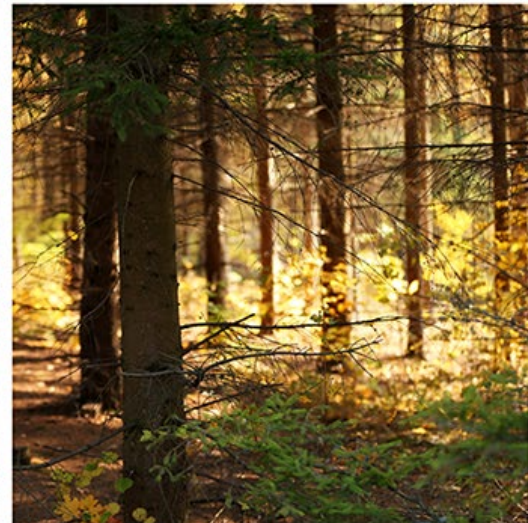
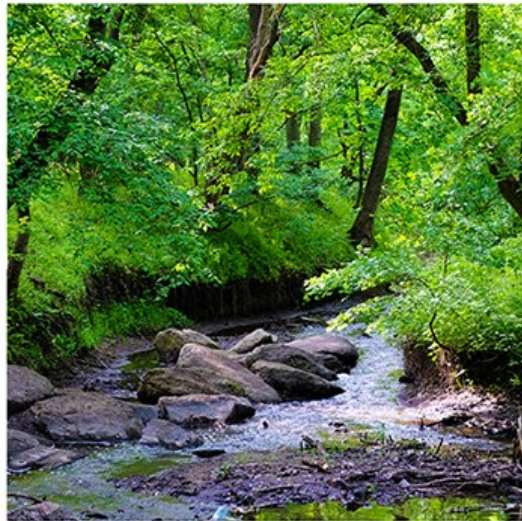
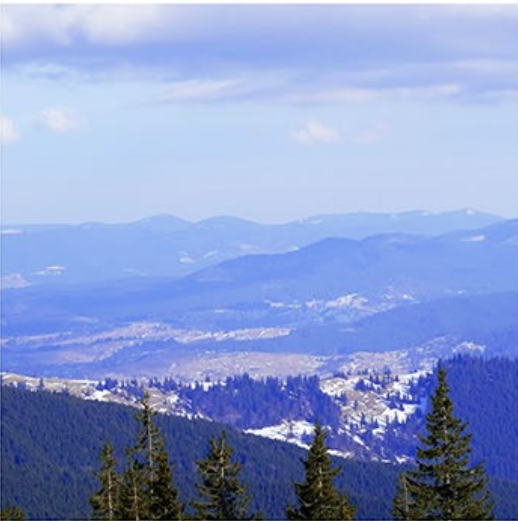


101 THINGS YOU CAN GET PAID TO PHOTOGRAPH ... in (and Around) Your Hometown



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101 Things You Can Get Paid to Photograph ...in (and Around) Your Hometown

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101 Things You Can Get Paid to Photograph ...in (and Around) Your Hometown

Freelance photography can be exciting, lucrative and fun. What a lot of people don't realize is that you don't have to leave home to get started. And you don't have to have any experience.

All you really need is a digital camera, a creative spirit, and a drive for adventure and fun.

Where to Sell Your Photos

Magazines, Newspapers, Web sites

Large publications such as *The New York Times*, *Travel + Leisure* and *National Geographic* don't usually work with amateur photographers. But small publications, local papers and limited-budget Web sites do.

Whether you're trying to pitch your photographs with an article or you just want to sell your photos as a photo essay, it's a good idea to start locally. You'll break in faster, and you'll accumulate experience that will make it much easier to move into the big leagues.

To get a good idea of what sells, pick up a few publications around town and flip through them. Before you contact the editor, get a sense for the kinds of articles and photos they like to run. While it's next to impossible to sell your island beach vacation photos to your town's local restaurant guide, they might appreciate photos of a nearby farmers market, food festivals, even close-ups of fresh food or coffee.

Fine Art

The unofficial definition of a fine-art photograph is: A photo that someone buys to hang on their wall at home, in their office or their establishment (if they own a business).

Professional photographer Rich Wagner has a lot of success selling photos of his hometown to people who live there. He says, “People buy fine-art photos that ‘mean’ something to them. If you live in Paris, then your photos of the Eiffel Tower could prove quite lucrative. But if you live in Connecticut, the likelihood of selling your Paris pictures as fine art is pretty slim.”

