

JASON COLVIN PHOTOGRAPHY

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Modeling Information Packet

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All of the models I've ever met has their own reasons for getting started into modeling. Many simply want a fun hobby, which makes them feel good about themselves, and will take any success gratefully. Some have a stronger desire for fame and recognition. For some, it's just a job, a way to pay the bills, and do what they're good at. Still others are artists or performers, and feel that modeling is simply another mode of artistic expression.

Many people's interest in modeling starts at a young age. It begins as a sort of fantasy, like dress-up or playing a princess or a movie star. Everyone should open themselves to their dreams, and to reach for goals that interest and excite them.

Unfortunately, many people also go into the real world of modeling without knowing a lot of facts about the industry. All they know about modeling has come from misleading TV shows and websites. They wander into a confusing world with nothing more than desire and maybe a belief that their dream will come true. But without the proper knowledge and information, these newcomers can lose money to scam artists, be taken advantage of by unprofessional photographers, and find their dreams and desires have turned into disappointment and disillusionment.

It's important to believe in yourself. But it's also important to know the facts, even if they make you uncomfortable. Facts like these:

If someone promises you money, fame, or fortune, it's a scam. There are no exceptions to this rule, no matter how good it sounds. Everywhere you turn, there will be people trying to take advantage of your dreams. If someone wants you to pay to join an agency or modeling school, or take part in a convention, don't even think about it. It's always a scam, no matter how bad you want it to be true.

Minnesota full-time models earn an average of \$15.48 an hour, according to the US Bureau of Labor.

Your physical imperfections limit your ability to succeed in modeling. That's the reality. The following all can affect your ability to find work: stretch marks, birthmarks, tattoos, scars, height, and weight. But, different types of modeling are more open than others. We'll discuss that in depth shortly.

All models are rejected for many more jobs than they are accepted for. When you go to auditions, you are basically attending a job interview based only on your looks. So are many other hopeful models. You will be rejected many times, and told bluntly that you are too fat, too short, too plain, or otherwise not right for the job. You must understand and accept that this will happen to you, no matter what.

On the job, the model doesn't matter. The client is the one who pays everyone, therefore the client is the only one on the set who matters. If you don't meet the needs of the client, you won't be hired. The client doesn't care who you are, how you feel, or what you want. They expect you to show up on time and do what you're told. If you don't, you won't find modeling work again. Why not? Well, because...

People talk. If you miss an appointment, if you don't seem dedicated, or if you have a bad attitude, you will not be able to find work. Other models talk to photographers. Photographers talk to other photographers, who talk to makeup artists, who talk to agents and directors. It's a small world, and the Minneapolis market is smaller than most. Good attitudes and hard work are often remembered, but a bad attitude or a lack of dedication will always be remembered, and will ruin your reputation.

Still reading? Congratulations! You've passed the initial reality check. Let's make you a model!

Safety

Just because a photographer isn't a full-time professional doesn't mean they aren't legitimate. Many photographers are just starting out, doing their first photo shoots. These photographers can be great to work with, since they have more open schedules and will often do test shoots for free, in order to get more experience and practice.

On the other hand, just because a guy has a camera doesn't make him a photographer. It's easy for any weirdo or pervert to buy a digital camera, and take nude photos of girls. They can be very persuasive and aggressive in their attempts to get models to pose questionably. You want to work with the legitimate beginning photographers who are just starting out, while avoiding the perverts with cameras at all costs. It's not always easy to tell the difference, but these tips will help a lot:

- **Look at the photographer's work!** EVERY legitimate photographer has a portfolio that they can show you. Meet the photographer for coffee before you schedule a shoot, and ask them to bring their portfolio. Or, look at their website. The photos should look appealing and appear professional. Avoid anyone whose work looks flat or crude, or who can't show you a portfolio.

- **Get references!** Ask for references from previous models and other professional contacts. Get *phone numbers*, not just e-mail addresses. Contact those references, and ask if the photographer was professional with them. If a photographer can't provide at least three references of any kind, don't be afraid to wait to work with them until they can.

- **Don't be afraid to communicate!** Do you refuse to do nudes? Does the photographer know that?

