

DIY Guide:

ENHANCING PRODUCT VISUALS TO BOOST YOUR SALES

BY TERRY LIVESEY

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Requests to the publisher for permission to reproduce or for use in any transmitted form should be addressed to Terry Livesey at terry@terryliveseyphotography.co.uk
www.terryliveseyphotography.co.uk

www.TerryLivesey.com

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Understanding the Basics	6
Importance of High-Quality Images.....	6
Differences Between Product and Lifestyle Photography.....	7
Choosing the Right Background and Setting.....	8
Chapter 2: Preparing for the Shoot.....	9
Planning Your Shoot	9
Essential Equipment.....	10
Tips for Product Preparation	11
Chapter 3: Mastering Lighting Techniques.....	12
Natural vs. Artificial Lighting.....	12
Using Softboxes, Reflectors, and Diffusers	13
Creating Depth and Dimension with Lighting	14
Chapter 4: Camera Settings and Techniques.....	15
Choosing the Right Camera Settings	15
Importance of Focus and Depth of Field	16
Techniques for Shooting Different Types of Products.....	17
Chapter 5: Composition and Styling	18
Rule of Thirds and Other Composition Techniques.....	18
Styling Tips for Various Products	19
Importance of Consistent Branding in Product Photography	20
Chapter 6: Post-Production and Editing.....	21
Basics of Photo Editing Software.....	21
Techniques for Colour Correction, Retouching, and Enhancing Details	21
Creating Consistent Image Styles and Templates	22

Chapter 7: Optimising Images for E-Commerce _____23

Image Size and Resolution Requirements for Different Platforms.....23

Importance of SEO: Alt Text, File Names, and Metadata.....25

Metadata (Title, Description, & EXIF Data)26

Tips for Maintaining Image Quality Whilst Reducing File Size27

Chapter 8: Advanced Techniques and Trends _____28

360-Degree Photography and Videos.....28

Incorporating Augmented Reality (AR) for Product Visualisation.....28

Current Trends in Product Photography.....29

Chapter 9: Case Studies_____30

Examples of Successful Product Photography Campaigns.....30

Lessons Learned and Key Takeaways.....30

Chapter 10: DIY vs. Professional Photography _____31

When to Hire a Professional Photographer31

Benefits of Professional Photography for Your Brand.....32

How to Choose the Right Photographer for Your Needs.....32

DIY Product Photography34

SUMMARY _____36

Helping Hand Offer _____36

Author Information36

About the Author _____37

INTRODUCTION

In the world of e-commerce and high-end brochure websites, high-quality product visuals are crucial. They not only attract customers but also help in building trust and driving sales. This e-book will guide you through the essentials of product photography, from preparation to post-production, ensuring your products shine online.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

Importance of High-Quality Images

High-quality images are vital in e-commerce and websites in general. They represent your brand, showcase your products, and are often the first interaction potential customers have with your items. Clear, detailed photos can significantly impact purchasing decisions.

- **Example:** Compare a high-quality image of a watch with a low-quality one. Notice how the details and clarity in the high-quality image make it more appealing.



Taken in the studio with PRO kit



Taken on an iPhone

Differences Between Product and Lifestyle Photography

Product Photography: Focuses on the product itself, highlighting its features and details. Usually shot against a plain background.

Lifestyle Photography: Shows the product in use, within a context. This helps customers visualise how the product fits into their lives.

- **Example:** See the difference between a product shot of a coffee mug and a lifestyle shot of someone enjoying coffee in a cosy setting.



Choosing the Right Background and Setting

The background should complement your product without distracting from it. For product shots, a white or neutral background is often best. For lifestyle shots, choose settings that align with your brand's aesthetic and the product's use case.

- **Example:** A white background for a tech gadget versus a rustic kitchen setting for a product shot.



