

# A picture is worth a thousand words

GREAT PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY IS VITAL TO SUCCESSFUL ONLINE SELLING. CUSTOMERS BROWSE THROUGH THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTS AND IMAGES ARE OFTEN THE FIRST THINGS THEY SEE.

It's really important to present your products clearly and beautifully, to inspire the customer to find out more from your product page and, hopefully, to make a purchase. Great product imagery is a worthwhile investment for your business, but one that may require time, or occasionally money, from you – in order to achieve positive results.

## OUR STYLE

Our creative team includes dedicated designers, stylists and photographers, who are itching to share their expertise. We've carefully researched what shoppers like to see on the site, and have developed a certain photography style based on our findings. There's a lot to say on the topic, so the main focus will be on the style that we use across our site, plus a few product-specific guidelines that we'll add to over time.



# A quick introduction to our style

## WHAT WORKS FOR CUSTOMERS

At notonthehighstreet.com, the story we're telling is one of unique beauty, achievable style, and inspiring homes and lifestyles. A great way to tell the story of your range is through lifestyle imagery. This is a tried and tested method that portrays the products in situ and inspires customers by prompting them to picture your items in their own homes.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPS

Simple, relevant props give products a sense of belonging and, most importantly, scale. Accessorising your product imagery will offer customers a full understanding of the size and function of your product at first glance.

## CREATING A STORY

With just a hint of simple styling and accessorising, you can really bring your products to life. Using relevant props and settings allows us to create a consistent style across the site, contributing to the notonthehighstreet.com brand. This style, developed over time by our team, appeals to the wide notonthehighstreet.com customer base and enhances the appeal of the thousands of gorgeous products that our Partners offer.

## CONSIDERING THE AMBIENCE

When preparing photoshoots for printed catalogues or selecting products to promote in emails and on our site, we look for bright and airy settings with plenty of natural light, soft, neutral tones and pastel colours to create a family-oriented feel.

## CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Creating a consistent look gives us the flexibility to use different combinations of products, while always achieving a coherent and inspiring result. It's important to retain your own sense of style and brand, but we do recommend keeping our look in mind as images that work with our style are more likely to be selected for marketing and catalogue campaigns.



# Checklist

KEEP THESE HELPFUL TIPS ON HAND TO ENSURE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY TICKS THE RIGHT BOXES EVERY TIME:

- ☐ Only ever display one main product (or a single set) per frame – grouping multiple products together could confuse your customer
- ☐ Make sure your product fills at least 80% of the image frame
- ☐ When focusing on the individual detail of a product (for example a delicate engraving), make sure the scale and context of the whole product remains clear
- ☐ Any personalisation should be shot in focus, clearly legible and free from reflection
- ☐ If photographing a kit, set or product consisting of multiple items, try to display every element (within reason)
- ☐ Use props to help indicate scale, but keep them to a minimum to avoid detracting attention from the main product – and always make sure they're relevant to the context
- ☐ As a rule, stick to white or light-coloured backgrounds – black is always a no-go
- ☐ For legibility, shoot detailed posters, prints and wall art from a straight-on perspective
- ☐ Shadows can be useful to create shape and add depth, but should never be too dark
- ☐ Make sure your final images are square – at least 900 x 900 pixels – and of the highest resolution and quality possible.

# Fashion

OUR SHOPPERS ARE AS DISCERNING ABOUT THE FASHION IN THEIR WARDROBES AS THEY ARE ABOUT THE ITEMS IN THEIR HOMES.

## LIGHTING AND COMPOSITION

Always use bright light and find somewhere with a warm, neutral backdrop to shoot against. Dark colours simply don't offer the bright, clear style our shoppers love and expect.

Shirts, blouses, t-shirts and other lightweight tops can look chic and stylish when hung on a simple coat hanger against a light background, for example a painted wooden wardrobe. Intricate or text-heavy designs are best set against a backdrop or neatly laid out on a flat surface.

For heavier tops like sweatshirts and knitwear, it's often helpful to display the product in two ways: one that shows the item as a whole, and another showing it neatly folded. Either way, it's best to take the photograph from a slight angle.

For women's clothing, bunches of flowers make for a particularly effective background prop – just make sure to choose colours that blend or contrast with your products.

