

# ENGAGEMENT SESSION GUIDE

ESTD



2019

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P H O T O G R A P H Y

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## YOU'RE ENGAGED!!

It's time to start thinking about and planning your engagement session!! I put together this guide to give you some more info I feel will be useful to help you prepare for your engagement session. Here you'll find info about locations (how to pick one, & what your options are), timing (depending on the location you choose will determine the best time of day for your session due to the lighting), outfit inspo (a few tips on what to wear and what to bring), and some tips to help you feel at ease going into your session!

Engagement sessions are some of my absolute favorite shoots because I love all the one-on-one time I get with my couples! There is no pressure because if something happens or the photo doesn't turn out just right the first time, we can just do it again! The goal of your engagement session is to capture this stage of your relationship, & give me some practice with how you two move and interact with each other so that everything photo-wise is seamless on your wedding day!

-NICOLE



AUTUMN  
WINTER  
SUNRISE



# DATES & TIMING



SUMMER  
SPRING  
SUNSET

## DATE PICKING

Obviously you just got engaged and there's a TON to plan, but I do think engagement photos should be one of the first things to plan once you have your photographer booked! Sometime between the one year and 6 month mark out from your wedding date is a great timeframe to plan for. This way, you'll have your photos soon enough that you can use them for your wedding website, save the dates or invitations.

## TIME OF YEAR

In Phoenix, it's no secret that the summer is PRETTY DANG HOT. So, that being said, if you find yourself engaged in the early summer and don't want to be a sweaty mess for your photos, but it pushes you closer to your wedding date than that 6-12 month sweet spot for photos, don't stress about it. Everyone's wedding timelines look different, and having to wait an extra month or so to get your perfect weather for your session is no biggie.

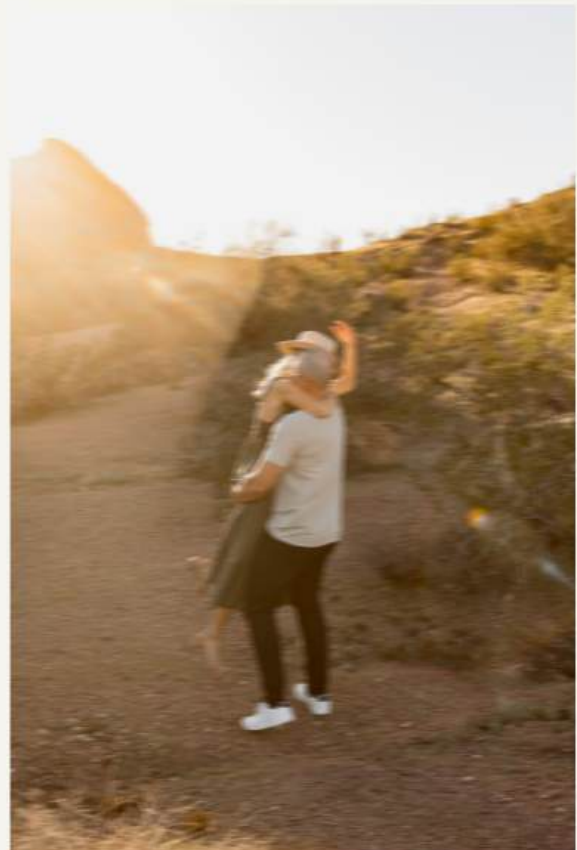
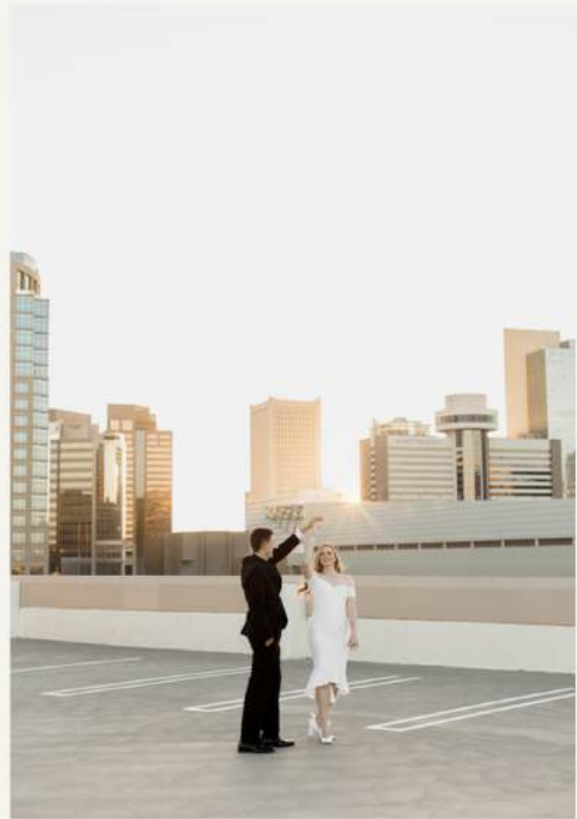
If we are heading somewhere outside of Phoenix- that's great!! When picking our session date we'll be sure to factor in local weather to give us the best weather possible!