“If you want to sell photographs locally,” he explains, “you’ve got to take local photographs. Among my best-selling photographs are pictures of the cows in the field next to our local airport, pictures of our local bakery, pictures of town hall and pictures of the local high school baseball field.”

What’s great about selling your pictures locally is that it won’t cost you a penny to walk down your street and start snapping pictures you could sell next week. While you’re at it, think about the photos you hang on your walls. Take the pictures you’d like for yourself. Chances are, someone else would like that picture, too.

Stock Agencies

Online stock photo agencies, also known as “microstock sites,” are how professional photographer Shelly Perry makes some cash. She uses iStockphoto.com but there are many different sites to choose from.

Online stock photo agencies, in general, are happy to work with amateurs but they do expect near-perfect photographs, so you’ve got to have a good digital camera and an eye for composition.

Art directors, ad agencies, businesses small and large, even individuals looking to illustrate their family newsletter or MySpace page are all customers of these online stock sites. It doesn’t cost you anything to upload

your pictures and buyers can download whichever pictures they choose for anywhere between \$1 and \$20 or more depending on the size of the image they want.

You, in exchange, get a royalty for each image. Percentages vary from agency to agency as well as with contributor status at each. iStock contributors earn anywhere from 20% - 40% of the photo sale. The beauty of these sites is that though that may only be 50 cents or so per image, you make up for it in volume. One photo can sell over and over again and you don't have to do anything but upload and wait. The more photos your stock agency accepts, the more money you're likely to make.

Just make sure, when you take pictures for stock, to try to make a unique shot. Don't simply copy a photo on the site, setting it up the exact same way the original photographer did. You can follow the same concepts and make similar compositions, but you should try to come up with a photo that is truly your own.

Some of the leading sites are: [iStockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com), [Bigstockphoto.com](https://www.bigstockphoto.com), [Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com), [Fotolia.com](https://www.fotolia.com), and [Dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com).

Quick Tips Before You Shoot

Watch your horizon line, and make sure it's always as straight as you can get it. Crooked horizons do not sell. Motion blur is a big no-no for stock sites. You may want to use artistic blur in your shots, but if the photo is supposed to be clear and it's at all blurry, it's bound to get turned down.

If there are faces in your shot and you want to sell it for stock, you must have a signed model release for each and every recognizable person in the photo. And if you're taking pictures of kids, you'll need their parents to sign for them.

If you're selling to stock, your photos must not have any logos or brand names in them. If they do, you have to take them out in Photoshop.

101 Things You Can Photograph — Today — For Cash

Here's a list of things you can photograph in (and around) your hometown... even inside your house.

Some of these things are better sold for stock, while others might be better suited for fine art. Many, though, cross over from one market to another. Keep these in mind (and keep your camera handy) and you can have a lot of fun while making some easy, extra cash.

Families

All of Shelly Perry's best-selling photos on [iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com) are people shots. And many are of her family members. One popular stock photo theme is a happy family together in front of their house. Real-estate brokers buy these pictures for their brochures, as do other businesses. Even without the house, though, family photos sell. Don't forget the dog.

Brothers and Sisters

Again, photos of people sell like hot cakes on stock sites... especially people who evoke emotions. Think of all the places you've seen shots of children in ads and magazines. Try setting up shots with differently charged situations such as fake arguments, crying, playing, laughing, etc.

Remember to get a signed model release from the parents before trying to sell these for stock. Some parents are willing to trade a model release for prints or a CD of the shots that they can keep.

Brother and sister themes are also great for portrait photographers.

Babies

Though happy babies sell well on stock sites, other images that sell are babies cradled in loving hands, babies with happy young couples, babies

with family members... and then there are baby accessories... such as bottles, rattles, mobiles and the like. Anything that makes people think of babies is saleable. Again, keep it clean — watch for identifiable trademarks or characters. For instance, Winnie the Pooh — whether he is in stuffed form or on a rattle or T-shirt — cannot be used for stock.

Grandparents

Get shots of seniors who are active, healthy and happy. Stylish is good, too. Alone, or with the grandkids. Think of the setting and background while you shoot. You could also sell caretaking shots of people helping the elderly.

You could send shots such as this to senior magazines or as stock. Baby boomer travel — though not all baby boomers are grandparents, yet — is also a hot topic for travel magazines.