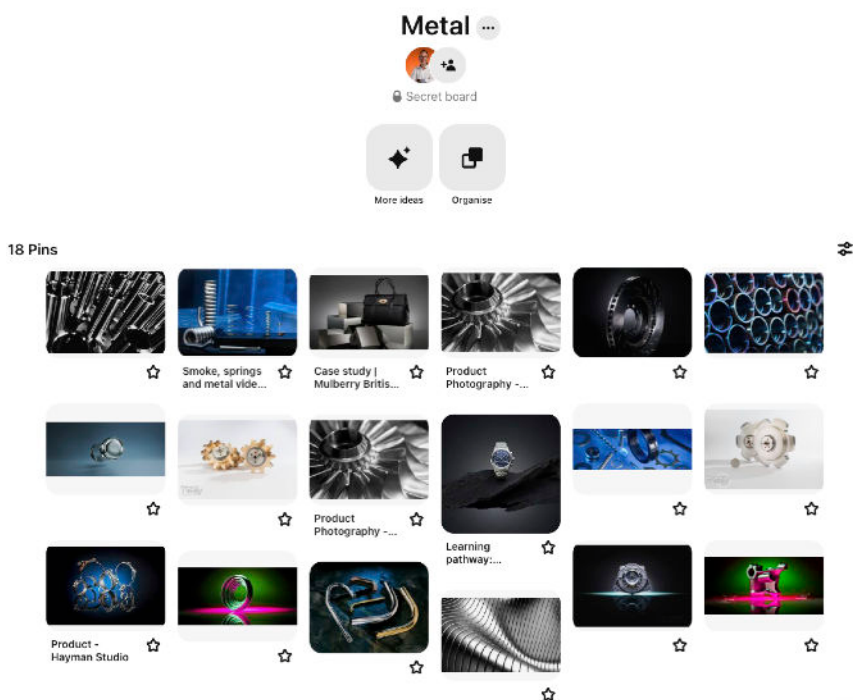
CHAPTER 2: PREPARING FOR THE SHOOT

Planning Your Shoot

Mood Boards: Collect images that reflect the style and feel you want.

Shot Lists: Create a list of shots you need, including angles and compositions.

Scheduling: Plan your shoot to maximise time and resources.



Essential Equipment

Cameras: DSLRs or mirrorless cameras are ideal.

Lenses: Use macro lenses for small items and prime lenses for sharp images.

Lighting: Softboxes, LED lights, and natural light can all be effective.

Accessories: Tripods, reflectors, and diffusers are essential.

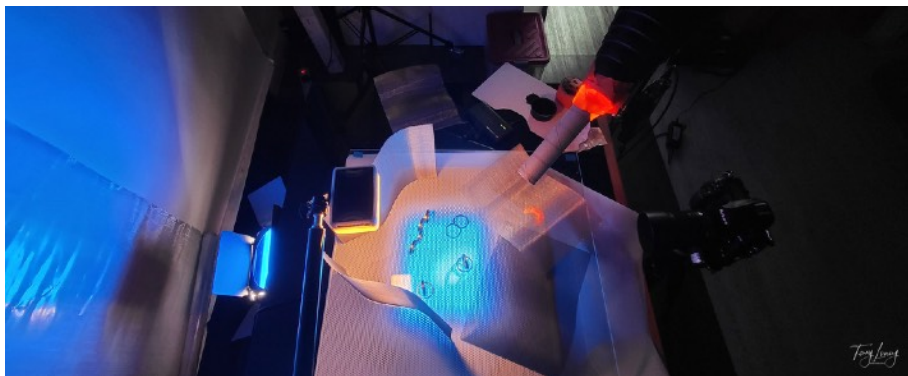


Tips for Product Preparation

Cleaning: Ensure products are spotless.

Styling: Use props to enhance the product without overshadowing it.

Arranging: Position products to highlight their best features.



CHAPTER 3: MASTERING LIGHTING TECHNIQUES

Natural vs. Artificial Lighting

Natural Light: Best for a soft, natural look. Ideal for lifestyle shots.

Artificial Light: Provides more control. Use softboxes or LED lights for consistent results.

- **Example:** Compare natural and artificial lighting setups.



Natural light



Studio lighting

Using Softboxes, Reflectors, and Diffusers

Softboxes: Create even, diffused light.

Reflectors: Bounce light to fill in shadows.

Diffusers: Soften harsh light.

