

HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH JEWELRY

Quick Guide
Written by Amy Grace



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INTRODUCTION

More than 1.6 billion people are buying products online. The jewelry industry is one of the top fields here. A large amount is earned every year from the jewelry market.

Among online sellers, 90% think that photo quality is the most important factor for sales. With each passing year, more and more jewelry sales shift to the online platform, and today the jewelry industry is one of the top fields in e-commerce.


Jewelry photography is different from other kinds of product photography in many ways. There are specific rules that need to be maintained. Anyone can shoot jewelry if only they've prepared themselves properly for the shoot. Knowing even the smallest details is a must here.

Do you know how jewelry photography is different from others? Here is a complete jewelry photography guide, including an equipment list, process, tips, and ideas.

What you'll learn in this guide:

Here, we will cover the significant aspects of jewelry photography, and you'll get an overall idea about the whole process. These are the areas to be discussed:

- 1) How to photograph jewelry
- 2) Equipment you need to shoot jewelry
- 3) Setup for jewelry photography
- 4) Common mistakes and how to avoid them
- 5) Important jewelry photography ideas and tips

 **Recommended Reading:** After learning about camera settings, improve your photographs by understanding how light works! Grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [Understanding Light Book One](#).

HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH JEWELRY

Photographing jewelry requires patience and meticulousness. Every detail is important here, and this is not an easy job. From lighting to composition, every element plays an important role.

Before shooting, you need to plan everything appropriately so that you can work according to the plan and achieve the outcome you want.

1. EQUIPMENT

There are some basic types of equipment that you'll need to photograph jewelry. While choosing these, keep in mind how you want to shoot your product. Here is the list of equipment you'll need to capture great photos of jewelry:

CAMERA

You don't need any fancy gadgets, and there is no one best camera for jewelry photography. A mirrorless DSLR camera is enough for a jewelry photo shoot. That will cover pretty much every product you might need to photograph.

Kit lenses that come with DSLRs can easily be considered the best lens for jewelry photography. A 16-50mm or 18-55mm can work fine for jewelry photography. You can keep an 85-100mm macro lens to capture the smaller rings or nose pins, but you'll need this only if you're publishing in big sizes. In that case, a macro lens will give better quality.

TRIPOD

A tripod is essential for product photography, particularly jewelry, to get sharp images. It's even better if you can use a remote to press the shutter to eliminate the camera shake. This will help you to establish the composition, too.

LIGHT

For jewelry photography lighting, three lights in total are enough. Use two lights for side lighting and one for the top. The top light needs to be brighter than the sidelights. You can use a 500-watt top light and two 250-watt sidelights.

Other than that, you might need a reflector and softboxes. If you are on a budget, a ring light can be an excellent choice.

TABLE AND BACKGROUND

You'll need a table to display the product on. If your product is on the floor, you'll have to take all the images from a high angle. Adding paper or cloth on the table creates a suitable background for the image.

2. SETUP

Jewelry photography setup does take a significant amount of concentration. We're going to break the parts down and discuss each one.

BACKGROUND

Background plays a crucial role in jewelry photography. You can't be fixated on one type. You need to change and try different backgrounds depending on your products. Plain white and black backgrounds are pretty standard in jewelry photography. But that just doesn't go with every product.

PROPS

Using props is fantastic for small products like jewelry. This creates a different ambiance in the image that makes it more appealing. Rather than finding difficult things, go for easy and straightforward items from your surroundings or from nature.

For example, you can place a yellow flower beside a piece of jewelry that has a yellow stone, or add a pinch of colored powder of that same color. This reference to a similar color makes the composition

much better. Always think about making creative compositions.

SET THE PRODUCT

Before shooting jewelry, you need to clean the product correctly. Even the most miniscule dust particles can show up in images. Use glass cleaner or other liquid to clean the product first.

Now it's time to put the product in the right place. You can simply lay it on the table, or you can use stands. For example, cardboard can be used for jewelry photography. You can put a necklace, earrings, or even nose pins on cardboard. Other materials like sticks and boxes can also be used to display the jewelry.

