

Quarantines & Newborn Photos



A GUIDE TO PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR NEWBORN
AT HOME DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

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★★ PHOTOGRAPHY



Congratulations on your little one's arrival!

I created this guide to help families affected by social isolation due to the global pandemic. I know how special this time is for your family as you welcome your new baby home, and I'm sure you were imagining the most adorable newborn portraits of your little one.

Just because our studio is closed right now does not mean you can't capture these moments while your baby is still so tiny!

I've filled this guide with tips and inspiration to help you capture this fleeting newborn stage at home with whatever camera you have available -- a phone, point and shoot, or a DSLR!

I look forward to celebrating with your family when it is safe to gather again, and I can't wait to meet your brand new baby and capture some beautiful portraits for you.

In the meantime, enjoy those newborn cuddles, and I can't wait to see what you capture!

Enjoy, and happy clicking!



Nicole

TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR OWN NEWBORN PHOTOS AT HOME

Getting Ready

Set your expectations. Remember that these DIY photos will not be the same quality as what you'll receive at the studio, and allow yourself plenty of grace throughout the process. Be flexible, and if baby isn't feeling it or is particularly fussy, change gears, cuddle, feed, and plan to come back to the photos later.

Time it right after a feeding so that baby is sleepy and has a full belly.

Choose a room with lots of natural light. Soft window light is ideal, and rooms with windows facing North or South are usually best. Turn off the overhead lights to avoid a yellow cast to your images.

Turn up the heat! Your baby is used to being inside of a 98 degree oven, so crank up the thermostat for the session and even consider bringing a small space heater into the room for an extra boost.

Keep the baby's diaper on to prevent messes, and use a swaddle blanket to cover it up while posing baby.



What to Wear

I always recommend light, neutral clothing for family portraits. Avoid dark colors like black, charcoal gray, and navy, and instead opt for white, cream, light gray, blue, and pastels.

Avoid clothing with bold patterns, logos, and words to keep the focus on your sweet family.

Baby looks best in swaddles or a simple white onesie.

Safety First

Your baby's safety and comfort is, of course, your top priority. Never position the baby in a way that does not support baby's head or that puts a strain on their joints. Never leave baby unattended. Please do not attempt any "poses" that you see newborn photographers do as many of those are composites and they have years of training in newborn safety and posing. Always have another adult nearby to act as a spotter, especially for sibling portraits.

Working with Siblings

If possible, I recommend having another adult there to entertain the siblings while you are doing baby's individual portraits. Let big brother or big sister join when ready, and always explain the pose to them first and keep an adult nearby for safety. If big brother or big sister isn't feeling it, take a break and try again later to keep everyone happy.

Equipment

Have you ever heard the quote that
“the best camera is the one you have with you”?

It's true. Don't worry about having a fancy DSLR camera.

A point and shoot or even a camera phone will do!

If you're shooting on your phone, try out portrait mode to capture some nice blur between the subject and the background. Play around with the exposure/brightness by tapping the screen so the box with a sun appears, and scroll your finger up and down to increase and decrease the brightness.



What You'll Need

For classic newborn photos that keep the focus on the baby, you really don't need much! Here is a list of items that I would consider essential for DIY portraits at home.

white blanket

a few swaddles

a few scarves or pretty blanket "layers"

white noise machine/app

pacifier

no time limit or rushing

lots of patience!



The White Onesie



There is nothing more classic than a baby in a white onesie laying on a white blanket. The look is clean, simple, and timeless. Make sure to choose a onesie that is fitted (newborn or even preemie size is best if you have it as 0-3 months will often be too loose!).

Lay the baby down on a white blanket with the window light at a 45-90 degree angle to the baby. Be sure the direction of the light is from the side and down the top of the baby's head -- never light the baby from their feet up as it is very unflattering.

Let the baby rest, stretch, yawn, and just be. Don't worry about posing. Capture all of those sweet newborn movements and reactions, and of course details like their little feet and tiny hands, too!

The Crib



This is a great place to start with individual portraits of the baby!

A few shots that I like to get in the crib are:

- Stand on a stool and shoot from up above
 - Shoot through the railings
- Siblings together in the crib (perfect for young toddler)
- Siblings looking/reaching through railings (older children)
- Mom sitting on the floor leaning against railings with baby in arms
 - Dog peeking through railings at baby

Swaddled on a Blanket



When you swaddle a baby with a full tummy, they almost always fall asleep! This is the perfect time to capture a variety of portraits of baby from up above and from the side.

Lay baby on the bed or create a mound of blankets next to the window with a white blanket on top. Capture some close-ups of baby with their little hands peeking out, and then gently pull an arm or two free so that you can see their cute little arms and elbow rolls.

Add in layers (blankets, scarves, rugs, anything with texture) for more variety and depth in your portraits. Remember to always angle your camera down at the baby and never shoot up their nose.



Siblings Lying Down



This is one of the safest poses for baby and big brother or sister, and it is perfect for toddlers and also for older children.

You can do this on the bed or on a pile of blankets on the floor next to the window. If on the floor, place a rug or simple blanket on top (no distracting patterns) and a pillow underneath to support their heads and shoulders.

Have sibling lie down first, then place baby in their arms.

Shoot from up above on a step stool, and be sure to have camera strap around your wrist or neck, or an extra tight grip on the phone to ensure you don't drop it.

Siblings on Bed



The master bed is another great spot for siblings to love on their new baby! It's soft and wide, with ample space for the big brother or sister to move around comfortably. Always have another adult nearby to spot the baby for safety.

A few of my favorite poses on the bed are:

- Leaning on pillows with baby in arms
- Lying on tummy with swaddled baby in front
- Sitting criss-cross with baby on legs

Baby in Parent's Hands



Your baby will never be this small again. Be sure to capture some portraits of your little one snuggled up in our arms to show just how tiny they really were. I especially love showing how small babies are against dad's big hands.

A few of my favorite poses are:

- Close up of baby in dad's hands
- Looking down at baby on your chest
- Looking over mom or dad's shoulder at baby
- Baby's back against your stomach with one hand across baby's chest and one hand underneath baby's legs

The First Family Portrait



Set a timer on your camera and make sure to capture a few photos of your whole family together with your brand new baby! Try to shoot from slightly above your eyes for the most flattering angle. You may need to stack books or furniture for a makeshift tripod.

A few of my favorite family portrait options are:

- Cuddled up on the master bed together
- Parents leaning over the crib to look at baby
- Sitting on the couch together with baby in arms
- Sitting/standing at the rocking chair with baby in arms



Mommy/Daddy & Baby



Don't forget to hand your camera to your partner and to take turns capturing a few photos of each of you alone with your brand new baby! My favorites are candid where mom and dad are just looking down at baby. There is always so much love in those portraits! Just don't forget to smile!

A few ideas for parent portraits:

- Standing in the nursery
- Sitting in the rocking chair -- turn the chair towards the light
 - Sitting on the bed
 - Sitting on the floor and leaning against the crib rails

The Little Details



Your newborn is going to change so quickly, and soon you'll start to forget the tiny little details. Be sure to capture them now to document just how fresh & new they were!

A few of my favorite details to capture are:

- Baby feet and skinny little baby legs
 - Sleepy little yawns
 - Little rolls on their arms and backs
- The hair on their shoulders and upper arms
 - Flaky skin on their wrists and ankles
 - A head full of hair

I hope you have found this guide helpful
as you prepare to photograph your
newborn's first photos at home.

Have fun slowing down these first few weeks
with your brand new baby, and enjoy
being creative with your camera!

I can't wait to see your family soon to
celebrate your little one's arrival with you!

Nicole