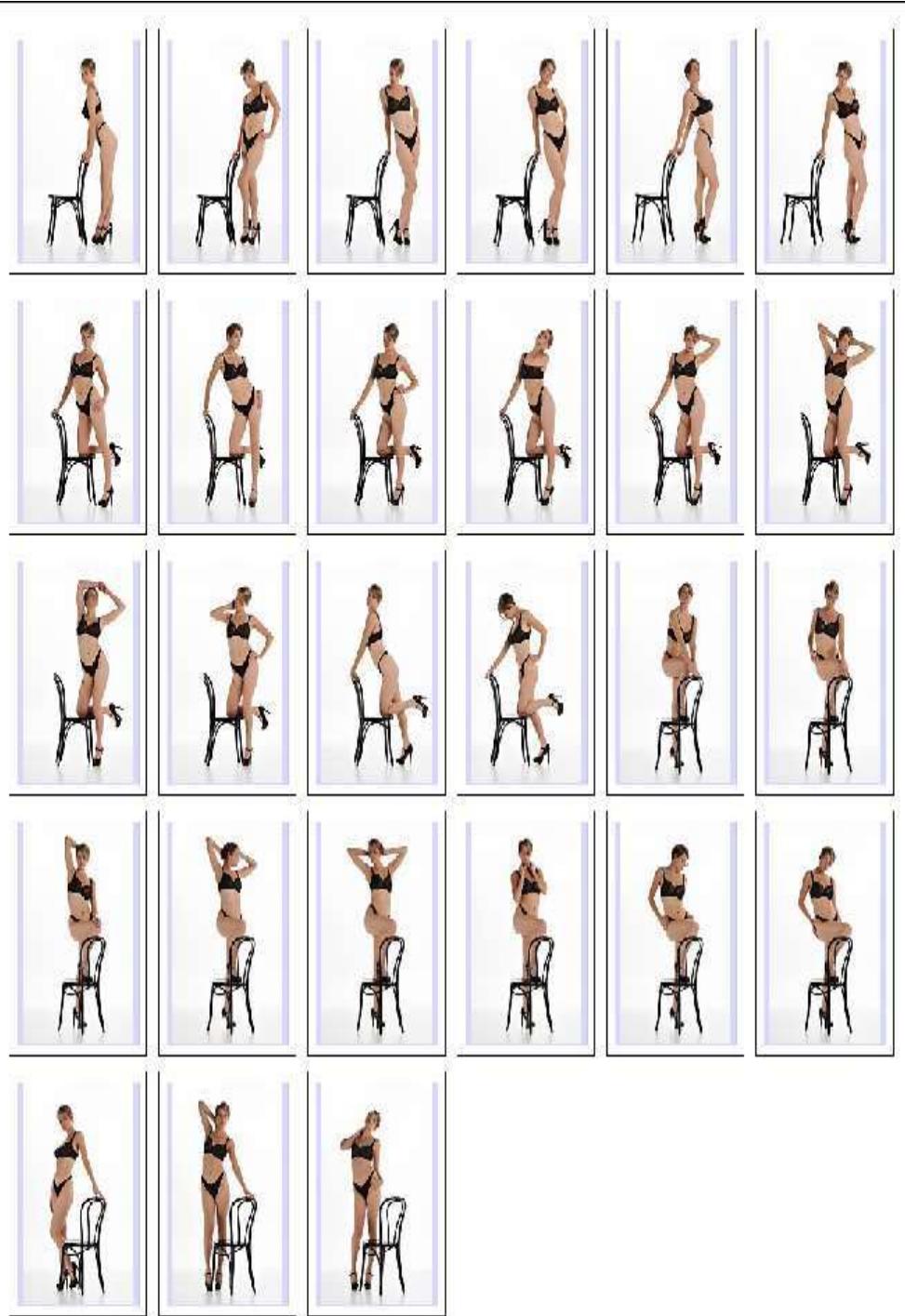


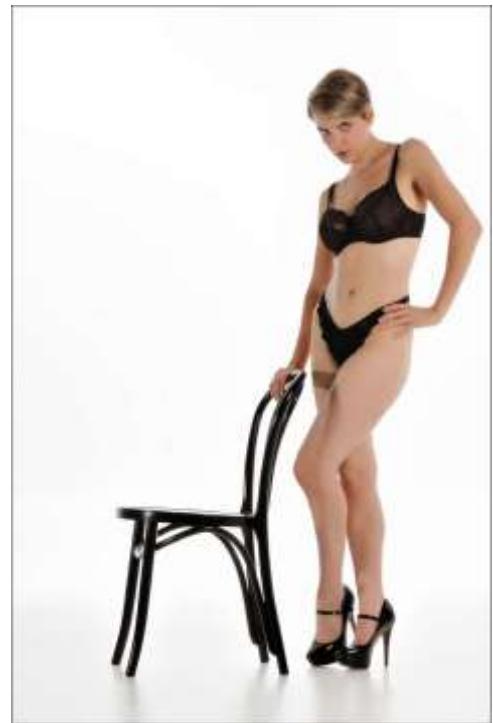


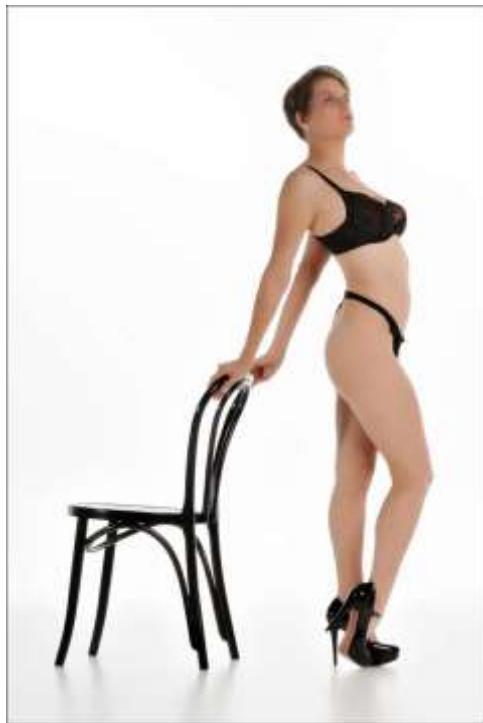
**Lingerie**

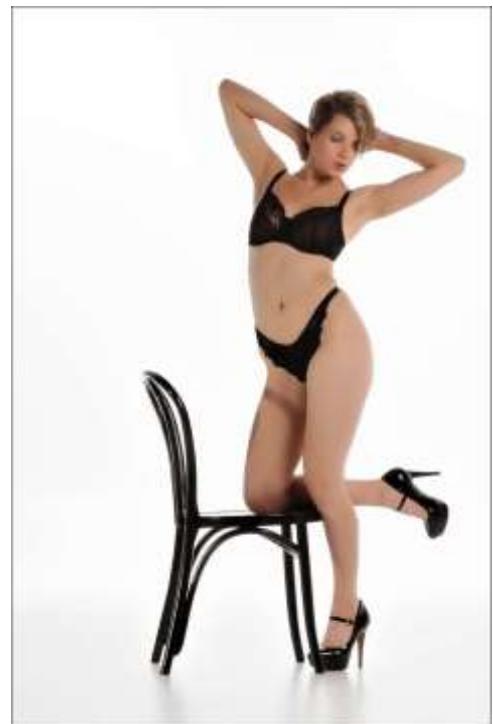
**Style: Elegant**

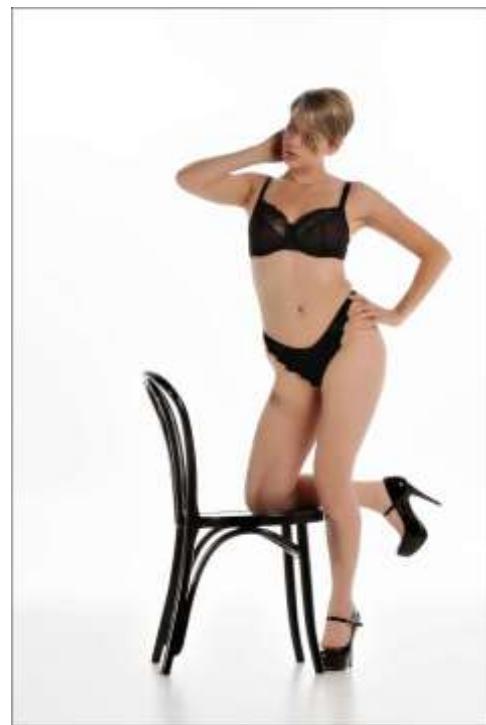
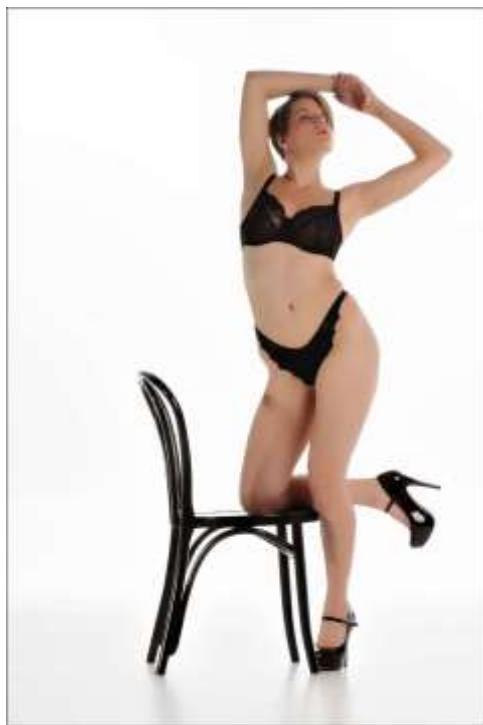
**Pose: With Chair**

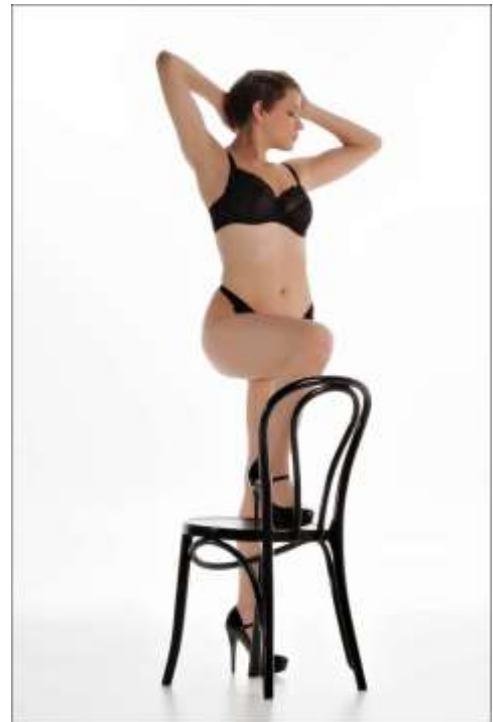
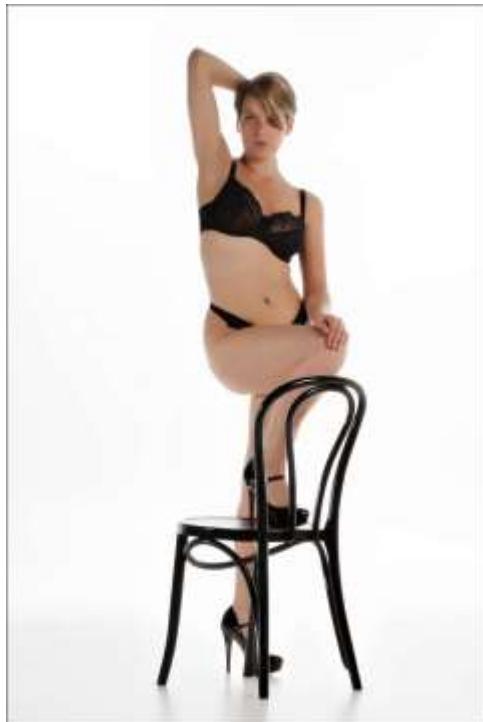
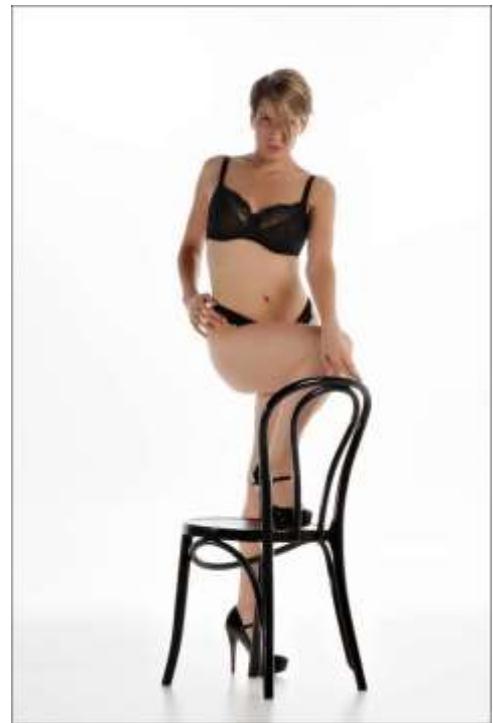
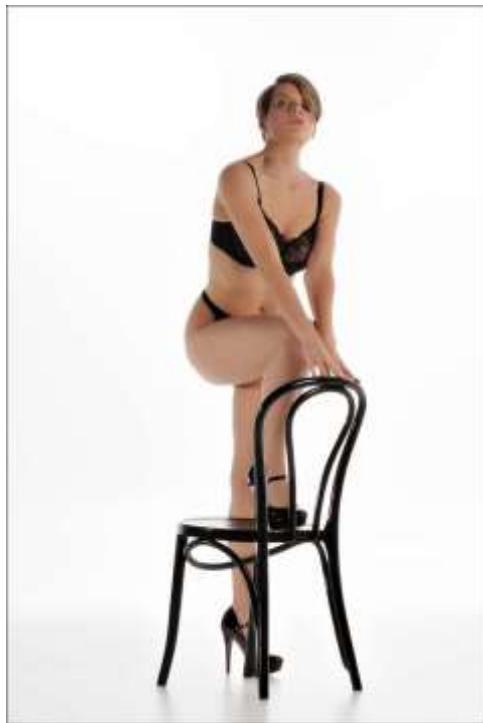


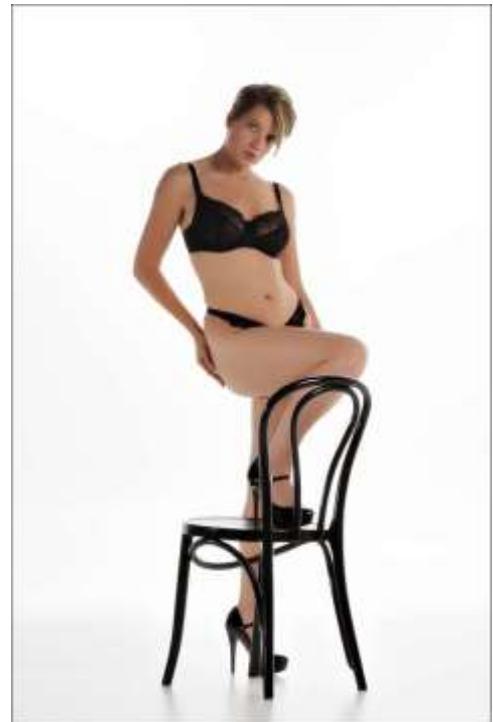
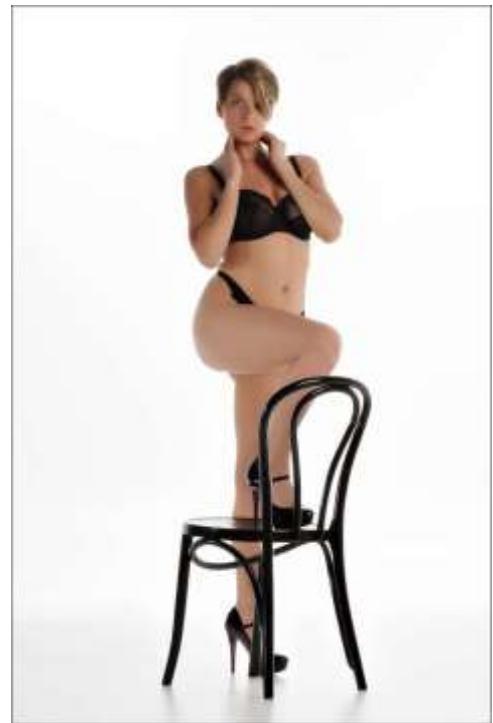
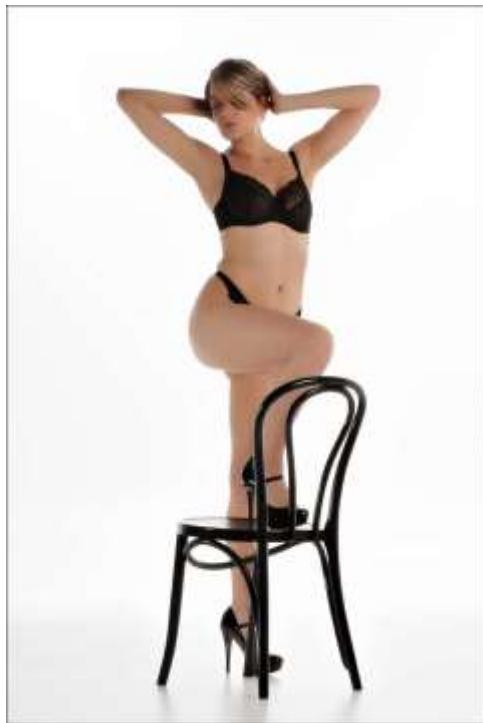


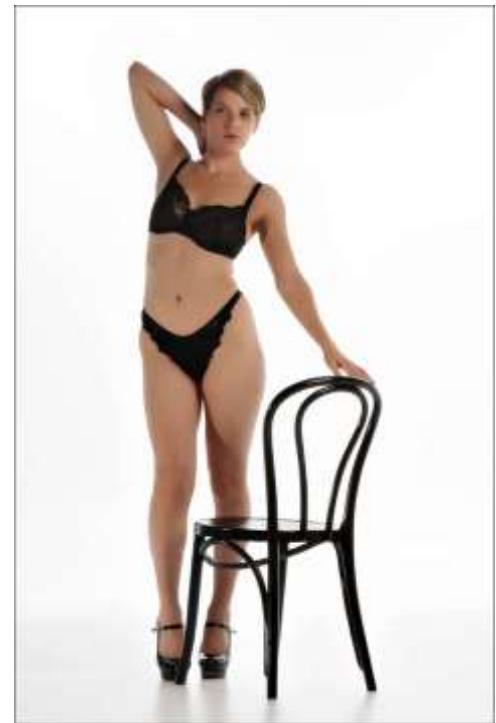
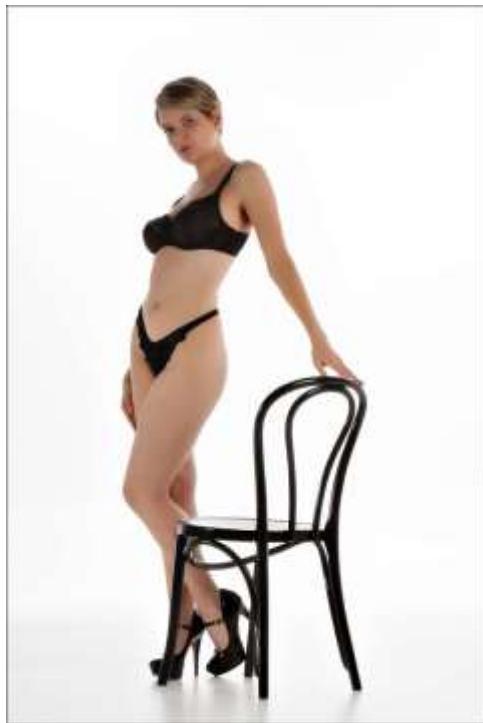










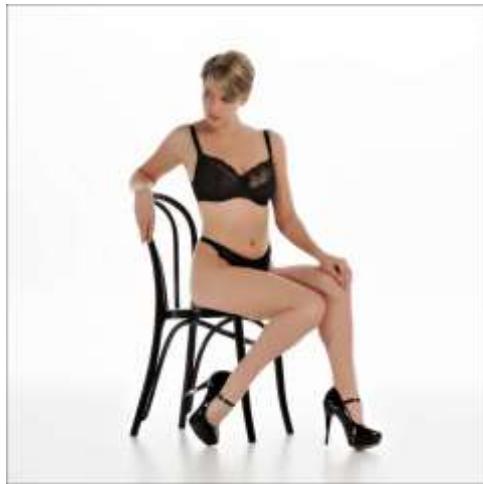
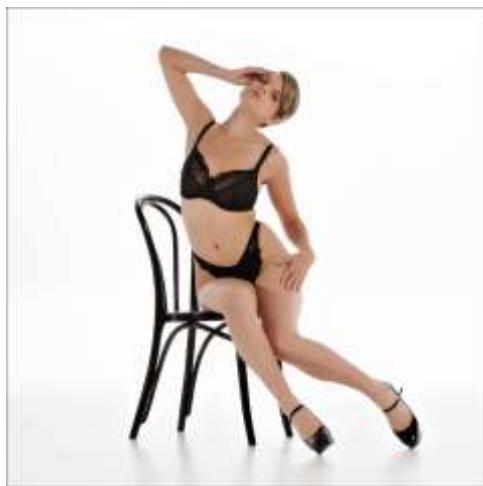


**Lingerie**

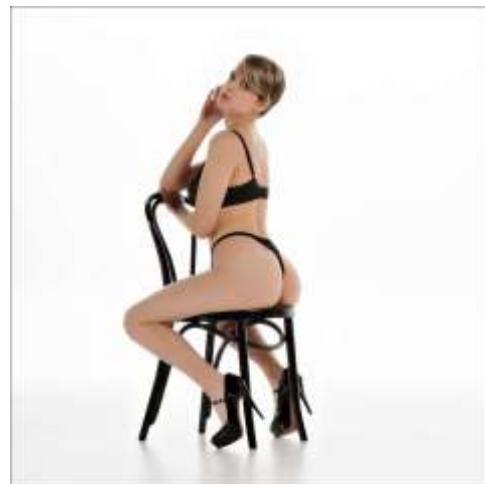
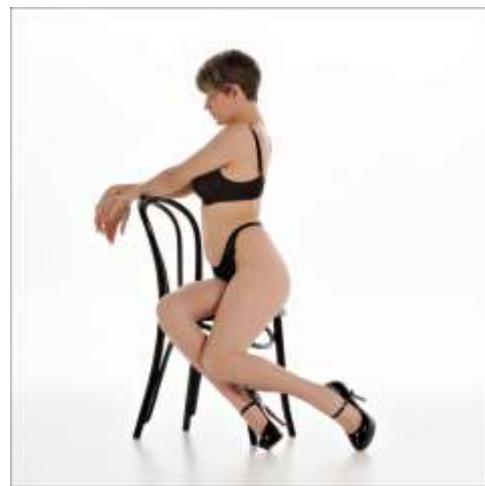
**Style: Elegant**