## TIME OF DAY

Lastly, let's talk about lighting and time of day! As far as lighting goes, I am comfortable in pretty much any lighting scenario (bright direct sunlight, shade, indoors with windows, indoors where it's dark, nighttime) as long as I know ahead of time and can anticipate what I'll need to bring with me to make it work- so don't worry about that!

For outdoor locations, it's no secret that photographers love "golden hour," but what does that mean? The hour or so before sunset is (in my opinion) the best light from the sun of the entire day! It's low enough in the sky that it's not too harsh and no one will be squinty, but still bright enough that there's plenty of glowy sunlight in your photos! If sunset isn't an option, the second best option is going to be sunrise, but that tends to be EARLY. So, unless you are morning people or the location is better at sunrise, it might be a bit of a hard wake up call.

For indoor locations, middle of the day when the sun is high in the sky and bright is usually ideal to let the most light indoors as possible, but timing is much more flexible indoors





Sunrise vs sunset at the same location (superstition mountains in Apache Junction, AZ). both are BEAUTIFUL! However, it dramatically changes the type of scenery you'll be getting based on where the sun is! Something to keep in mind when picking your session timing- and we'll chat through best options depending on the location we decide on.

DESERT  
MOUNTAINS  
STREAMS & RIVERS



# LOCATIONS



URBAN  
DOWNTOWN  
FIELDS





## TYPES OF LOCATIONS

First, think about the broad type of location you're interested in. Are you nature lovers or city dwellers? Do you prefer a rustic or modern backdrop? Depending on what you think fits your style best, that should narrow down options quite a bit.

In Arizona specifically, here's a handful of location "genres" to choose from: desert, cactus, mountains, western-vibe, downtown/urban sceneries, greenery, Sedona or Papago red rocks, Pine tree forests (flagstaff or payson), lakes (lake pleasant, saguaro lake, watson lake), indoor studios, cool coffee shops and vintage book stores, bars and speakeasies, old town scottsdale, the grand canyon?! and really so much more!

TIP! I try to encourage my couples to pick an engagement session location that's really different from their wedding venue! That way you have a good contrast and variety of photos to display in your home from these two special events!

## PERSONAL STYLE

Next up, let's consider your personalities. If you are homebodies, maybe it makes sense to pick a library or shoot your engagement photos inside your own house! Big on hiking? An epic picturesque mountaintop might be just what you're looking for! Think about things you like to do together that reflects who you are and use that to guide your decision.

## UNIQUE TO YOU

Pick a location that's meaningful to you both! Was your first date at a cute little coffee shop? Let's go there! Do you go to the farmers market every weekend and stroll around together? That sounds ADORABLE- let's do it!

## MY FAVORITE LOCATIONS

Here is a list of a handful of my favorite Phoenix-area locations to give you an idea of what kinds of options are out there!

Visit the link below or scan the QR code below on your phone!!