You need to be clear, up-front, and open to avoid misunderstandings. If you have questions, ask them before the shoot begins, and make sure you get answers. If you have specific limitations, make sure you explain them. This is *your* responsibility, no one else's.

- **If something doesn't seem right, leave!** It's natural to be nervous for your first few photo shoots, but soon you'll know what to expect. But if something seems really wrong or uncomfortable, *leave*. If the photographer repeatedly tries to touch you or says inappropriate things, you should simply get out. You can pretend you're ill, say you forgot something, or simply say the shoot is over and walk out. If you're not sure later if it was the right decision, ask another photographer or model that you know and trust.

Should models bring escorts? That's the source of a lot of debate. Some photographers don't want them there, since they've had bad experiences with jealous boyfriends, or the model getting distracted. But, some models aren't comfortable with going alone. Then again, if there's a makeup artist or stylist there, there will already be another person there. What do you do?

First and foremost, **if you are hired for a professional modeling job, don't bring an escort!** It's considered unprofessional, and will sideline you immediately. You wouldn't bring your mom or boyfriend to your day job, don't bring them to a modeling job either.

If it's for a test shoot, try a compromise. Have a family member or friend meet the photographer, drop you off, then set a time for them to return to pick you up, or for you to call them. If you don't have an escort, leave the photographer's contact information and address with a trusted friend, let them know when you arrive, and be sure to let them know once you're done with the shoot.

(One other thing: if you're under 18, you should be *expected* to bring a parent or guardian on all shoots, and they'll have to sign your release form. That's how it works, and if you run into a photographer who doesn't want to do it that way, you **should not** work with them.)

Avoiding Scams

There is a really easy way to figure out if a modeling offer is a scam: Do you have to pay a significant fee for it up front? If you are asked to pay a fee, it's a scam, and you should avoid it.

If you are signed on as a model by a reputable talent agency, you will pay the agency nothing until you work. After getting work, your agency will take their commission from your check - **BUT YOU SHOULD PAY NOTHING IN ADVANCE.**

The most common scams are the model expos, and companies claiming to be modeling schools or "agencies."

Model Expos or Conventions: Examples include Proscout, American Model Search, Model Search America, or any other company with the combinations of the words "scout," "model," or "search" in it.

What happens at these expos? You pay a steep registration fee, and you are promised exposure to big-name modeling agencies. It won't happen. At the convention center, you will be ushered in, pumped up, and then sit for hours listening to someone tell you how lucky you are to have this opportunity.

Then, you might go with a few hundred others to be paraded in front of agency representatives. After the walk-through, you will be sent back to listen to more boring speakers, while the representatives pick the models they'd like to interview. You most likely will not get selected. You'll be invited back to try out again (after paying another registration fee, of course), and you'll be sent home, scammed out of \$400 or more.

Modeling Schools: Barbizon, John Casablancas, and John Robert Powers are all examples of these. Modeling schools are not agencies. They are businesses designed to generate profit by teaching "model skills." What they don't tell you is that you can learn these skills on your own!

Modeling schools make their profits by selling lessons and portfolios to the students. As a student, you would take "modeling classes," taught by "experienced models." You are also expected to sign a contract to pay the company's in-house photographer \$300-\$1200 for "portfolio shots." Trouble is, these lessons don't necessarily help you, and their portfolios won't necessarily get you work.

Incidentally, some schools occasionally do get contracts for models, but the school's instructors have been known to keep the jobs for themselves!

So, how do you learn to be a model without attending modeling school?

The same way that you learned to ride a bike. Take a deep breath, jump on, have someone show you the basics, and be ready to fall down a few times while you learn. Modeling is learned through practice, and listening to advice from those who have been there before.

Many seasoned models and photographers will be very open and friendly to newcomers, and enjoy sharing their stories and experiences. You can get all the experience you need for free, or at least cheap. By contacting local photographers and requesting "test shoots" with them, you can get in front of a camera, and get some direction. With modeling websites getting ever more popular, it's now even easier to get those test shoots done. Just call or e-mail a photographer whose work you like, and ask.