**Pose: Sitting**













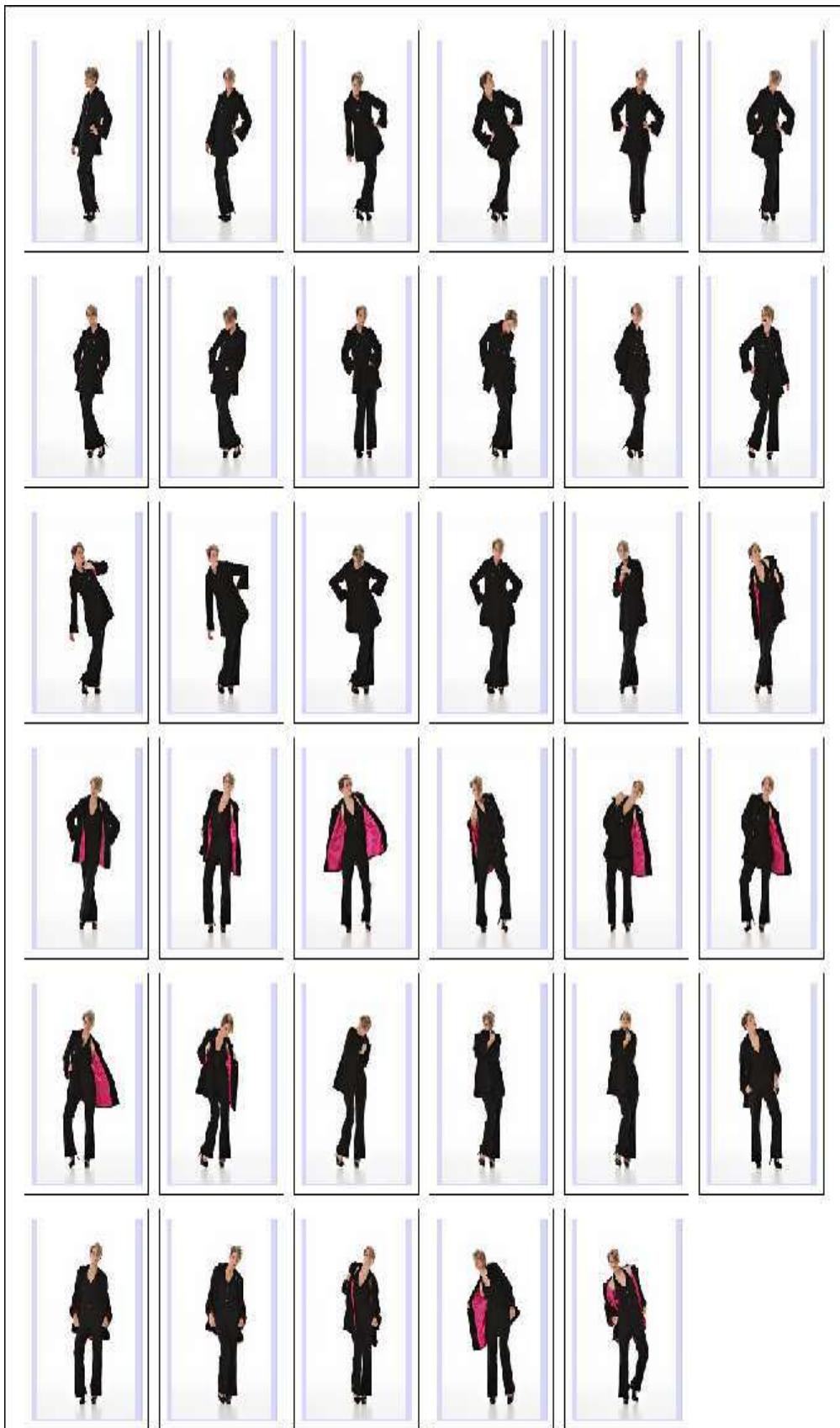




**Short Coat**

**Style: Smart**

**Pose: Standing**





















**Short Dress**

**Style: Smart**

**Pose: Standing**











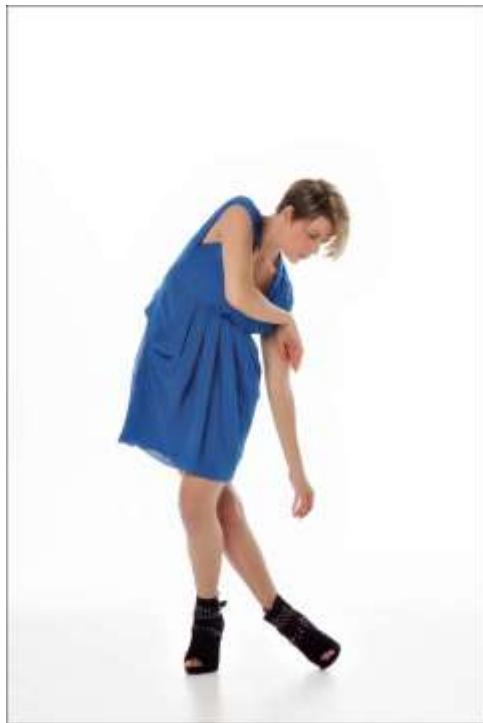




















**Short Dress**

**Style: Smart**

**Pose: Sitting**

















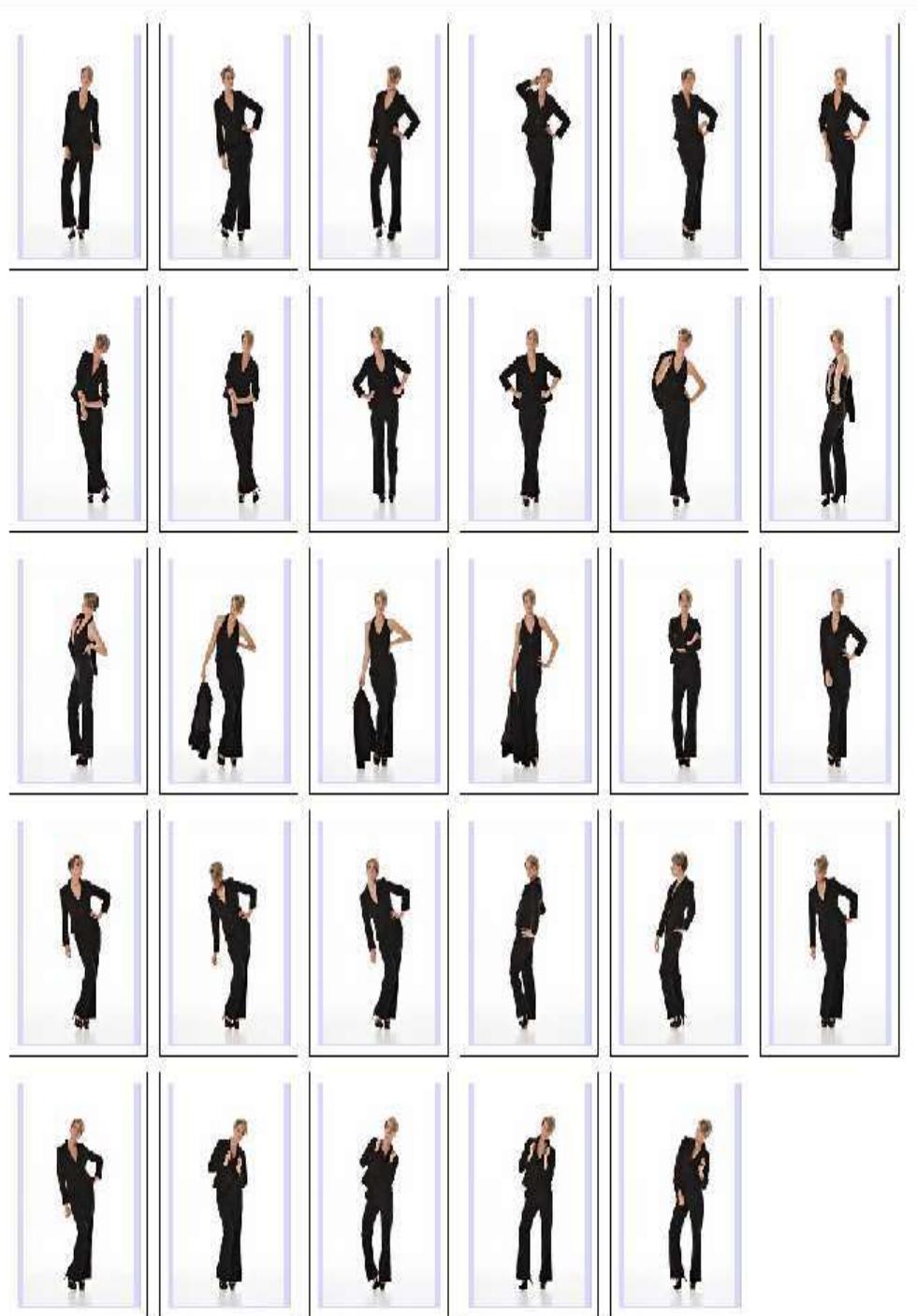




**Trouser Suit**

**Style: Smart**

**Pose: Standing**



















**Trouser Suit**

**Style: Smart**

**Pose: Leaning**



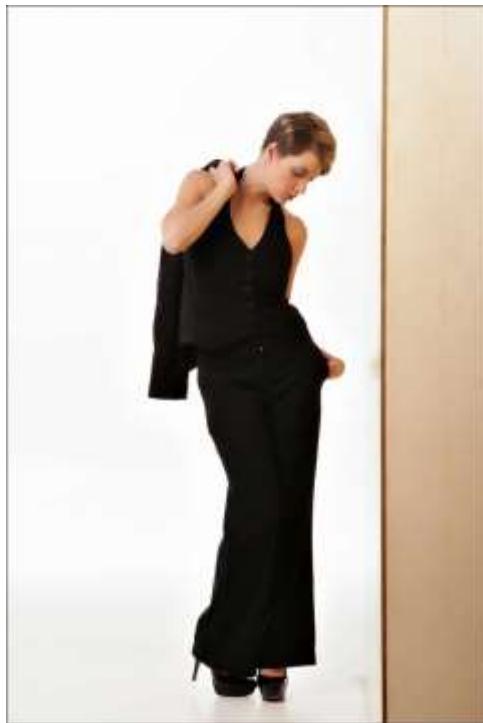


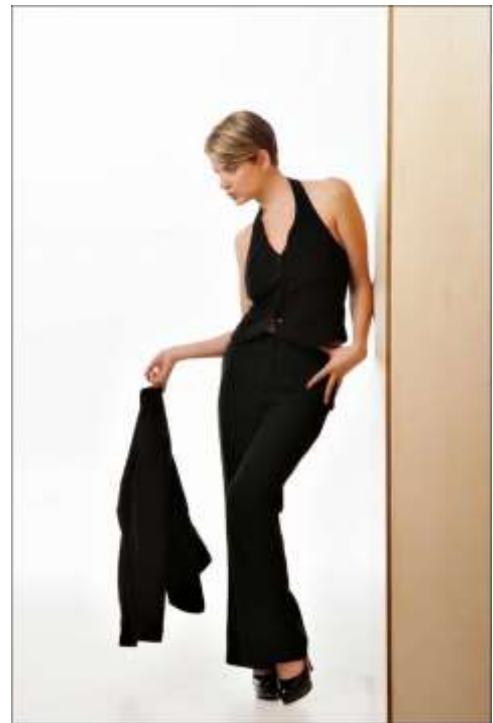
















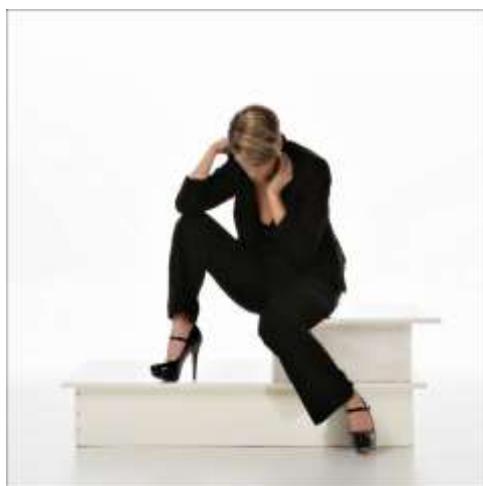


**Trouser Suit**

**Style: Smart**

**Pose: Sitting**

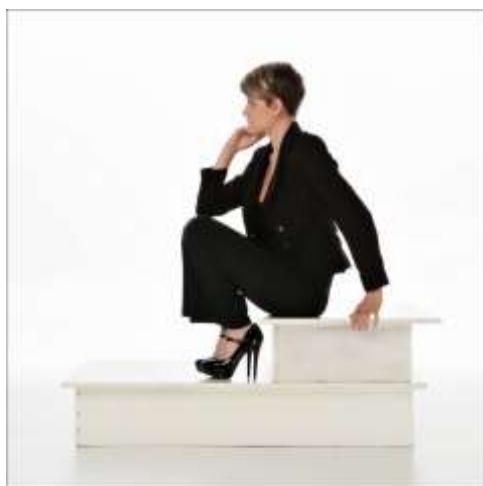




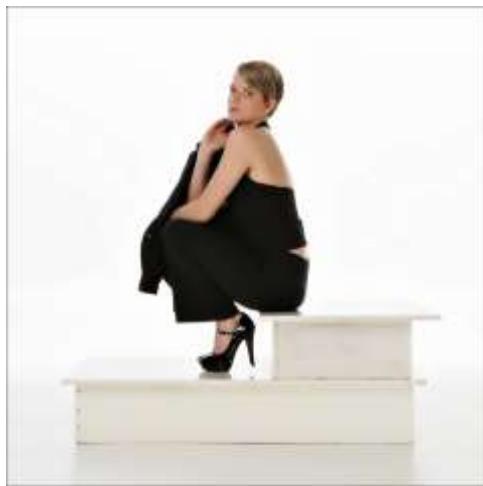


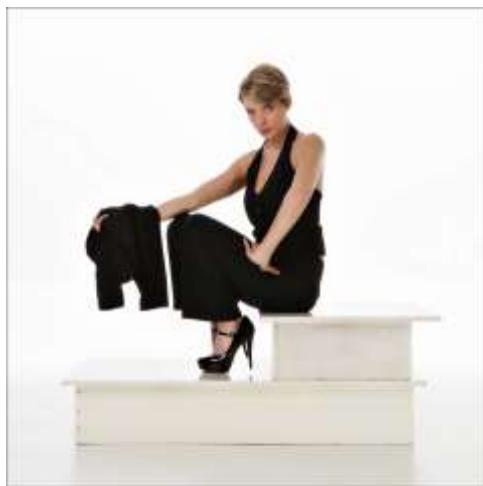


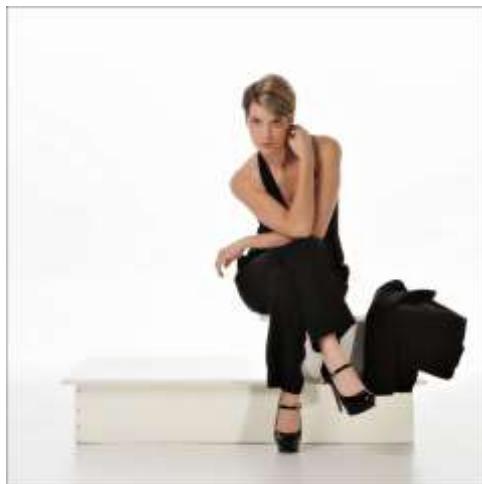










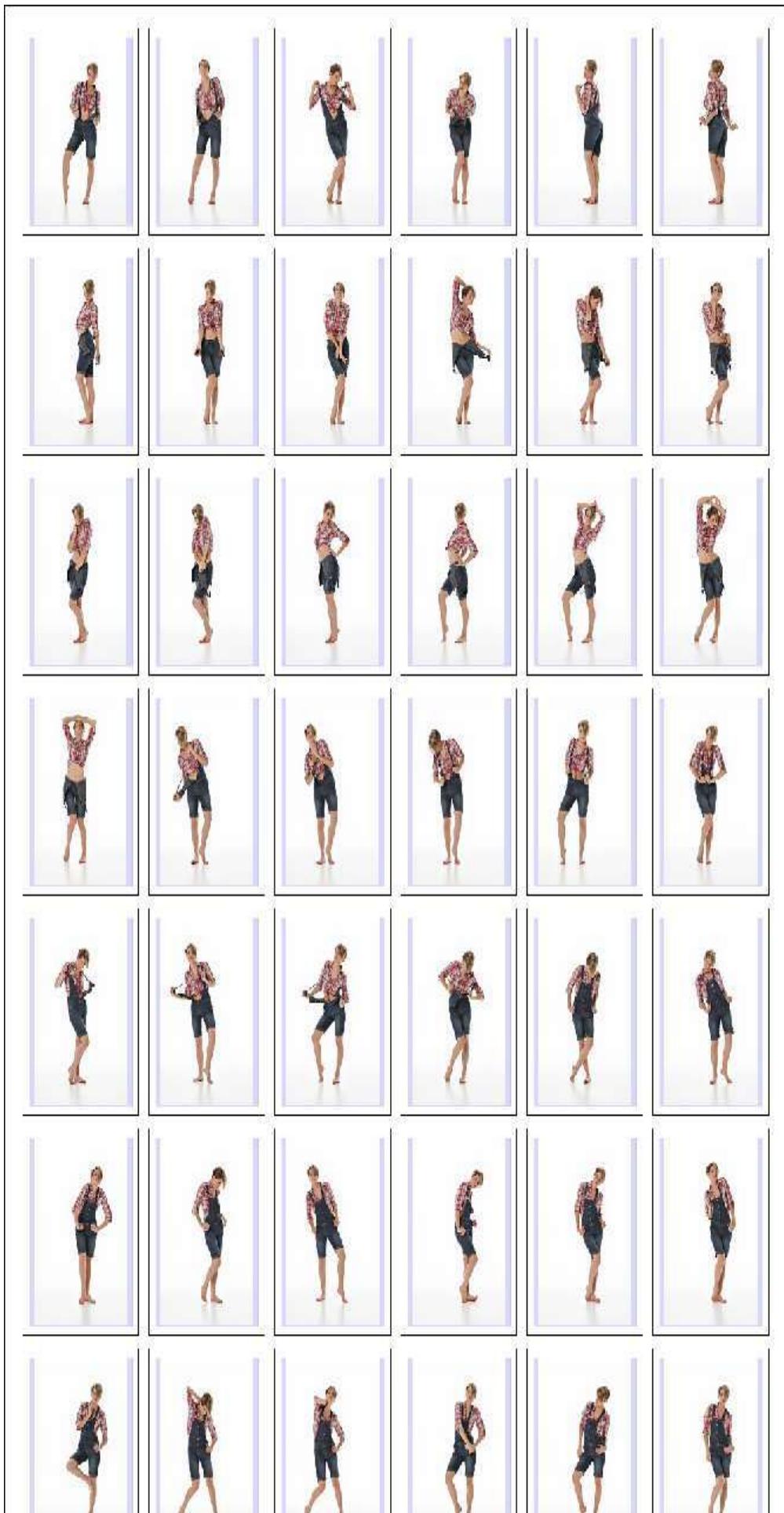




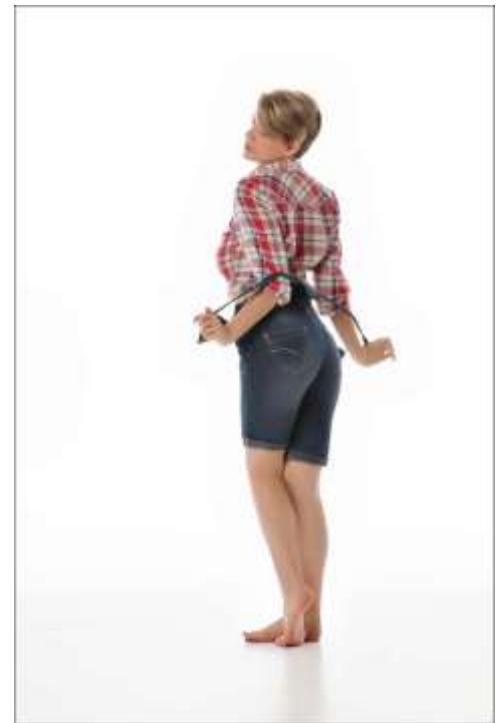
**Dungarees**

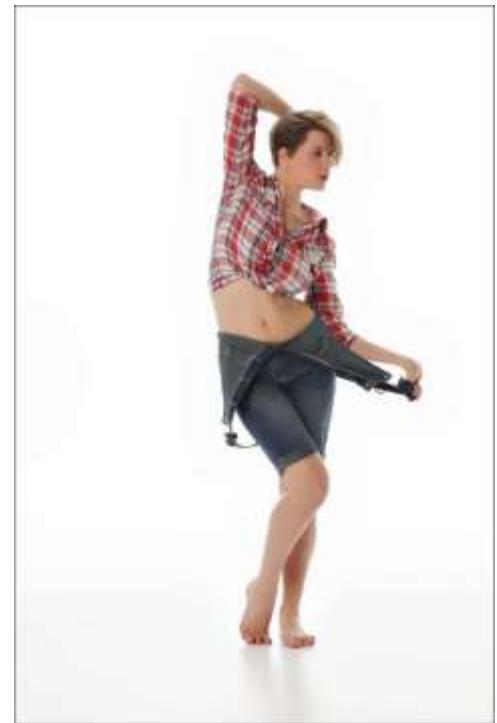
**Style: Casual**

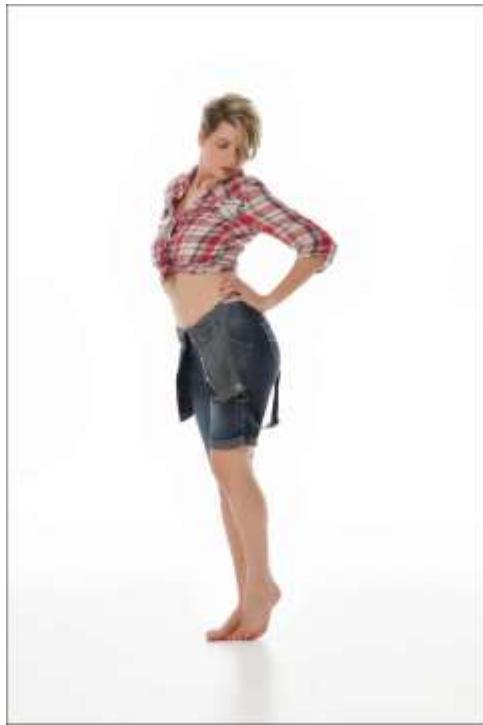
**Pose: Standing**

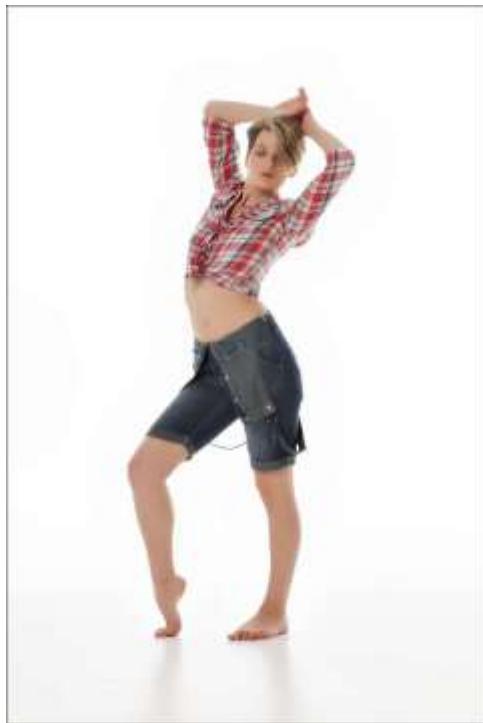


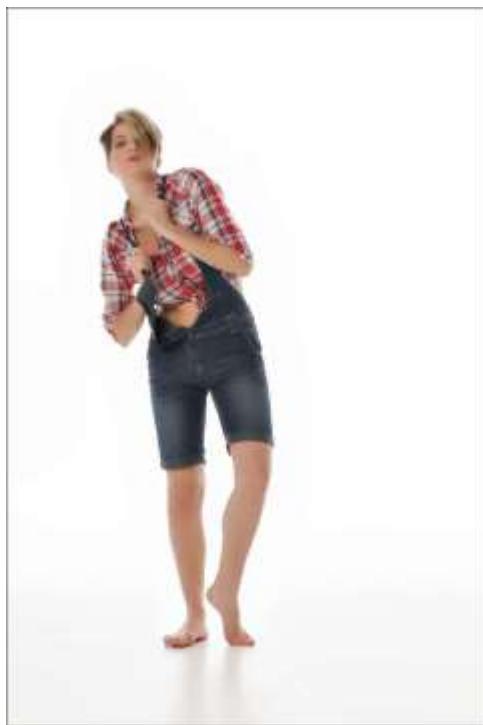


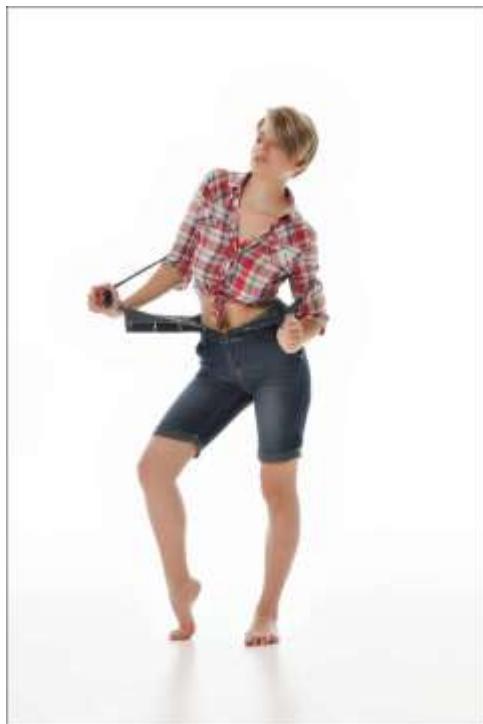
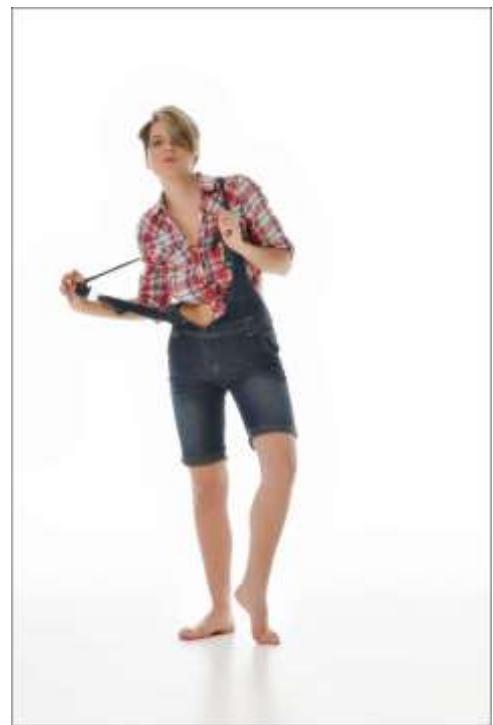