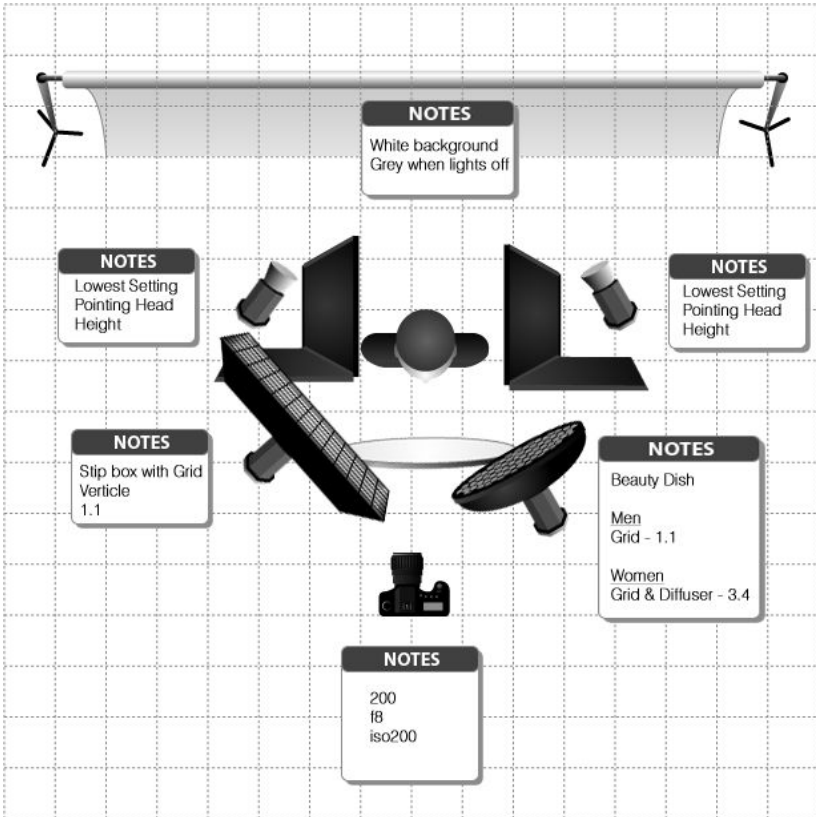
- **Example:** Lighting setups with softboxes, reflectors, and diffusers.



Creating Depth and Dimension with Lighting

Use multiple light sources to create depth. A key light, fill light, and backlight setup can add dimension and highlight product details.

- **Example:** Lighting diagrams showing depth and dimension techniques.



CHAPTER 4: CAMERA SETTINGS AND TECHNIQUES

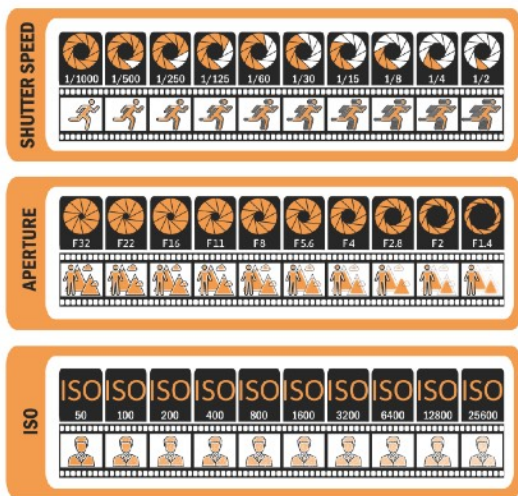
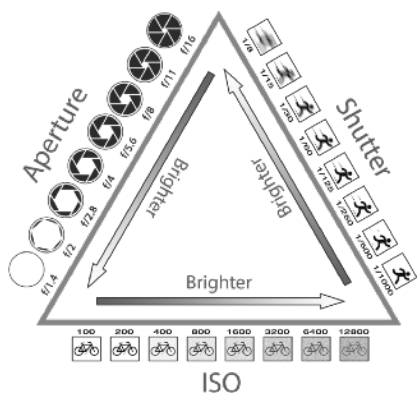
Choosing the Right Camera Settings

ISO: Keep it low (100-400) to avoid noise.

Aperture: Use a small aperture (f/8-f/16) for sharpness and depth of field.

Shutter Speed: Ensure it's fast enough to avoid motion blur (1/60 or faster).

Here are some cheat sheets to assist you in adjusting the settings, though comprehensive teachings exceed the scope of this book.



