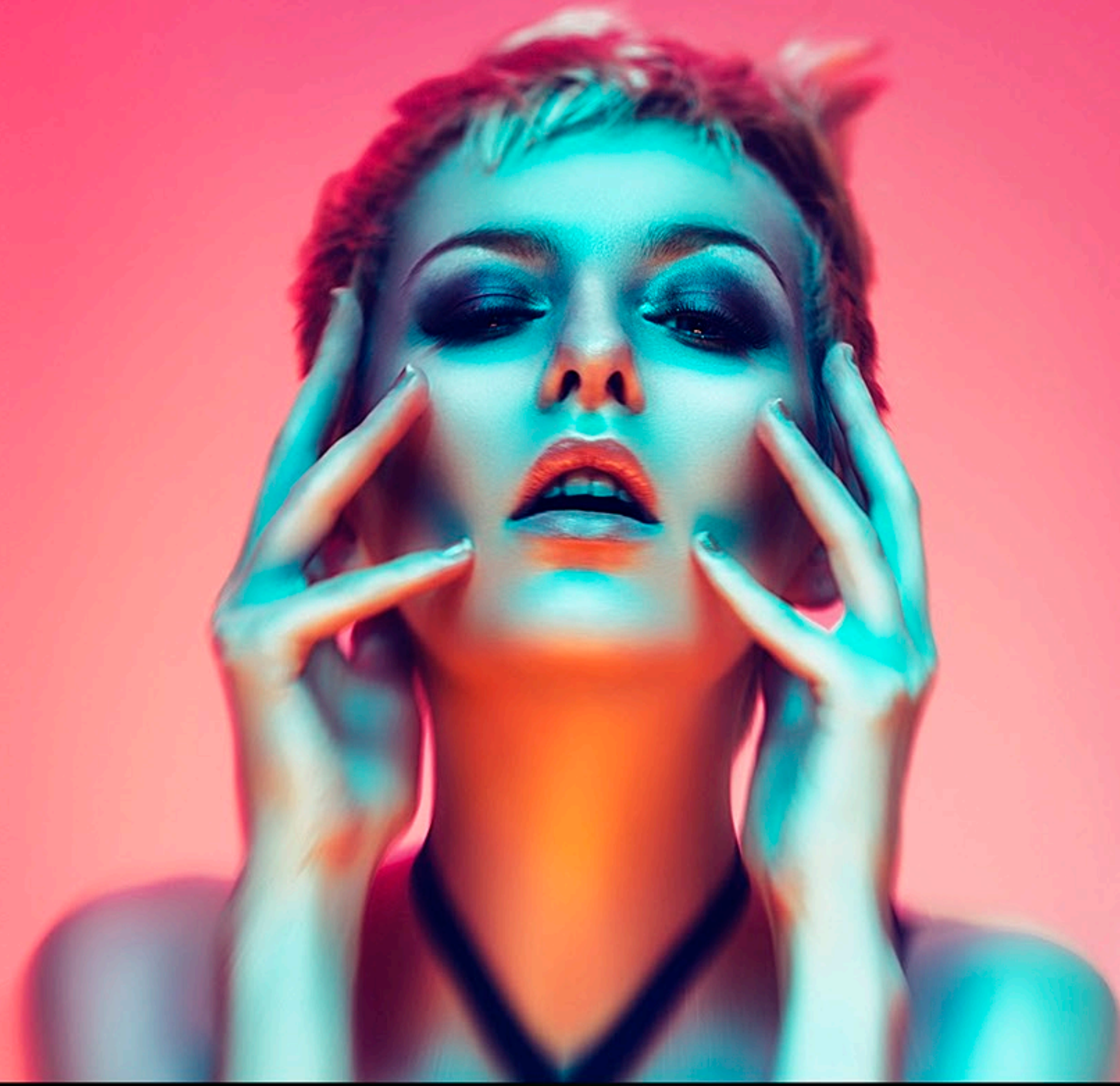


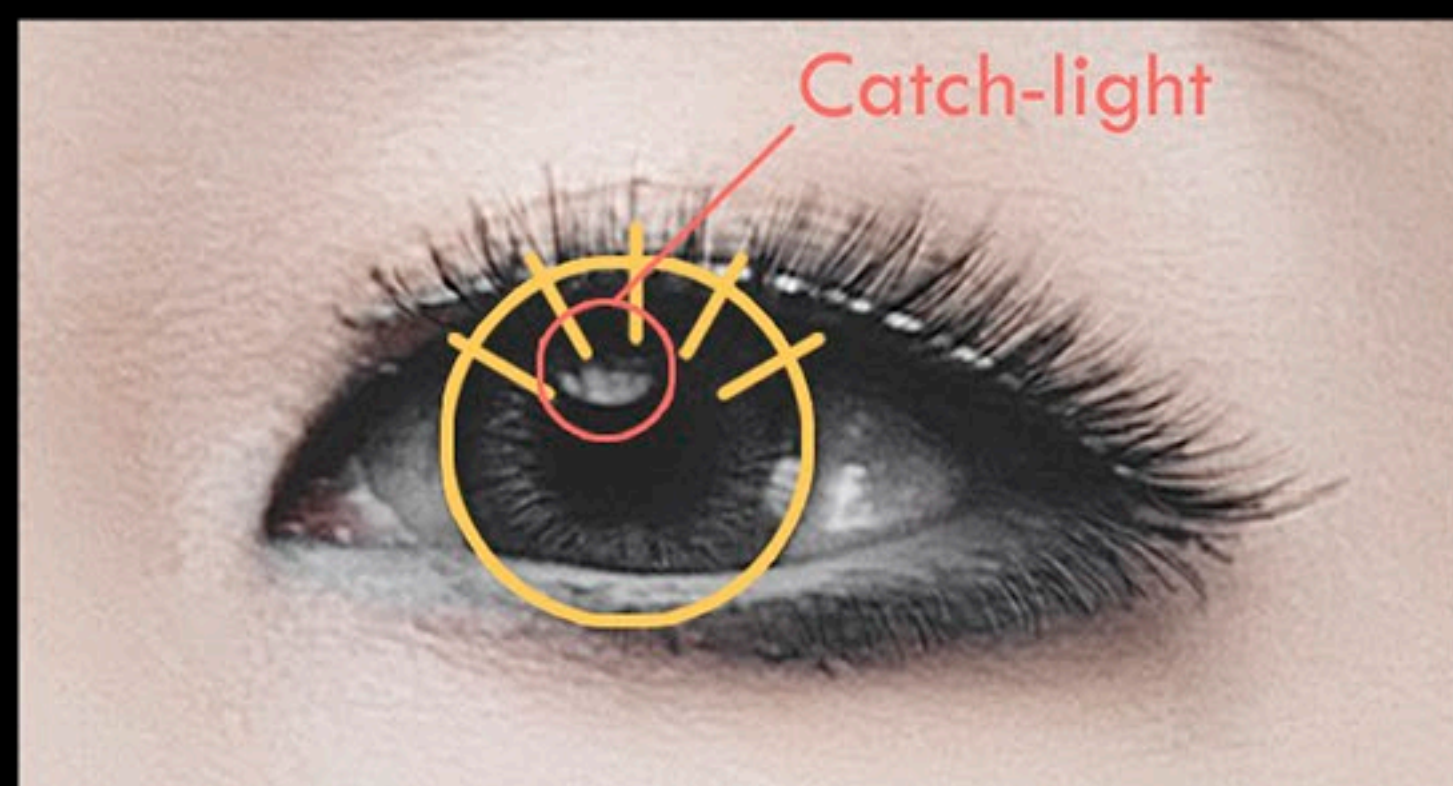
Thanks so much for signing up to my mailing list  
- Here's your Top Ten Quick Tips from Jake Hicks Photography-



**JAKE HICKS**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**



Try and avoid cross-contamination when using multiple lights, overlapping shadows create confusion for the viewer. The most successful photos have always given the 'appearance' of being lit from a single source.



Ensure that your key light; the one lighting the models face, is working with your models pose. Try to keep clean crisp shadows and try to avoid dark eye sockets without the tell-tale sparkle or catch-lights in the subject's eyes. Talk to the model before you start shooting, explain where your key-light is and which way you want them to direct most of their poses.

With your secondary lights; ensure that they are giving you the desired effect. Remember, these lights are subjective; you can use them to either fill in shadows or create highlights in the hair. The power and exposure that they give you is down to your discretion, if you want to blow the highlights in the hair to give it extra shine you can.

If you are lighting your background with coloured gels, try under-exposing them by a couple of stops to get stronger vibrant colours.



Try to match your poses to your chosen lighting style. If you're going for a hard-lit style, try to capitalise on the dramatic shadows with dynamic and strong poses, remember that the absence of light in areas of the image will create shapes, capitalise on this to draw the viewer around the photograph.

Keep an eye on background clutter. Check for objects that shouldn't be in the image like lighting stands, cables, assistants, even give a dirty floor a quick clean if it will save you time in post. A cable coming out of the side of a models head can take seconds to move on set but hours to remove later in post, especially where hair is involved.