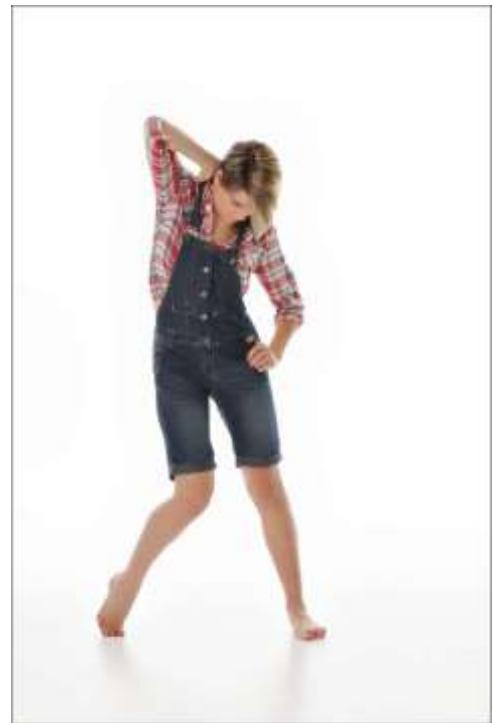


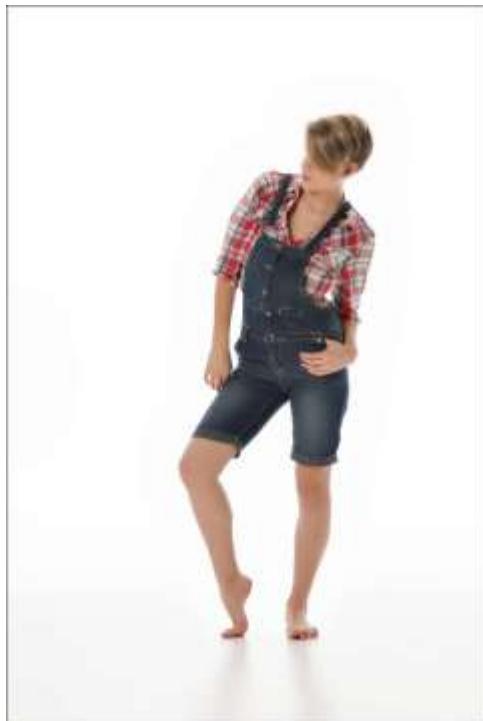








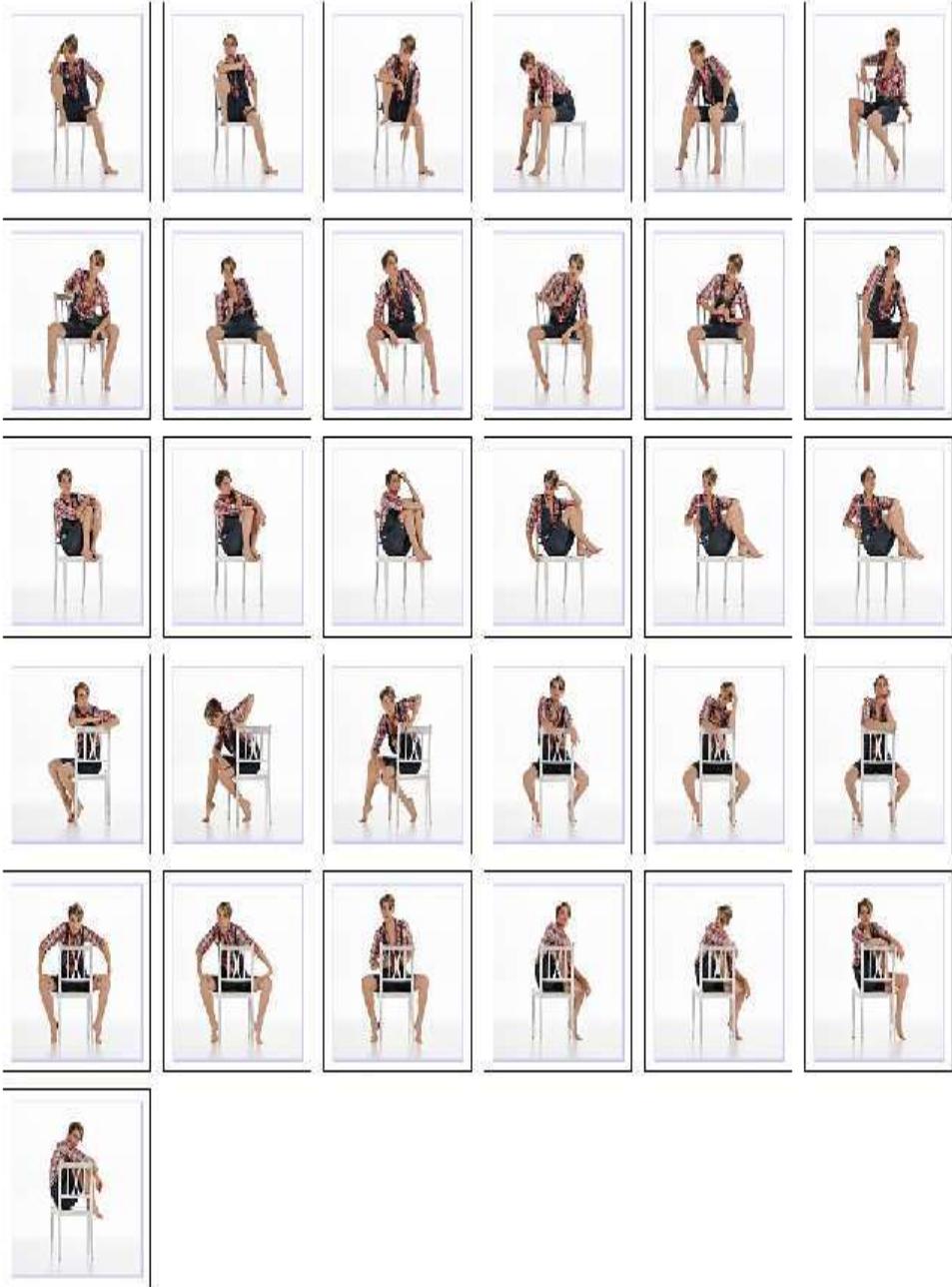


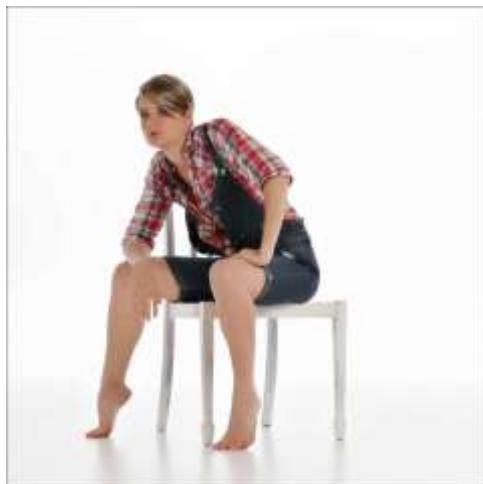


**Dungarees**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: Sitting**















**Jeans and T-Shirt**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: With Chair**







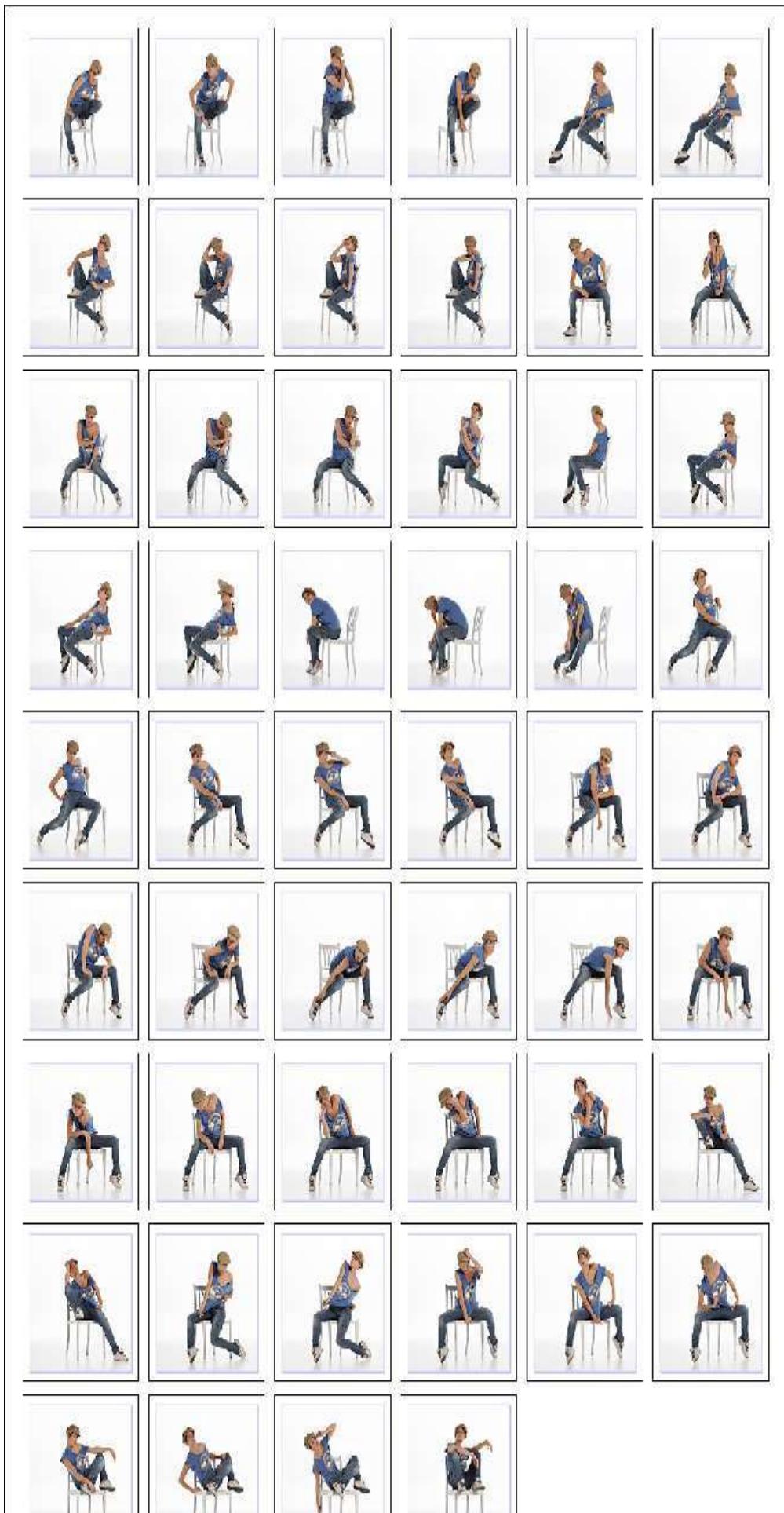




**Jeans and T-Shirt**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: Sitting**

















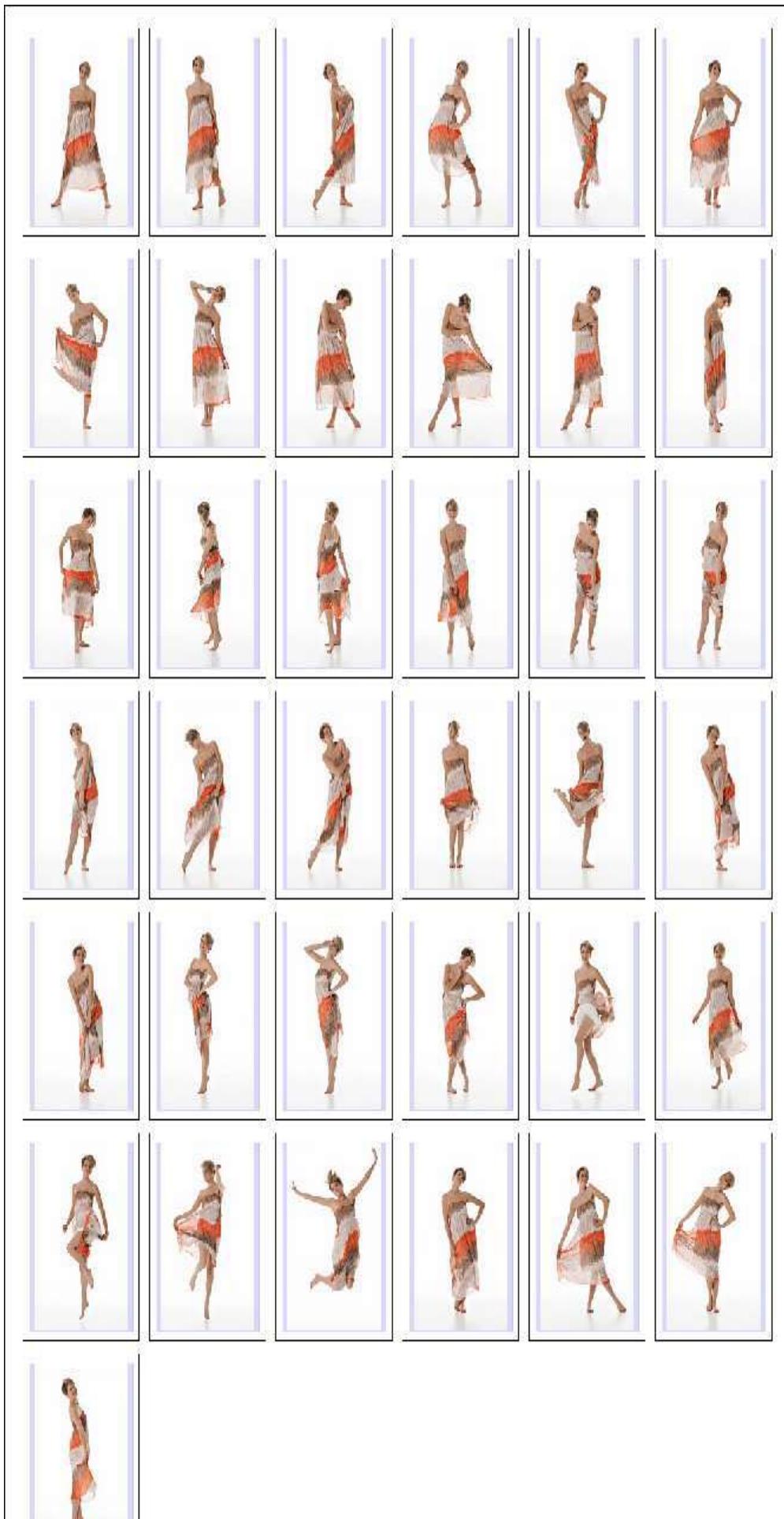


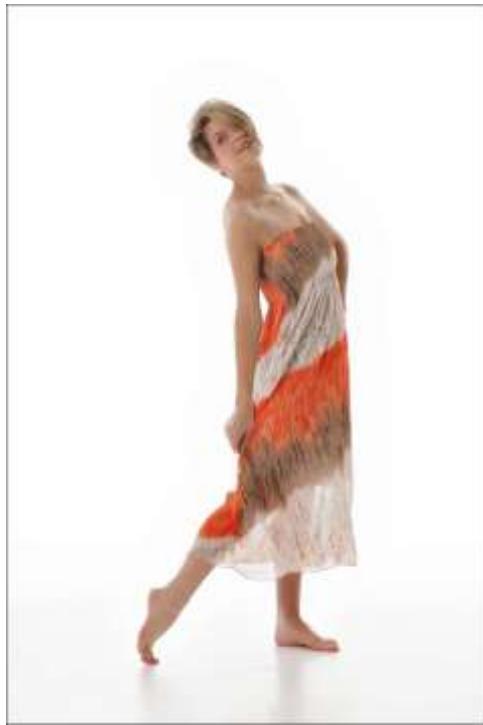


# **Long Summer Dress**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: Standing**

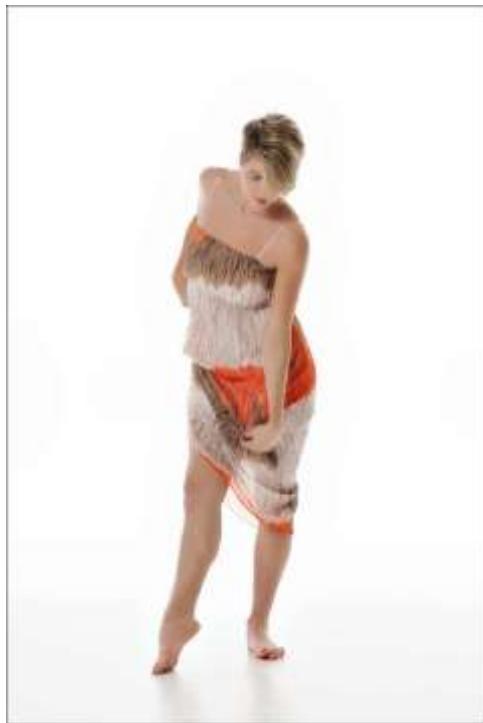


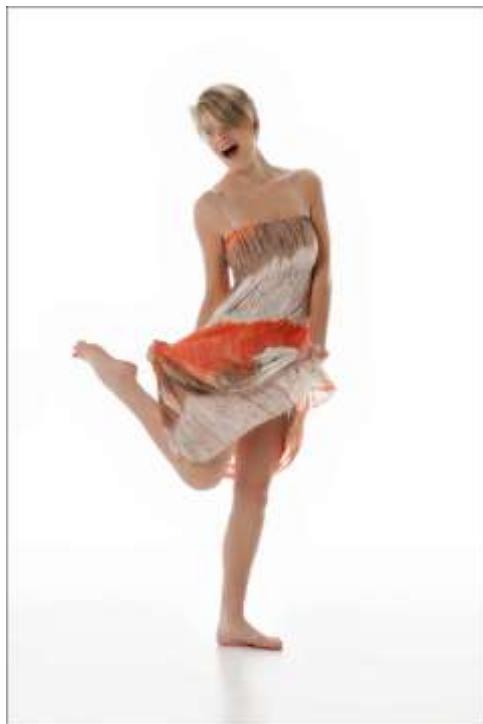




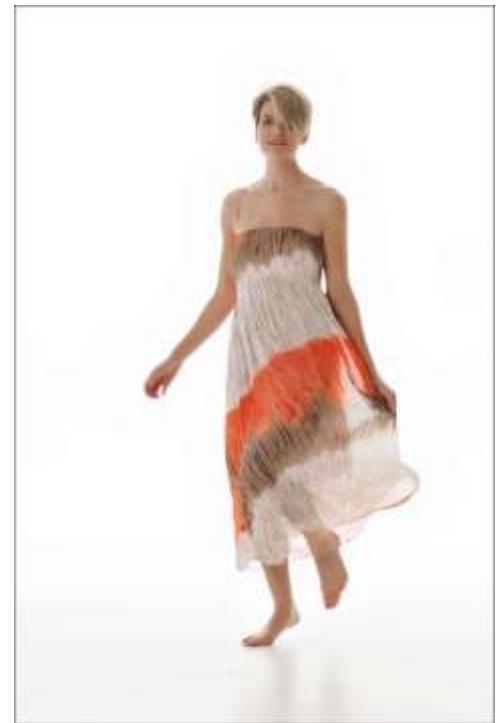














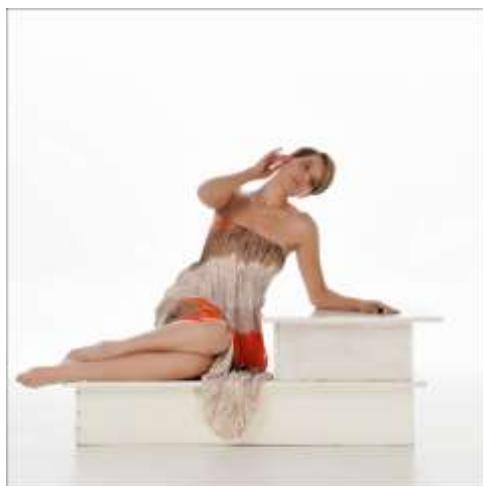


# **Long Summer Dress**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: Sitting**

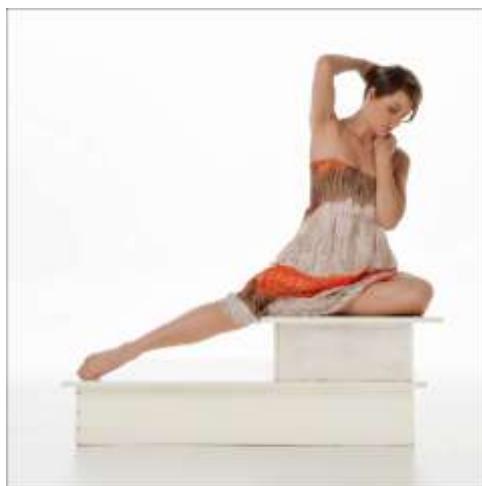
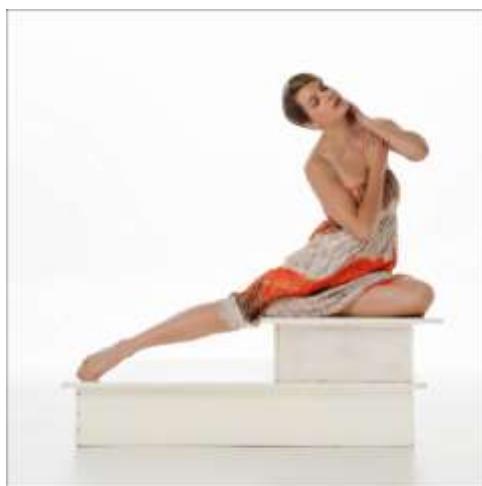
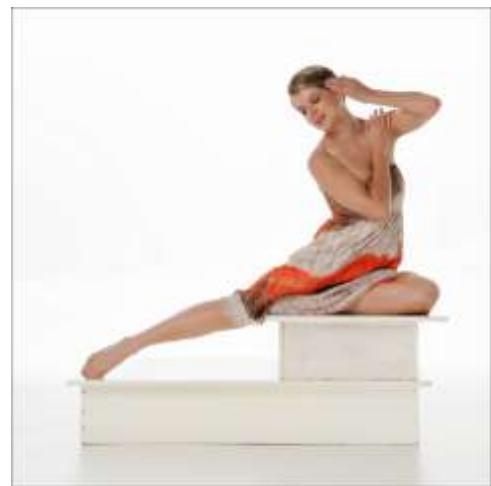