## ADULT CLOTHING

When it comes to women's fashion, our style is bright, breezy, relaxed and tasteful – not only the clothes themselves, but the way we present them in our imagery.

High-quality images reflect quality garments, and it's important that you style your shots well to really grab the customer's attention.

When styling men's fashion it's important to bear in mind who'll be buying them – more often than not, it's women buying on their behalf. This ought to influence your styling to some extent, and be consistent with the soft, muted feel we use for women's fashion. It's also important to always try to appeal to a wide audience: if you have a t-shirt that's suitable for teenagers as well as adults, include a thumbnail or two directed towards a younger audience.



NEUTRAL BACKDROPS ALLOW PRODUCTS TO STAND OUT





## CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

T-shirts and babygrows can look great on a simple wooden clothes hanger, either hanging against a wall or on the back of a child's chair. You can always add little touches to help soften an image, for example by hanging your wooden hanger on a bright piece of ribbon.

## USING A MODEL

High-quality, modelled images perform very well on our site, and across the industry as a whole, but can be tricky to create successfully without spending a lot of money on professional photography. That said, here are a few helpful tips that ought to make the job a lot easier.

Natural lighting might be great for still life shots, but it can be difficult to photograph clothing on models without some additional light. The simplest way to add this extra light is to use a lamp to brighten any dark shadows, in which case it's best to choose a bulb that simulates natural daylight as these give a soft, natural feel without over-exposing your image. You can even use a number of lamps at once to achieve the right effect, but be careful not to over-do it – you could compromise the detail of fabrics or make your model look unnaturally pale.

Men's t-shirts and children's items work particularly well in modelled shots and, in the latter case, the cute factor really is unbeatable. If you do find a willing volunteer, remember to take as many pictures as you can because it can often be quite a task trying to get the perfect shot (especially where wriggling children are involved).

If you need your model to wear a different garment on their upper or lower half, ideally use another item from your range. Whatever you choose, it's important to make sure that the extra piece is as plain as possible, so that it doesn't detract from the main focus of your shot.



ACCESSORISE CHILDREN'S CLOTHING WITH SIMPLE HANGERS AND RIBBON



CUTE CAN MAKE A SHOOT

## DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

- Iron fashion items before shooting them – it'll make a huge difference to the overall quality of your image
- Try taking multiple shots from different angles to see which works best
- Make sure any key details are in focus and clearly visible
- Shoot some high-quality cut-out images if you can, to sit alongside your stunning new lifestyle images
- Do use a model if you can, particularly for children's clothing – but make sure to take plenty of shots, and ensure the pieces fit your model well. You can always pin fabric at the back to hide excess material.

### DON'T

- Use mannequins – they simply don't perform well for our audience
- Choose a black or dark background
- Show colours or sizes that you don't have in stock – try to keep your images and product pages consistent and up-to-date
- Use flash, especially when photographing models – unless you're a professional photographer with professional lighting, you could end up with unwanted shadows, scary red-eye or a flat photograph.



# Food and drink

FOOD BRINGS US TOGETHER – THINK PARTIES, WEDDINGS, DRINKS, DINNERS – AND, IF THERE'S ONE THING WE KNOW, IT'S THAT NOTONTHEHIGHSTREET.COM SHOPPERS LOVE GETTING TOGETHER FOR A CELEBRATION.

It might be a mouthwatering gift sent in the post or a gorgeous addition to a party spread – whatever the occasion, food and drink products need to look delicious, original and utterly desirable. However, they can sometimes be let down by photography that doesn't show off just how scrumptious they really are.

## LIGHTING

Natural light is most flattering for any product type, but it's especially brilliant for food items and will make your products look even tastier. Ideally, shoot near a large window on a bright day, but be careful to avoid direct sunlight by using a white sheet or curtain to diffuse the light.

The easiest (and often most effective) way to shoot any product is by placing it directly in front of your light source, though it's best not to include the window or lamp in the final image. It's always worth experimenting with different angles to see which offers the best effect for your product. If you are photographing a drink, you might find that shining a little direct light through the glass or bottle really brings the image to life.