LIGHT

Set the light after placing your product. Ensure the light source is precisely where you want it to be. Use softboxes to get rid of hard shadows in your image. Place lights on both sides of the product and a third light shining from the top.

3. LIGHTING

First of all, keep in mind that you need to use soft light for jewelry photography. Jewelry products are already glossy. Hard light is unacceptable in most cases here because that will create dark shadows and reflections. Try to keep the lighting soft and mild.

We already talked about using three lights with softboxes. Ring lights also work well for jewelry photography as they produce soft light. Also try window lights. There is no rule that you'll need expensive lighting equipment. Make use of ambient light if needed.

If you need flash, avoid using the on-camera flash, as this is direct and will create brighter light than you need. Use off-camera flash and set it wherever you need it. Also, adjust the light intensity while setting up.

To set the light, you might need to experiment and readjust several times in order to find the point where you get the best light.

4. CAMERA SETUP

Set your camera on a tripod and frame your shot. Shoot in manual mode so that you can adjust the exposure easily. There are three settings that you need to work with:

APERTURE

Use shallow depth of field if and only if your product and image demand that. In most cases, you'll need a greater depth of field. Keep the aperture above f/11 or f/15 or even higher if necessary.

ISO

As there will be a light setup, you won't have to think about higher ISO. Keep the ISO low to avoid noise in your image.

SHUTTER SPEED


You can, and you should, use a fast shutter speed here. Keep it around 1/1000 or 1/2000.