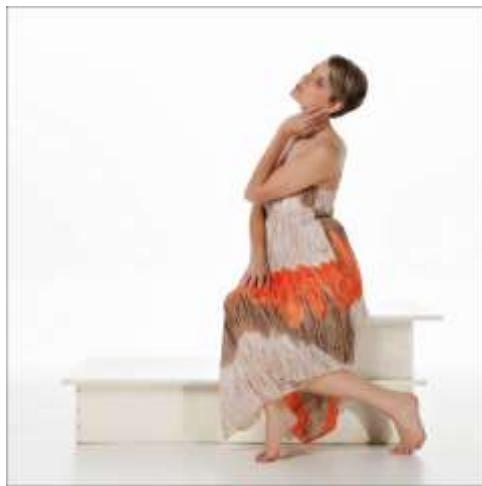


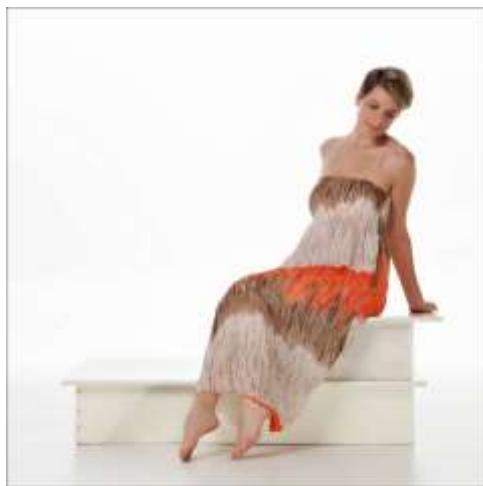










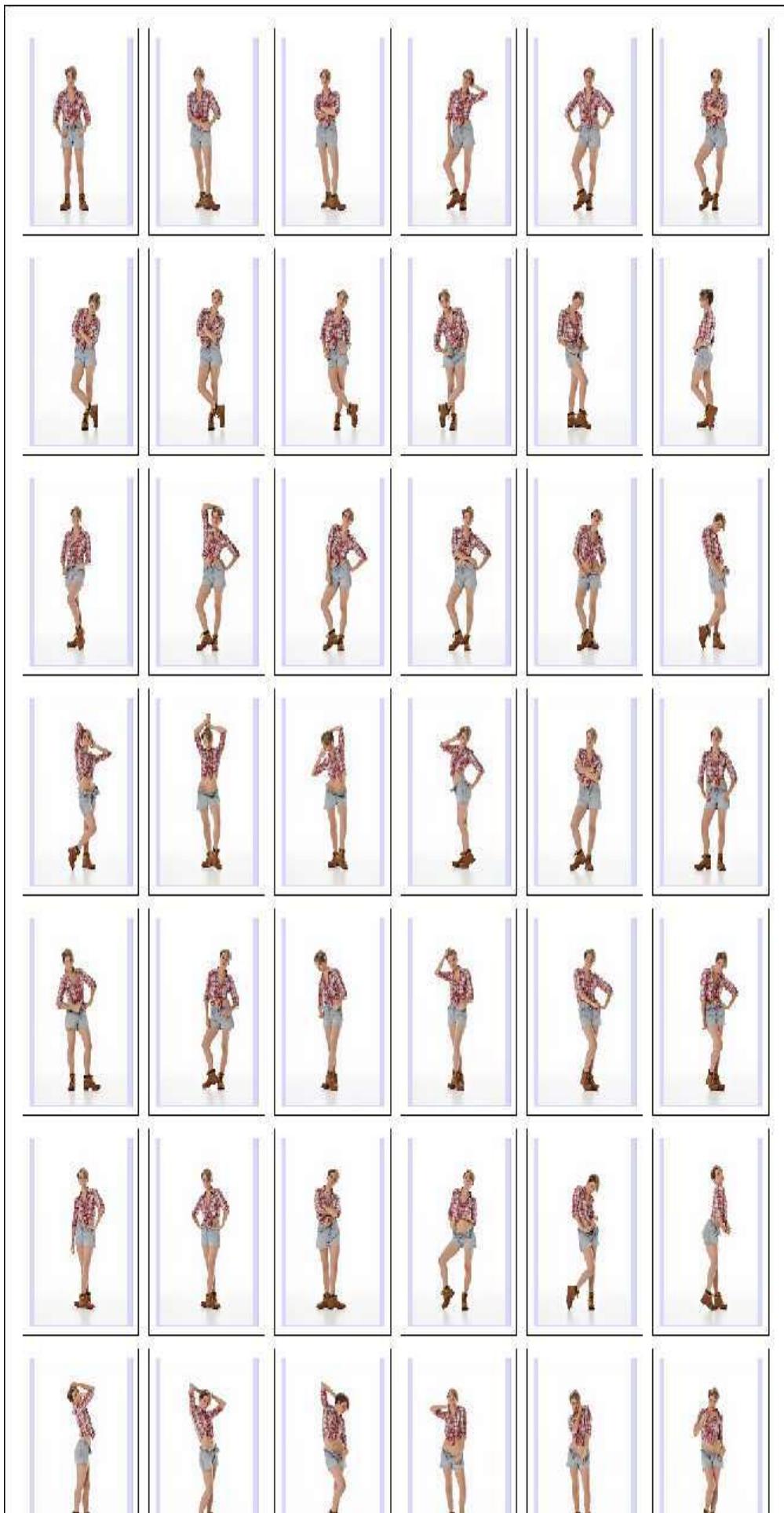




# **Shorts and Shirt**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: Standing**









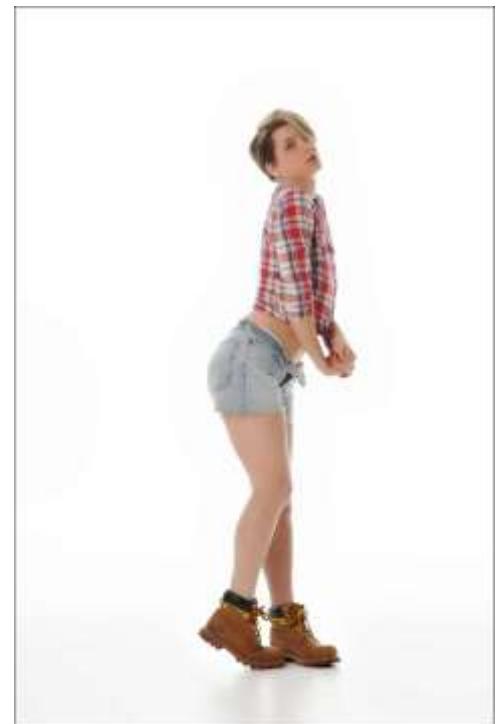




















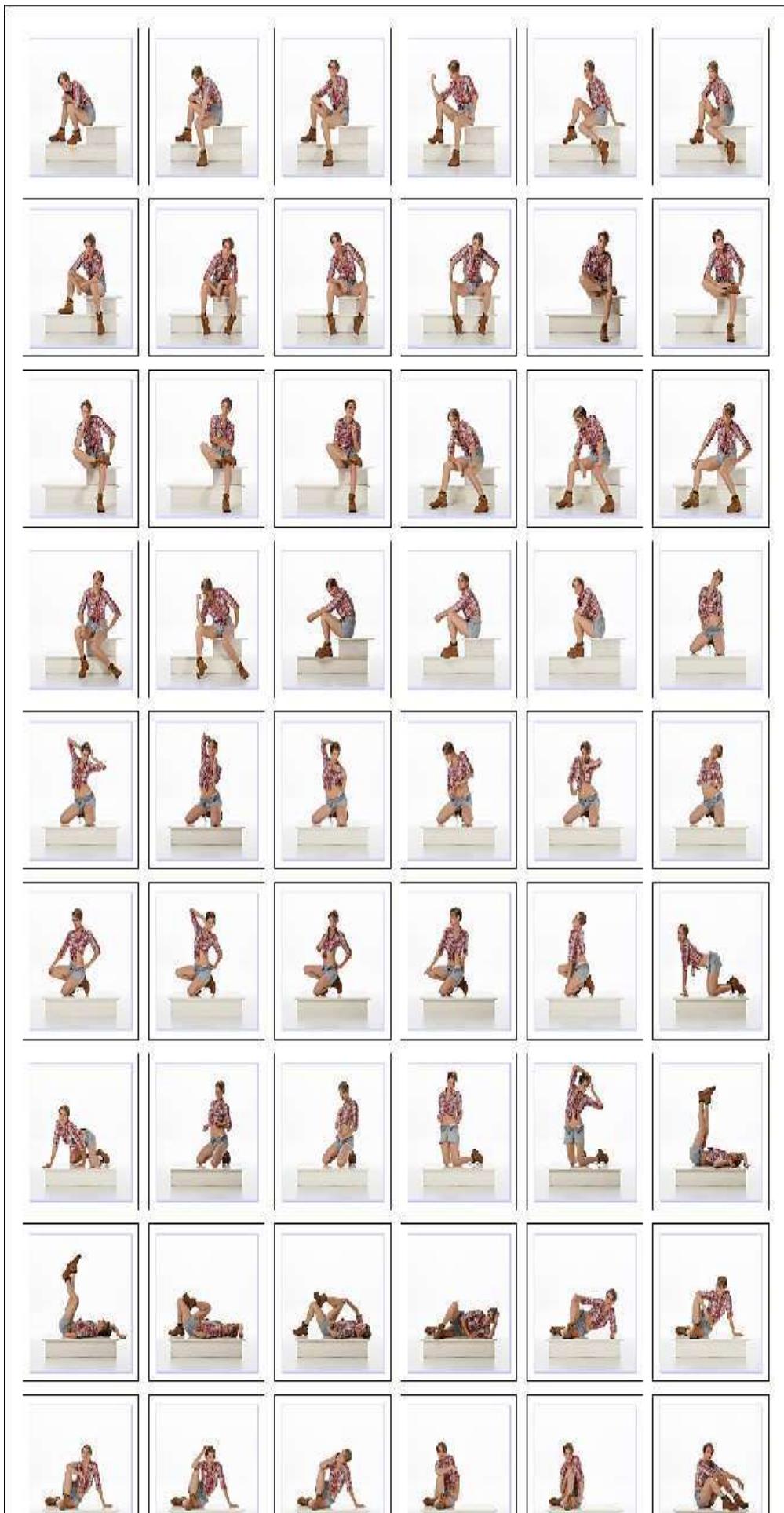




**Shorts and Shirt**

**Style: Casual**

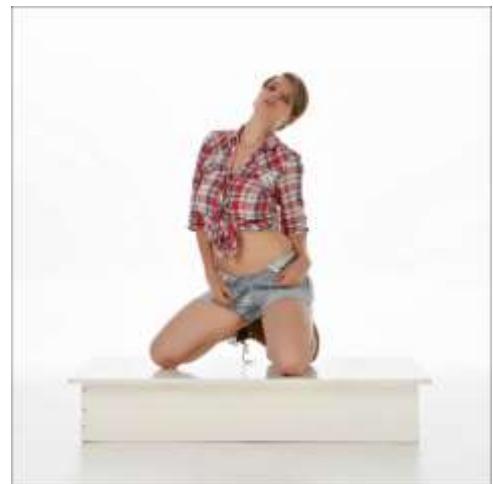
**Pose: Sitting**

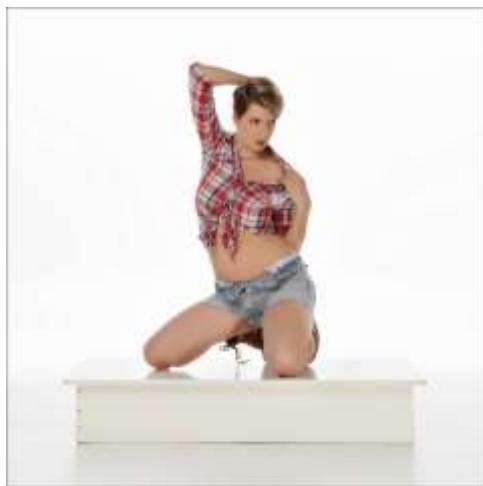








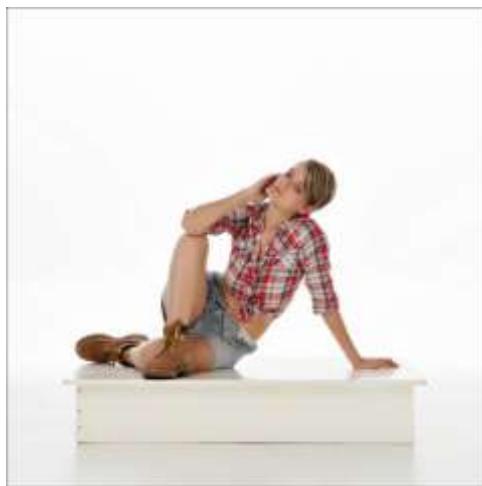










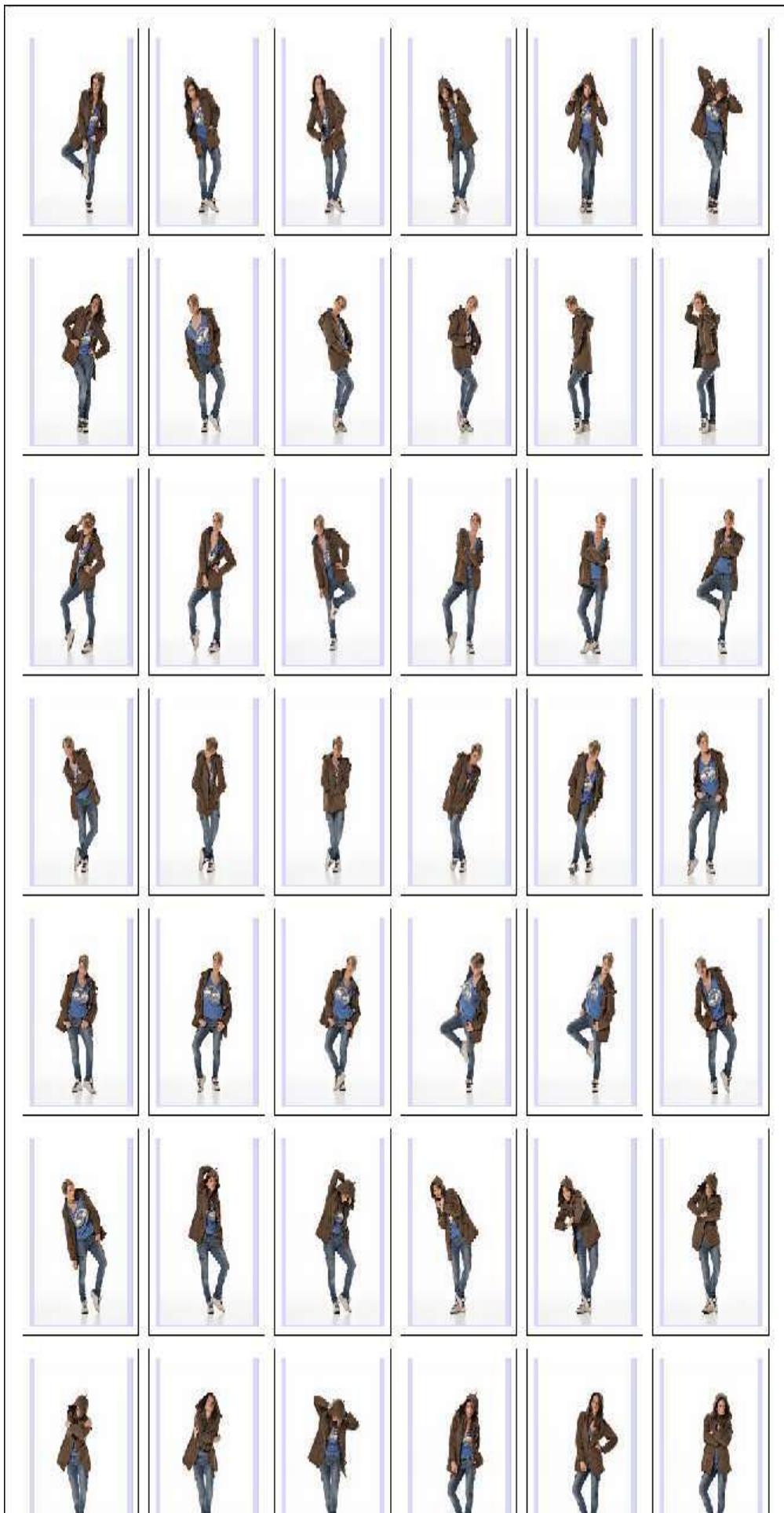




**Urban Coat**

**Style: Casual**

**Pose: Standing**





















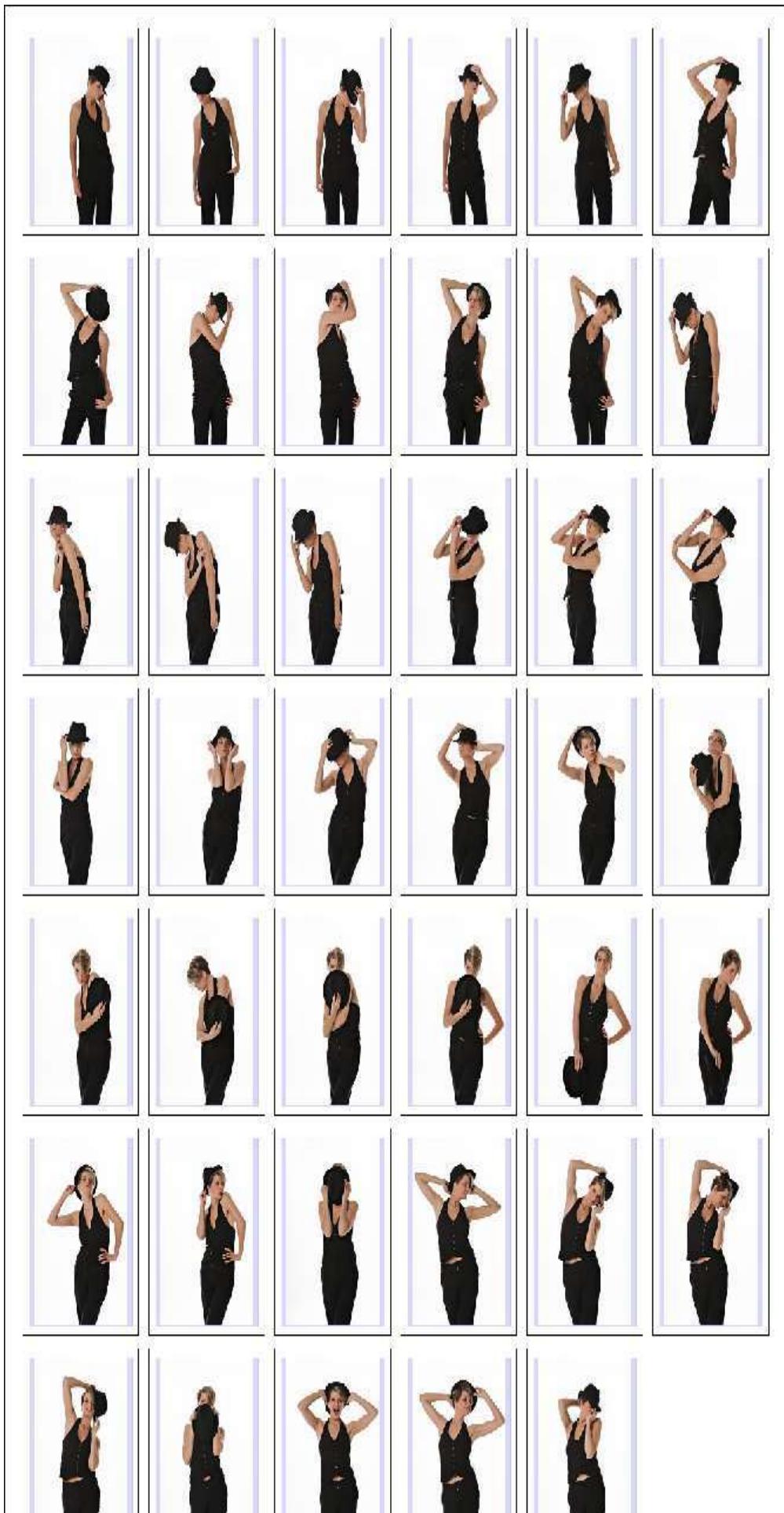


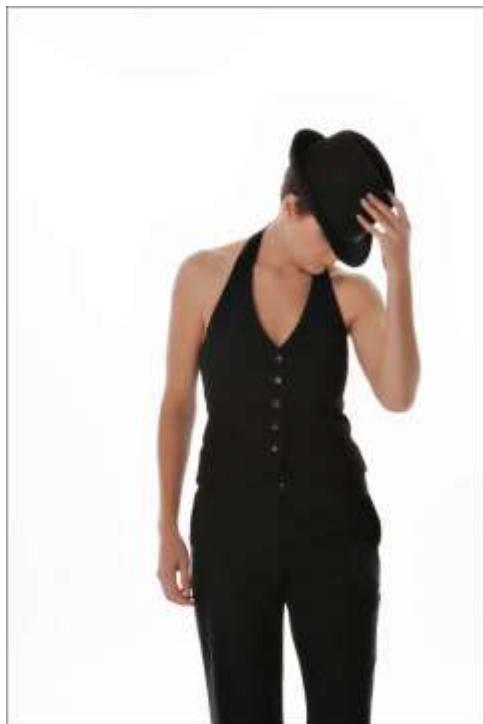
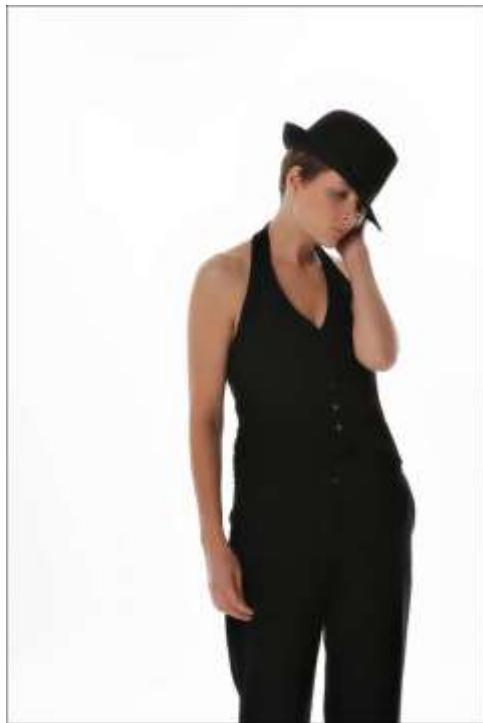