Photo by Great Escape Publishing workshop attendee Jim Smith (also available for sale at [iStockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com))

Couples

Happy couples, sad couples, couples arguing, couples traveling, young couples, elderly couples... pictures of couples do well for stock, especially if they embody some kind of emotion or situation such as happiness, newlywed, even divorce. If you can stage these situations, you could come out with a selling shot. You can also sell couple shots as portraits.

Religious Images

Photos of people meditating or praying, hands holding the Bible, monks, places of worship, the cross and other religious symbols could sell as stock or to religious magazines. Even as fine art.

People in Uniform

If you watched the American Music Awards in 2007, you would have seen a few of Shelly Perry's photos of a young military man in uniform on the big screens behind Chris Daughtry's live performance. Where did they get those photos? From [iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com).

Shots of people in uniform alone or with family might be of interest to military magazines, as well as stock sites. And there are many types of "uniforms" to choose from... doctors and nurses to mechanics and technicians.

Shoppers

Local magazines might be in need of photos of people shopping in your town. You could also approach independent stores and ask if they need photos of people modeling their clothes or using their products for catalogs, ads or store displays. Images such as this can also work for stock so long as there are no visible brands or labels on the grocery bags or clothes.

Think attractive people holding shopping bags or people looking at price tags, checking produce, exchanging money and reading food labels.

Workout Gear

Simple shots of dumbbells, jump ropes, people on treadmills or stair machines, people working up a sweat, make good stock shots.

Also consider:

- **Junk Food**
- **Healthy Food**

Local Festivals

You don't want to miss any of your town's annual festivals. You may or may not find stock shots there, but you are likely to get some photos that you could sell to your local newspaper or magazines for next year's event.

Diet & Weight Loss

Get photos of people running or small people holding out their large clothes to show weight loss, standing on scales, holding measuring tape around their waist, looking in the mirror, etc., and send them to health magazines or stock agencies.

Farmers Markets

This is a great place to go for colorful pictures of fresh produce, textures, patterns, movement, people doing things, culture, etc. You could sell photos of textures or nice, bright fruits for stock or fine art. Think of photos you would hang in your kitchen. Local magazines might also be looking for images of events such as farmers markets in their city.

Recognizable Landmarks, Buildings

If you have a landmark that makes you think of your town, it could make a fine-art or stock shot.

Signs

Fun signs, signs scrawled in chalk (such as ones you'd find at a farmers market), signs in foreign languages and signs that you can alter in Photoshop or other photo editing programs are fun and can sell for stock or as fine art.



Photo by Great Escape Publishing workshop attendee Ray Batson (also available for sale at [iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com))

City Skylines

Photos of your city skyline — day or night — could sell as fine art to the people who live there, or as stock. Think of looking at your city from unique places. Cities reflected in bodies of water are always popular. Use a tripod to avoid blur at night.

Street Signs

Street signs of popular areas in your town can be fine-art shots. Look for famous streets and names. These could also sell as stock.



Computers and People Using Them

Shelly Perry snapped a photo of a laptop sitting on a desk in San Francisco and at the time of this writing it has sold 292 times on [iStockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com). You could also get photos of people helping other people use the computer, seniors using the computer, kids typing or business people with laptops.

Business People

Business is one of the top selling subjects in stock sites. People in business attire doing things together, shaking hands or standing looking proud are among the most popular images.

Women in Business

Groups of women in business suits, or a woman standing ahead of a crowd, are likely to be popular stock photo images.

Wedding

You don't have to be a hired wedding photographer to take wedding photos (though, that is one way to sell your photographs). You can sell wedding detail shots — that is, photos you shot as a guest of the wedding — to bridal magazines and Web sites, stock sites and even as fine art.

Hands with Wedding Rings

This is one detail that sells well. Think about young hands, old hands, different skin tones, etc.

Bride and Groom Clothing

Photos of bridal clothing — on people or alone on the hanger — could sell to bridal shops, magazines or stock.

Champagne and Celebration

Glasses of bubbling champagne and people celebrating or toasting could make a good stock shot.

Landmark Days

Birthdays and graduations, as well as other days of celebration, can be themes for stock photos. You could get pictures of someone blowing out the candles on a cake or people in party hats with balloons. Even just balloons.

Wrapping and Bows

You could make nice, selective focus images of bows, wrapped boxes with blank labels attached. Try solid color boxes and bows, changing up the color combinations.