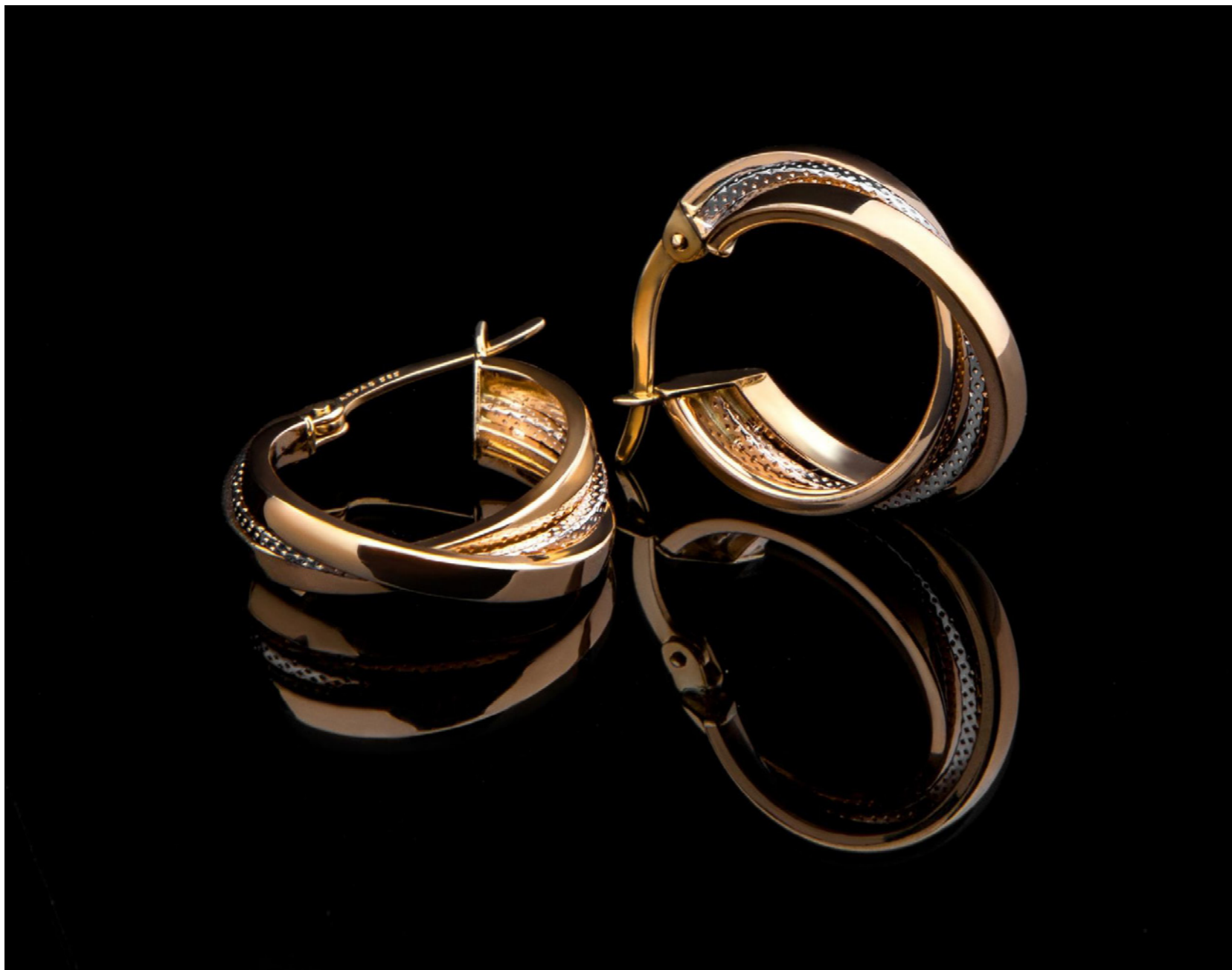
5. POST-PROCESSING

These are the most basic post-processing edits you can apply to your jewelry photography:

- **Brightness/Contrast:** This is used to adjust the light and shadow of the image. Contrast means the difference between light and dark in an image.
- **Dodge/Burn:** The Dodge tool and the Burn tool are opposites. The Dodge tool darkens an overly highlighted area. On the other hand, the Burn tool highlights a particularly dark area.
- **Hue/Saturation:** This changes the color tone of the image. Be careful about not changing your original product color while using this.

- **Clone:** Use it if you accidentally get any unwanted spots in your photo. This tool copies and pastes one part of your image onto another.
- **Spot Healing:** Correct small details of the product with this tool, like dust, scratches, etc.

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Photograph by Dima Valkov

COMMON JEWELRY PHOTOGRAPHY MISTAKES TO AVOID

Here are some of the most common mistakes that photographers make while shooting jewelry:

FOCUS

Many photographers don't keep in mind that focus doesn't work in the same way for all images. You can't just use shallow depth of field where you need to show an overall view. Greater depth of field is a must here to give a complete picture.

On the other hand, shallow depth of field works for details. When you want to show details of a product, then you can focus on a particular area and keep the other areas out of focus to keep your viewers' concentration on a specific detail.



Photograph by Leah Kelley



Photograph by Carlos Esteves

WHITE BALANCE

White balance determines the color tone of an image. Be careful about the white balance while shooting. If you want to capture the product's actual color, you'll have to adjust it with the white balance. Otherwise, there is a chance of the customer returning the product because of the wrong color.

REFLECTION

Reflection is a frequent struggle of jewelry photographers. As jewelry itself is a glossy product, there is a high chance of reflection while shooting. Even if it is a small one, this can change the design of your product. So, try your best to avoid reflection while shooting.

If you still get that, work on it while doing post-processing and adjust the light. Don't forget that any kind of unnecessary reflection will disturb your viewers, which you surely don't want.



Photograph by Photos Olit

HARD LIGHT

Hard light is annoying for jewelry. This creates so many other issues like high contrast and hard shadows, increasing the chance of getting unnecessary reflections. Natural light or soft studio light works much better for jewelry, so don't bring the harsh light into your image without good reason.

INCONSISTENCY

There is importance in pattern. Following a specific style allows you to create your own unique identity. But suppose you are inconsistent and produce different product images for various products. In that case, there won't be any way to identify that all these are owned by one brand.

Inconsistency makes it challenging to relate to the brand. You don't need to use the same composition or background or props. Just maintain a particular style. You also can make a preset for post-production to keep the tone of the images the same.