Importance of Focus and Depth of Field

Focus: Ensure the product is in sharp focus. Use manual focus if necessary.

Depth of Field: A larger depth of field (higher f-stop) keeps more of the product in focus.

- **Example:** Examples of different focus and depth of field settings.



Shallow depth of field for an Arty look



Large depth of field for everything looking perfectly sharp and in focus

Techniques for Shooting Different Types of Products

Reflective Items: Use diffused lighting to minimise reflections.

Textured Products: Side lighting can enhance textures.

Small Items: Macro lenses and close-up shots work best.

- **Example:** Techniques for shooting reflective, textured, and small products.



CHAPTER 5: COMPOSITION AND STYLING

Rule of Thirds and Other Composition Techniques

Rule of Thirds: Position the product off-centre for a balanced composition.

Leading Lines: Use lines to guide the viewer's eye to the product.

Framing: Use props or natural elements to frame the product.

- **Example:** Composition techniques illustrated.



Rule of Thirds - Main product is in on the third both vertically and horizontally



Leading Lines - The truck bed takes you to the action.



Framed

Styling Tips for Various Products

Consistent Branding: Use colours and props that reflect your brand.

Clean and Simple: Avoid clutter to keep the focus on the product.

Contextual Relevance: Choose props that align with the product's use.

- **Example:** Styling examples for different products.



The Rug has the surrounding props and area styled to compliment it

Importance of Consistent Branding in Product Photography

Consistent styling and composition help in creating a cohesive brand image, making your products instantly recognisable.

- **Example:** Examples of consistent branding in product photography.



Fishy



Fishy



Fishy



Fishy



Fishy



Fishy

CHAPTER 6: POST-PRODUCTION AND EDITING

Basics of Photo Editing Software

Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom: Industry standards for editing.

GIMP and Canva: Good free alternatives.

- **Tutorial Resources:** <https://www.terryliveseyphotography.co.uk/resources/resources-tools/>

Techniques for Colour Correction, Retouching, and Enhancing Details

Color Correction: Adjust white balance, contrast, and saturation.

Retouching: Remove blemishes, dust, and imperfections.

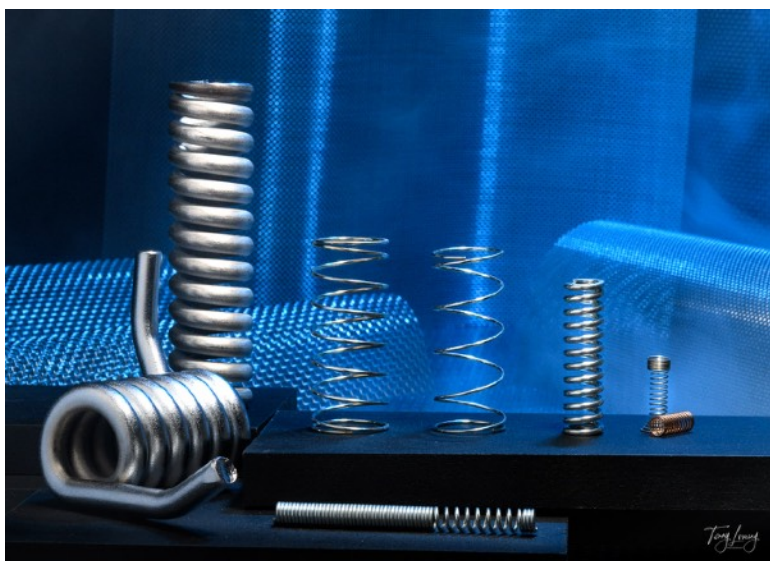
Enhancing Details: Sharpen key areas and adjust clarity.

- **Example:** Before and after images showing editing techniques.



Creating Consistent Image Styles and Templates

Use presets and templates to maintain a consistent look across all product images, enhancing your brand's professional appearance.



CHAPTER 7: OPTIMISING IMAGES FOR E-COMMERCE

Image Size and Resolution Requirements for Different Platforms

Resolution: High resolution (at least 1000px on the longest side) for clarity.

File Size: Keep it under 1MB to ensure fast loading times.