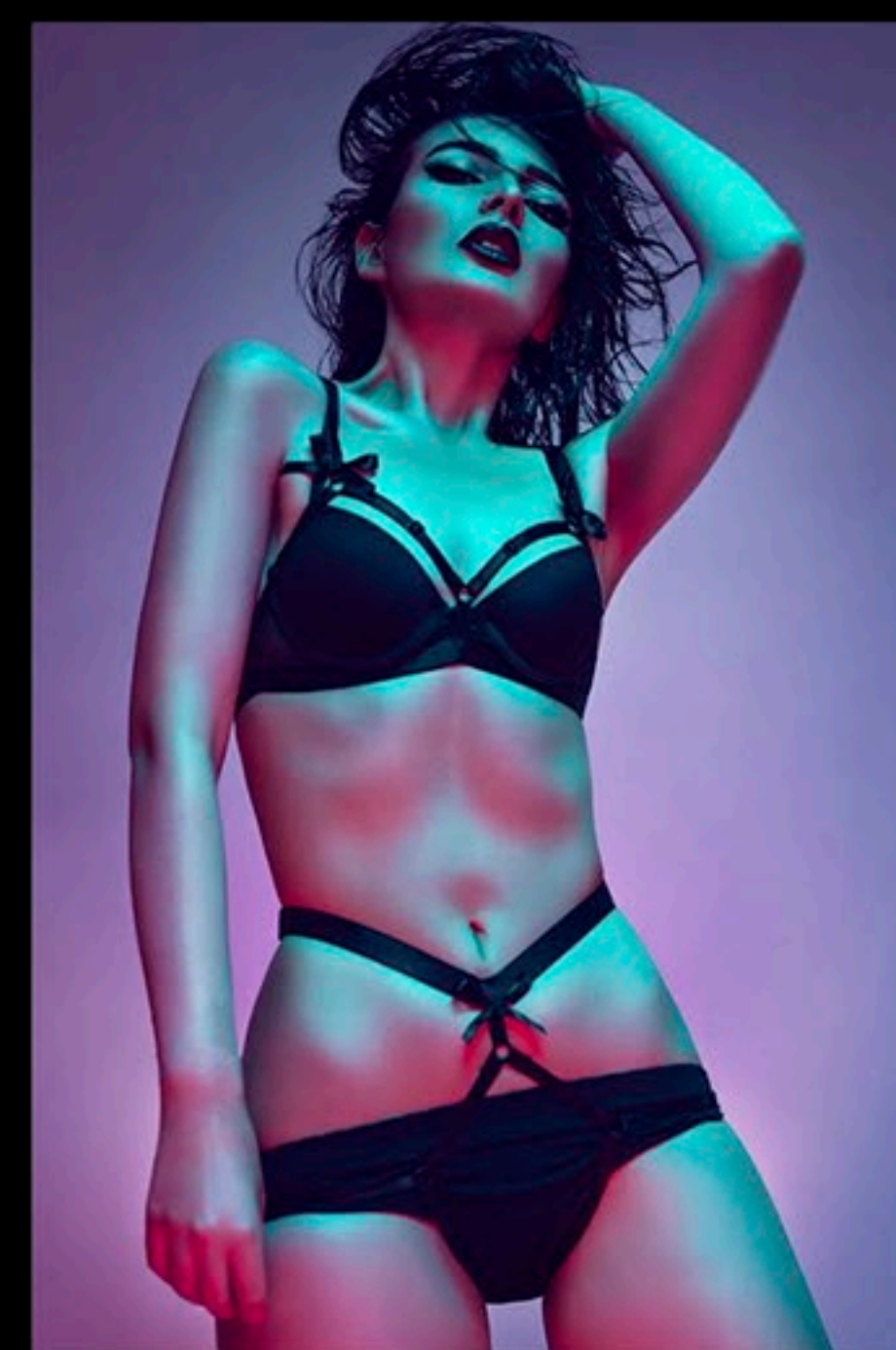


# JAKE HICKS

## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Top Studio Lighting Tips

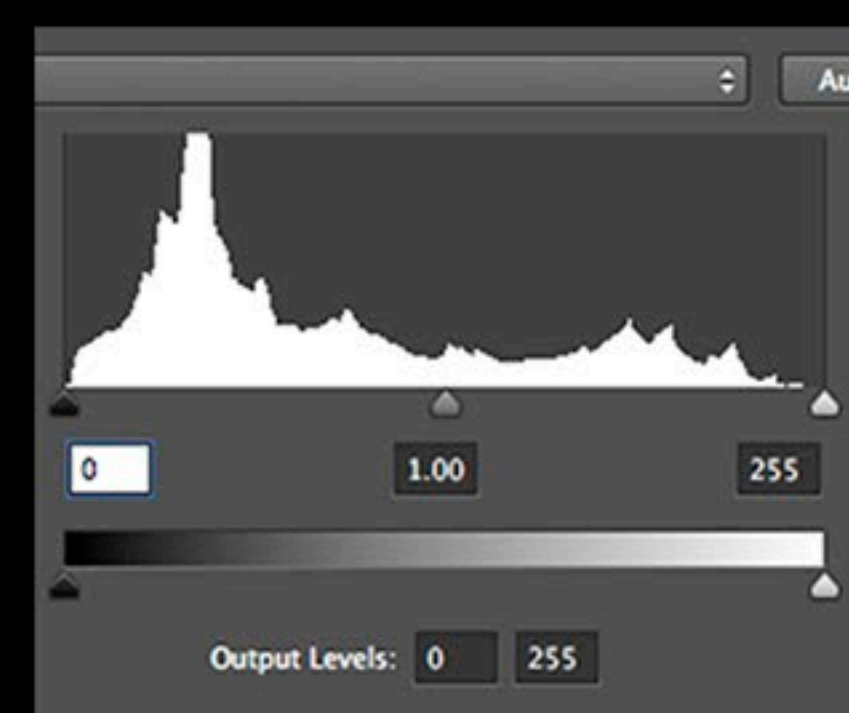
There are very few rules in photography beyond the physics of light, but there are certainly a few *guidelines* you'd best consider being very mindful of.



Think of where your camera is in relation to your model. If you are above the models eye level shooting down on them, they will often look less dominant or 'cute'. If you are shooting below their eye level you will make them look

more powerful in an image. This technique is often used in corporate portraiture and presidential photos.

Utilise your space. If you're finding your key light spilling onto the background, move your lighting setup further away to compensate.



Always light meter but above all check the histogram of your images whilst you're shooting, it's to late to check them later in post.



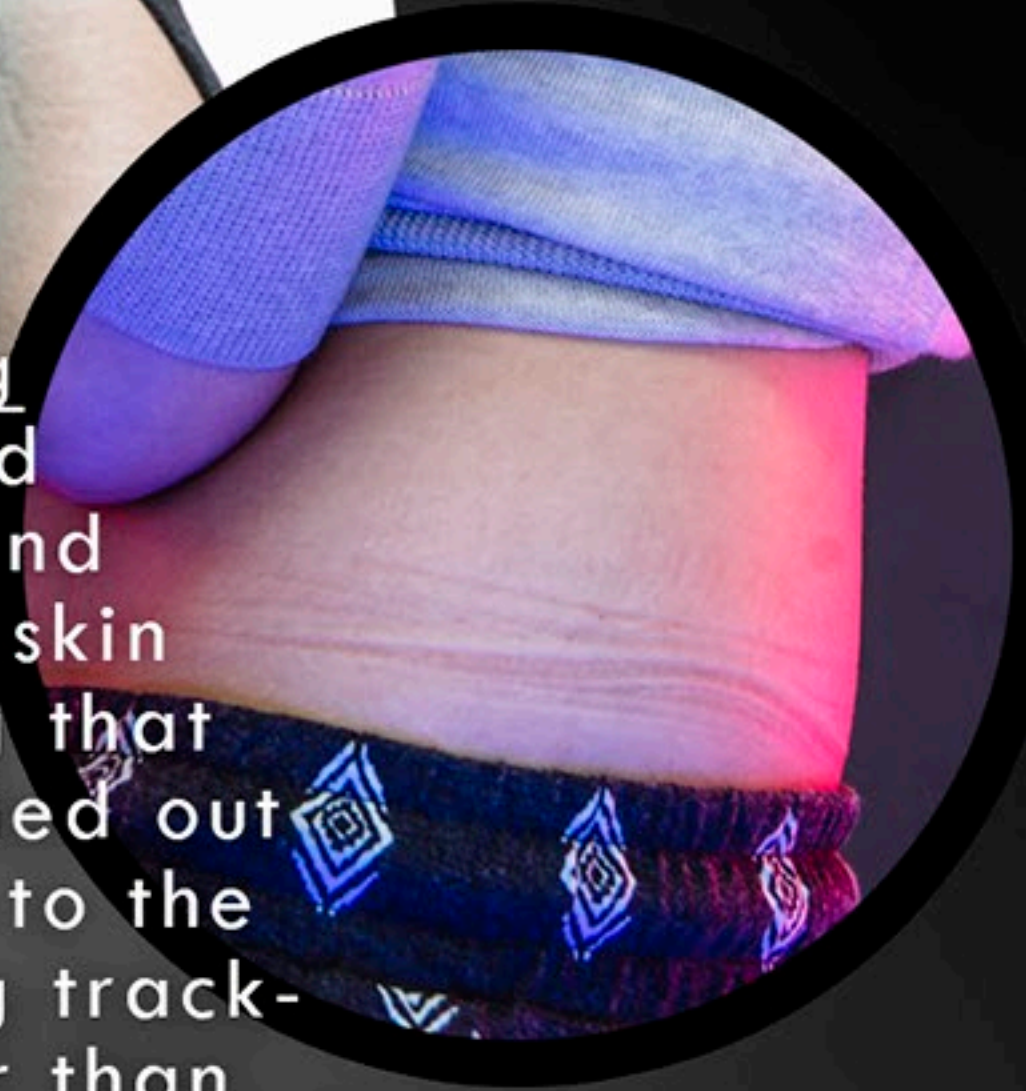
### Hair Bands

This is my biggest pet-hate! Hair bands on the wrist seem to happen at least once per shoot. They even appear on the wrists of models with short hair! Spot them and remove them before you have to retouch them.