<https://nicomariephoto.com/location-inspiration>



TEXTURE  
COLOR  
COORDINATION



# OUTFIT INSPIRATION



AUTHENTIC  
COMPLIMENTARY  
MOVEMENT

## # OF OUTFITS

As far as amount of outfits go, for engagement sessions I always tell my couples to bring two different outfits!

The first outfit should be something comfy & casual that I could catch you two wearing out and about on any random day. Something that feels like yourselves & would be great in a "lunch date" kind of setting.

The second outfit is something bold or more dressy! Usually I say that if it looks like you're going to be guests at a wedding or going to a cool new date night cocktail bar/fancier restaurant, you probably hit the nail on the head!

99% of the time I'll have you two show up in the more casual outfit and then change into the dressier outfit halfway through your session (I'll bring a pop up changing tent so no worries about where you'll be able to change!)

## AUTHENTICITY

If you are not comfortable in the clothing you've picked out, it's probably going to show through in your photos. Make sure that both of you are comfortable in your clothing to ensure you'll be confident and comfortable. Plus, if you or your partner/your spouse love the clothes you've chosen, you can wear your outfits over and over again! Less waste, more economic, happy faces, win-win-win!

## COMPLIMENT. DON'T MATCH

It's possible to achieve a cohesive look without both of you wearing the same/similar colors, and style. It's also much easier to choose clothing that coordinates well when you have a building block to start with. Start with one person's outfit and plan the other's outfit to compliment the first. If the first person's outfit is patterned or texture-heavy, stick to solids or neutrals for person #2 so things don't get too busy.

## COLOR SCHEME

Pick colors that either compliment your wedding color scheme so you have a seamless look throughout all of your photos if you choose to display some at your wedding, or colors that will look great when printed and displayed in your home! Choose 1-2 main "popping" colors you love, and plan outfits using those colors in different hues. Sprinkle in neutrals such as denim, white, grey and tans and you're good to go!

\*Neons, in my opinion, should always be an immediate no, but other than that, I don't think there's any colors that can't look good when paired with the right combos or patterns, so choose something you love and run with it!





## ACCESSORIES

In this instance, I don't usually think that more is better! Stick to simple, neutral accessories to compliment your outfits! If you feel like your outfit is a little plain, maybe consider bringing layers like jackets/cardigans/etc..., or sprinkling in some personality in unexpected places (adding a patterned pocket square, picking more textured pieces, wearing statement shoes).

## TEXTURE & PATTERNS

Instead of plain jeans, a basic t shirt and plain shoes, try to incorporate at least one "texture" on each person to add some visual interest! Some textures to look for depending on your style; knitwear like sweaters and cardigans, leather, linen, lace, denim, rips/distressed clothing, mesh, silky fabrics, embroidery, etc..

## BE SEASONALLY APPROPRIATE

If we schedule your session for late December, please don't show up in a mini dress or shorts (unless you are prepared to be cold and are willing to brace against the elements)! You will be freezing and uncomfortable if you don't at least bring along a layer to keep you warm in between photos, but I don't want you to be so uncomfortable that you can't enjoy yourselves and live in the moment.

## INSECURITIES

We've all got 'em. If you have something about yourself that you just don't quite love as much as you should, let me know ahead of time and I can help pose and prompt you to aid in any body discomfort you might be facing.

That being said, I will likely be photographing you from ALL angles to give your gallery more variety. Try to make sure you love the outfit you're wearing as much as possible from all angles!

## PRO HAIR & MAKEUP

Who doesn't love an excuse to get all dolled up?! If you're able to, try and plan your wedding day hair and make up trial for the same day as your engagement session! Otherwise, find an artist whose work you love and get yourself scheduled to get your hair and makeup done anyway! (If you want some suggestions let me know and I'll send over my fav H&MU artists in the Phoenix area)



PETS  
MINDFRAME  
PREPARATION



# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND



RELAX  
CELEBRATE  
BE PRESENT



## HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR SESSION ON THE OUTSIDE

### HAIR CUT & COLOR

Now's probably not the beeesstt time to try out a whole new look. Stick to a cut and color that you know you love and maybe be a little adventurous with your style! Try to schedule your hair appointment ~2 weeks out from your session.