Photo by Shelly Perry
(also available for sale at
iStockphoto.com)

Holiday-themed photos could sell for editorial, stock or fine art. You can have fun with this one, too. Think chocolates, roses, pink and red themes for Valentine's, turkey and fall leaves for Thanksgiving, lights and boughs for Christmas, etc.

Coins

Pile up some coins, or get a picture of hands holding coins... coins overflowing out of a jar or a piggy bank sitting on a pile of coins for stock. Pair them with paper money, stack them or get pre-rolled coins.

Money

Piles of money, people rolling in money, money in hands or pockets... the creative possibilities here are endless.

You'll want to sell it as stock*.

* Check the photo guidelines on each stock site before you upload pictures of money. There are specific guidelines for photographing money that you must adhere to.

Foreign Money

If you have foreign money lying around, you could put it in a pile and photograph it as is, or sticking out of a suitcase, lying with plane or train tickets, etc. You could make this into a travel theme or a business exchange theme and sell as stock*.

* Again, check your stock agency's photo guidelines before you upload pictures of money.



Veterinary Office

It's hard to get good photographs at a vet's office because you have to battle the harsh indoor lighting and the reaction of the animals to your flash. It's also hard to get permission from the vet.

This is both good news and bad news for you, the photographer. If you have a friend or family member that can get you permission to set up the right kind of light and photograph a certain selection of their patients, you could come away with pictures the rest of us can't get.



These pictures can sell with an article and they're also saleable for stock.

Pets

Professional pet photographer Ren Netherland sells pet portraits and makes good money doing it.

Stock sites are already pretty full of pet shots, so unless your photos are really unique, stock isn't your best bet for your pet photos. You could try cat or dog enthusiast magazines and Web sites, though. Or as fine art.

Zoo Animals

If you can zoom in close on exotic animals at the zoo, you could come away with intriguing fine-art shots, pictures to illustrate magazine or newspaper articles or stock photos. Try getting some with the bars and cage walls to show that you're at the zoo and then zoom in closer to eliminate those things for an entirely different image. However, many zoos have restrictions on the commercial use of their facilities and animals, so be sure to know the local rules.

Farms and Farm Animals

Food magazines or local magazines might want photos of nearby farms. Farm animals — especially cows — isolated on a white background or against a blue sky sell well as stock, too.

Rich Wagner sells a photo of cows as fine art to people in his town who recognize the location.

Bus and Train Stations

You don't have to leave town to make travel-related photographs. Bring a couple of people and stage a goodbye or a vacation. Don't forget the luggage.

Travel Accessories

Try some photos of a passport and suitcase, or other travel accessories — by themselves or with people holding them.

Your Favorite Hobby

Pictures of people beading, scrapbooking, knitting, drawing, and all of the tools that go with your favorite hobby can turn into money-making stock photos.

Doctor's Office

Smiling doctors with patients or nurses helping people are photos that could sell to health and medical magazines, as well as stock.

Make sure you ask before taking the photo and always have a model release if you want to sell them for stock.



Libraries

Libraries are ideal for photographs of kids or young adults studying. Bring a laptop or play with books. Libraries are private property, though. So if you're asked to stop, stop. You can always stage a library in your own home by piling up books on a desk or using a bookcase as your backdrop.

Kids at School

If you have kids, you could take photos of them with their friends or alone in front of their lockers or on the playground. Get permission from other parents as this can be a touchy subject if you're not the parent.

Sports Teams

Get shots of kids' sports teams playing, cheering, strategizing or going home defeated for stock. Again, make sure that if you're selling them for stock, you get the kids' parents to sign the model release. And you'll need to take off any team names or logos on their clothes in Photoshop.

School Supplies

Crayons, paper and pencils, balled-up paper... here's another place you can get creative for stock photos. Make sure no brand names are showing.



Photo by Shelly Perry
(also available for sale at [iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com))

Construction

Large-scale construction, especially on a bright, sunny day, could give you some stock shot opportunities. Construction site pictures with an article about new local landmarks and/or changes to your town are also great to sell to your local newspaper.

Home Improvement

For stock, you can get out a tool belt and get shots of a handyman or woman fixing the toilet, unstopping the sink or changing a light bulb. Do-It-Yourself magazines might also be interested in an article to support your pictures on clever design or fix-it techniques for remodeling.

Paint

If you've got some painting to do in the house, you can get two things done at once and photograph people in the act of painting. Also try open, multicolored paint cans or saturated paint brushes. These make great stock and fine-art shots.