### Tight Clothing

Those little red grooves, lines and marks on models skin from tight clothing that needs to be retouched out afterwards. Arrive to the shoot in loose fitting track-suit bottoms rather than tight skinny jeans, this will save a lot of retouching time.



### Five things that will reduce your retouching times

Most of these are little things and are easy to rectify but they often get overlooked. If you spot them during shooting or prepare properly prior to actually taking the shot you can save yourself a ton of retouching time.

A lot of these can actually be spotted by the photographer to so its not just down to the model to remember.

### Don't get your face on

If you're arriving to a shoot as model and you know that there's going to be a makeup artist there, don't arrive with a full face of makeup already applied. The makeup artist is just going to have to remove it and start again. Plus this can sometimes result in extra redness especially in the eyes that needs to be retouched.



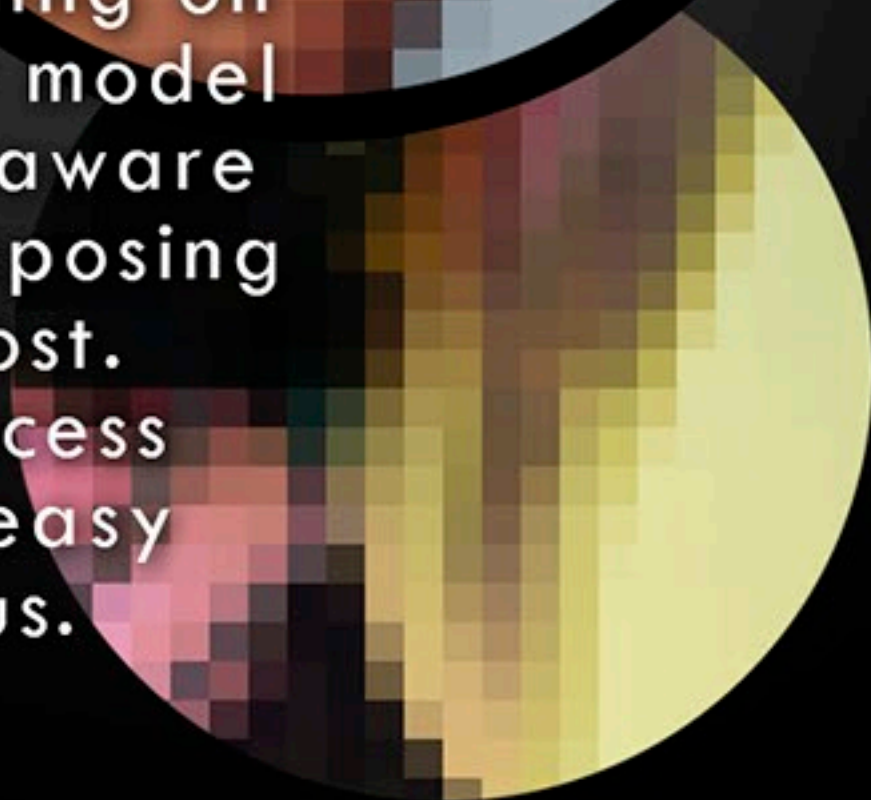
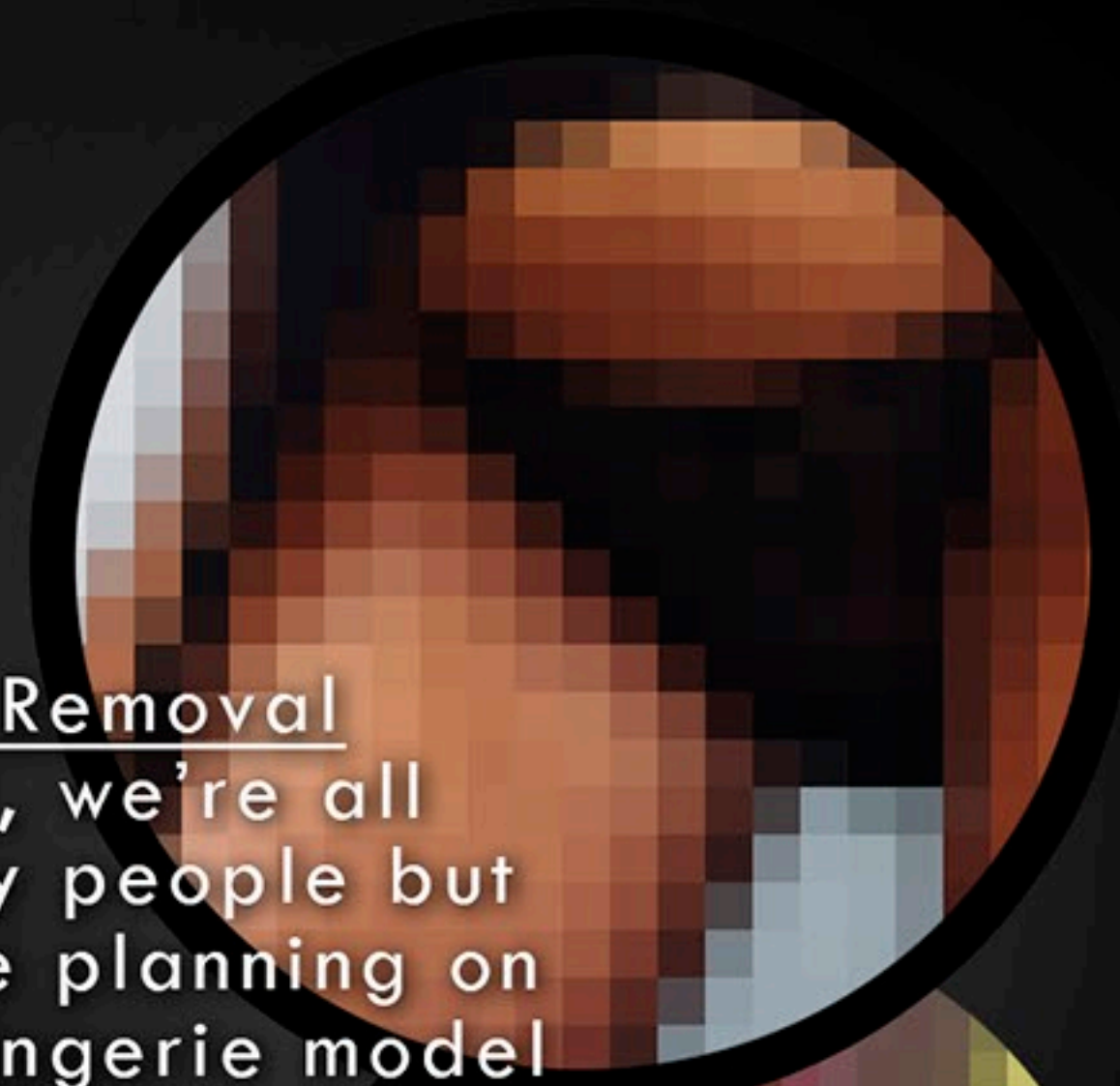
### Personal Items

This is easily done as models wear these personal items like piercings and rings everyday but they can be quite distracting in a shot so politely ask them to remove them.



### Hair Removal

I get it, we're all very busy people but if you are planning on being a lingerie model then please be aware that you'll be exposing more than most. Retouching excess hair is never easy or glamorous.







## Complimentary Colours

These are the two colours that are opposite one another on the colour wheel. Popular colour combos to try are green and red, yellow and purple and my personal favourite, orange and blue.



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## The Humble Colour Wheel

The colour wheel has been around since Isaac Newton laid out colours in a natural progression around a disc in 1706 and its the universal standard for displaying colours which we now refer to as a colour wheel.

A statement like that is usually followed by saying 'look at how far we've developed it since then', but that simply isn't true. In fact it literally hasn't changed at all, colour is a representation of lights wavelengths perceived by our eyes, it's physics and as such hasn't changed and nor is it likely to.

Although colour and its relationship to one another hasn't changed over the years we still find it tricky to remember all of the combinations that work well together. The reasons for why certain colour combinations work is beyond the scope of this mini article but the purpose is to highlight the importance of a colour theorists best friend, the humble colour wheel.

Those that have worked with me in the past will no doubt attest to the fact that I will rarely be far from my colour wheel when I am planning the final stages of a photoshoot. There are usually a lot of colours at play on a shoot like styling, lighting, makeup and backgrounds so to ensure that all these colours work in harmony you need to know which colours work well together and a colour wheel is going to give you the answer.

## Triadic Colours

This colour combination requires three colours that appear at the three corners of a triangle laid out on the colour wheel. The most obvious and most popular triadic colour combo is the three primary colours, red, blue and yellow. Other colour combos to try are green, orange and purple or one of my favourite variations blue/green, red/violet and orange/yellow.