- Optimal Sizes:

Amazon

- Main Product Image: 2000 × 2000 px (minimum 1000 × 1000 px)
- Thumbnail Image: 500 × 500 px
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square)
- File Format: JPEG, PNG, GIF, or TIFF
- Background: Pure white (#FFFFFF)

eBay

- Main Product Image: 1600 × 1600 px (minimum 500 × 500 px)
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square preferred)
- File Format: JPEG, PNG, GIF, or TIFF
- Background: White or neutral recommended

Shopify

- Recommended Size: 2048 × 2048 px
- Minimum Size: 800 × 800 px
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square preferred)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

Etsy

- Main Product Image: 2000 × 2000 px (minimum 1000 × 1000 px)

- Thumbnail Image: 570 × 456 px
- Aspect Ratio: 5:4
- File Format: JPEG, PNG

WooCommerce (WordPress)

- Main Product Image: 800 × 800 px to 1200 × 1200 px
- Thumbnail Image: 300 × 300 px
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square preferred)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

Walmart Marketplace

- Main Product Image: 2000 × 2000 px (minimum 1500 × 1500 px)
- Thumbnail Image: 100 × 100 px
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

Google Shopping

- Main Product Image: 800 × 800 px (recommended 1200 × 1200 px)
- Thumbnail Image: 100 × 100 px (for non-apparel) / 250 × 250 px (for apparel)
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square preferred)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

Facebook & Instagram Shops

- Product Image: 1024 × 1024 px (minimum 600 × 600 px)
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

AliExpress

- Main Product Image: 1000 × 1000 px to 2000 × 2000 px
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

BigCommerce

- Recommended Size: 1200 × 1200 px (minimum 1024 × 1024 px)
- Thumbnail Image: 200 × 200 px
- Aspect Ratio: 1:1 (square)
- File Format: JPEG or PNG

General Recommendations for All Platforms

- ✓ Use high-quality images (sharp, clear, and properly lit).
- ✓ Keep the file size optimised for faster loading (use compression tools like JpegMini/TinyPNG).
- ✓ Maintain consistent aspect ratios across product images.
- ✓ Use a white or neutral background unless branding requires otherwise.

Importance of SEO: Alt Text, File Names, and Metadata

Alt Text: Descriptive text for accessibility and SEO.

File Names: Use descriptive, keyword-rich names (e.g., "red-leather-handbag.jpg").

Metadata: Embed relevant keywords and descriptions.

When it comes to SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), alt text, file names, and metadata are essential for ensuring your images and videos rank well in search engines like Google. Optimising these elements can increase visibility, attract potential clients, and improve website accessibility.

Alt Text (Alternative Text)

Why It Matters:

- Improves accessibility – Screen readers use alt text to describe images for visually impaired users.
- Enhances SEO – Google and other search engines rely on alt text to understand what an image is about.
- Boosts rankings in Google Images – Optimised alt text helps images appear in search results.

Best Practices:

- ✓ Be descriptive and specific (e.g., “Professional product photography of a luxury wristwatch on a marble background”)
- ✓ Include relevant keywords naturally
- ✓ Avoid keyword stuffing
- ✓ Keep it concise but informative

File Names

Why It Matters:

- Helps search engines identify image content
- Improves image SEO rankings
- Makes it easier for users to understand the content of the image

Best Practices:

- ✓ Use descriptive, keyword-rich filenames (e.g., commercial-product-photography-worcestershire.jpg)
- ✓ Separate words with hyphens (not underscores or spaces)
- ✓ Avoid generic names like IMG_1234.jpg

Metadata (Title, Description, & EXIF Data)

Why It Matters:

- Enhances search engine indexing by providing additional context
- Boosts website engagement by encouraging clicks
- Helps Google understand the image’s relevance to search queries

Best Practices:

- ✓ Use keyword-rich titles and descriptions

- ✓ Keep titles clear and engaging (e.g., “Corporate Headshot Photography in Worcester – Professional Business Portraits”)
- ✓ Add location-based metadata for local SEO
- ✓ For EXIF data (hidden metadata in images), include copyright info, location, and keywords

By optimising alt text, file names, and metadata, you can significantly improve your website’s search visibility, user experience, and accessibility. Since Terry Livesey Photography focuses on commercial photography and videography, implementing these SEO strategies can help attract the right clients searching for professional photography services online.

