

Photographing the "Stack" - a How To Guide

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I see it on forums every where. Novice and experienced showman alike posting the "Stacked Shot" of their dog for critique, brag, whatever. Unfortunately for the novice (and sometimes the experienced!), the pictures are taken terribly, terribly wrong and an honest critique can not be given! Knowing how to take photos of your dog will save everyone some time and frustration. Heed a few simple tips and you'll be posting fabulous photos of your dog in no time!

1. It's about more than just your dog, because YOU are in the picture too!

Consider yourself when you take stacked shots. I'm not suggesting you go get your hair done and put on your Sunday best, but do take yourself into consideration. What you wear is one of the biggest factors in the outcome of the picture. Wearing black while stacking a black dog or one with a dark mask is not a good idea! Wearing heavy prints on a patterned animal (Brindle, Harlequin, etc) is also a bad idea. Dress in a fairly subtle but contrasting color so that nothing distracts from the dog or creates an illusion.

2. Make time.

Don't rush your shots. Set aside time to do photos and take LOTS OF THEM. On an average session I take about 150 photos and usually post only about 10% of those. The key (especially with wiggle butt puppies) is in taking as many pictures as you can. The more pictures you take, the better your odds are of the perfect one!

3. Make Space.

I don't know about you, but my Great Dane barely fits in some rooms... much less with 2 people, a camera, and enough extra space for a good shot!! Outside shots are the best for the best lighting and the most room to spread out and get a good shot.

4. Consider your background.

A busy brick wall may not be the best backdrop for your brindle and a white wall might not be the best for your lightly marked harlequin. Find a background that is simple with enough contrasting color to get a good view of the dog.

5. Let there be LIGHT!

Outdoor pictures really are the best for lighting. Be sure to angle yourself so that no shadow is casted on any part of the dog.

6. Make your photographer knowledgable.

If you're like me, you probably have a friend, relative, or hubby who knows nothing about dogs or dog showing helping you take the picture. Inform them of the best place to stand to take the best picture!

Use this guide to help you!

What you get: Mistake #1 - The "Top Shot"



Why you get it: Notice the photographer standing and located too close.
The camera lens is pointed down at the top of the dog.



What you get: Mistake #2 - The Giant



Why you get it: You can see here the photographer is too close and the camera lens is pointed up at the dog. Amazing how this little puppy looks like Goliath simply because of camera angle.



What you get: Mistake #3 - The Shoulder Shot



Why you get it: The photographer is not aligned with the center of the dog, but is moved toward the front.



What you get: Mistake #4 - The Butt Shot



Why you get it: The photographer is not aligned with the center of the dog, but is moved toward the rear.





**What you get
THE CORRECT Shot!**

Why you get it: The photographer is a good distance away from the dog, is crouching to make the camera lens level with the dogs back, and is centered with the dog's body.





Before you know it you will be serving up the perfect stacked shots for all of your best dog friends to admire... and critique because you KNOW they will! :)

And Some parting shots of Mayer because I LOVE my boy and he did such a great job helping me today...