## Analogous Colours

Analogous colours requires three colours to achieve but its relatively easy to do because the colours are side-by-side on the colour wheel. Here I'm using violet, blue/violet and blue but you can use any three similar colours and the most popular ones you see are sunset photos that use the reds, oranges and yellows.







The image above was taken with this simple setup of a key-light and a fill light. The setup is often referred to as 'clam-shell' lighting and its popularity is in part due to its incredibly beautifying light thanks to its symmetry. What can often be the problem with this setup is the fact that its very hard to get the fill light in close enough to the model without the additional light-stand getting in the way. This results in it having to be placed one side or another of the key-light which in-turn ruins the symmetrical lighting you're going for. The Super Clamp however solves this issue by attaching directly to the key-light stand pole maintain that beautifying lighting.



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## Super Clamp

The aptly named Super Clamp from those clever gear heads at Manfrotto have yet another 'must have' studio accessory. The Super Clamp is a great little clamp that comes in very handy for many a studio lighting application and it's simply a hand tightened clamp that closes around any ledge and surface. Most importantly for us studio shooters though is that it can clamp securely onto tubes and poles of 13mm to 45mm which pretty much covers any pole and stand we would use in a studio. Although I have used it to hold lights on an overhead pole for hair lights I mainly use it for quick and easy lighting setup like the 'clam shell' setup shown here. It simply takes away the need for an additional light-stand that almost always gets in the way of the key lights stand.



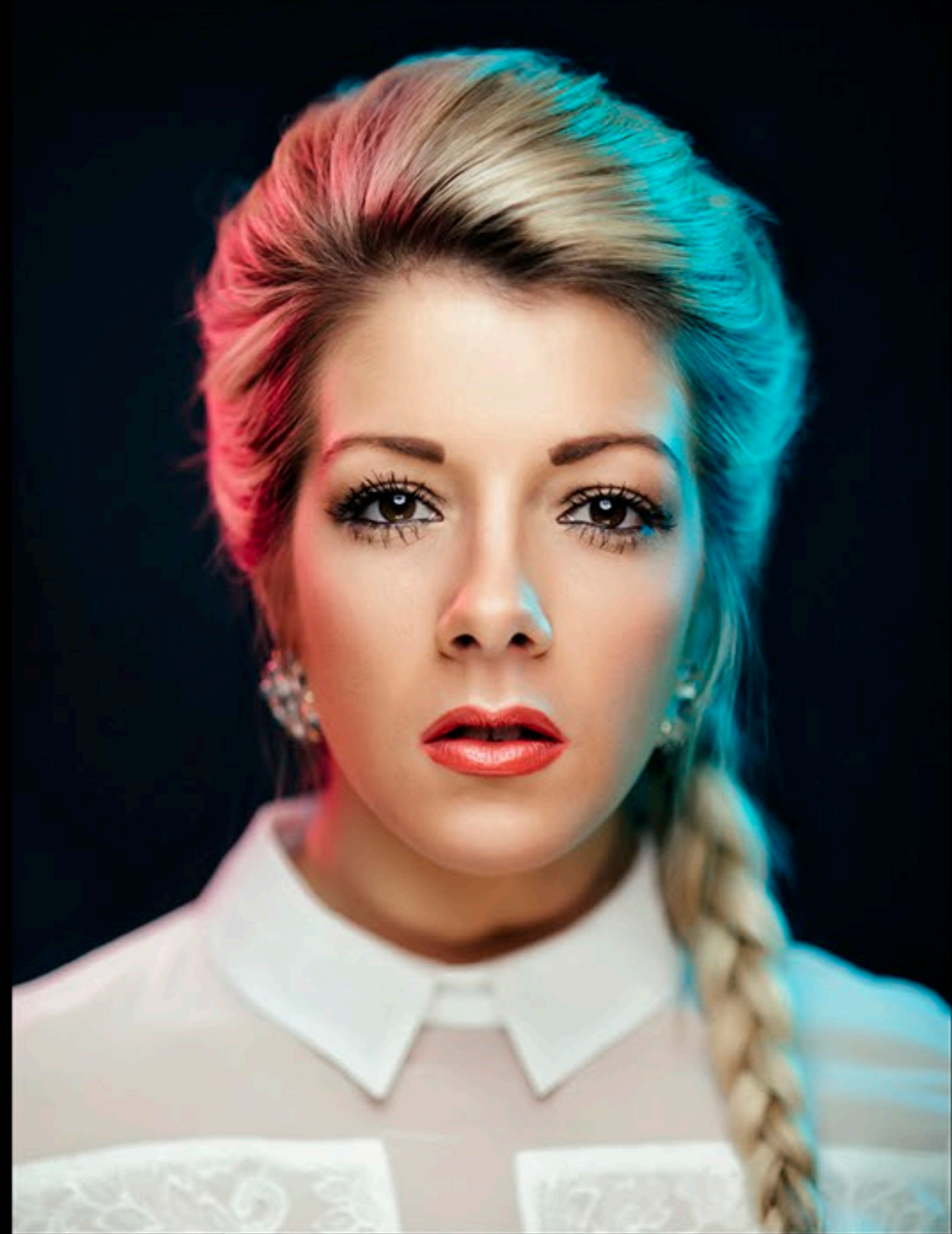




This is how most key lights are mounted, a light placed directly on top of a stand. Unfortunately this makes it very hard to create clean symmetrical lighting because your light-stand is always in the shot.



By attaching the right angle knuckle on top your light-stand instead, it allows you to attach your light at right-handers and shoot directly under your light without the light-stand always getting in the way.



We often search out symmetry in nature as a sign of beauty so if we create symmetrical lighting in our portraits and head shots we can greatly enhance how our images look.



The right angle knuckle attachment has many uses and is an incredibly valuable little piece of kit to have in your bag. It can hold umbrellas in front of speed-lights, you can attach reflectors to it in a multitude of angles and of course use it as a mini boom for your key light. It's very quick and easy to use and perfect for location shooting.

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Space saving boom - The right-angle attachment  
In most studios you will always have a boom stand. These stands will enable you to position the light directly above the model by extending the light out along its arm, great for hair lighting. A boom will also allow you to position the light-source directly in front and above the model, this is an incredibly flattering light and as long as the model is looking straight to camera it also creates a very symmetrical light. This type of light has many names but it's most commonly known as butterfly lighting and used a lot in beauty photography. The main reason for this is that it creates a very symmetrical light and in nature we search out symmetry as a form of beauty. For most of us though it can be tricky to create this straight on symmetrical lighting because our light-stand gets in the way so we have to position our light-source off to one side so we can shoot past the light-stand. An alternative to this is to obviously get that key light on a boom arm but we may not have the time, space or money to make that happen. Here's an incredibly simple and painless alternative; the right angle knuckle attachment. Place it on your light-stand and mount your light at a right-angle and it will give symmetrical lighting and the valuable space you need to shoot directly under the light.