Tips for Maintaining Image Quality Whilst Reducing File Size

Compression: Use tools like TinyPNG or JPEGmini.

Formats: JPEG for photos, PNG for images with transparency.

- **Resources:** <https://www.terryliveseyphotography.co.uk/resources/resources-tools/>

CHAPTER 8: ADVANCED TECHNIQUES AND TRENDS

360-Degree Photography and Videos

360-Degree Photography: Interactive and engaging, allowing customers to view products from all angles.

Product Videos: Showcase features and usage in a dynamic way.

- **Example:** Sample 360-degree images and product videos can be found on my website here: <https://www.terryliveseyphotography.co.uk/commercial/360-product-photography/>

Incorporating Augmented Reality (AR) for Product Visualisation

AR: Enables customers to visualise products in their environment, enhancing the shopping experience.

This is a complete book in its own right, but it may be worth your while to consider it if you wish to reach the pinnacle of technology usage within your business.

Current Trends in Product Photography

Minimalist Style: Clean, simple images with a focus on the product.

Bold Backgrounds: Using bright colours to make products stand out.

Lifestyle: Using the environment to showcase the product

- **Example:** Current trends illustrated with examples.



CHAPTER 9: CASE STUDIES

Examples of Successful Product Photography Campaigns

- **Apple:** Clean, minimalist images highlighting product design.
- **Nike:** Dynamic lifestyle shots showcasing products in action.

Have a look at the case study for the Gerber: <https://www.terryliveseyphotography.co.uk/portfolios/gerber-dime-red/>

Lessons Learned and Key Takeaways

Consistency is Key: A cohesive look builds brand recognition.

Focus on Details: High-quality images can significantly boost sales.

- **Example:** Summary of key takeaways with visual examples.



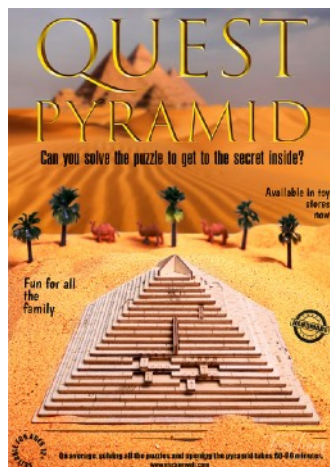
CHAPTER 10: DIY VS. PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

When to Hire a Professional Photographer

Complex Shoots: Multiple products, models, or intricate setups.

Branding Projects: Consistent, high-quality images for brand identity.

- **Example:** Situations where professional photography is beneficial.



Benefits of Professional Photography for Your Brand

Expertise: Professional photographers have the skills and equipment to capture the best images.

Time-Saving: Allows you to focus on other aspects of your business.

How to Choose the Right Photographer for Your Needs

Portfolio: Look for a style that matches your brand.

Experience: Ensure they have experience with product photography.

Reviews and References: Check past client reviews and ask for references.

- **Example:** Checklist for selecting the right photographer.

Portfolio & Experience

- ✓ Do they have a strong portfolio with relevant product photography?
- ✓ Have they worked with similar products or industries?
- ✓ Do their images align with your brand style and quality expectations?

Technical Skills & Equipment

- ✓ Do they use professional-grade cameras and lenses?
- ✓ Do they have experience with lighting techniques for product photography?
- ✓ Can they shoot in a studio or on location, depending on your needs?
- ✓ Do they offer 360-degree or lifestyle product photography if required?

Editing & Post-Production

- ✓ Do they provide high-quality retouching and editing services?
- ✓ Are they skilled in colour correction, background removal, and compositing?
- ✓ Do they deliver images in the required formats (JPEG, PNG, TIFF, etc.)?

Understanding of Branding & Marketing

- ✓ Do they understand your brand's aesthetic and target audience?
- ✓ Can they adapt their photography style to match your brand guidelines?
- ✓ Do they have experience working with e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Shopify, or Etsy?

Pricing & Packages

- ✓ Is their pricing structure clear and within your budget?
- ✓ Do they offer bulk discounts or package deals?
- ✓ Are there any hidden fees for revisions, licensing, or expedited delivery?

