How to Be an Art Figure Model

A practical guide to preparing, posing, and working with artists

An art figure model gives artists a live subject for studying gesture, weight, proportion, light, and form. Strong modeling starts with clear communication and poses that can be held comfortably for the time requested.

1. Confirm the work before you arrive

Ask about the start and end time, pose lengths, breaks, rate and payment timing, attire or nudity, room temperature, changing space, props, accessibility, and policies for photography and artwork sharing. Agree on boundaries and who will time poses. Ask whether the host wants gestures, a long pose, or both.

2. Pack a small kit

Bring a robe or cover-up, slippers, water, and a clean sheet or towel for the stand. A mat, cushions, a block, or a stable prop can help if the studio permits them. Ask what the venue provides and arrive early enough to set up privately.

3. Compose the pose from the ground up

Settle your weight first. From there, try a tilt of the shoulders, a turn of the torso, a bend at an elbow, or a gap between an arm and the body. These create readable shapes from several angles. Rotate your orientation between poses so different parts of the room can see the gesture.

4. Match the pose to the clock

Short gestures are a good time for asymmetry and larger movement. For a longer pose, favor a chair, floor support, or other stable setup. Rest the weight of raised arms where helpful and leave enough room to breathe naturally. Choose another position if you feel pain, numbness, tingling, or dizziness.

Try a short practice set

Use a timer for four 30-second gestures, two one-minute poses, one five-minute seated pose, and one ten-minute supported pose. Take breaks. Notice which shapes read clearly and which you can hold without straining. This is a practice example, so follow the timing the studio gives you on the day.

Working a Live Session

Returning to a long pose, setting boundaries, and getting booked

5. Make a long pose easy to repeat

Note where each foot, hand, and elbow rests. With the host's permission, use removable tape to mark feet or furniture. Pick a visual reference in the room for head angle and gaze. At each break, return to those contact points first, then ask the host to check the pose from the artists' side.

6. Use simple, direct language

Try "I can hold that for five minutes," "I'd like a cushion under this knee," or "I need to stop and reset." A host can plan the session around a change when you speak up early. Keep a cover-up handy and tell the host if someone disregards an agreed boundary.

7. Finish professionally

Follow the host's timing, cover up during breaks as appropriate, and clean your area before you leave. Confirm payment if the arrangement is unclear. If the session went well, ask whether the organizer wants you in their rotation and share the availability you can reliably offer.

8. Apply with relevant information

Introduce yourself briefly. Share your general area, availability, preferred formats, and experience or interest. Ask what the studio needs before sending reference materials. For Green Mountain Figure Drawing, leave photos out of the application.

Before stepping onto the model stand

Confirm the timing and breaks, attire, changing area, photography rules, rate, and how to signal a reset. If the work changes, agree on the change before modeling.

Apply at greenmountainfigure.com/apply-to-model.