Here are some other Do-It-Yourself, Home Improvement images that could sell:

- **Hammering**
- **Couples With A Ladder**

Tools

Old, rusty tools can make great fine-art shots. And images of tools (and toolboxes) sell well for stock, too.

Household Chores

Next time you get out your cleaning supplies to go about those household chores, take your camera out, too. Colorful sponges, rubber gloves, buckets, spray bottles, etc., can make a good stock photo. So can:

- **People Cleaning**
- **People Folding Laundry and/or Folded Laundry**
- **Someone Organizing the Closet**

Working Hands

Close-up shots of activities aren't the same without a human element to them. You can get stock photos of hands doing activities such as cooking, sewing, hammering, driving, etc. Hands make nice fine-art shots, too. I have a great photo of nothing but a man's hands fixing a fishing net in Greece.

Color-Specific Images

Speaking of holiday themes, one simple picture of green felt has sold 628 times as of this writing under the "St. Patrick's" label. Art directors might need color-specific images. You can get creative with this, or get out your camera if you stumble upon a room that happens to be all red, such as this one.



Food

Health magazines, food magazines or stock sites are good places to send photos of different foods. Artfully done, foods can make fine-art shots, too. Like black and white shots of pasta or grains for the kitchen, for example.

Beautiful Food

If you're out in a restaurant and you're served a piece of cake that looks like a piece of art, get out your camera and capture it.

Same goes for lattes, entrees, salads, main dishes, fancy drinks, etc. Make sure to get in close.

Candies

You can do creative things with candy for fine art or photograph it alone. You could take bright, colorful hard candies and make color-specific or multicolored stock shots. Again, make sure no brand names are showing.



Kitchen, Preparation

People cooking, plates and forks, knives, spoons, steaming pots and pans and the like might be attractive to food magazines or as stock photos. Kids cooking with parents,

families together in the kitchen, people looking in the fridge can all be used to illustrate an article on family restaurants, trends in family cooking, etc.

Meals

You could take photos of a healthy family sitting down to a good meal, or people on a date over a nice dinner.

Seasonal Foods

I know for sure it's summertime when we bring a big watermelon home and cut it into juicy wedges. What other kinds of foods symbolize seasons or occasions?

Holiday Meals

Christmas-themed meals, Thanksgiving, Fourth of July picnics these are all things you can photograph in your own home and it doesn't even have to be on the holiday. These kinds of shots are great for stock — especially when the people in the shot look like they're having a good time. Happy people sell.

Fabrics

Silky and satiny fabrics can make nice backgrounds for shots of objects... or by themselves as a stock shot. Some fabric designs are copyrighted, so be sure to check the edge of the fabric and/or the bolt before you shoot.

Tassels and Details

Another stock photo possibility is tassels, zippers and other fabric adornments. Shoot them up-close, or off to the side.

Textures

Patterns and textures, when they're in focus and well lit, are likely to be accepted as stock shots. Try all kinds of textures around you, such as wood, stucco, brick, chipping paint ...



Paper Scraps

Like old frames and textures, some people search stock sites for images of old scraps of blank or lined paper, paper that looks stained or wrinkled, ripped or folded.

Picture Frames

If you have any outrageous or unique picture frames, you can photograph the frame against a white background or use Photoshop to erase what's inside for stock.

Curtains

Shelly Perry's friends think she's crazy when she sits down to a theater performance and takes pictures of the red curtain before the show. But she's on to something, because that red curtain shot has sold on [iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com) 188 times, as of this writing.



**Photo by Shelly Perry
(also available for sale at
[iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com))**

Photos with Copy Space

If you have a photo or two with the subject matter all the way on one side and nothing but blue sky or green grass or some other open space on the other, magazines might be interested in running it with text over the blank space. You could also try to submit it for stock, as ad agencies might want to pick it up for the same reason, as long as the subject matter is relevant.

Daily Rituals

For stock, you can get photos of people going about their daily routine. Consider these rituals:

- **Brushing Your Teeth**
- **Getting Dressed**
- **Making Coffee**

And think about the items people use to complete these rituals:

- **A Hairbrush**
- **Soap and Towel**
- **Shower Curtain**
- **Shaving Kit**

Houses and Real Estate

For stock, in your town, you can take pictures of new houses, houses with “for sale” signs in the yard (as long as the company selling isn’t visible on the sign), couples in front of a house with a “sold” sign or shaking hands with a real-estate agent.