## COMPOSITION

Your product should always be the main focus of the image, ideally taking up around 80% of the space, so you only need to use one or two carefully selected props – for example a plate and a knife, a pretty cake stand or an elegant wine glass. Plates, napkins and other more prominent items should contrast or harmonise with your product – think dark chocolates on a white plate, or a pretty pink iced cupcake on a pale blue background.

Both the props and the product should be immaculately clean and tidy. If you're showing a slice of cake, try using dental floss to cut it precisely – that way, your customer can see how well decorated it is, as well as the delicious filling inside.

If you're shooting a hamper or gift set, make sure you show the different components altogether, and also displayed unpacked or in situ. It's important to show the customer how much thought, time and effort you've put into sourcing or making your collection.



SHOW PRODUCT PACKAGING, BUT ALSO THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE PRODUCT CAN BE ENJOYED



NATURAL LIGHTING MAKES ITEMS LOOK MORE APPETISING (NOT THAT THESE BROWNIES NEED HELP WITH THAT)

Think about the feature you'd most like to accentuate – is it the textured icing, the creamy truffle interior, or the personalised message on top? Set up your shot to focus on the most attractive and marketable aspects of your product. It's really important to get up close to your food, so shoot from plate-level (or slightly above) so that you can really hone in on the tasty treat that's going to put a smile on your customer's face.

## THE MORE, THE MERRIER

Food is one area where it's really worthwhile taking plenty of photographs. Not only will you have more shots to choose from when deciding on the main image for your product page, but you'll have a wider selection to include as thumbnails.

Showing the customer as much detail as possible is a great way to highlight the many delicious features and uses for your product. You could include shots of a whole cake and a single piece; an entire box of chocolates and just one or two; each item in your hamper and everything packed neatly inside; or a full bottle of wine next to a single glass.

It's also incredibly important to include an image of your packaging – it's one of the best sales tools there is. You'll not only give the customer confidence that their purchase will arrive safely, but show them that it's beautifully presented and ready to be given as a gift.

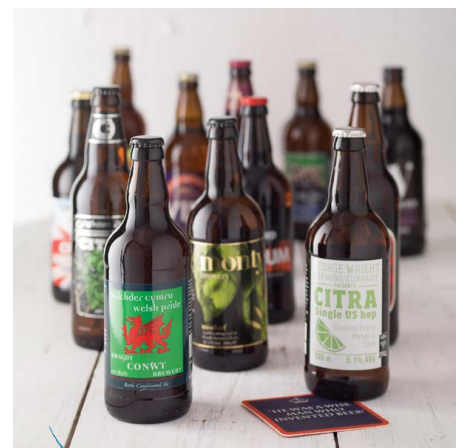
## DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

- Be quick! Most food doesn't retain its appetising appearance for long, so you'll need to finish the shoot before your product melts, collapses, wilts or changes colour
- Experiment with different angles to show the detail in icing, texture or presentation
- Use props to demonstrate scale and context – for example a slice of bread next to your pot of home-made jam.

### DON'T

- Use a messy or irrelevant background – even the most tempting items can look strange when placed on a piece of fabric or in the grass, rather than on a clean plate or napkin
- Show just the packaging – the food itself is the most important element, so it's best to show the overall product in your main image and any packaging as an additional thumbnail.



SUBTLE PROPS CAN HELP BRING YOUR FOOD AND DRINK PRODUCTS TO LIFE



# Jewellery

JEWELLERY HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF OUR BESTSELLING CATEGORIES AT NOTONTHEHIGHSTREET.COM, AND WITH SO MANY PRODUCTS COMPETING FOR ATTENTION, IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOUR IMAGES STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD.

## LIGHTING

It's particularly important when shooting jewellery that you find a bright and natural light source. As a rule, try to keep a consistent level of light across the shot and avoid using flash or dappled light, as you risk drawing attention away from your product. Saying that, with careful positioning, you might find that you're able to use a little light to highlight a specific area of the product – this is a particularly effective method for capturing delicate gold or silver pieces.

It can be tricky to avoid reflections as jewellery surfaces are often shiny and/or curved, but white sheets and cardboard can help remedy this situation. A sheet can be used to create a cave around your product that will still allow light to reach it, and will help to prevent strong reflections against its shinier parts. Cutting a hole in a piece of cardboard to fit around your camera lens will greatly reduce reflection from the body of your camera or tripod, and small reflections from the lens itself can easily be edited out from your final shots.