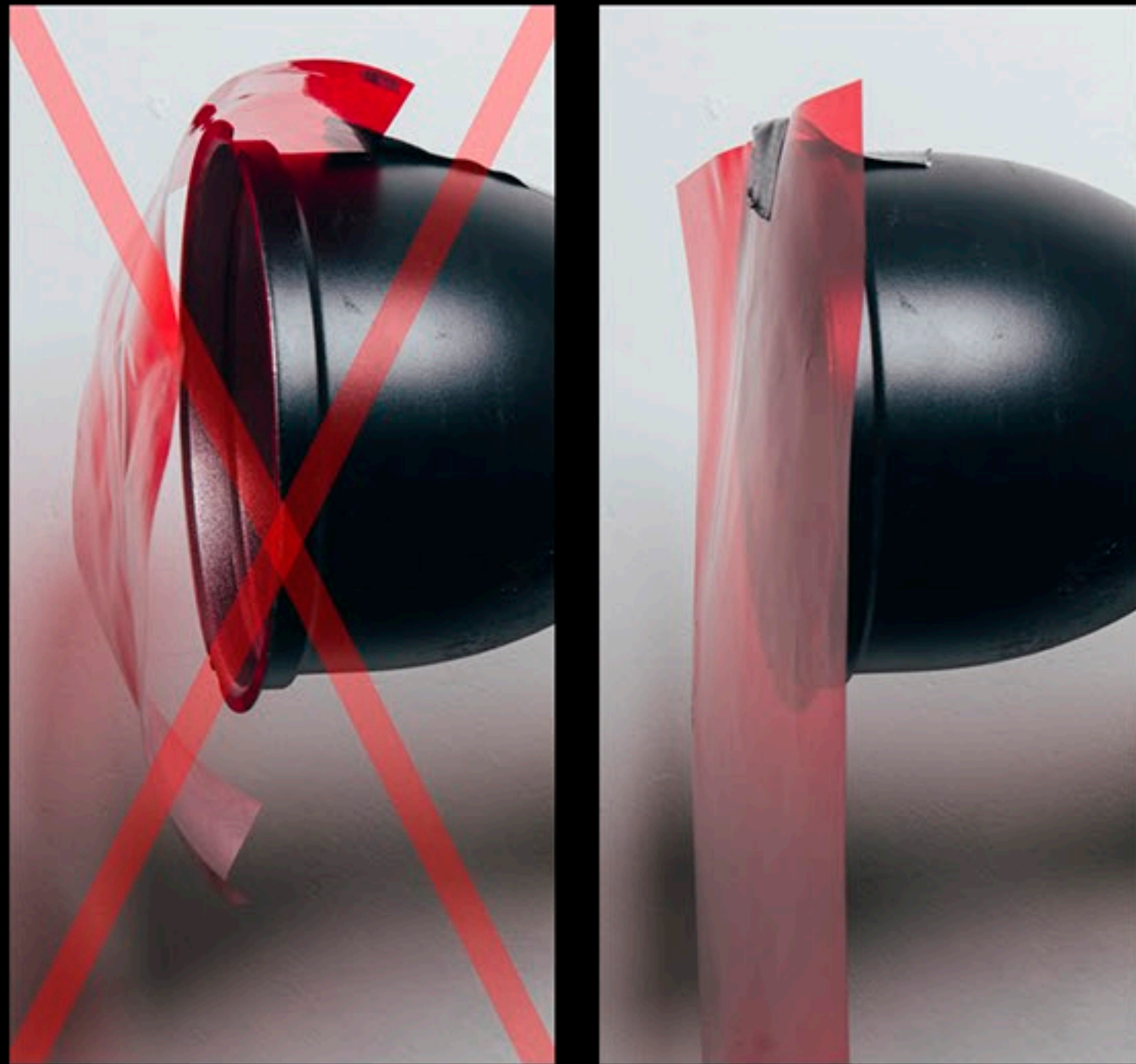
### Softbox

The easiest way to attach a gel to a softbox is to momentarily peel back the outer diffusion panel and to place the gel over the actual flash tube inside. Replace the diffusion cover when you're done. When I do this I often simply remove the modelling bulb to ensure an easier complete coverage.



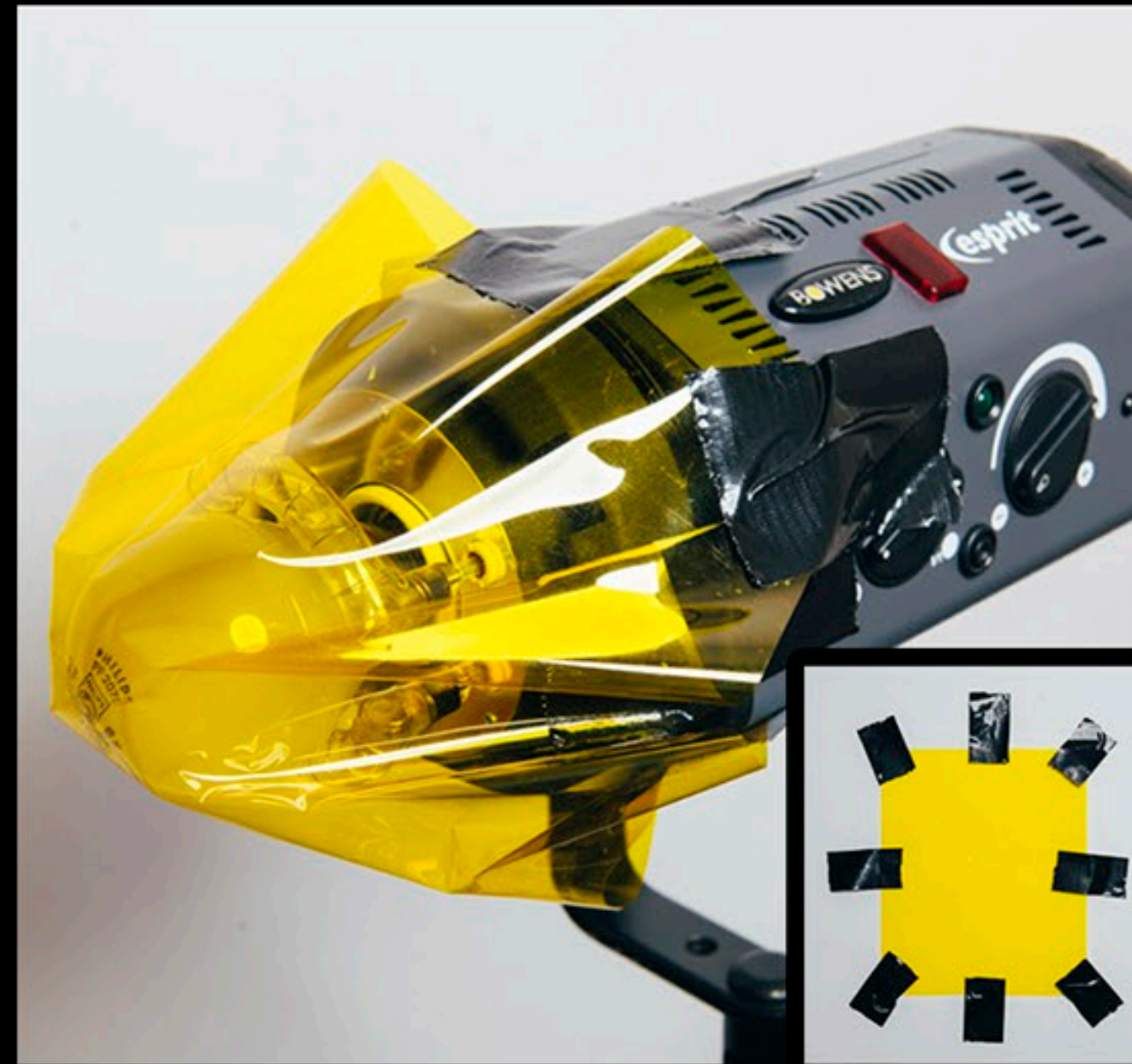
### Beauty Dish

Gelling a beauty dish is actually very easy as all you do is place the gel under the diffusion cone and over the hole where the flash tube is situated. Depending on the dish and the type of modelling bulb you have, you can often get away with not removing the modelling bulb. Just be careful the gel doesn't sit directly on the modelling bulb as it will likely melt.



### Hard-light modifiers

Hard-light modifiers are grids, honeycombs and even open reflector dishes. These are all relatively easy to gel as they are very directional and the end of the modifier where you're attaching the gel is often well away from the hot bulb. The biggest issue I often see when people gel hard lights is that they attach the gel too far back on the modifier. This results in the gel draping over the end allowing a lot of white light to escape around the sides. The best way to attach the gel is to literally tape it to the very end so it hangs straight down leaving no gaps.



### Bare-bulb

This never looks good or professional but it's worth giving it a go as it can create some pretty great looking coloured light. This lighting technique requires you to **never** turn on the modelling bulb as the gel will melt and warp quite quickly but I find it easier to attach the gel with the bulb still in place. Simply tear off 6 to 8 strips of tape and tape it over the head at each corner of the gel, then go back and tape each of the intersecting gaps to ensure no white light escapes.

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## Gel Attachment

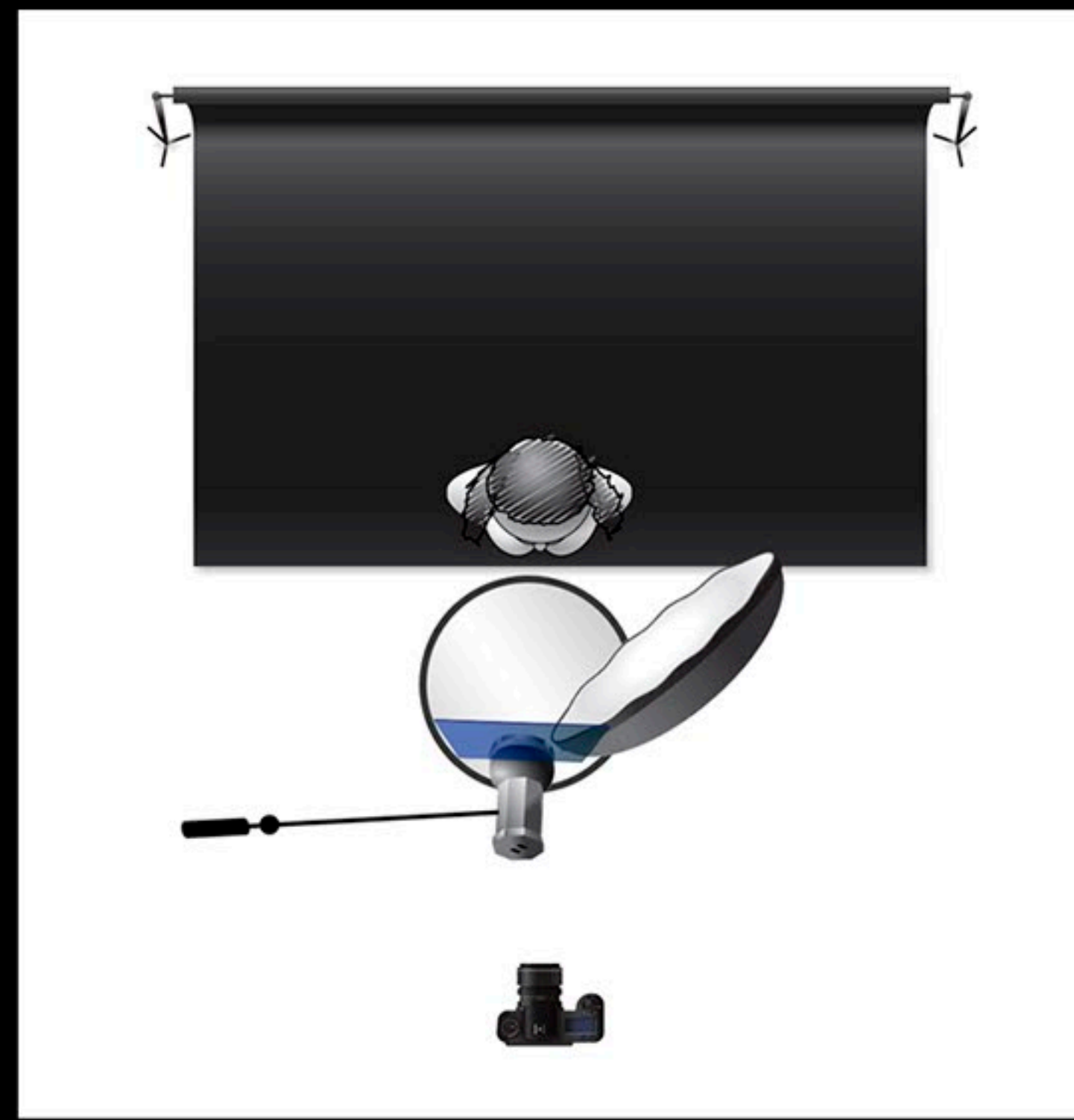
The act of attaching gels to lights isn't as obviously simple as you might think. I spent many years training new recruits in a busy studio and believe me when I say I've seen all manner of things used to affix gel to modifier. There are a couple of key things to bear in mind to achieve both a successful bond and a successful gelled effect.

