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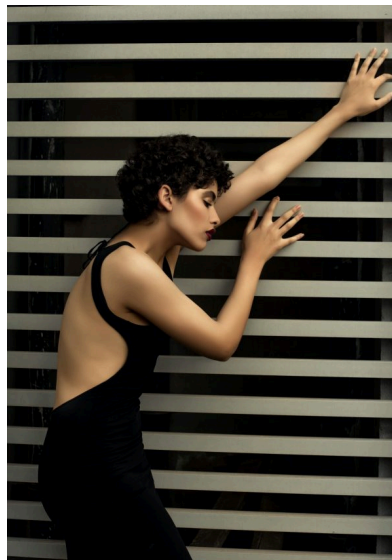
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How Does One Carry Out A Virtual Photoshoot?



BY LIBERTY IMHOFF · JUNE 16, 2020



Quarantines imposed around the world due to coronavirus are beginning to lift, but the move to get back to pre-COVID levels of work and communication is sure to be a measured process.

One thing that we've wondered during this quarantine is this: how is it that brands and photographers are carrying out these so-called "virtual photoshoots"? The entire idea seemed blasphemous to our ears, but one thing we found is that

technology always finds a way. So, too, does the fashion industry. Here's what we discovered about the process of carrying out these distanced photoshoots:

Models do their own hair and makeup, as there is no one else present to do it. Many of them are actually very good at this because they've picked up skills from being on set doing shoots. In terms of styling, models do a fair amount of that as well, although they will likely consult with a creative team over video about which outfits to use. This consulting can be done by having the model show their wardrobe to the team on the other end of the phone using their phone camera.



When choosing locations throughout the place from which the model will be doing the virtual photoshoot, a couple of things can happen. Either they'll take photos of locations throughout the house that could be interesting and send those photos to the photographer – who then chooses the locations from which the model will pose – or they'll use their video camera to guide the photographer around the house and let locations be chosen that way. A huge factor that determines what time of day and where photos will be taken is the amount of natural lighting that a location has to work with.

Once the locations are chosen and the hair, makeup, & wardrobe have been taken care of, the photoshoot can begin to take place. The model will also supply props for the shoot in addition to everything else that they've had to do to put the shoot together. The photographer will direct the model in terms of where to place their computer (or tripod, if a phone is being used as the photographic device). If the model has a ring light, that's even better for lighting purposes. Once the screens of all parties are wiped clean, actual photos can be taken.



Photographers have a few options. All photos can be taken using a video chat system like FaceTime, Google Hangouts, or Zoom. FaceTime is often the chosen medium of photography if both parties have an iPhone. The reason is that FaceTime has a Live Photo feature – the shutter button – that'll take a photo of the model's camera without having the photographer's camera present in the shot. Since the shutter button shows up on each subject's screen during calls, it's a perfect feature for virtual photoshoots.

Another method that photographers can employ is to take raw photos of their computer screen with their own camera; this allows for a lot more editing freedom. While the model is posing, the photographer takes shots of the screen. Each party has to be prepared for there to be short lags with photo processing time, so models will hold their poses for a slightly longer period of time to make sure that the photo was captured. In terms of taking direction from the photographer, not too much is different for the model during a virtual photoshoot.

And that...is the process in a nutshell. We thought that the process would be a lot more difficult than it actually is, but it seems fairly streamlined – at least from a glance. What is notable is the workload that models end up bearing because of isolation; they have to do their own hair, makeup, wardrobe styling, and location/lighting scouting – things that they'd normally have an entire team do for them. Take [this model's](#) view of the situation; she explains what virtual photoshoots are like from a model's perspective.

We were surprised at the widespread prevalence of these shoots: top talent – both past and present – have participated in these photoshoots. Our assessment on the future of these shoots post-coronavirus is this: virtual photoshoots will become a very important tool in the pockets of the fashion industry to use when travel is not possible. Whether that reason is due to a public health crisis or geographic distance between the model and photographer, these types of shoots will be useful for the foreseeable future.




However, we believe that fashion is a business built on relationships and human connection. As such, the industry will almost certainly embrace in-person photoshoots again as soon as we are able to safely gather to have them.

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