## COMPOSITION

It's especially important when photographing jewellery that your setting gives a clear sense of size and perspective, so lifestyle shots work well. For the best effect, try shooting your products at a slight angle, and from slightly above – a short depth of field will draw attention to finer details or personalisation. While most jewellery items feature a chain, clasp or hook, they're less integral parts of the design so don't have to be shot fully in focus.

Make sure that your background is light and plain, so that the delicacy of your product is visible. It's often tempting to set silver jewellery against very dark or slate backgrounds, but try to refrain from doing so – your final images would be inconsistent with the light styling we use on the site, and therefore less likely to be included in promotional campaigns.

Our team has styled lots of shoots in their time, and find that jewellery items look great when paired with a plain vintage book; a light linen material (well-ironed and laid flat); or a white cup or bowl.



SHOOT FROM ABOVE, AT AN ANGLE, TO HIGHLIGHT FINE DETAIL



AVOIDING REFLECTIONS CAN BE TRICKY

## NECKLACES AND PENDANTS

The most special component of your product should be the main focus of the image, whether it's the simple silver pendant as a whole or a smaller, more detailed element. Placing this main component in the foreground of the shot and trailing the rest of the necklace or pendant behind can look particularly effective, and works best when shot at an angle. As for most jewellery items, shots taken from directly above tend to look flat and dull.

## BRACELETS AND BANGLES

Most bracelets look best arranged in a round or oval shape, so that it's clear exactly what sort of product you're offering, and so that no aspect is obscured. If your product includes a charm or other dominant feature, make sure it takes prime position as the main focus of the shot.

## EARRINGS

Because they're so delicate, studs are sometimes challenging to shoot. Make sure that you get really close to your product, and that both earrings are included in the shot. You might like to arrange them at different angles to show the butterfly or fastening, or any other interesting aspects.

More often than not, it's best to hang longer earrings against a prop to help customers see what they'll look like when worn. It's easy to set up the shot using a plain glass, cup or bowl – just hang the earrings from the side for a simple, elegant look that will flatter your designs.

If you decide to place your products on a flat surface and take the photograph from above, try to shoot as directly from above as you can manage (though a gentle angle shouldn't hurt).

## RINGS

Rings are, by their nature, small and delicate, so it's best to keep the composition of your image as clear as possible. Place the ring at an angle to give customers a better sense of dimension and display both the outside and inside of your design. If the ring is large, or if your design is particularly complex or unusual, make sure you take multiple shots from different angles.

## PINS AND BROOCHES

Again, these usually look best photographed at a slight angle rather than straight on, and a plain, neutral surface will be most effective.

Place the whole product in view at the centre of the shot – you may want to attach it to a bag or purse to show how it might be used, but be careful not to overcrowd the image. Always make sure that the item you're selling remains the main focus of the shot.



HANG LONGER EARRINGS FROM A CUP OR BOWL FOR AN ELEGANT LOOK



GET UP CLOSE AND INCLUDE BOTH EARRINGS IN YOUR SHOT



SHOOT RINGS FROM AN ANGLE TO DEMONSTRATE DESIGN FEATURES

## DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

- Keep your images simple and your products the main focus of each shot
- Include plenty of thumbnails to show finer details from different angles, as well as colour, size or personalisation options
- Make sure your shots are in sharp focus
- Experiment with different foreground and background focus to highlight the most delicate or interesting features of your design.

### DON'T

- Forget about packaging – if you send your jewellery in an attractive box, include an image in a thumbnail
- Use mannequins or modelled shots as your main image – rather than showing the whole product, they often obscure half of it with a wrist or finger. One modelled (thumbnail) shot to demonstrate the length of a necklace might be useful, but in all other cases we recommend sticking with a lifestyle setting
- Use black or very dark backgrounds – they don't fit in with our brand photography style and can detract from your designs.