### GET YOUR NAILS DONE!

I almost always shoot close ups of hands during your engagement session (gotta show off the new bling!), so it wouldn't hurt to at least be cut and filed! Neutral nails tend to look best overall, but if you're into wild colors and designs, do what speaks to you!

### CLEAN YOUR RING

Make sure there aren't any little hairs or fibers stuck to it (more common than you think!!), and give it a good polish (either using an at-home ring cleaner or professionally!)

### EAT A NORMAL MEAL

Please don't show up with a hungry belly! Remember that bodies shift and change throughout the day as we eat, and I would hate for you to be miserable during your session because you're hangry in order to avoid a little bit of normal bloating.



## HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR SESSION ON THE INSIDE

### DON'T STRESS!!!

Relax and treat the day as a date! Laugh with your partner, let yourselves be silly, and it'll all go smoothly- I promise!

### TRUST YOUR PHOTOG (ME!)

My goal is to make sure the whole process is as comfortable and not awkward for y'all as possible. As much as I love a good ol' candid photo, I am NEVER just going to tell you to 'act natural' and start snappin' away. I'll guide you with prompts, let you know where to move your hands to, and just overall make sure you're feeling taken care of through the entire process. (If at any point you are feeling uneasy- PLEASE let me know ASAP and we'll get it handled!

### PREPARE TO HAVE FUN!

It's time to celebrate your engagement! Let's have some fun, tell some jokes, make some good memories and count down the days 'til y'all get hitched!!

### BE YOURSELF

Remember, these are pictures of YOU so don't try to be like that person from Pinterest. We'll capture you two and how you naturally interact, which will make for the most special photos that are unique to the both of you.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED Q'S

## Q- ANYTHING ELSE WE SHOULD BRING?

A- depending on your session, here's a few things that might be helpful to bring with ya; water, a small (non-messy) snack, comfy walking shoes, hair and makeup touch ups (lipgloss, brush, mascara, powder, bobby pins, hairspray, gel, etc..), gum or tic tacs, tissues, fashion tape (if your outfit calls for it or might need it to stay put).

## Q- WHAT TYPES OF PROPS (IF ANY) SHOULD WE HAVE?

A- Bottle of Champagne to pop, a newspaper or piece of cardboard with a cute phrase written on it, a bouquet, a picnic blanket, a cool classic car (JenzBenz is my favorite place to rent cars from for photoshoot!!) The list goes on. Whatever you two love and want to incorporate- we can make it happen!

## Q- CAN WE BRING OUR PET(S)?

A- SURE THING! I love when my couples bring their fur babes! Only thing for this though, if you're going to bring your pet(s), please also plan to bring an extra human with you to wrangle them while they aren't in the photos, and also give me a heads-up, please!

## Q- WHAT IF WEATHER DOESN'T LOOK GREAT?

A- I'm an obsessive weather checker. If it looks like we'll be seeing some rain, wind, snow, sleet, etc.. I will let you know as soon as possible and we can decide weather to reschedule or not based on your comfort level/preference. (I will always have umbrellas on me, just in case though!)

## Q- HOW MANY PHOTOS WILL WE GET?

A- More than you'll know what to do with, seriously. I promise between 50 and 100 images but have never delivered less than 100 for an engagement session, so you will have no shortage of favorites, guaranteed!

## Q- WHEN CAN WE EXPECT THE PHOTOS?

A- you'll get a handful of sneak peeks the very next day (sometimes immediately after I get home if I have no chill that day), and then the full gallery about 2 weeks following your session





# LAST THING ON THE LIST... GET EXCITED & START COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS!

Hopefully you're feeling a little more prepared for your engagement session! Please reach out if you have any questions, need help with pulling together outfits or picking a location, or if anything else comes up that you think I'll be able to help with.

If I'm not already your engagement session photographer- SEND ME A MESSAGE!! Let's get your session scheduled!! I cannot wait to meet you and capture this special time in your relationship journey!

*-Nicole*



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