Photograph by Tessa Wilson

TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING JEWELRY

Try to keep these essential rules in mind to produce quality work for your business:

CREATIVE COMPOSITION

Composition is essential for any kind of product photography. For small products like jewelry, it's even more important to give enough attention to composition. This can change the mood of an image. Try interesting and new ideas to make it work. The more creative you are here, the more pleasing your image will be.



Photograph by The glorious studio

USE INTERESTING PROPS

Using props is nothing new in product photography. Chances are, many other photographers will use the same technique. But what makes the difference is how incomparable your props are. The more unique and exciting your props are, the more appealing your image will be.

TRY GIF

GIFs and moving images have become a big part of digital media. They are cool; they are trendy as well as lively. Suppose you're making an earring image. Just by swinging the earring and capturing the movement, it will change the quality of your image. This kind of image attracts the customers much more than the typical static image.

TAKE MULTIPLE SHOTS


One or two shots are never enough for jewelry photography. For jewelry, you need to show the product from different perspectives to give an overall idea. If you have enough shots, you can adjust and use them in whichever way you want. Take close-ups, wide shots, and try different angles.



Photograph by say straight

MAINTAIN MINIMALISM

Finally, be minimal with your image. The 'less is more' rule works here well. Keep the background simple so that it doesn't distract viewers. Use minimal props and keep the image simple. Jewelry itself is a gorgeous product, so you don't need to add anything distracting that takes the lead in the image.

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Photograph by Eric Fung

FINAL THOUGHTS

The jewelry industry is a big market and has always maintained high standards. Now, with the growth of the digital market, jewelry photography has also made its place. Professional photography is not enough; keeping pace with the trends is essential, too, as this is constantly evolving.

Jewelry photography techniques are not tough, but they can be challenging. Photographing jewelry requires a lot of attention to each detail. Even the smallest mistake can be a major one in the image. As this kind of photography is sensitive, photographers need to have adequate knowledge of what they're going to do.

Self-Check Quiz:

- 1) What kind of light sources can you use in jewelry photography?
- 2) How do you prevent reflections in images?
- 3) What props can be used in jewelry photography?
- 4) When doesn't a shallow depth of field work for jewelry?
- 5) What quality of light is preferable for jewelry?



Hey there!

Let's get real for a minute... Learning photography can be super challenging! But we're here to help you every step of the way! Here are 3 of our most useful (*and FREE!*) photography resources:



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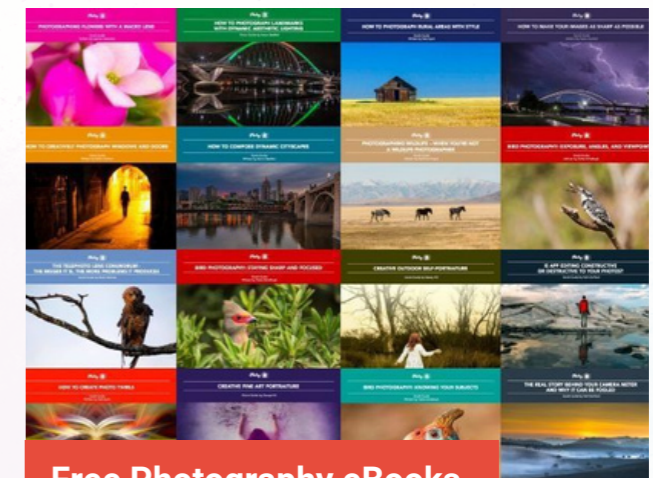
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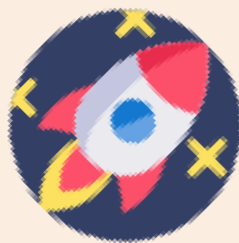
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Amy Grace, a devotee writer of [Clipping Path Studio](#), has substantial experience in the commercial photography field. Merging competency and skill in her profession, she has helped numerous entrepreneurs create their brands. Aside from photography, Amy is involved in photo retouching work as well. Follow her on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Congratulations! You've completed this Photzy guide!

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