*Firstly and most importantly you want to cover the flash tube completely. Any un-gelled (white) light escaping around the gel onto your subject will destroy the desired effect immediately.*

Secondly you want to bear in mind the gel distance from the modelling bulb. This is the light that is on but not the flash bulb, this bulb will get incredibly hot so care should be taken that your gel doesn't actually sit or rest on this as it will likely melt your gel.

*Lastly you'll need the proper tool to achieve the first two points. The quickest most effective way is with tape. Not any tape, not clear tape, masking tape or parcel tape because as I said, the modifier will get very hot turning your gel and tape into a hot mess of uselessness. Personally I have always used gaffers tape as it responds well to heat and is easy to tear off and use. Make sure to get the black gaffers not the silver duct tape.*





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## Bouncing Gels

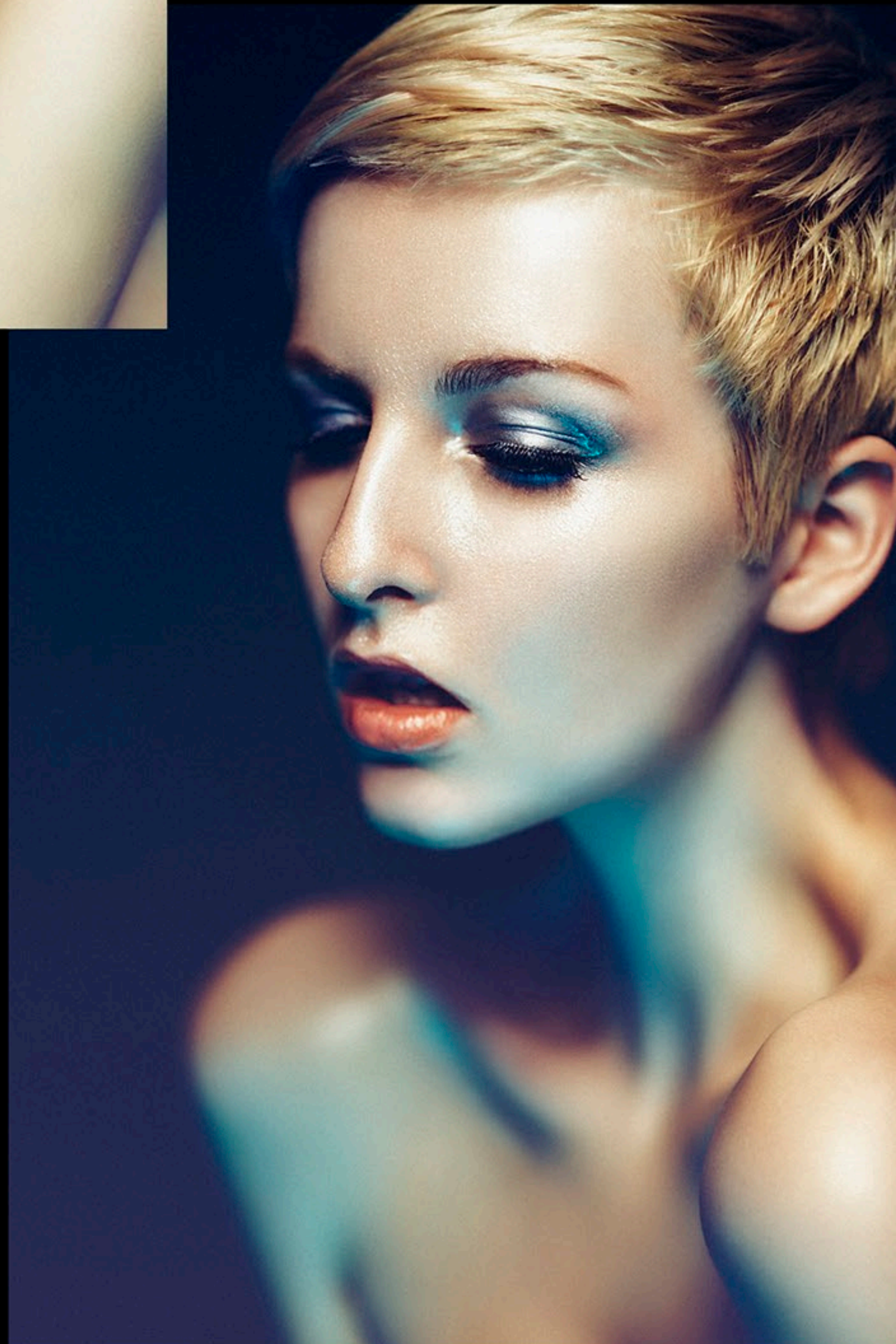
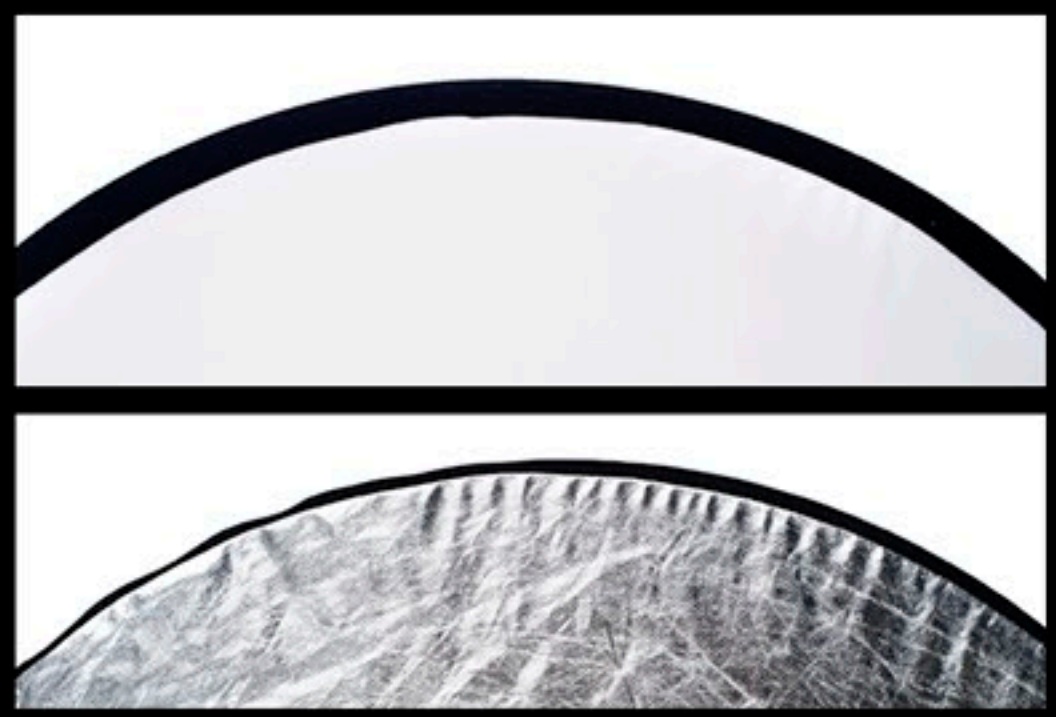
A great little cost effective way of adding a bit of variety to your shots is to add some colour. I'm sure we've all seen the lovely 80's neon looking hard light gels floating about the internet but for those that want a more subtle colour tone why not try softening the gel light.

As we know the smaller the light-source the harder the light-source so if we enlarge it we will also soften it. All this technique requires is for you to angle your hard gel light at the floor in-front of or to the side of your model taking care not to get any spill onto the model directly. With some careful placement you can now bounce your coloured light off a reflector placed on the floor. The gelled light is now effectively being scattered and softened giving it the impression of being a far larger light as it falls onto your model.

As you can see here the soft blue colour falls softly and evenly across the models shadowed areas lifting the image and giving a lot more interest without looking like an 80's pop video. This gel light is effectively your fill light so take great care not to overpower your key light above. The hardness of your gel fill light can also be effected by whether you use a silver or white reflector to bounce the light.