# **Hats**

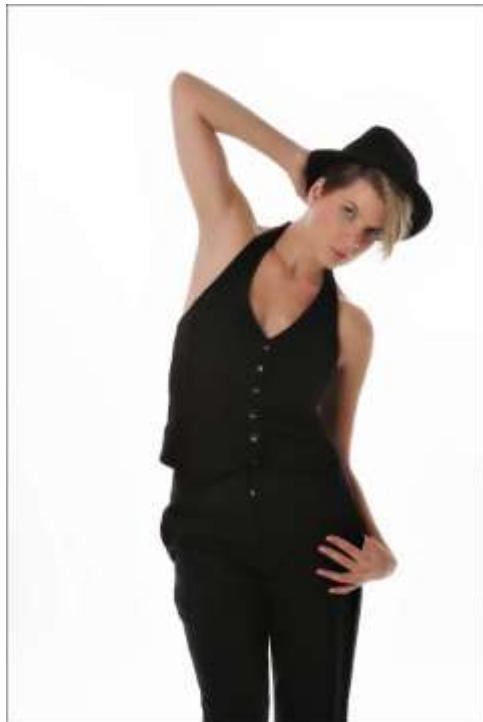
**Style: Casual**

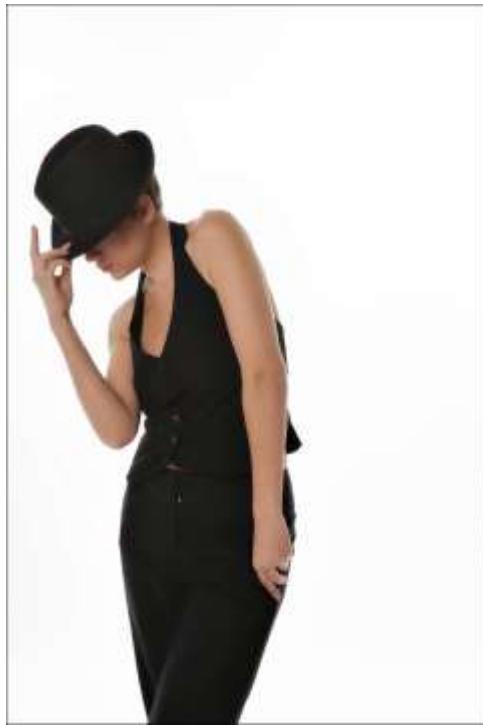
**Pose: Standing**



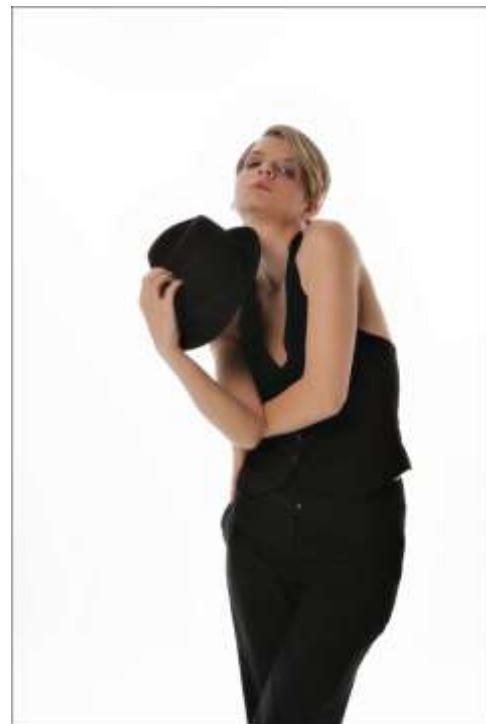
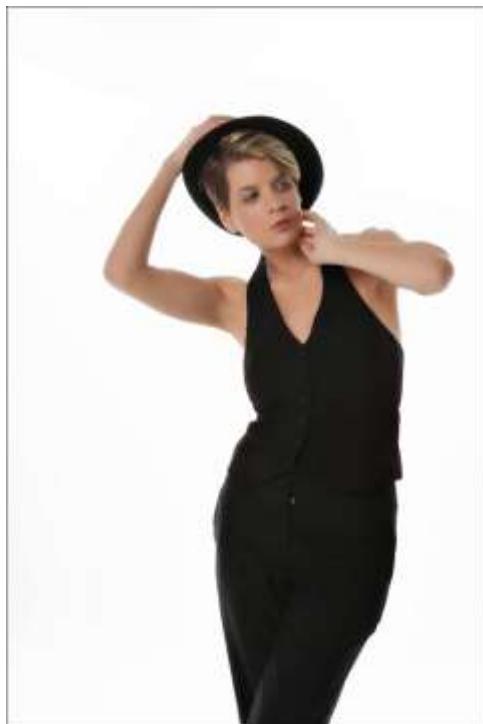


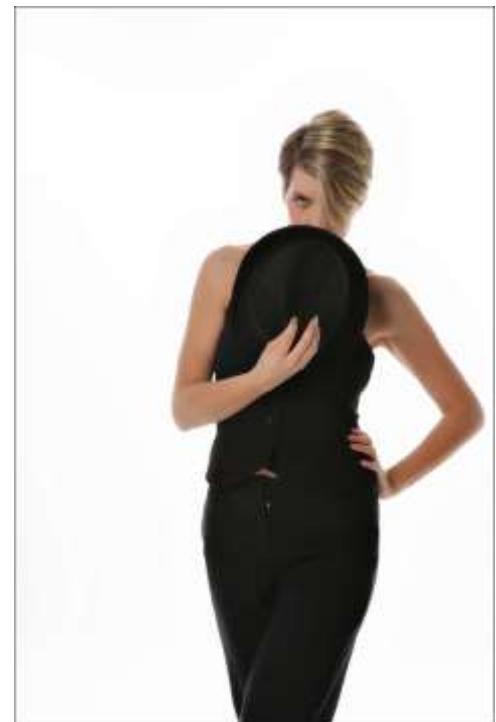
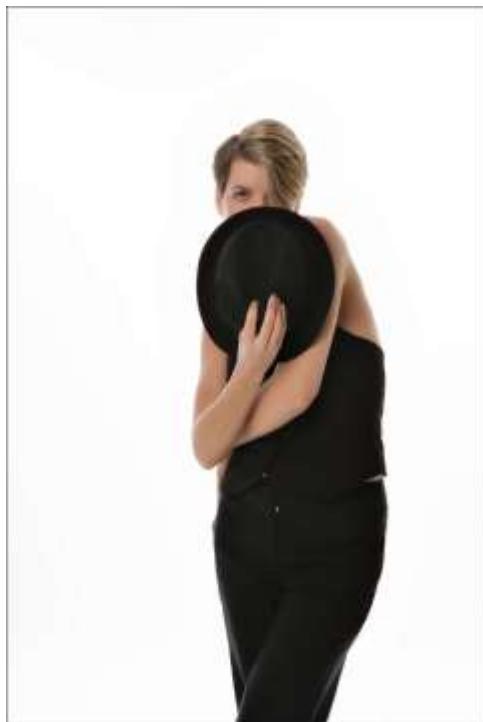
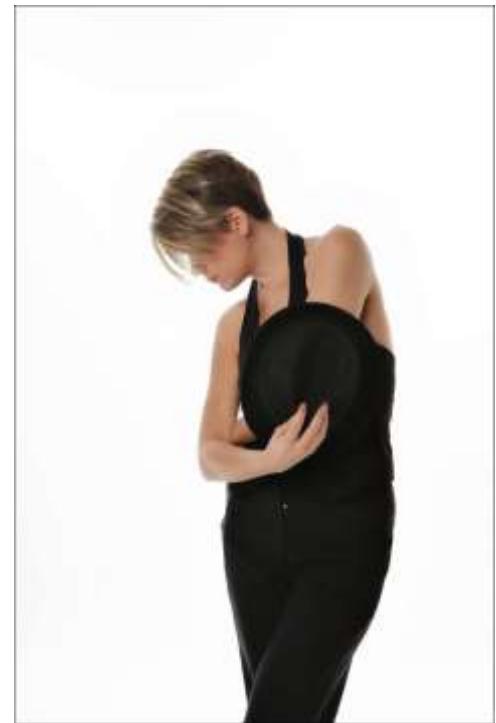
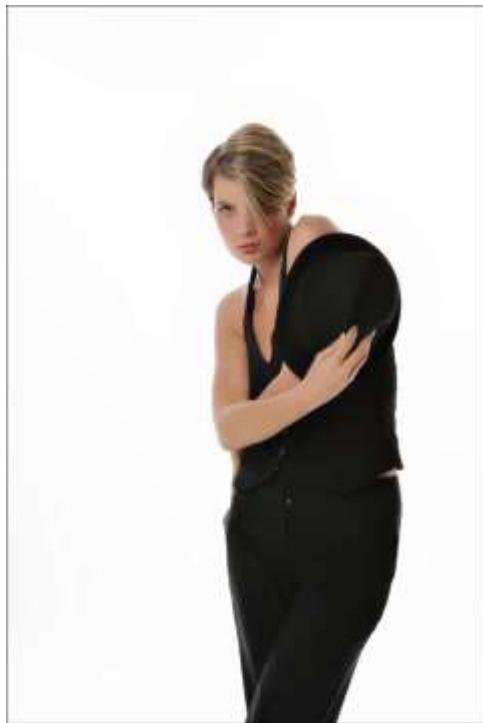


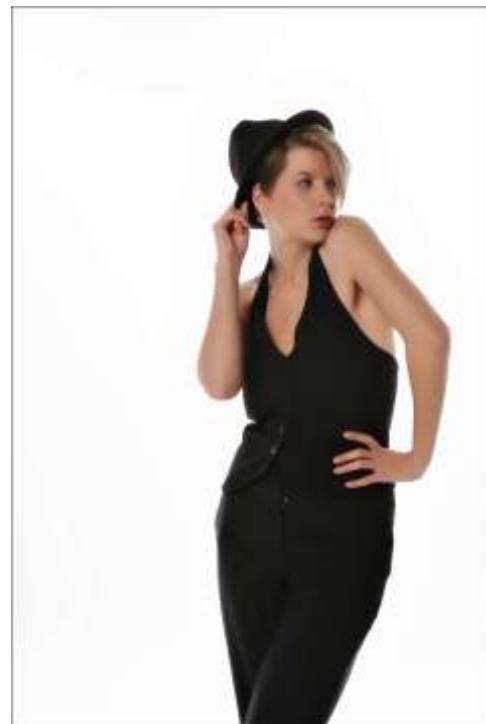
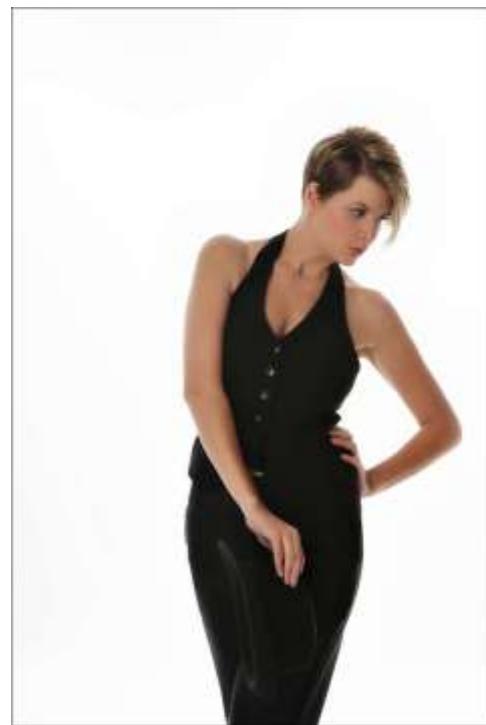


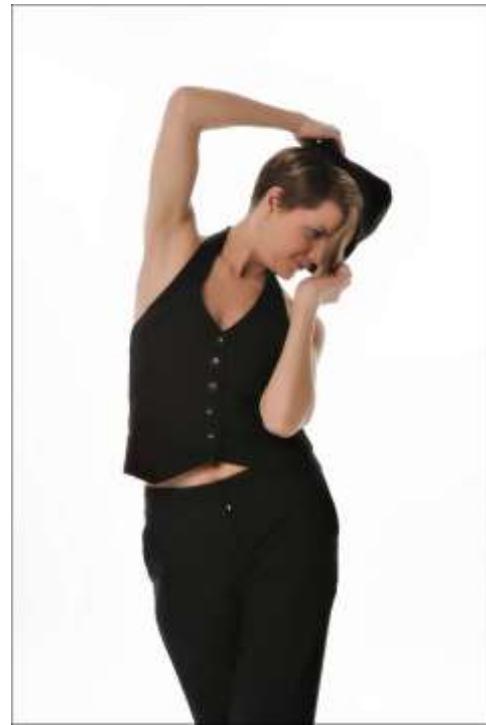
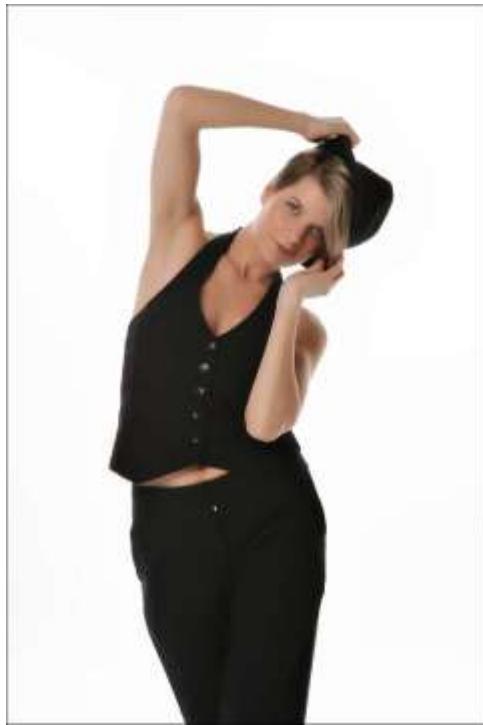
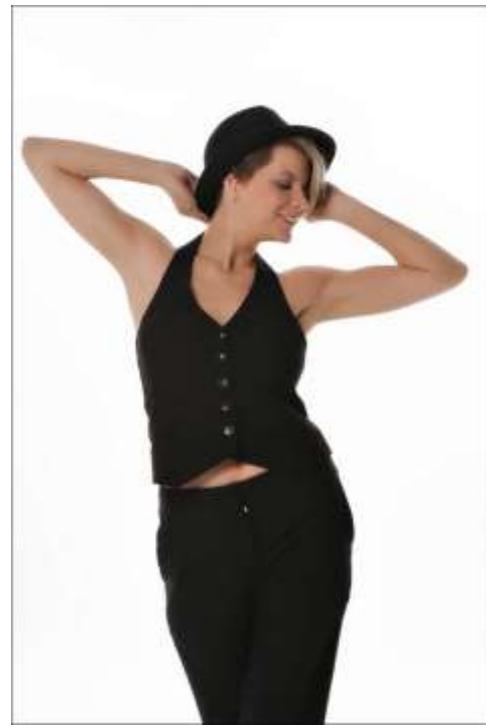
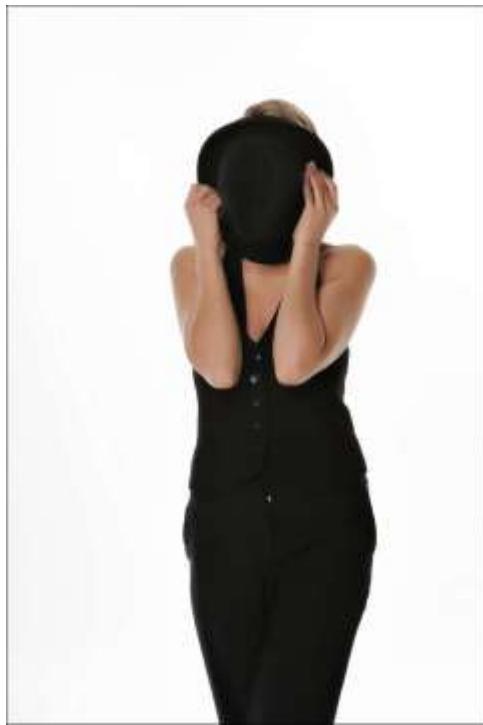


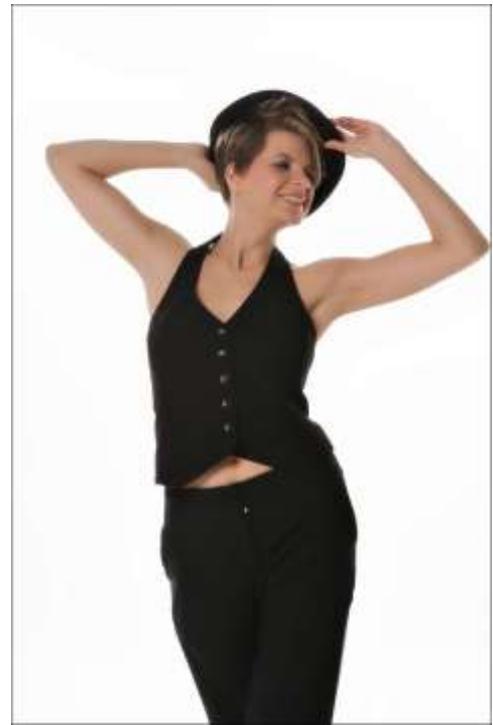
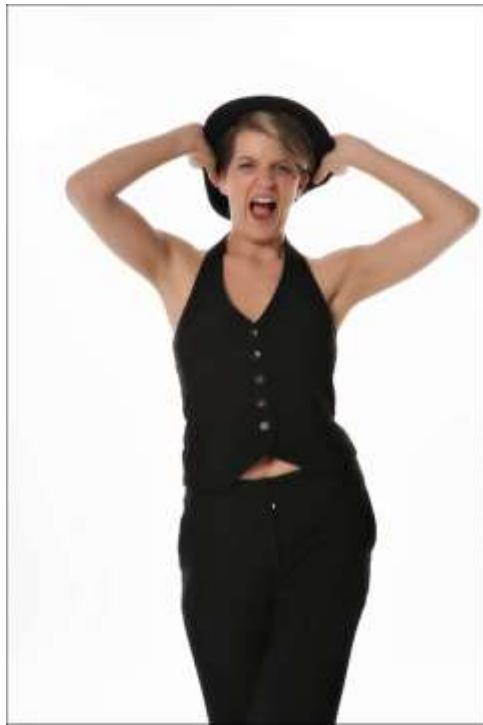
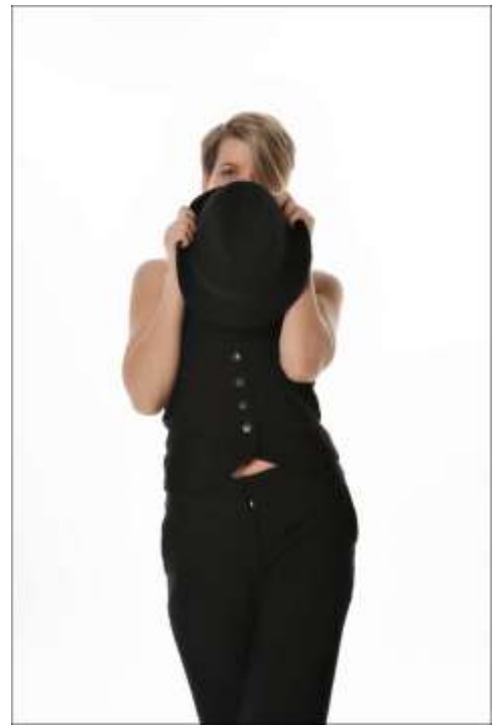
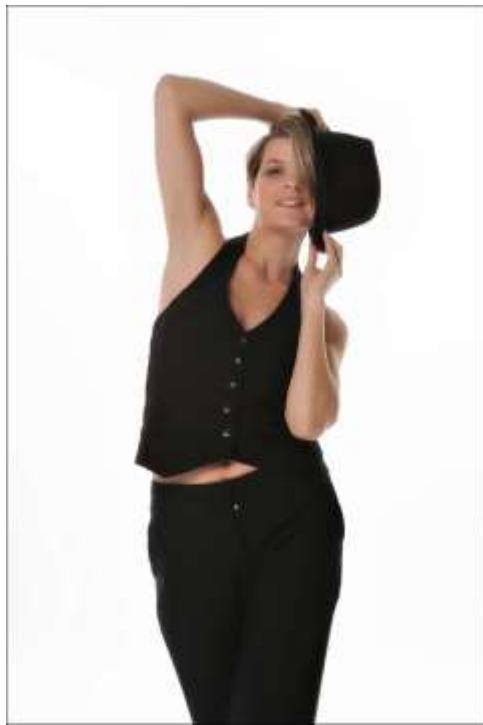


