

LYME ACADEMY

OF FINE ARTS

Figure and Portrait Model Tips for Lyme Academy Classes and Open Drawing Sessions

For those new to figure and portrait modeling we've created this handy tip sheet to help prepare you for your modeling sessions at the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts. We consider the professional work of models to be the bedrock of the Academy, and we are grateful for models' contribution and creativity, and welcome and encourage all genders, ages, and body sizes and shapes.

What skills do you need to be a successful figure or portrait model?

- Physical stamina to stand and pose for long periods of time. *The ability to hold still and not fidget is necessary for the students & artists to accurately depict the details of your facial and body features.*
- Creativity to come up with poses and various positions.
- Confidence in your unclothed body, particularly in front of others.
- Punctuality

What happens in the model studio?

A class or session is typically 3 to 3 ½ hrs broken into 20-minute segments, with five minutes between segments. There is one long break of 15 minutes..

The instructor or monitor will set all poses and will also set a timer. For lengthy or extended poses, the instructor or monitor will work with the model to find a pose that is comfortable. Given that students are working precisely and accurately, models are asked to memorize and hold each pose to the best of their abilities (see below for tips). Discuss any challenges you may have in advance, to ensure that you can hold the required pose.

The model's feet and any props required for the session will be outlined in tape by the teacher or studio assistant to help with consistency of the pose. You can also do this in certain contexts (see below).

LYME ACADEMY

O F F I N E A R T S

During breaks, models must wear clothing or a robe. A robe is recommended because it is easy to put on and take off. Sandals or slip-on shoes are also recommended; cement floors can be cold!

Other helpful tips

- Be prepared: arrive well-rested and bring water, a snack, and/or anything else you might need during scheduled breaks.
- Find a stance that is more or less balanced, not leaning too far in one direction. See if you are able to slightly relax in the pose.
- Check that the pose is not restricting your regular breathing.
- Use your core to support the spine.
- Try not to let the arch of the foot collapse. Scrunching and wiggling the toes can help.
- Imagine your foot as a tripod with three points contacting the floor: big toe, pinky toe, and heel. This helps distribute the weight more evenly and allows you to feel grounded.
- Keep the knees slightly bent, especially if the leg is bearing weight. At the same time think of gently pressing the floor away from you.
- Use any additional padding or cushioning that you need. Be sure these are not too thick or too soft, as that can sometimes cause instability.
- Keep the eyes focused on one specific point as much as possible. This helps to keep your eyes and head in a consistent direction and alignment.
- Use a piece of tape or other marker if the surface is a blank wall or floor. If you are distracted for any reason, returning your gaze to this point will help you reset.

LYME ACADEMY

O F F I N E A R T S

Practice your poses

Practice is important, especially for those new to figure modeling, use a mirror to see the motion, position and view. Find which positions are more comfortable, easier to hold for long periods of time and are more dynamic.

Practice is important, especially for those new to figure and portrait modeling. Use a mirror to achieve and observe optimum motion, position, and view. Find which positions are more comfortable, easier to hold for long periods of time, and are more dynamic.

Be sure to practice holding these poses for at least 10 minutes to determine your level of stamina. The more experienced you become, the more able you will be to hold a steady pose. Also remember that you can adopt the same pose, rotating it to give artists other angles and views to draw.

These model tips were provided by Lyme Academy of Fine Arts models, Katie Schenker and Tom Soboleski, 2022.