Turnaround Time & Availability

- ✓ Can they meet your deadline?
- ✓ Do they provide a realistic timeframe for shooting and editing?
- ✓ Are they available for future projects if you need consistency?

Client Reviews & Testimonials

- ✓ Do they have positive reviews from past clients?
- ✓ Can they provide references or case studies?

- ✓ Have they worked with reputable brands or businesses?

Communication & Professionalism

- ✓ Are they responsive to inquiries and clear about their process?
- ✓ Do they ask relevant questions about your product and expectations?
- ✓ Are they professional, organised, and easy to work with?

DIY Product Photography

For businesses just starting out or those with budget constraints, DIY product photography can be a viable option. Here are some tips and considerations:

Basic Equipment: You don't need professional gear to get good results. A smartphone with a good camera, a tripod, and some basic lighting can suffice.

Simple Backgrounds: Use plain, uncluttered backgrounds. A white poster board or sheet can work well.

Natural Lighting: Utilise natural light from windows. Avoid direct sunlight to minimise harsh shadows.

Editing Software: Free or affordable software like GIMP or online tools like Canva can help enhance your images.

Learning Resources: There are many tutorials available online that can guide you through the basics of product photography.

DIY Benefits:

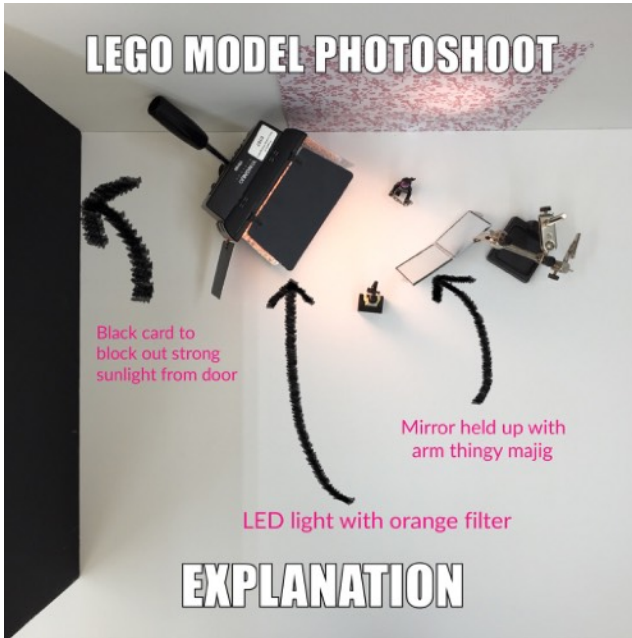
Cost-Effective: Saves money, especially important for startups.

Flexibility: You can shoot anytime, making it easier to update your product images regularly.

DIY Drawbacks:

Learning Curve: It takes time to learn the techniques and get consistent results.

Quality Limitations: Without professional equipment and expertise, achieving the highest quality can be challenging.



SUMMARY

Photography is all subjective, but good photography makes people pay attention, and great photography sells!

I hope that, with what I've covered in this document, you have a better idea of what you need to do to achieve the results that will help you with your marketing, and create amazing shots that sell your business or product.

HELPING HAND OFFER

Feel free to send me a sample image for a critique if you want some guidance on whether you are on the right track. Please note, that I judge photos for a living as well, so I won't sugarcoat it but will give you constructive critique on what needs to be done. Send your image to: hello@terryliveseyphotography.co.uk

Author Information

Terry Livesey is a professional photographer with over a decade of experience in product photography. He has helped numerous brands elevate their visual presence and drive sales through stunning imagery.

- **Website:** www.terryliveseyphotography.co.uk
- **Contact:** hello@terryliveseyphotography.co.uk
- **Social Media:** [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#)

If you want to learn more about photography, then visit my YouTube channel where I cover demonstrations, reviews and general photography chat.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Livesey is an Advertising, Product and Commercial Photographer, who creates high-quality imagery, to give the best first impression to your clients and customers, operating from a studio in Worcestershire and working throughout the United Kingdom.

He's not just a photographer, he's a business professional with years of experience in marketing; has worked in TV and Film, built up and sold a successful IT business, written books, won a few awards, judges photography competitions, undertakes speaking engagements within the photography field and spends his days creating magic with photography and videography.