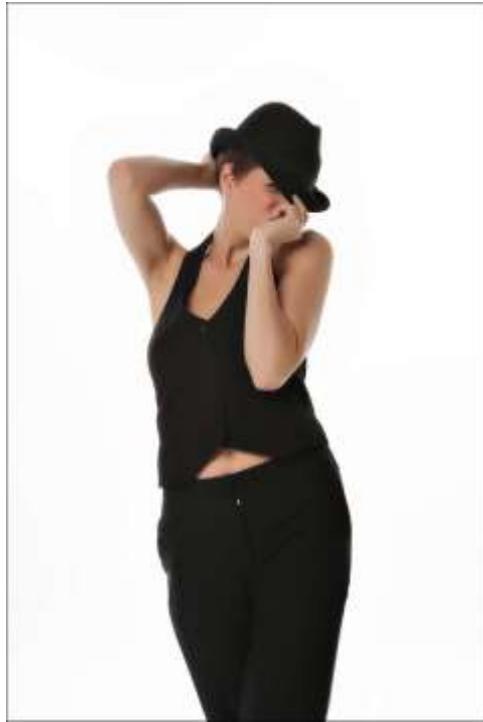










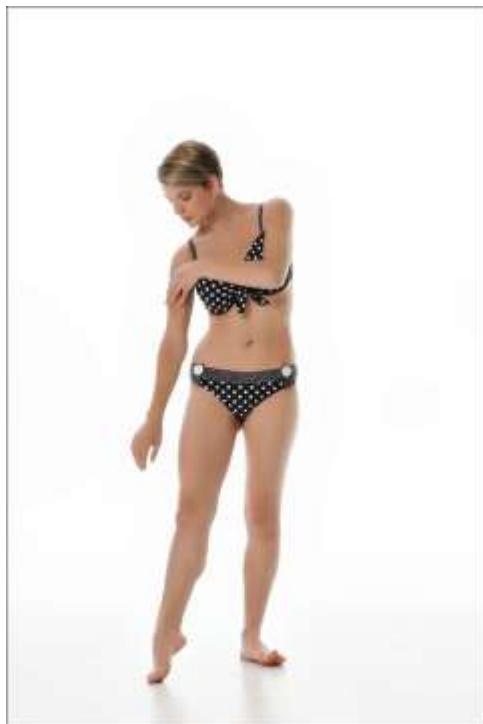


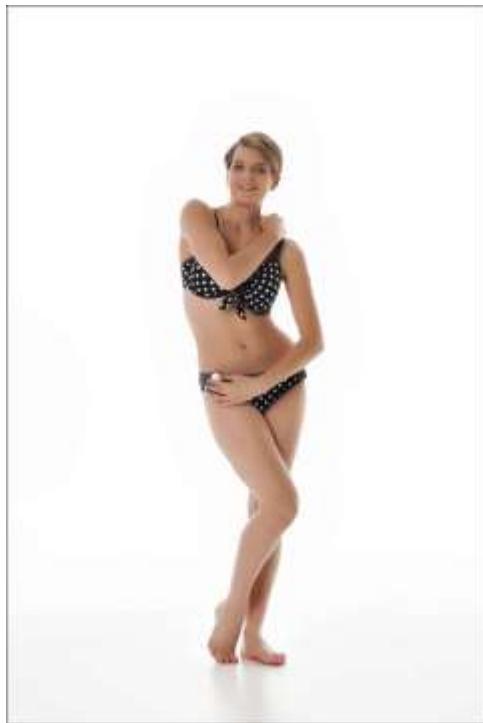
**Swimwear**

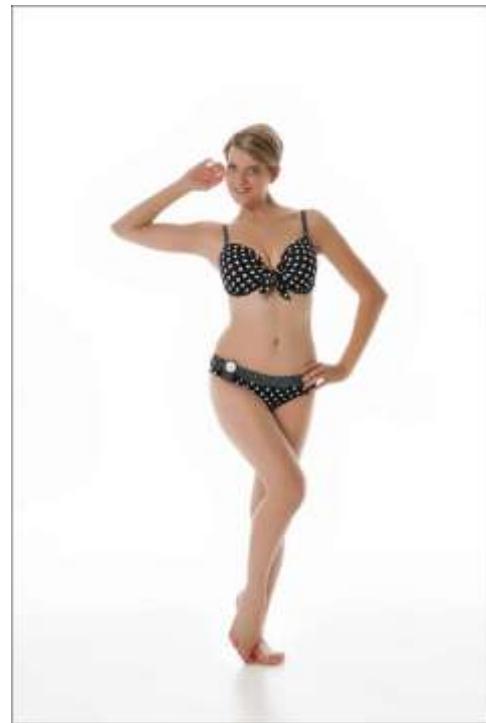
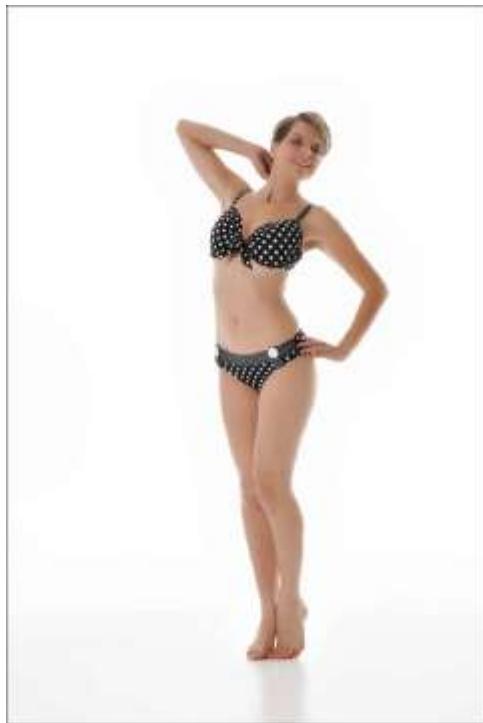
**Style: Swimwear**

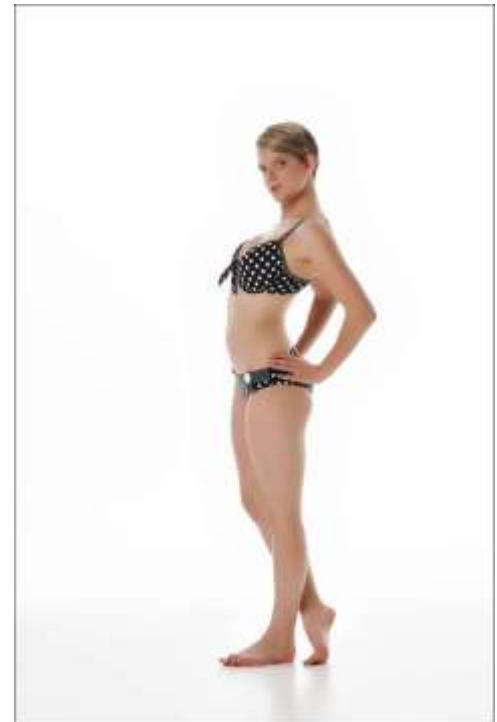
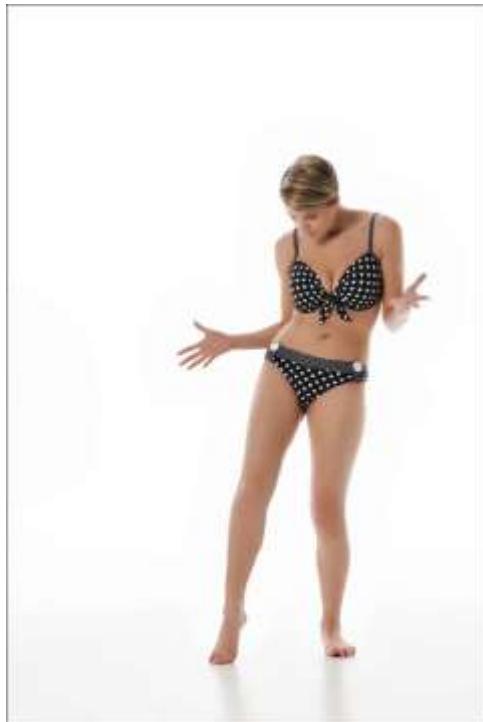
**Pose: Standing**

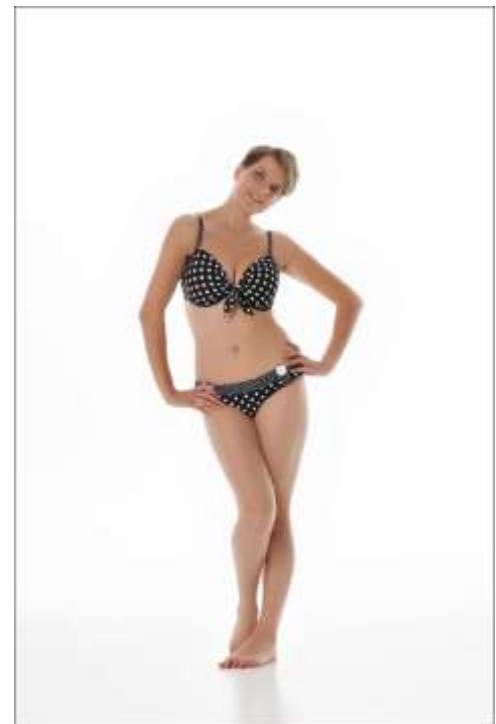


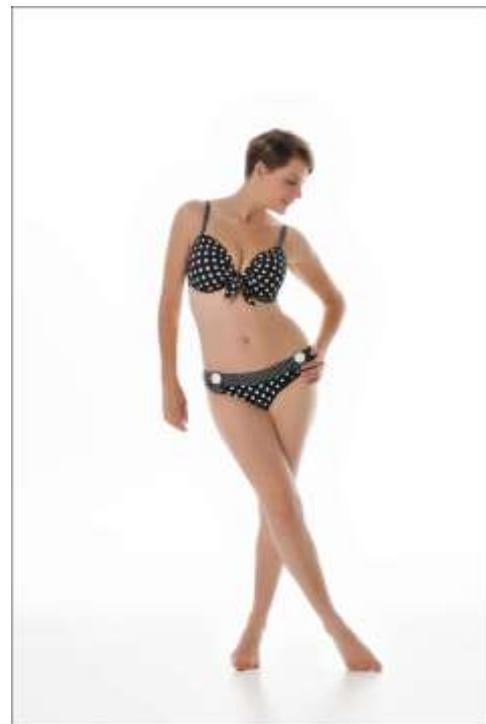


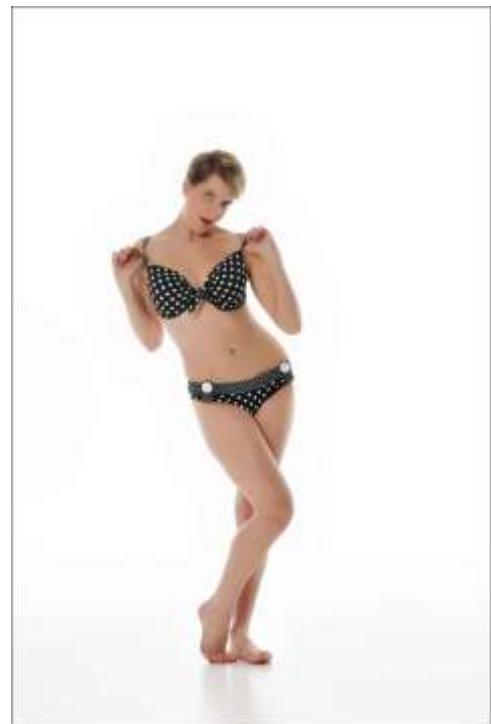


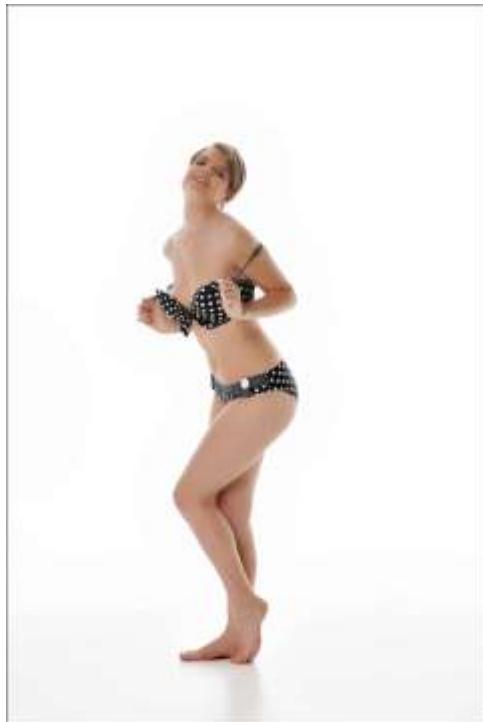
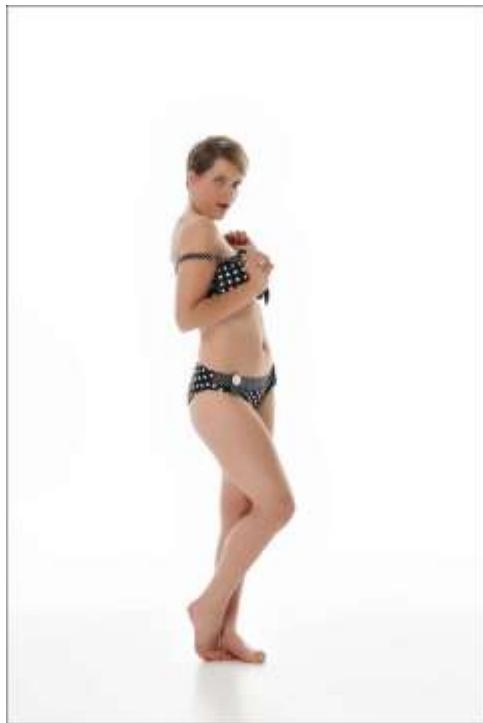


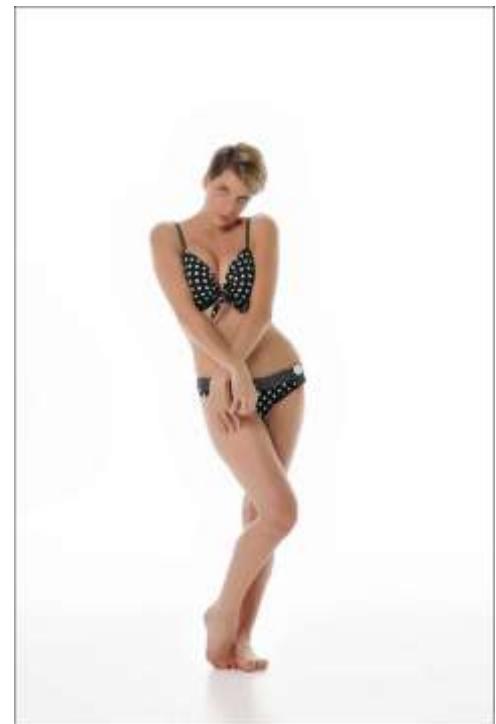
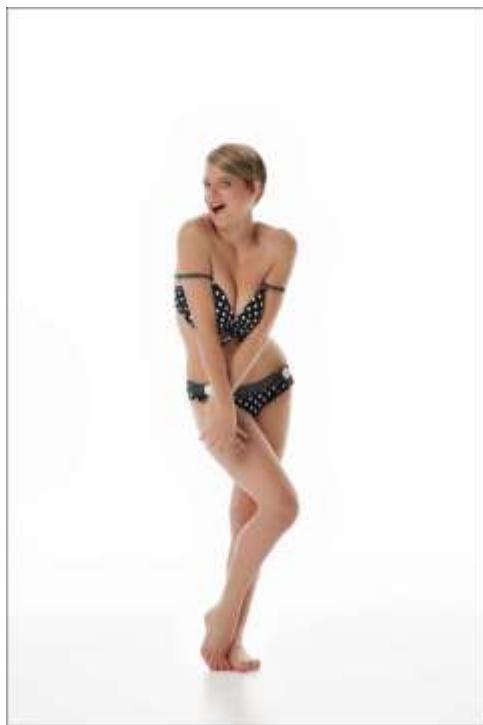


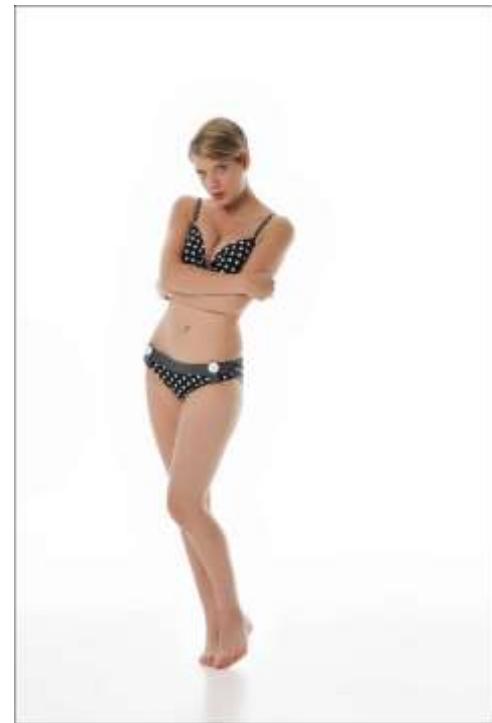


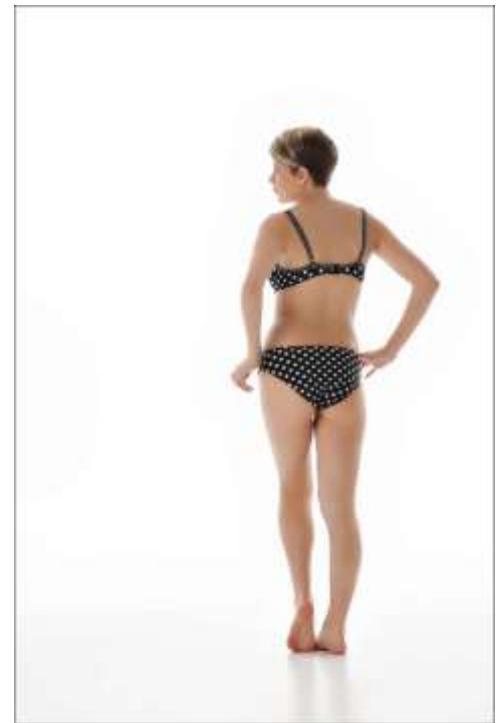
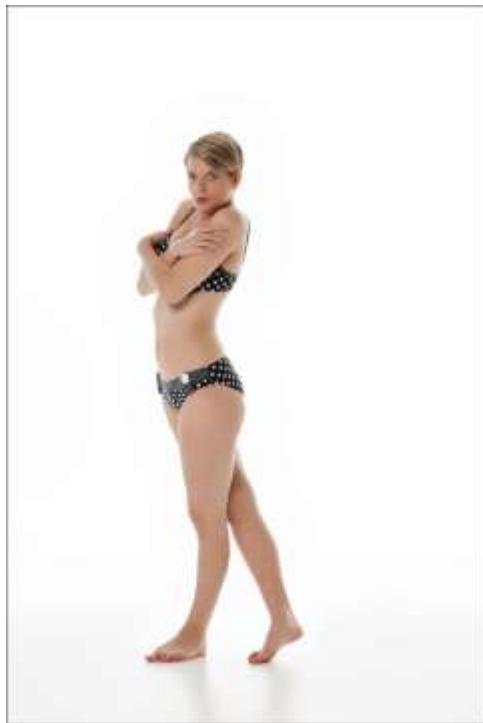