ELEGANT PROPPING ALLOWS  
THE CHARM OF A PRODUCT TO  
REALLY SHINE



WHEN SHOOTING BANGLES,  
ALWAYS PHOTOGRAPH THE  
WHOLE PRODUCT TO MAKE THE  
NATURE OF THE ITEM OBVIOUS

# Pictures, paintings and canvases

WHETHER FINE ART OR FUN-FILLED, YOUR PRODUCT WILL BE ENHANCED BY STRONG PHOTOGRAPHY WITH BRIGHT LIGHTING AND SIMPLE PROPS.

Pictures and prints are some of the easiest products to shoot and, with a few clever tricks, you can transform a simple shot into a beautiful representation of your design.

## LIGHTING

As always, bright and natural light is best. Shooting near to a large window will help make your image feel light and breezy, and ensure the colours of the piece appear true to life in the digital image – invest in a natural-effect bulb if you're struggling to find a suitable location. In any case, avoid too much strong directional light or you'll risk creating harsh shadows around mounts and frames.

## POSITION

The most effective shots result from placing the product in situ, whether it's hanging on a wall or resting on a shelf or mantelpiece. It's important to photograph artwork within a frame, even if you're not offering a framed version – our research shows that doing so can greatly increase your chances of making a sale.

## BACKGROUND

As always, we recommend a white or neutral colour that flatters your design; busy, dark or dull backgrounds can really detract from the fresh, contemporary feel that we and our shoppers love. Similarly, avoid heavily textured or patterned surfaces – if you can't find a plain wall in your perfect location, try a large piece of painted wood, MDF or thick cardboard instead.

When photographing a white frame, a light grey or pale pastel background will help add some contrast between the frame and wall.



PROPS HELP TO GIVE PRINTS A SENSE OF SCALE



CAREFULLY CHOSEN PROPS CAN ALSO HELP TELL THE STORY OF YOUR PRODUCT



## PROPS

The main focus of the shot should be your design, but accessorising the image can add a sense of scale and context, which will help your customer to imagine the picture in their own home. For instance, placing a small toy next to a child's piece, or a small vase with flowers beside a more romantic design, will develop the mood and add some valuable perspective to your shot.

## ANGLE

To get the best view, hold your camera at the same level as the product, rather than shooting from above or below. Taking the photograph straight on can work especially well for more delicate designs. For simpler and larger designs, a slight angle to the left or right might be more flattering. However, beware that strong angles can warp the customer's perception – not only of the shape of your product, but of the overall design too.

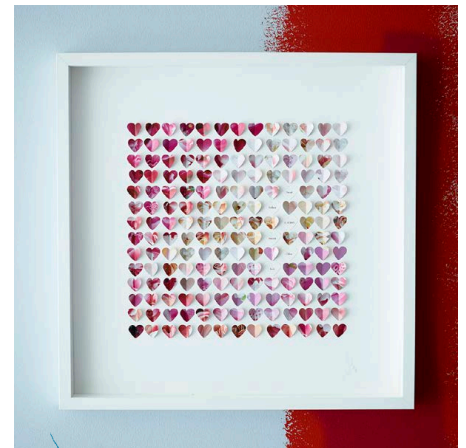
## DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

- Use props to add a sense of scale, but think carefully about the story your artwork tells and make sure it's reflected in the items you choose
- Match the colour of any props to a feature of your design, to help tie the elements together
- Use thumbnail images to provide close-up shots of the detail and texture of your design
- If you're offering the same design in varying dimensions, include an image showing every size together for context
- Remove any glass from frames before shooting to minimise distracting reflections.

### DON'T

- Obscure any part of the design with props
- Use harsh lighting to avoid dark shadows around mounts and frames
- Use distracting backgrounds – you'll risk drawing attention away from your product
- Use too many props, or you'll end up with a busy and potentially confused composition.



SHOOT STRAIGHT-ON TO KEEP DELICATE DETAILS CLEAR



YOU CAN REMOVE GLASS FROM FRAMES TO REDUCE GLARE AND HELP HIGHLIGHT FINER DETAIL

# Stationery

CARDS, INVITATIONS, NOTEBOOKS AND PHOTO ALBUMS ARE ALL HIGHLY PERSONAL.

We send cards thoughtfully, choosing the right design for the right person; we use notebooks daily for scribbling down important thoughts, ideas and lists; and we choose photo albums to compile precious memories. Great photography will show your thoughtful and original designs in a way that inspires customers to buy into the stylish lifestyle that you present.