## The Reflector choice

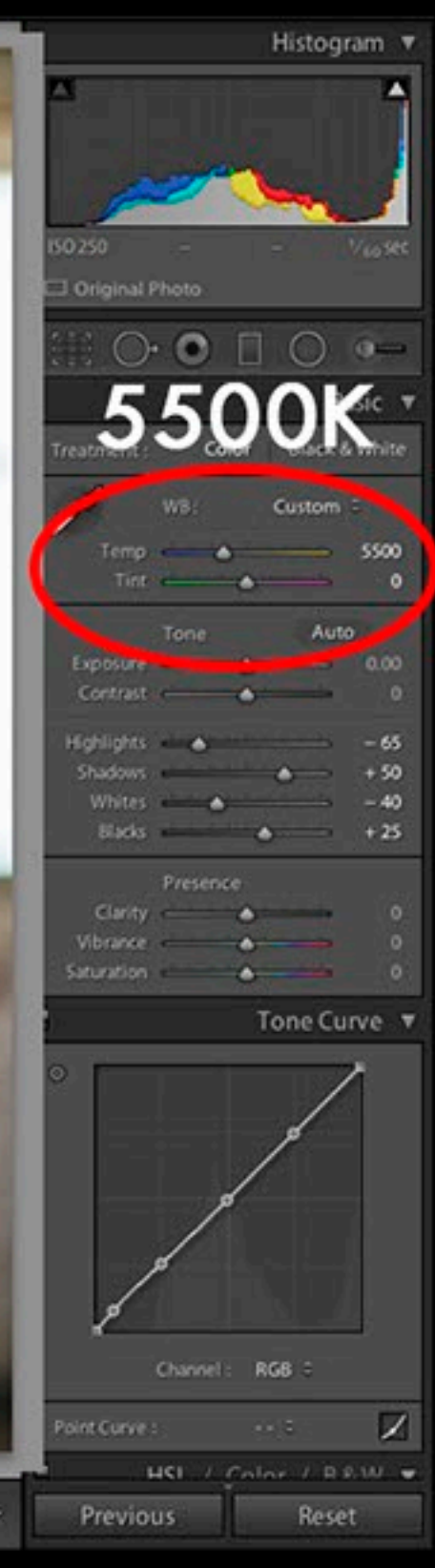
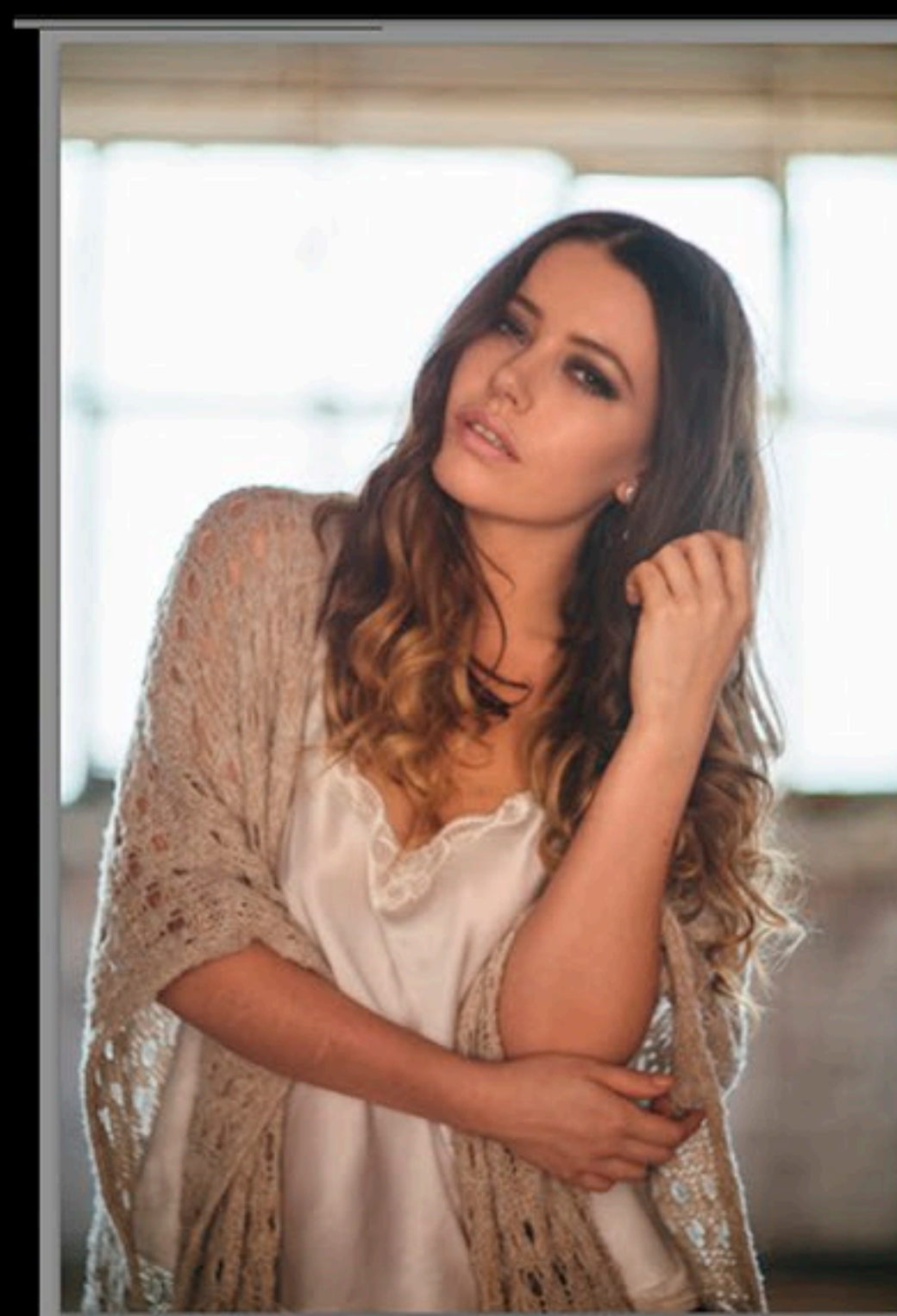
The type of reflector you use to bounce the light will effect the type of light reaching the model. Using a white reflector will result in a more subtle effect where as the silver reflector will have more contrast.







**All You Need**  
 You need a single flash (strobe or speedlight) to attach some colour correction gels to. My 'Utility' gel packs available on my sites products page contain all the ones you need.



**5500K - No Gel**  
 In this shot I used a single flash with no coloured gel attached and positioned my model in front of a daylight window with my camera set to daylight white balance.

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## One Light-Mixed Daylight and Flash Setup

This is a super quick and easy setup to achieve but I still don't see many people playing with it. All it requires is a little daylight, a single flash head or speedlight plus a couple of colour balancing gels.

The resulting images give you an alternative coloured ambient background and it's done by tricking the camera with the use of colour temperature gels and manually adjusting the kelvin value (white balance) on your camera. For example if you want a cooler (bluer not trendier) background:

### Step 1

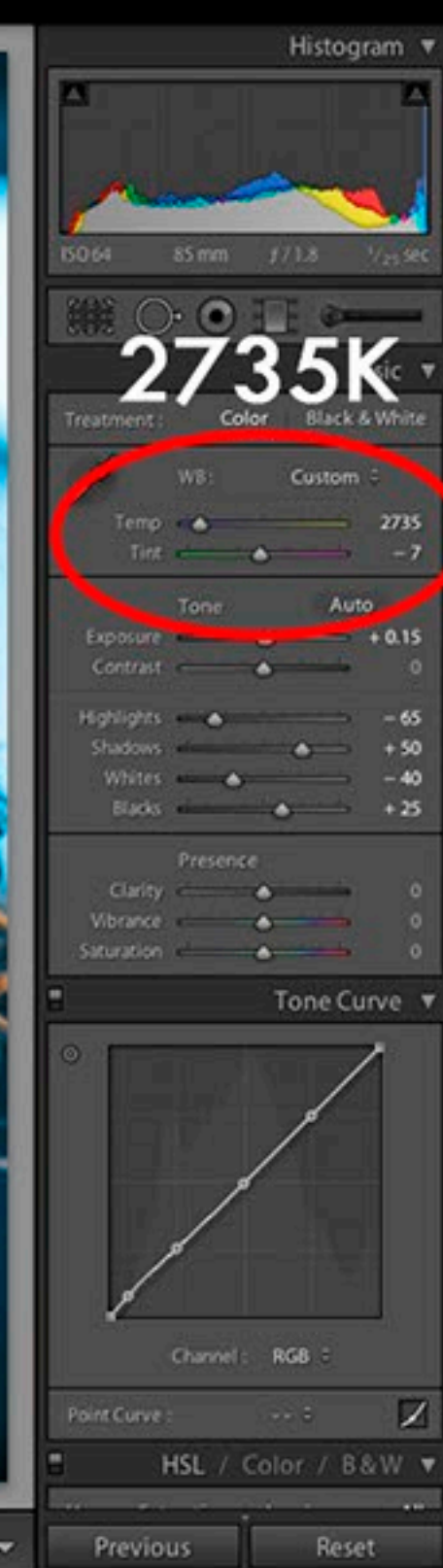
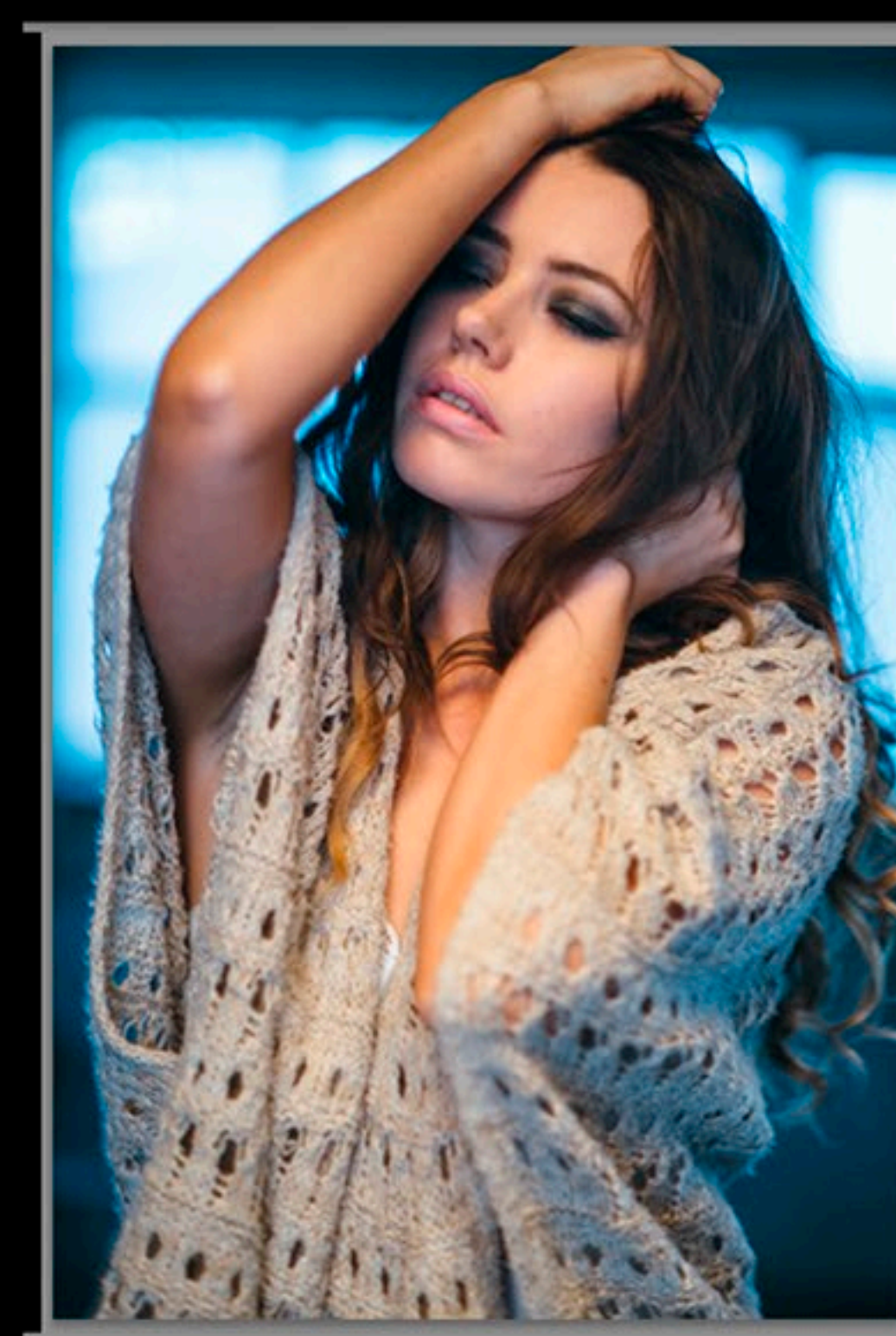
Attach a CTO (colour temperature orange) gel to your flash.

### Step 2

Adjust the kelvin value on your camera to around 2600-2800K.

### Step 3

Place your subject in front of some daylight and start taking pictures of them with your colour adjusted flash.



**2735K - Colour Temperature Orange Gel**  
 I now attach a CTO (colour temperature orange) gel to my flash and set my cameras white balance to 2735 Kelvin. You can now see the daylight behind has a blue hue.



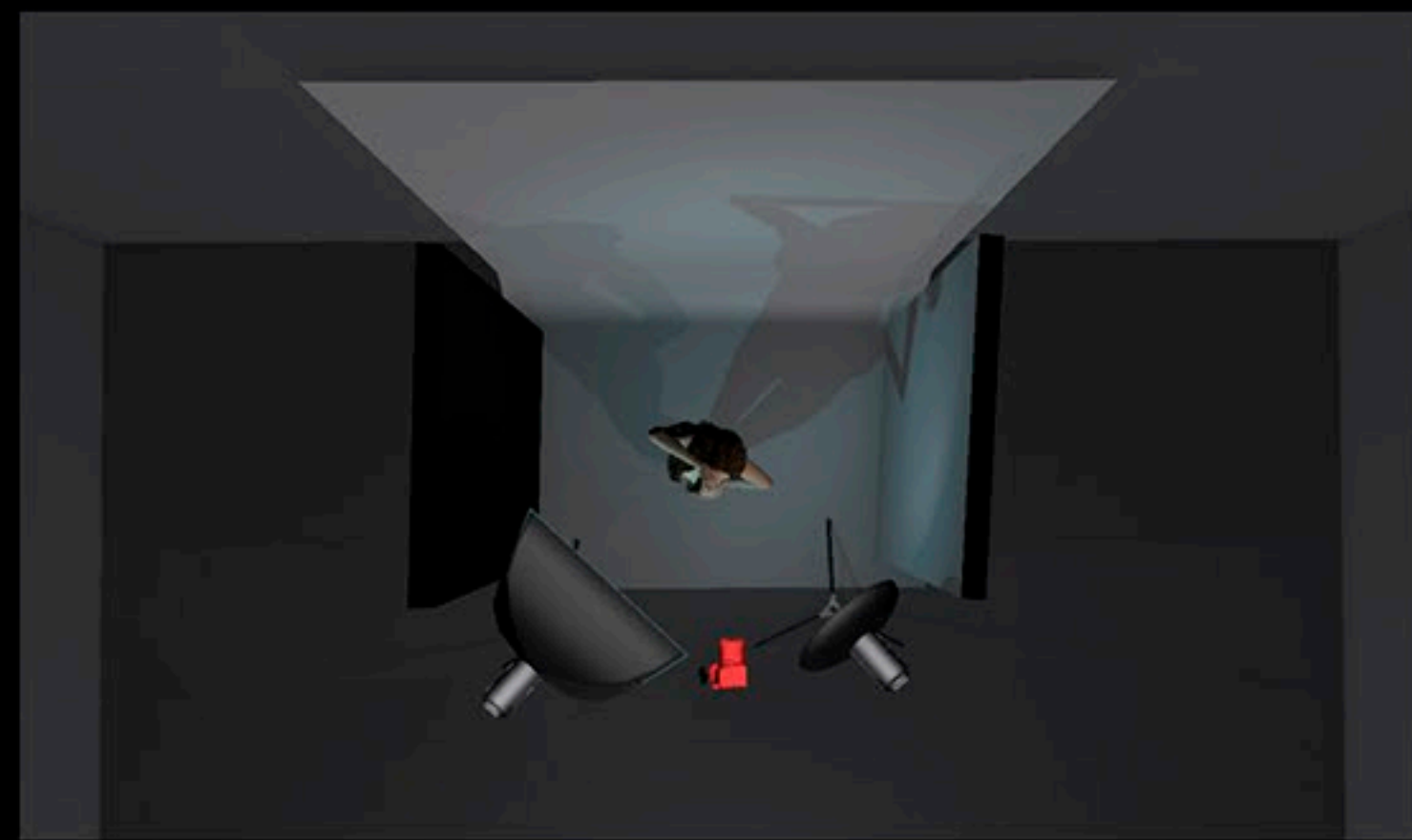
**5900K - Colour Temperature Blue Gel**  
 This time I have attached a CTB (colour temperature blue gel to my flash and set my cameras Kelvin to 5900 to compensate. The daylight behind is now an orange hue.







You can simply gel a softbox by opening it up and covering the flash tube with a gel. Just don't use it with the modelling bulb on.



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## Gelled Beauty

This is one of the lighting set-ups that I cover extensively in my RGG EDU Gelled Lighting tutorial video but here's the basics on creating some stunning gelled beauty shots. This setup simply requires two lights and as it's a beauty look you can achieve it in a very confined space. Place your beauty dish to one side slightly above the models head and angled down. You want to place it far enough around that it casts a shadow on the opposite side of the models face. This shadow can further be controlled by placing a black board on the shadow side. On the opposite side of the model you want to place your gelled light to colour that shadow like you see here. One last thing I personally like to add is a white board on the beauty dish side to bounce any spilled colour back into the shadows to tie the whole image together.



Remember that you don't need a 6ft x 4ft poly-board, you can just use a simple black sheet on the shadow side and a white sheet on the opposite side. Hang them up on a stand and they'll be just as good.





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### Colouring the Shadows

The secret to this technique is to have as hard a key-light as possible. This particular shot was achieved with the Bowens Universal Spot and creates razor sharp shadows that are easily filled with colour. The two colours come from two gels bounced off reflectors in front of the model and they in turn fill the shadows without colouring the body. This can only happen with such a hard key-light, using a soft-box or other soft-light would wrap and spill light heavily reducing the colour effect. Another thing to bear in mind is model placement. Her shadow is now a key feature of the shot so bear that in mind whilst composing your shot too.