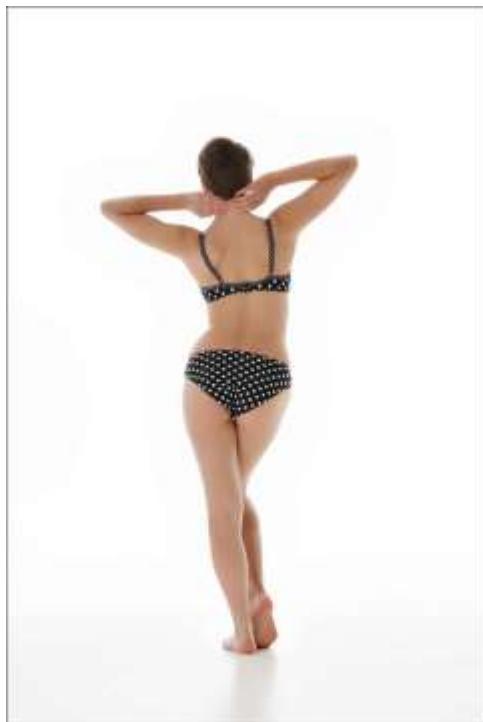
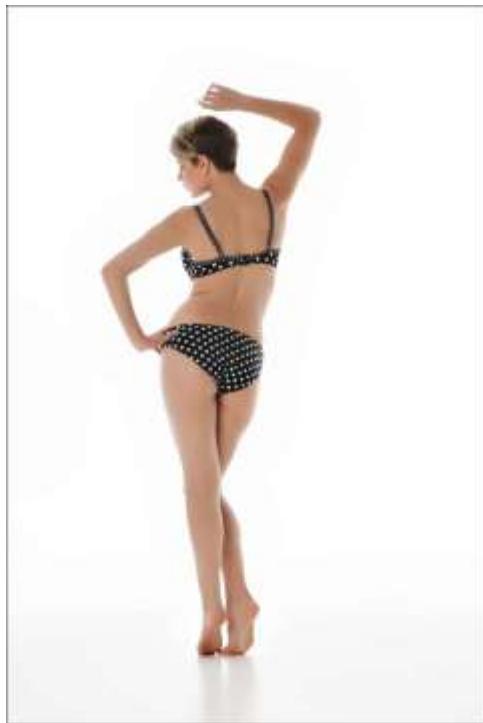








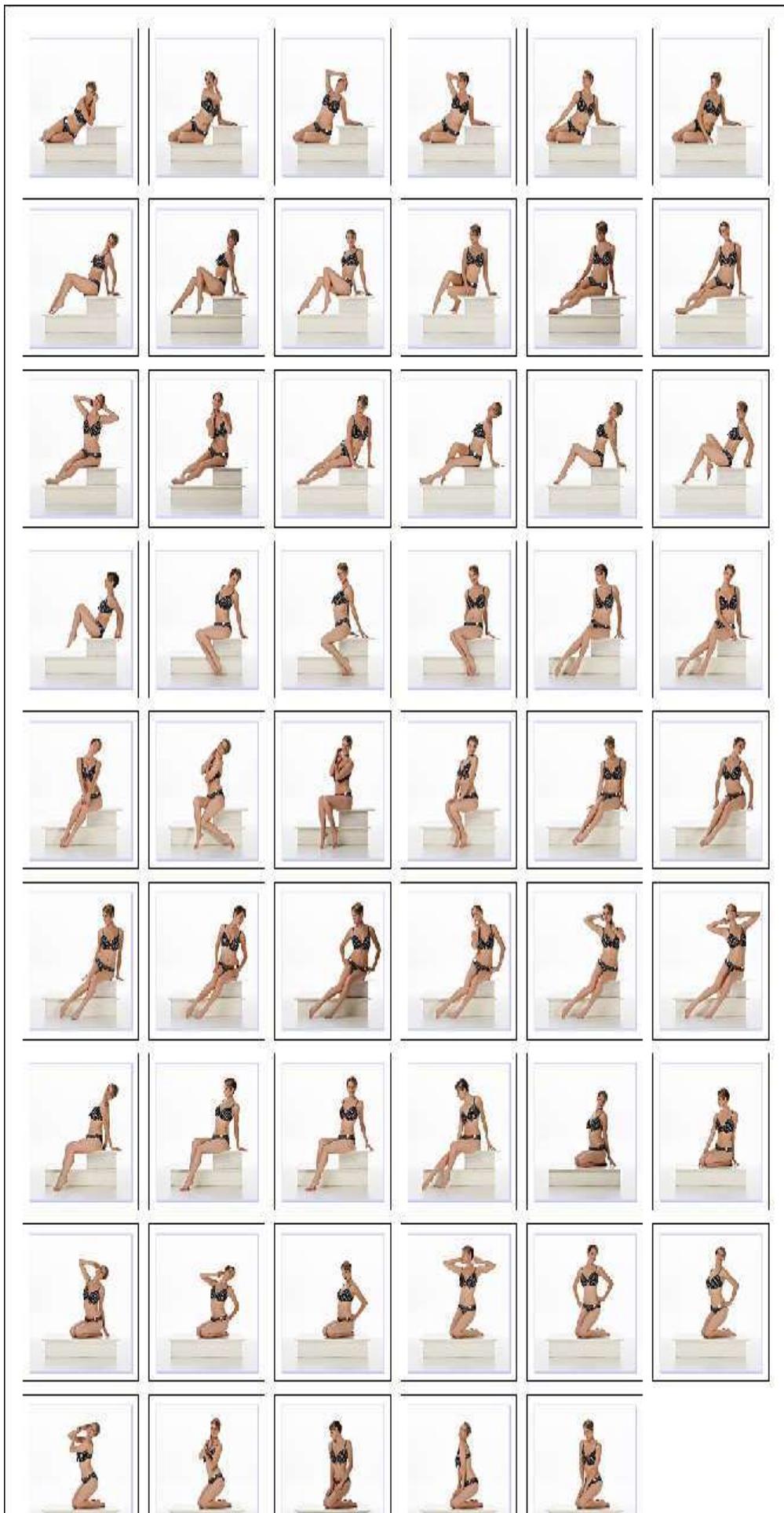


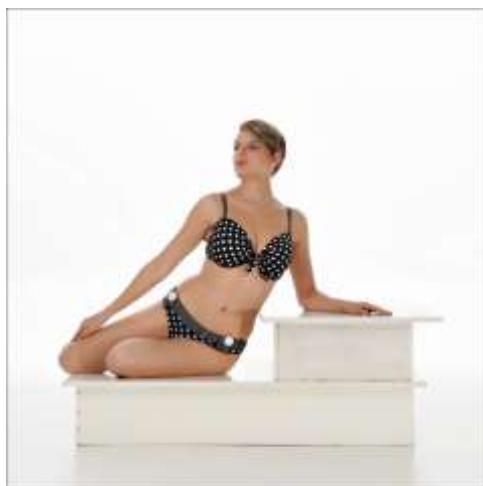


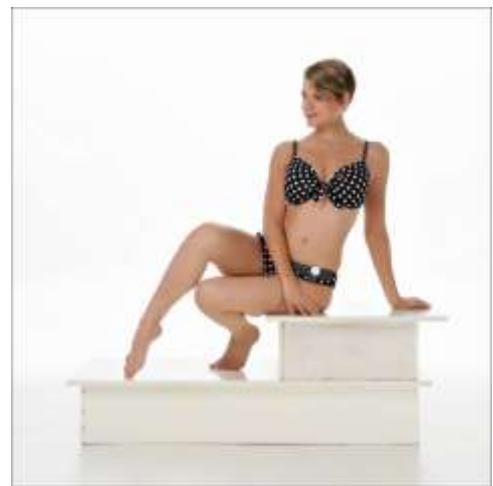
**Swimwear**

**Style: Swimwear**

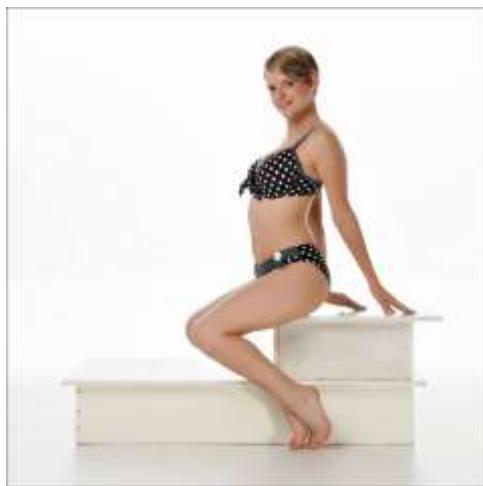
**Pose: Sitting**

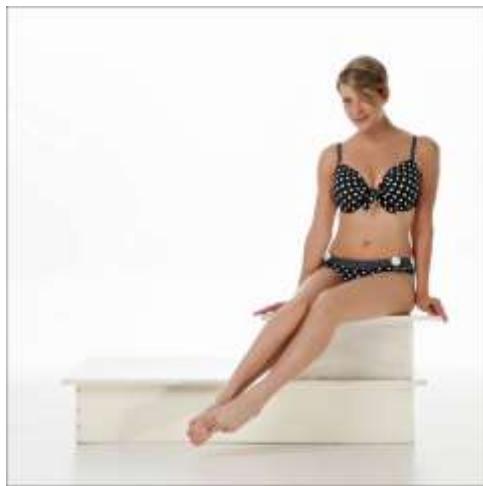


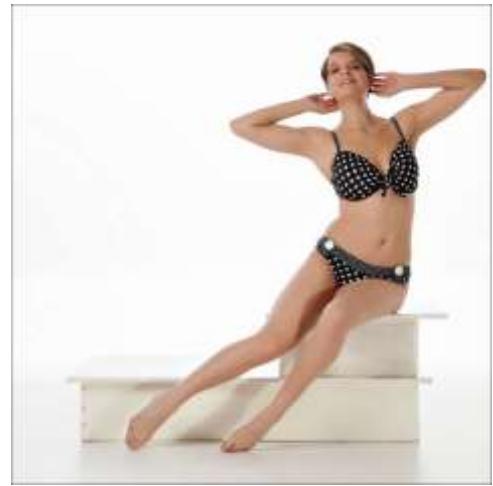
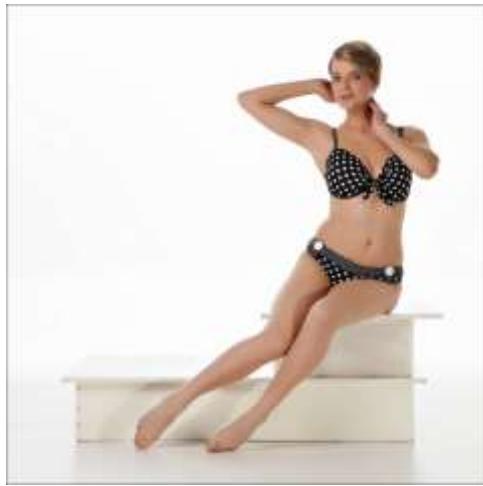
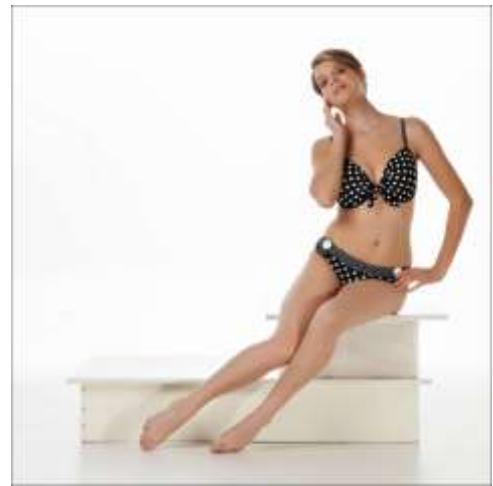
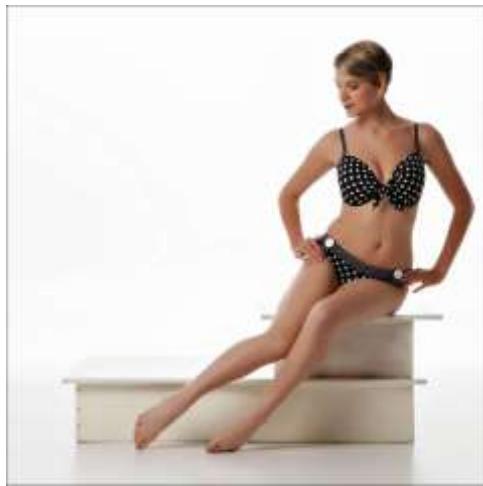


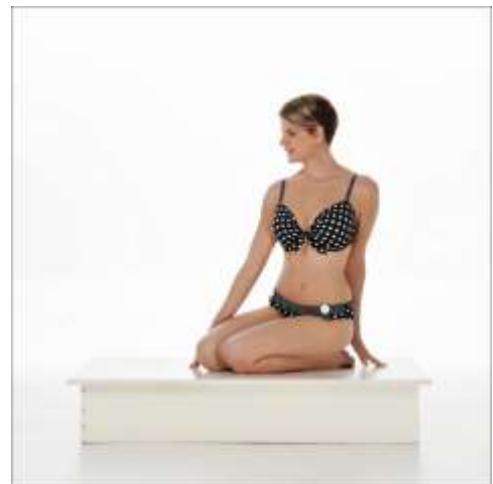
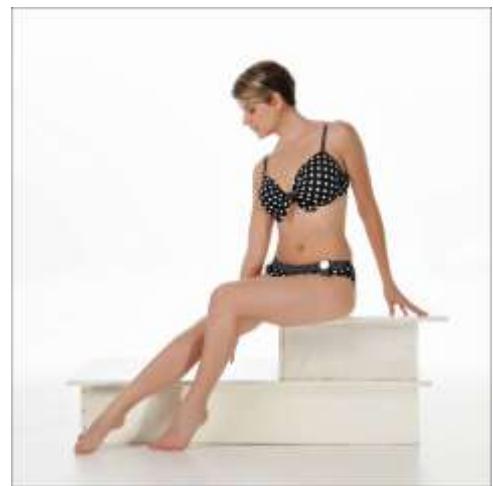


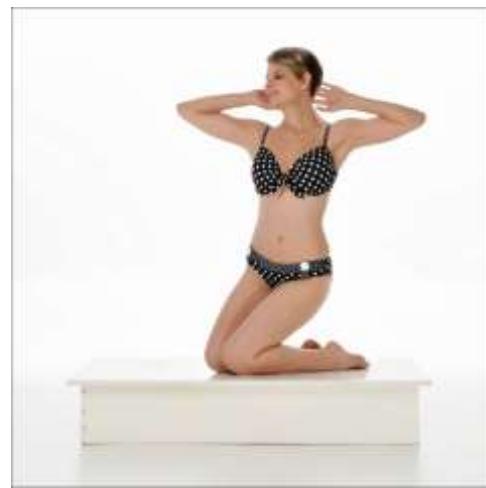
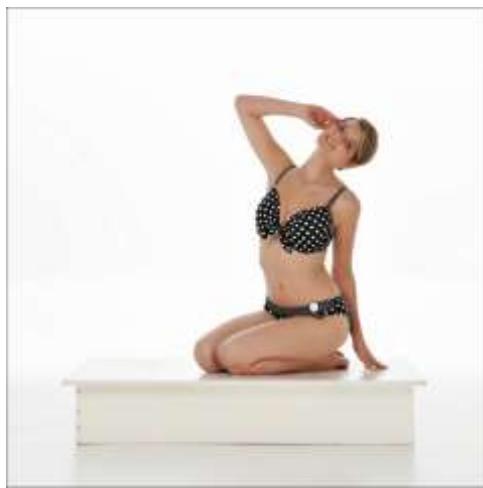


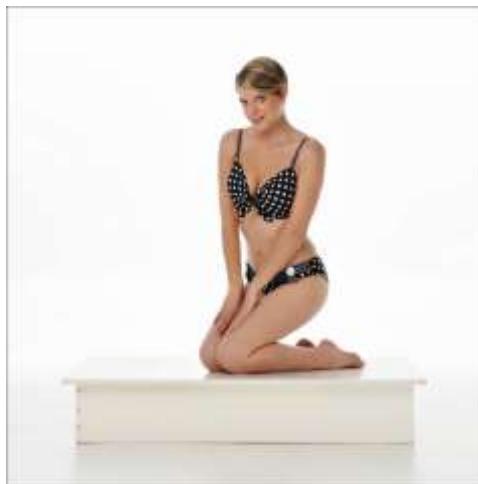
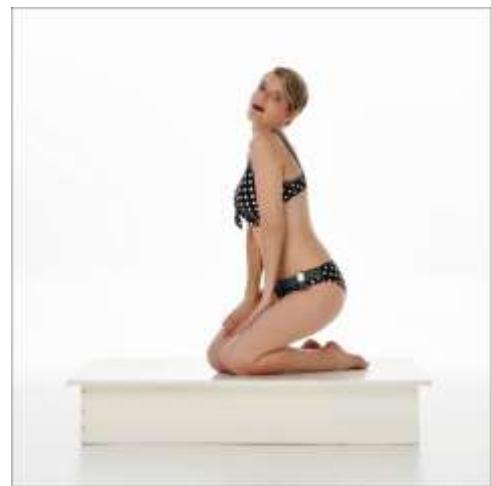
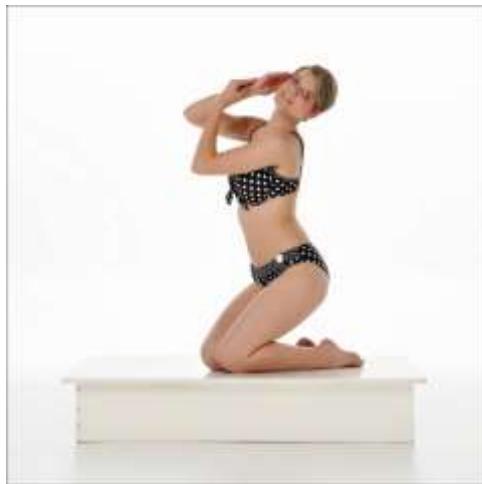








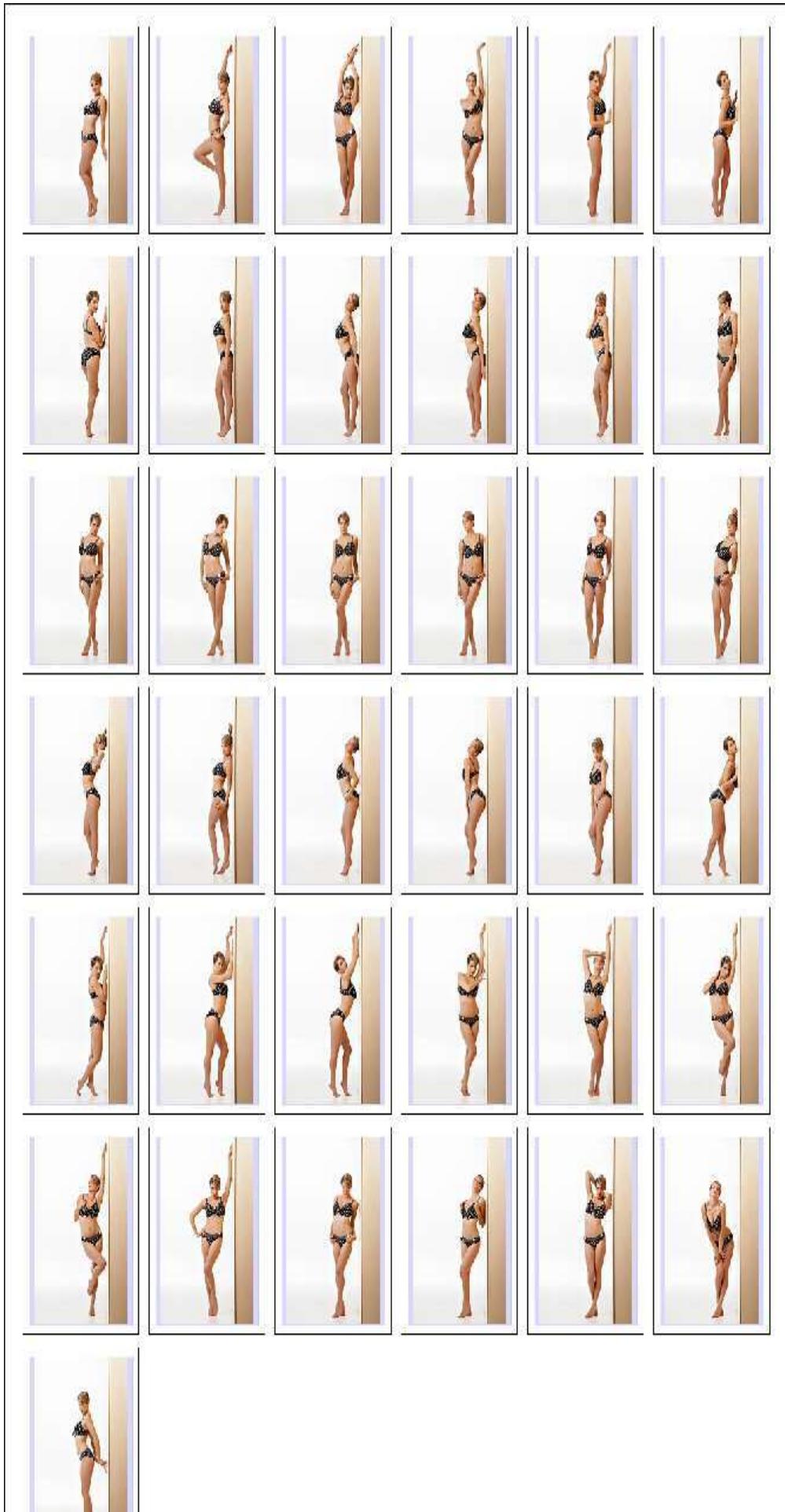


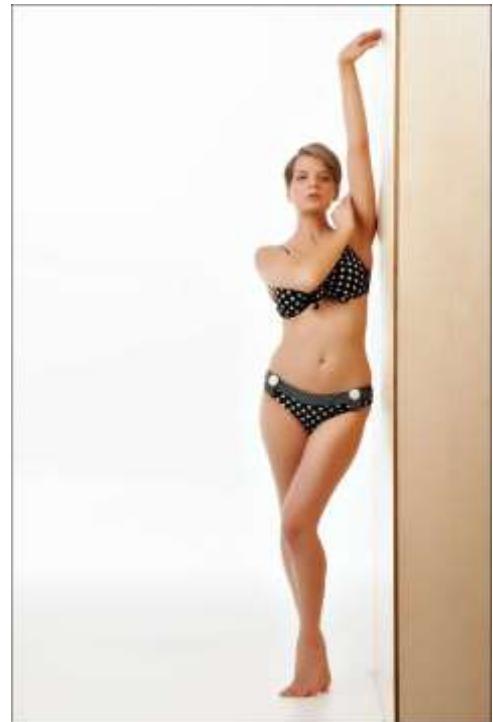
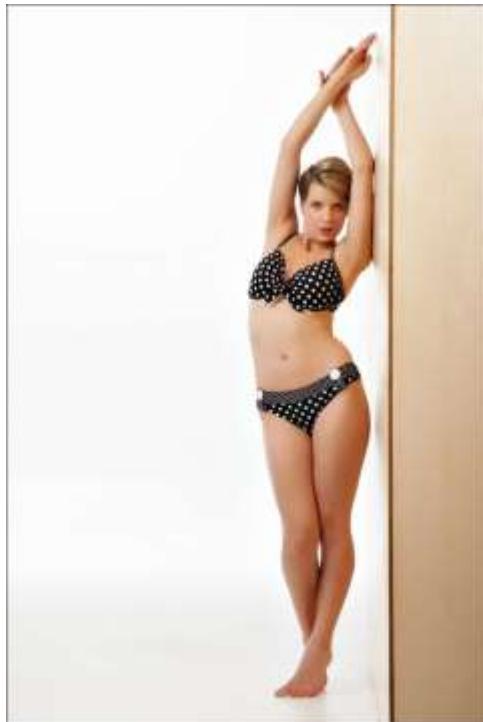
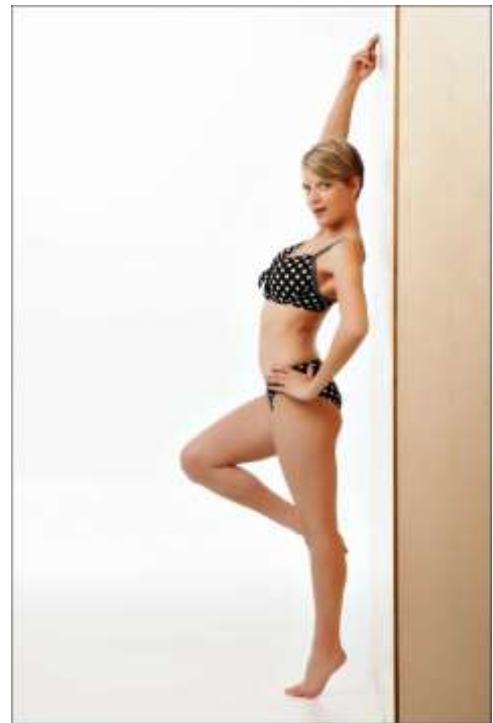
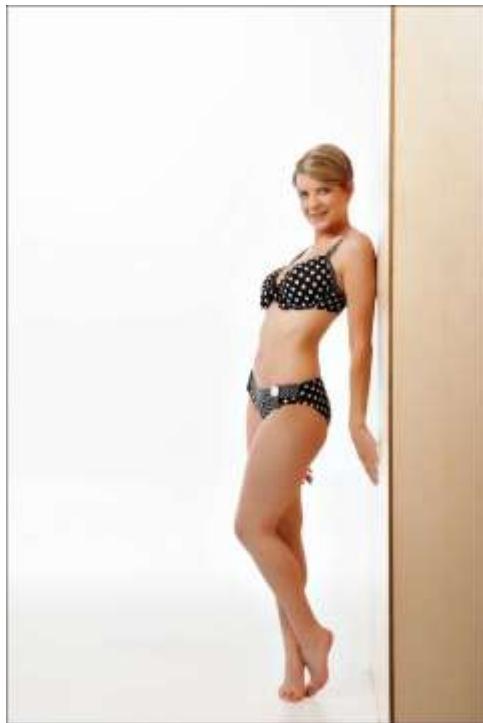