If you sell them to a newspaper, you don't need a release. For stock, you'll need a release from every identifiable person and all the company logos and trademarks on the signs will need to be removed.

Kitchen

A spacious, empty kitchen with no people in it and no clutter, brightly lighted, can make a real-estate stock photo.

Dining Room

Try a few things in your own dining room, such as setting the table with your best dishes and silverware, or emptying the table of all contents. Elegance does best for stock photos of dining rooms.

Family Room

Pictures of stylish living and family rooms can do well for stock as long as they're cleared of anything personal, such as magazines or movies. They must be neat and shining clean — unless you're making a shot of a family sitting on the couch together or a couple watching a movie.

Here are some other rooms that could sell for stock:

- **Empty Bedrooms**
- **Your Home Office**
- **Your Garage**

Pool or Patio

For outdoor shots of a pool or patio, early morning and late afternoon are the best times to shoot, as the intense light of midday has a tendency to wash out colors.

Seasonal Themes

You can take pictures of popular places in your town that change during the seasons and turn them into seasonal art shots and/or photographs for your local paper. The same thing might sell for stock, too.

Fall Leaves

Colorful fall leaves are one obvious autumn theme, but you can also go on trips to the local pumpkin patch, or take indoor shots of apple cider on a table with a few fall leaves around it, pumpkin pie, soup and grilled cheese sandwiches, anything else that makes people think of fall.

Winter Scenes

Families making snowmen, kids making snow angels, snowball fights and other winter-themed photos can sell as stock or fine art.

Spring Buds

If you're thinking flowers, you might be able to sell them as fine-art shots. But stock sites are already full of flowers, so unless your flower photo is really amazing, you're probably better going with something such as hay fever for stock.

Spa and Spa Experiences

This is where it gets good. Go to the spa and treat yourself to a massage or a mud mask. Bring a friend and your camera and you can get stock photos of spa elements, such as essential oils, incense burning, your friend in a facial mask with cucumbers on her eyes, etc. Better yet, do it at home and save a few bucks.



Cosmetics

For stock, beauty magazines or local cosmetics shops, you can take photos of (unused) beauty products on a white background — getting a good range of colors in the shot — or of people applying makeup in a mirror.

Luxury Dining

Food or local-events magazines and Web sites might consider your photos of fine restaurants. And pictures of your place setting, the wine glasses and the food itself might make good fine-art shots. All of these things can be good for stock, too.

Luxury Travel

Check into a local luxury hotel and get stock photos of items in the room that convey opulence. If you don't want to check in, you can peruse the lobby for photos of chandeliers, front desk service bells and other lobby accoutrements. Don't forget to get a shot of the pool. Ask the staff for permission before photographing any people working there.

Hotels are private property so if they tell you to stop, you must stop.

Old Photos

If you can get model releases for the people in them (or direct descendants of the people in them), your scanned vintage photos might be of interest to stock sties. You can erase the faces in Photoshop if the people in the photos aren't around to sign a model release... and that way, people who buy the photo can put their faces in the photo, instead. Be sure that the photos you choose are unique or interesting in some way, not simple family portraits. Think 1970s and earlier.

Emotions

You can stage an endless number of scenes to shoot for stock photos, but the ones that sell best are photos that tell a story about the person in them.

Think about color. If you're shooting a happy photo, you could dress the person in yellow. To illustrate sadness, try a blue theme.



Photo by Shelly Perry
(also available for sale at [iStockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com))

Here are some ways you can try to capture common emotions:

- **People Laughing**
- **People Crying**
- **People Yelling**
- **People Comforting Other People**

People Holding Signs

There are hundreds of stock possibilities with words and signs. Another sign option — and one that sells better than signs with words — is blank signs that businesses or individuals can personalize with their own words. For example, you could take photos of business people holding blank signs or giving presentations, pointing to a blank display. Try to convey the message with the expressions on the peoples' faces.

Your Favorite Evening Activity

Whatever you do with your evenings, if it's a popular activity, you can bring your camera along for some stock shots.

Board games, poker, quilting or bingo... even at the movies, you can get photos of things that could sell as stock — such as cards, bingo boards or movie popcorn.



Some of these can make for interesting fine art as well.

Again, try capturing just someone's hand playing chess or someone's fingers quilting. And be careful with playing cards and board games as they could be trademarked.

You can keep this report as a reference, or use it as inspiration. The 101 photo ideas in it can get you started in the right direction, but the creative possibilities are endless. Now it's up to you to get out your camera and start shooting.