

Engagement Session

GUIDE

ONLINE

www.josephwashere.com

CONTACT

info@josephwashere.com

SOCIAL

[@josephwest](https://www.instagram.com/josephwest)

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ABOUT THE SESSION

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• MARA + DAVE, HOUSTON, TX •



– These sessions are really just about celebrating your love and life together. It's a chance to capture moments that tell your story, embrace individuality, showcase creativity, and illustrate the love you share. I like to keep things laid back and stylish with a bit of quirk and the result is photos to share who you are with the ones you love. Aside from having photos of the two of you, this session is when we really get to know each other. Both you, me, and the camera.

It's the perfect way for us to learn a lot about each other's personalities; it's amazing how much I learn about how couples interact with each other just hanging out for a few hours taking photos.

After the session, I'm always open to any feedback you may have, in case we need to change anything up for the wedding day portraits. Some couples prefer less affectionate photos, sometimes the sessions lead people to finding their "good side," whatever the case may be. It's a great practice for the wedding day photos as well - it goes so much quicker and smoother if we're all comfortable and if we know what to expect from each other.

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WHEN TO BOOK

– The session kicks off all the wedding planning and festivities so timing is everything.

The engagement session will be on a weekday and ideally, in the evening or early morning. The best light is at sunrise & two hours before sunset.

As early as a sunrise session sounds, I promise, the light is perfect, sometimes there's an early morning fog, and if it's amid-summer session, it's a perfect way to beat the heat. While it's not always possible to schedule on a week day morning or evening, the sidewalks are always a little more cleared out, parks are usually emptier, and we can schedule further out in advanced if you're willing to plan for a weekday.

Scheduling the date for the engagement session will vary on what you would like to use the photos for.

Save the Dates are pre-invitations usually sent out at least 4 months before the wedding.

Since the average edit time for engagements is 4-6 weeks, I recommend scheduling your session at least five months out from your wedding day for Save the Date purposes.

When ordering a guest book or an engagement album to display at the wedding, I recommend scheduling the session at least two months before the wedding so

— I always ask my couple to help me chose a location that is unique to you. Think about things that inspire you; consider places that have might have sentimental meaning to you or anything that's fun or different about your hobbies, careers, or passions you may want to incorporate. Make it personal. Avoid monuments and landmarks. The best locations are a mix of quirky and obscure.



Laura + GW during their engagement session out in West Texas, their favorite place to be. (LEFT)

Tomiko and Braxton (TOP) did their session in Houston, starting out at their favorite bar.

WHERE TO START

Get together and brainstorm anything that describes both of you; if you're both coffee fanatics, maybe think about including your favorite local cafe in your session. If your style is more modern and minimal, you may want to pick a city block with modern store fronts, a building or restaurant with modern flair, a modern art museum, or a parking garage with geometric architecture, an industrial setting, for example. If you're both foodies, a colorful outdoor market or a picnic may be an option.

If you're both constantly found with your nose buried in books, a bookstore, library, or a study might be right for you. If you're both earth lovers who want to spend your session in the sun, in the grass, in flowing clothing, pack a picnic or grab some bikes and we'll make it happen.

Think about the colors and style of any potential locations and how you can compliment them with your outfits. If it helps to include props (or pets!) to help show who you are and what makes you different, absolutely bring them along theme you want to incorporate, feel free to talk to me about what you have in mind and we can work together on executing your ideas.

Keep in mind that sometimes the best locations for a shoot are sometimes in the most unusual places. These are just a few ideas to help you get started choosing a location.

Our shoot doesn't have to be deep and conceptual, but it helps if you love where we are. And of you have a mood, concept, or a theme you want to incorporate, feel free to talk to me about what you have in mind and we can work together on executing your idea.

If you'd rather me choose I'm always up for location scouting to find the perfect spot for you.



Like the location, your outfits should also be a reflection of you. You'll want to keep the location in mind when you're planning your session wardrobe.

I've put together an inspiration board to help show some items that work well in photos here: <http://pinterest.com/joewestishere/client-inspiration/>

I've included a few additional tips and color and pattern combinations on individual pins on the Pinboard that I felt work really well. Take this as your excuse to buy that outfit you've been eyeing and to break out the shoes you look amazing in and just had to buy.

Primary colors play a huge part in my photography.

A touch of red, yellow, or blue can make any ensemble pop and help you stand out from the background. Even adding a pair of red or yellow shoes, tights, or a bright blue tie will transform your outfits.

A great, fitted button up shirt is perfect. The sleeves can be rolled up for part of the session for something a little more casual or bring a blazer for a more dressed up look. If into hats bring along a fedora, but leave baseball hats at home.

Complimenting accessories are important as they're a perfect way to bring your outfits together.

– Confidence is everything in photographs. What you choose to wear should be something you feel comfortable in, something that compliments your physical features, your individuality, something you can move in, and something that makes you feel amazing.



JENNIFER + DAVID, ANNIVERSARY SESSION

Think about colors that go well together, but please try to avoid matching.

Dress as though you are attending the same event; if one of you is dressed sophisticate-chic or if you're planning to go barefoot in a field, match each other accordingly.

Avoid baggy button down shirts, light denim, polos, tennis shoes and sneakers, and logo shirts. There are always exceptions to the rules, but one rule I must insist on - if your shirt has more tattoos than you do, please leave it at home. Also, try to avoid any clothing that may show visible bra straps, tags, or semi transparent clothing that could reveal undergarments.

During the session, plan on only carrying the bare minimum - if you can, leave purses, bags, cell phones, etc in your car or I can carry them for you.

I often recommend scheduling the makeup trials on the same day as the shoot - I'll say it, being dolled up makes you feel a little more ready to work it for the camera.

The camera loves eyes that pop, so feel free to give your lashes, brows, and eye



make up a little extra attention before the session. Don't forget nail polish or if you prefer bare nails and you're worried about your nails during ring shots, consider treating yourself to a mani pedi. It's doing that little bit extra that will make you feel confident, and, (sorry for repetition, but) confidence is king.

Lastly, rules were meant to be broken. I truly trust your personal style and I know I'll love what you choose, but I encourage bringing along an extra outfit or two for

each of you in case one gets dirty, if we have time to change during the session; or if you'd just like a second opinion before we start the session.

If you have any questions as you're planning for your session, please don't hesitate to ask and I look forward to photographing you soon!



Something a little different

It's becoming increasingly more common for couples to put on the wedding dress and suit and shoot a session as "bride and groom" before or after the wedding day. It's a relaxed way to get to explore any areas and locations you won't be able to visit on your wedding day and if you'd like to change the style up a bit, it's a chance to wear a slightly different version of your day-of outfit.

While it's not a substitution for wedding day portraits, it does help take some of the stress off the both of you during the bride & groom session on the wedding day. This session can be a package add-on or can be used in place of the engagement session itself.



JESSICA + DAN, HOUSTON, TX
DAY AFTER SESSION



Alexandria + Justin's session at James Turrell's "Twilight Epiphany" Skyspace



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MICHELLE + BRETT, 2018

SHOW YOUR LOVE — This guide was written to give a few tips to help plan for your session. It's in no way a rule book. It's a few pointers to help guide you in the right direction to make sure you're ready for the camera. When it gets right down to it, this is YOUR session. Make it personal, make it about you...and remember, above all else, have fun with it.

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ARYA + SAHIL, CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

WHERE YOUR LOVE
STORY LIVES ON.



W: josephwashere.com

E: info@josephwashere.com

IG: [@josephwest](https://www.instagram.com/josephwest)