If your favorite local photographer isn't doing test shoots, they may at least be willing to negotiate prices, or offer you one of their specials. In some cases, independent photographers' prices are even comparable to the prices of the generic portrait studios, so ask around.

Net-modeling vs. the real world

Internet modeling is a huge and growing business. There are photographers and models who have never made contacts anywhere but the internet, and the internet is becoming the avenue of choice for many beginners. Scores of "model portfolio" websites have sprung up, offering "exposure" to beginning models for a fee, and giving them places online to network and find shoots.

Is it a scam? Not exactly. Is it the key to modeling success? No way.

At its best, net-modeling is a way to gain a little experience, practice, and get your face out there. If you can avoid the clueless amateurs and find the good people, you can learn some good tips for getting started. With persistence and dedication, you can land an audition or a paid shoot. And once that happens, your networking skills, work ethic, attitude, and dedication might just open more doors for you.

At its worst, however, net-modeling is a fast-track to disappointment. For every professional photographer and model you find, you'll see ten amateurs who don't have a clue what they're doing, and probably never will. You might learn everything wrong, from the lingo and the traditional practices, to incorrect posing. Many who start out in net-modeling try it for fun, do it for a short time, then get so disappointed by their bad experiences with inexperienced amateurs and creeps that they never continue.

Net-modeling requires as much caution and sense as doing anything else online, but don't dismiss it. Use it to your advantage and be smart, and you'll come out on top.

Net-modeling tips:

- 1 Avoid using phrases like TFP (time for prints) or TFCD (time for CD) - they are only used online, and can cause confusion. Use "test shoot" to discuss an unpaid or experimental photo session instead.
- 2 Learn some of the basic photographic concepts like composition and lighting. With this knowledge, look closely at a photographer's work before working with them. Many photographers (including the author of this guide) will be glad to teach some of these basic ideas to you.
- 3 Don't ever let a photographer persuade you to do nudes or lingerie shots if you don't want to, and avoid shooting with photographers who get pushy or threatening about the issue.
Badly done nude photos in your portfolio can hurt your career in mainstream modeling.
- 4 Use common sense. If you're unsure of someone's professional status, ask questions before meeting in person. No matter how good someone may be, *choosing not to work with one person will not hurt your career, as long as you handle it professionally.* A professional photographer will simply move on to another model, and will accept an apology. A sleazy one will threaten to ruin your reputation. Don't worry, the only reputation at stake is their own.

Internet websites will not replace traditional agencies, but they are making an impact in the real world. Models who treat the internet as another tool without depending solely on it will find more name and face recognition, and many more opportunities for experience.

Some common model portfolio websites:

<i>Recommended:</i>	Model Mayhem	www.modelmayhem.com
<i>Recommended:</i>	MuseCube	www.musecube.com
	One Model Place	www.onemodelplace.com
	One Talent Source	www.onetalentsource.com

Getting your foot in the door

Self Representation

If you've got the skills to sell yourself, you may want to consider self-representation. The obvious advantage of self-representation is that you don't give an agency a fee. The disadvantage is that you don't have the contacts that the agencies do, and you need to work very hard to promote yourself.

There are some places that can help you get started. Look at the Craigslist website for your area (www.craigslist.org, pick your city from the menu on the right) under Jobs, Gigs, or Community.

Also, check with local college and university arts departments. They may need figure models for various painting, drawing, and illustration courses.

Check the website of your local radio stations. Many feature "Hot Chick of the Day" or similar sections, which are usually free to submit to, and are good for publicity.

Maxim Hometown Hotties is another good way to get free exposure, as long as you're comfortable doing their style of work, which is a mix of swimsuit and glamour shots. Make sure you understand the rules before submitting:

www.maximonline.com/hometown_hotties/home.aspx

As a freelancer, you can pursue many different types or styles of modeling, including:

- 1 Print
- 2 Local fashion
- 3 Commercial
- 4 Editorial/Lifestyle Model
- 5 Promotional Model/Spokesmodel
- 6 Figure and Art Modeling
- 7 Alternative modeling (tattoos, piercings, etc.)

