

Lifestyle Content Guidebook for Contributors

Learn how to create and upload diverse lifestyle content to Shutterstock



Welcome to Shutterstock's Lifestyle Content Guidebook



What you will learn in this guidebook

We'll be reviewing what diverse lifestyle imagery looks like, and why it sells on Shutterstock. The goal of this guide is to help you prepare, shoot, and upload content in order to maximize your earnings.

Our customers are looking for imagery of diverse individuals in genuine lifestyle moments, with an emphasis on diversity. Knowing how to create visuals that sell will help you be a successful contributor at Shutterstock. Let's get started!

What is diversity in lifestyle content?

Creatives are searching for images that showcase diversity in all its forms. Powerful lifestyle photography aims to capture real-life events, situations, or milestones from an artistic point of view. When you create lifestyle visuals for stock, you should capture a feeling of reality, while showcasing the true diversity of a world featuring people of all ages, body types, genders, abilities, ethnicities, and lifestyles.

Using models that are diverse is recommended to not only establish a more worldly approach to your images, but also to attract global clients to purchase your images.



Why upload diverse and authentic model-released content?

It's simple. It sells.



Now more than ever, it's important for clients to showcase diversity and genuine lifestyle imagery.

- Diversity of ages, abilities, ethnicities, and genders in model selection should always be a top priority.
- Keep in mind when picking models and set accessories that the final photo should feel genuine and natural. Don't simply check off "diversity boxes", as deliberately forcing situations may come off as fake.
- Don't only have models look straight into the camera. Capture a variety of poses and real moments.
- Use real environments instead of only a studio setup. For example, shoot in city centers, unique cafes, or interesting destinations.
- Use natural light, not just studio light. Consider shooting in the golden hour, moody evening light, or natural daylight.

Examples of imagery that sells

Part of the beauty of being human is that each individual has a range of moments and emotions in our everyday lives. These include happiness, sadness, and all the in-betweens. Capturing these real-life situations is a good strategy for what type of content to focus on. That's why diversity of age, gender, ethnicities, disabilities, body types, and relationships play such an important role.

Pro Tip: Check the Shot List for a monthly list of content clients are searching for.



Why are model releases and accurate keywords important?



Releases are required for submitted content. Having accurate information when you upload is required in order for potential customers to find your images.

Things to keep in mind:

- Always have model or property releases available on your phone, so that you're prepared for any opportunity to shoot.
- Your keywords, descriptions, and model release information should be accurate to the image you upload, so when customers search for them they find the right image.
- Make sure your models' ethnicities are a true representation of who they are. For example, don't only tag "European"; be specific to the model's country of origin.
- Here's an example of why that matters. Imagine a client is looking for an image of a Russian woman walking through the park. All keywords, tags, and descriptions should be accurate to the ethnicity of that model and image. Including only a tag that says "European" may turn away clients as they could have been specifically looking for a Russian woman.

10 key tips for any lifestyle photoshoot



Here's a good page to keep as reference before any lifestyle shoot.

1. Diversity is key. Use models of all ages, genders, ethnicities, disabilities, and body types.
2. Upload clear, concise, and accurate keywords and descriptions for images and models.
3. Be specific about your models' physical attributes when entering keywords.
4. Select locations and angles that provide variety in the surrounding elements.
5. Use real people, not just professional models. Working with your local network is a great place to start.
6. Shoot realistic expressions and stories in a stylized way.
7. Imagine what your audience will feel when looking at the image or moment you are capturing.
8. Provide your models with positive encouragement, especially if they aren't used to being photographed.
9. Upload candid photographs—moments you don't expect to shoot may turn out to be the most genuine.
10. Keep it fun! You're there to capture real, enjoyable memories. Make it a great day on set for all!

Use this guide as a daily reference when capturing lifestyle content.

Additionally, check out the Shutterstock Blog for more tips and resources to help you succeed. Thank you for being a part of the Shutterstock contributor community. We can't wait to see what you create next!

Questions? Contact submit@shutterstock.com.