## CARDS

It can be helpful to show greetings cards in two ways: a lifestyle shot with the card standing open or lying down flat will offer a sense of perspective; and a cut-out or graphic of the design will allow the customer to zoom in on the important details.

To take a lifestyle shot of your card, find a light, plain background (a neutral windowsill is perfect) and place the card standing up, slightly open. The lighting should be bright and natural so that the design can be seen clearly, and the card itself should take up most of the image space. You might like to try using a small, relevant prop, as well as including the envelope in the background to add a sense of scale and to show exactly what's on offer.

Taking the photograph with your camera at the same level as the card will avoid obscuring or warping any part of the design, while shooting from directly above will make for a strong graphic composition. In any case, the most important thing is to make sure your background is clear and neutral – any distraction from the design could mean your card is overlooked by browsing customers, even when it might be exactly what they were looking for.



CARDS WORK WELL STANDING UP  
- ENHANCE THE COMPOSITION BY  
ADDING AN ENVELOPE OR PACK OF  
CARDS AS A PROP



OVERHEAD SHOTS CREATE  
NICE GRAPHIC COMPOSITIONS

## PARTY AND WEDDING INVITATIONS

Wedding stationery is so much more than a piece of paper with names and dates – it's the first piece of styling that any guest will see, and often a keepsake that will be treasured for years.

With this in mind, your imagery needs to reflect the quality of the product, its unique design and the ways in which it might be kept long after the big day is over. Photos of party invitations should reflect a sense of fun and friendship, whether your design is aimed at adults or children.

A lifestyle setting will really bring out the sense of occasion that your product is a part of. The item should always be the main focus of the image, but a little simple styling in the background can really go a long way. Using a couple of roses for weddings, or pencil crayons for children's parties, will add life and atmosphere.



USE A SLIGHTLY HIGHER ANGLE FOR CAPTURING NOTEBOOKS

## NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES AND PHOTO ALBUMS

There are two styles to include when shooting these products: a clear, simple lifestyle image (your main product page shot) and several thumbnails to show various details, colours and sizes.

Your main lifestyle image might show a single product on a desk, accessorised by a couple of simple props, or it might show multiple products stacked or lined up together. Pale, painted tables or desks work well as backgrounds, and photographs or other simple stationery items make effective props.

Many successful shots can be achieved by taking the photograph from a slightly elevated angle. Make sure that the main focus isn't obscured by any of your props, and that it's clear exactly what sort of product you're showing – a notebook rather than a diary, for example. In terms of lighting, keep it bright to capture the quality of your design and highlight the lifestyle that the product fits into.

Customers are often interested in detail. Is it hand-stitched? Are there protective leaves between pages? Is there a title page? Can it be personalised? Of course, writing about these features in your product description will help, but showing such detail in your images can really boost your chances of making a sale.



PAIR PHOTO ALBUMS WITH BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS

## WHITE ON WHITE

If you're trying to shoot a white product against a white background, your product might not stand out enough and the overall image can end up looking bleached out. But fear not, there are a couple of ways around the problem.

If you're able to find a really bright setting, the strong natural light will create a subtle definition between your product and the background. You might need to play around with different angles, but should be able to avoid a washed out result without too much trouble.

Alternatively, create contrast by using a light-coloured background instead – but beware heavily patterned or dark materials, which can result in a messy look. A piece of MDF or thick cardboard painted in a pale colour (we love blue) or covered in a lightly patterned paper can work well, as can fine-weave linens.

## DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

- Show envelopes, different colours, size variations or personalised designs, if available
- Include shots of the back of the product as thumbnails (unless completely blank)
- Make sure that any text or personalisation is in focus
- Try graphic compositions
- Keep images simple, using relevant props where necessary
- Use natural light to create soft shadows.

### DON'T

- Use a black or very dark background, especially against white cards or paper
- Arrange multiple products in a long line – group shots are great, but arrange them so that the resulting image is as square as possible
- Over-complicate shots with props or backgrounds that detract from the focus.



AN ANGLED SHOT CAN HELP TO SHOW RELIEF DESIGNS



PALE BACKDROPS HELP BOLD COLOURS AND FONTS STAND OUT