Agency Representation

There are two ways to get in the door of a reputable agency. You can obtain their address, and send the appropriate person a cover letter, resume (if applicable) and an 8x10 headshot and 8x10 body shot. In your cover letter, express your interest in gaining representation for modeling positions through their agency. Address it to "Attention: New Talent" if you don't have a specific name.

The second option is, you can attend an open call at the agency. An open call is a day when the agency opens their doors to interview any prospective models who come in to the office. Most legitimate metro-area agencies hold open calls once every week or two; call the agencies in your city and find out when they're holding the next one. Again, present them with a cover letter, resume (if applicable) and a headshot and body shot.

Your photos should be taken by a professional photographer, in the form of 8x10 or 8x12 prints, and they should be printed by your photographer or at a photo lab. The photos should be natural, without extravagant makeup or a high-fashion wardrobe. The agencies want to see you in your natural look, not after you've worked on your hair and makeup for two hours.

Don't be surprised if the agencies ask you to send snapshots or Polaroids of you standing in your underwear with no makeup on. They sometimes prefer these, since they show you exactly how you are.

Agency contact information is listed on the following pages.

Getting your foot in the door

Part II – Local Agencies

Here are some of our reputable local working agencies, the biggest and most important step for any aspiring local model to find jobs in the Minneapolis and Midwest market. These agencies generally accept mailed or delivered submissions, and some hold open calls.

If you've heard of an agency that isn't on this list, it doesn't mean it isn't legitimate. It might be, or it might not. Do your research. Remember, if you're asked to pay a fee up front, it's a scam. If you're asked to travel for a modeling job, make sure you've signed an agreement that guarantees you payment before you pay travel expenses. And never sign anything until you are **100% sure** that you understand it.

*Please note: Always, make sure you do plenty of research, and **never sign anything** until you feel that you are completely informed about the circumstances.*

Minnesota Agencies

The Wehmann Agency
1128 Harmon Place, Suite 202, Minneapolis, MN, 55403
612-333-6393
www.wehmann.com

Moore Creative Talent
1610 West Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-827-3823
www.mooretalent.com

Meredith Model & Talent Agency
800 Washington Ave N, Suite 511, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1330
612-340-9555
www.meredithagency.com

Agency Models and Talent
800 Washington Avenue North, Suite 305, Minneapolis, MN 55401
612-664-1174
www.agencymodelsandtalent.com

Wisconsin Agencies

Dylan Scott Talent, Inc.
PO Box 2073, Madison, WI 53701-2073
608-294-5702
www.dylanscott.com

Arlene Wilson Management
807 N. Jefferson St. Suite 200, Milwaukee, WI 53202
414.283.5600
www.arlenewilson.com

Lori Lins Limited
7611 West Holmes Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53220
414-282-3500
www.lorilins.com

Getting your foot in the door

Part III – National Agencies

The following agencies are the cream of the crop nationally. They are looking for the very best in male and female models, who fit the following requirements:

Females – 16-23 years old, 5'9"-6', 100-120 lbs, clear complexion, unique looks a plus.

Males – 17-25 years old, 5'11"-6'4", 130-150 lbs, clear complexion.

If you don't fit these requirements, stick with self representation, or the local agencies. The NY or LA markets have no tolerance for those who don't fit their exacting standards. Learn to love yourself, and carve out a local niche for yourself.

However, if you do match those measurements, and you've got a unique or outstanding look, these people may want to speak with you. Contact them by mail with a cover letter expressing your interest in representation, and an 8x10 natural body shot, or consider booking a trip for face-to-face meetings. Plan on a few days to be able to visit them all.

New York Agencies

Ford Models

142 Greene St., 4th Floor
New York, NY 10012
Contact: Katie Ford
212-219-6500

Elite Model Management

111 E. 22nd Street
New York, NY 10010
Contact: Karen Lee Grybowski
212-529-9700

Trump Management

91 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10003
Contact: Jon Tutulo
212-924-0990

IMG Models

304 Park Avenue South, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10010
Contact: Mark McCormack
212-253-8884

Los Angeles Agencies

LA Models

7700 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90046
newfaces@lamodels.com
323-436-7700

Ford LA

8826 Burton Way
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-276-8100

Next Management LA

8447 Wilshire Blvd
Penthouse
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
323-782-0010