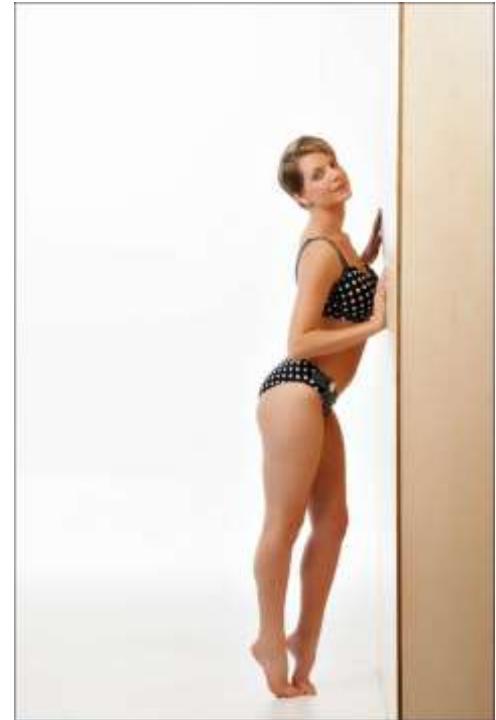
**Swimwear**

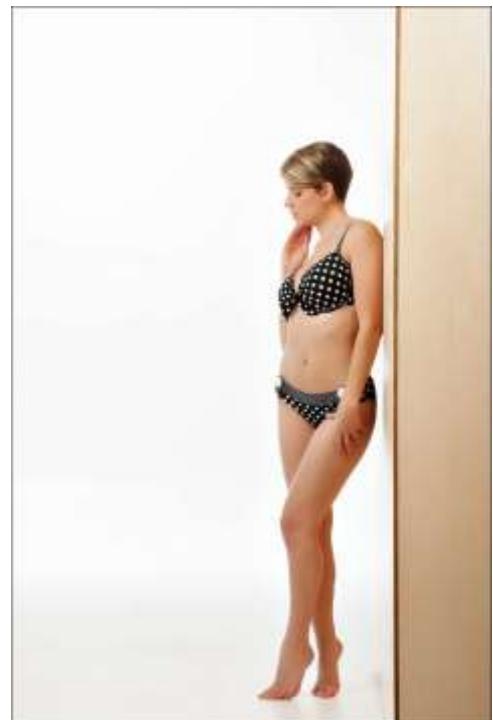
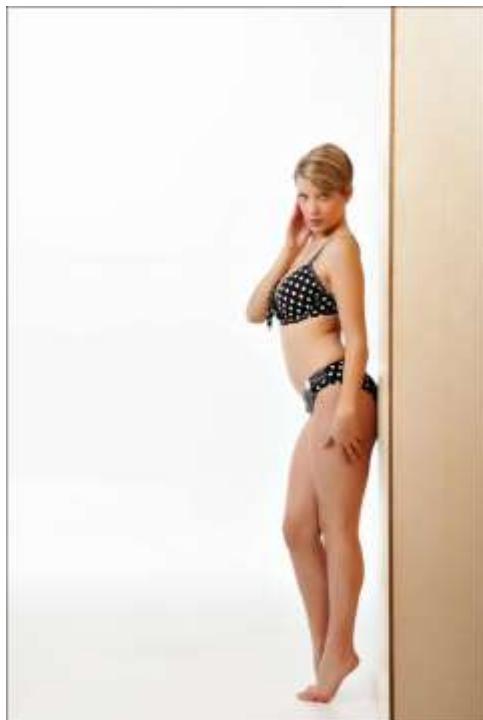
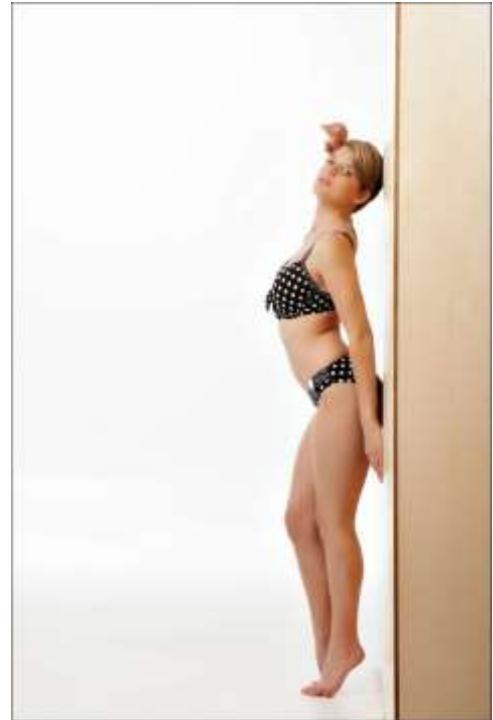
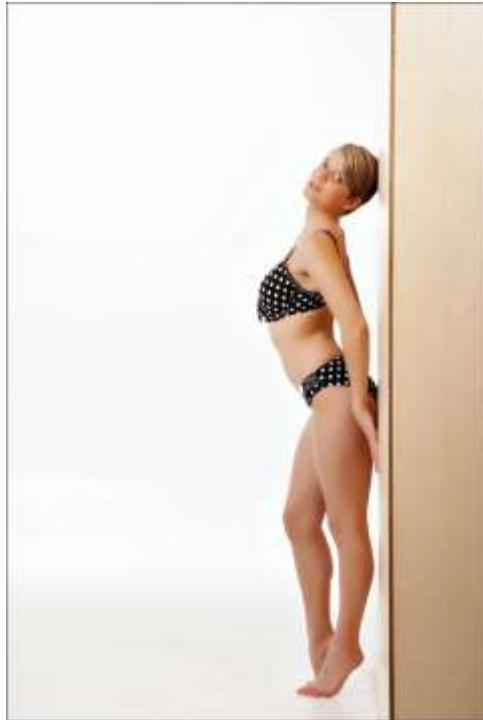
**Style: Swimwear**

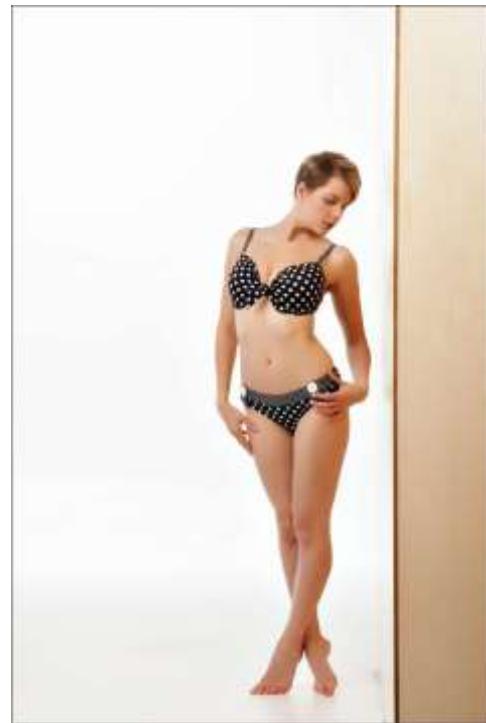
**Pose: Leaning**

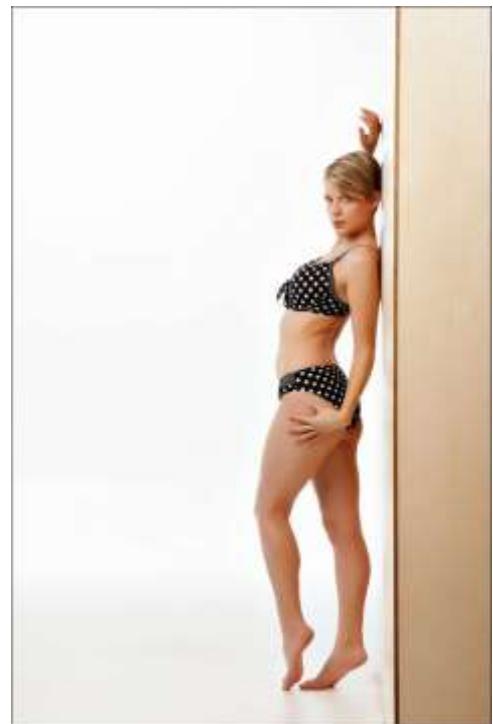
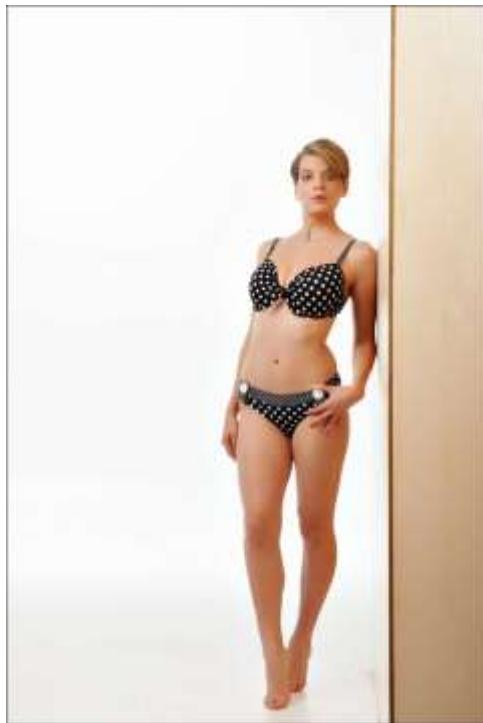


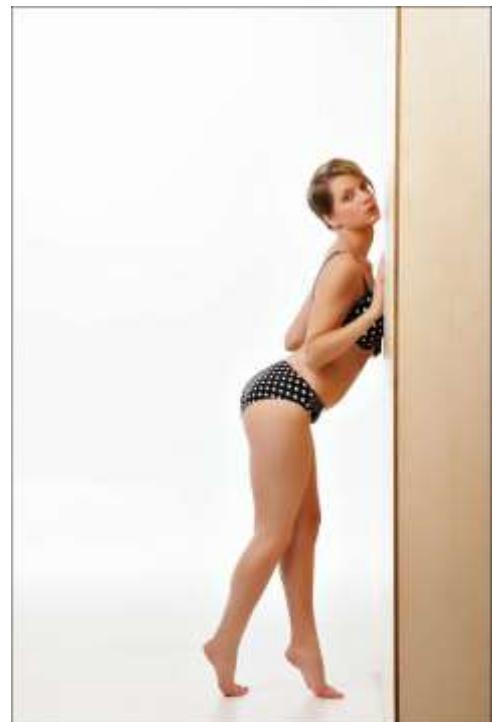
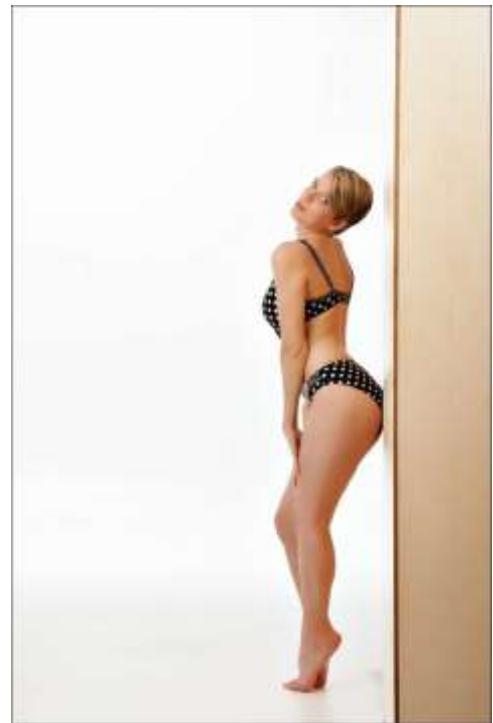
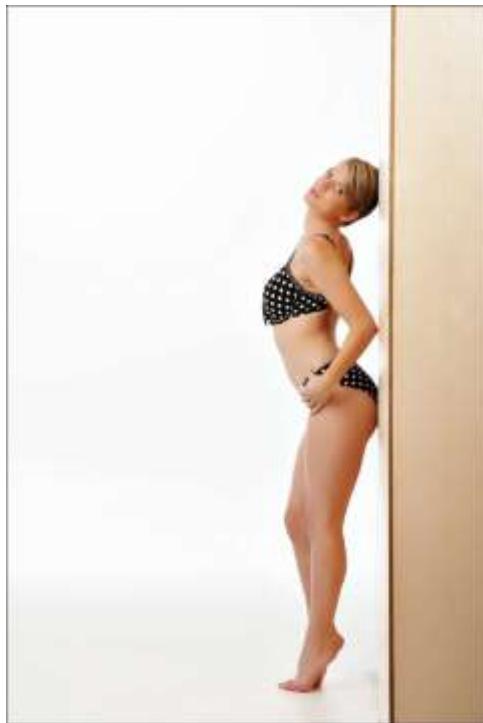


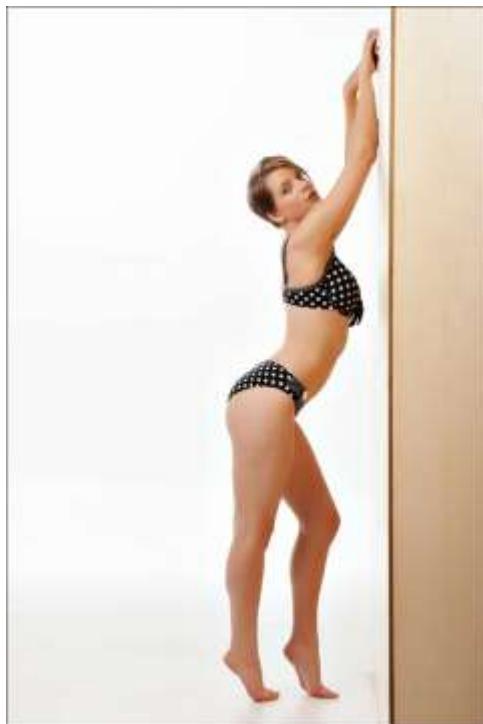
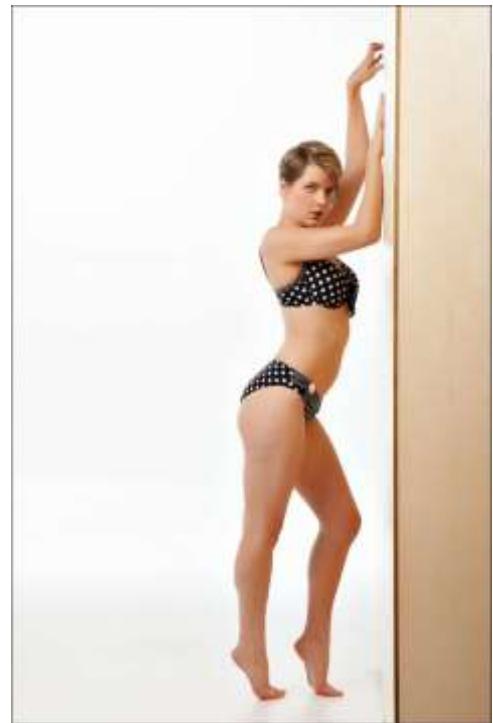


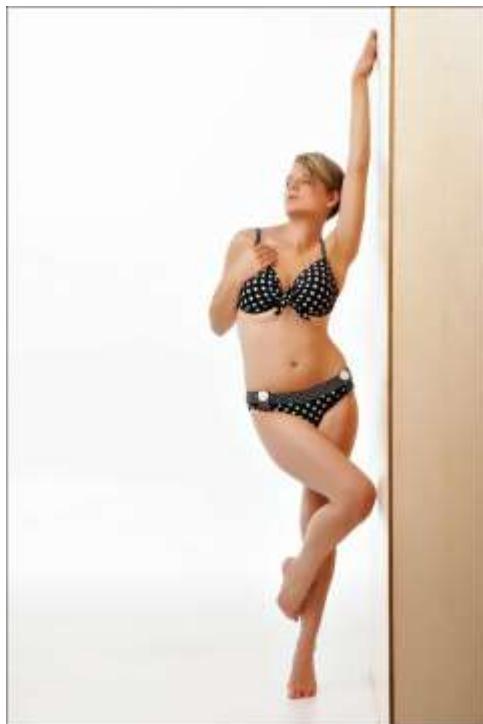


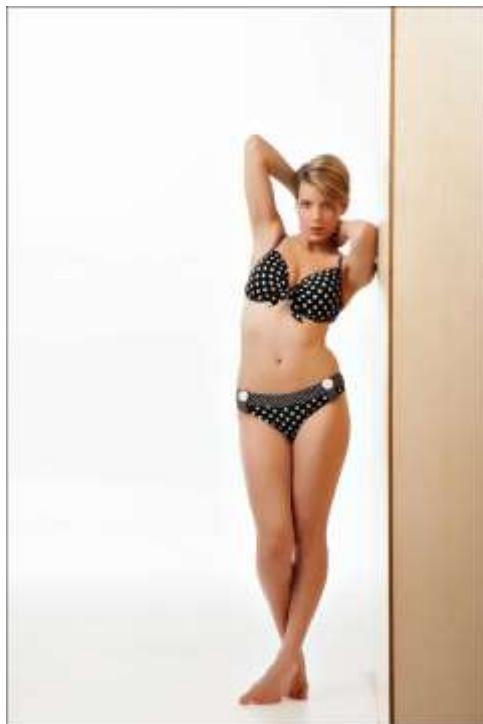
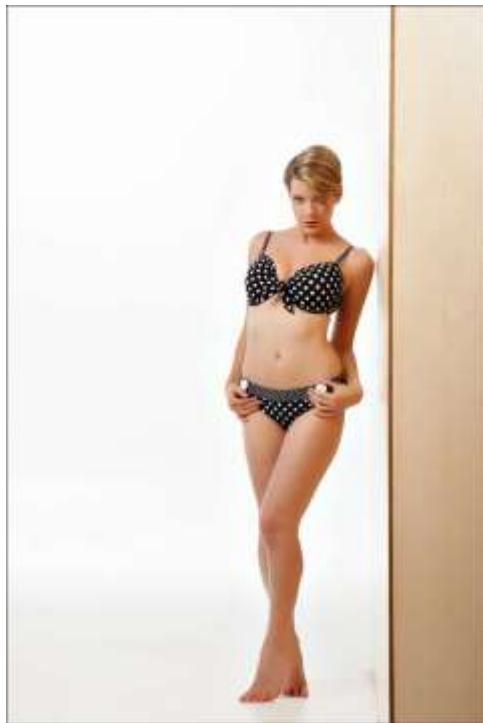


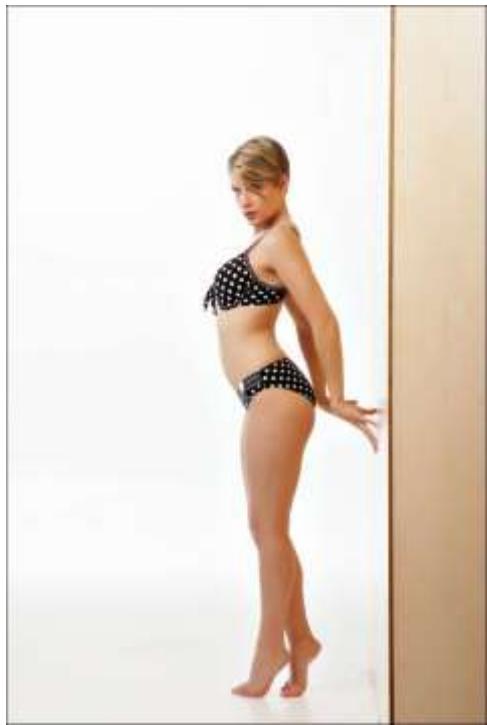












# Acknowledgements

Thanks to our very special model: NikiMarie

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## About

Simon Q. Walden is a freelance photographer and author. He runs a studio in Cheltenham, England.

His art works have been exhibited around the world. His work has appeared in print in both art and commercial magazines.

Walden has published many books and has been featured in international books on photography. His pose books have been in Amazon Top Ten ever since they were first launched.

Walden's expertise is photographing people. He is sought after to shoot portraits, portfolios and weddings.

Walden started FilmPhotoAcademy.com in 2007 to provide training, workshops, books and DVD's to photographers, models and visual creatives. He is a regular trainer for the Royal Photographic Society.

## **Other Resources You May Find Useful**

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DVD programs are available which cover a range of photographic techniques for shooting the female form.

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