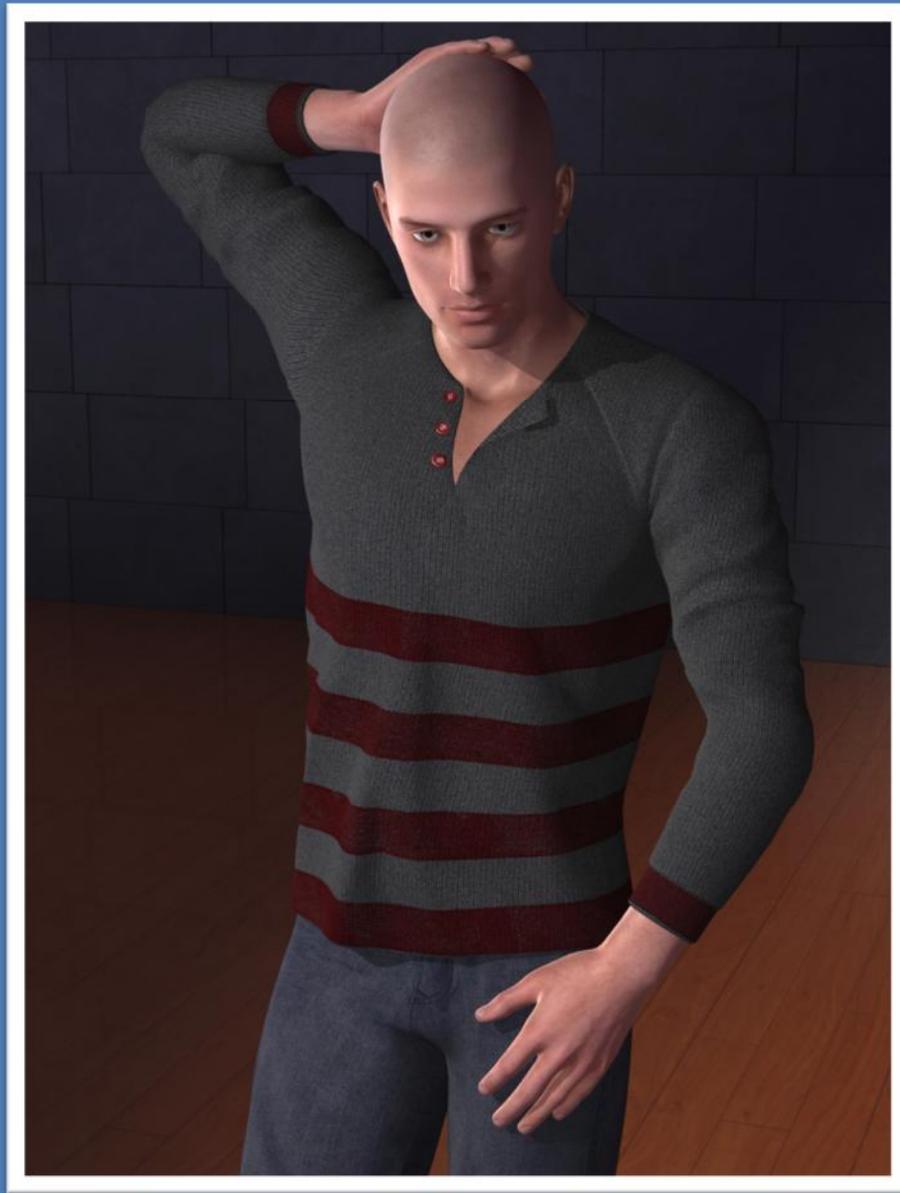


Portrait Lighting with Daz Studio



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Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| What will you learn? | 3 |
| What should you already know?..... | 3 |
| About this document..... | 3 |
| 1. CREATING A PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO IN DAZ | 4 |
| Creating a studio with primitives..... | 4 |
| Applying shaders to the floor and wall | 5 |
| Rendering your image..... | 8 |
| 2. ADDING THE SUBJECT CHARACTER..... | 9 |
| 3. ADDING AMBIENT LIGHT | 10 |
| Daz Studio’s default light..... | 10 |
| Lighting like a photographer..... | 10 |
| Adding ambient light with <i>UberEnvironment2</i> | 10 |
| Adding an environment map..... | 12 |
| Quality settings..... | 13 |
| The UberEnvironment2 environment sphere | 13 |
| The UberEnvironment2 Environment Mode..... | 15 |
| UberEnvironment2 Intensity..... | 15 |
| 4. ADDING A KEY LIGHT | 16 |
| Off-camera lighting | 16 |
| Adding a key light | 16 |
| Positioning the key light..... | 18 |
| Adding shadow | 19 |
| Balancing light levels | 20 |
| 5. ADDING A FILL LIGHT | 21 |
| Positioning the fill light..... | 21 |
| Adding the fill light | 21 |
| Balancing light levels | 22 |
| 6. WHERE TO FROM HERE? | 23 |
| Rim lights..... | 23 |
| Add other objects to the scene | 23 |

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Introduction

What will you learn?

In this tutorial, you'll learn how to create a photographic portrait in Daz Studio. You'll do many of the things that a photographer would do when shooting a portrait:

- Set up a studio.
- Choose and style a subject.
- Pose the subject.
- Add ambient light.
- Apply a key light, fill light and rim light.

What should you already know?

The tutorial assumes that you have installed Daz Studio and have a basic familiarity with it. If you're new to Daz Studio, it would be a good idea to work through Daz's *QuickStart Guide* before proceeding:

1. Run Daz Studio.
2. From the **Help** menu select **QuickStart Guide....**

This will open your web browser and display Daz's introductory tutorial.

About this document

Your feedback and suggestions regarding this tutorial will always be appreciated.

The document was developed using Daz Studio version 4.8, but the techniques should be easily applied to other versions.

Cheers,

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1. Creating a photography studio in Daz

Creating a studio with primitives

Portraits are often shot in a photographic studio. Creating a studio environment in Daz is simple. You create a floor for the subject to pose on and a single wall behind the subject to act as a background:

1. Run Daz Studio. If it's already running, from the **File** menu select **New...** This will create a new, empty scene.
2. From the **Create** menu, select **New Primitive...** This will display a dialog box.
 - Set **Type** to **Plane**.
 - Set **Size** to 10.
 - Set the units popup menu (next to the Size field) to **m** for metres.
 - Press **Accept**.

This creates a floor surface that you can stand your subject on.

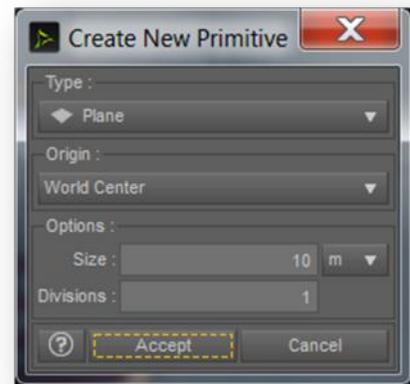
A good practice in Daz is to name each object as you add it to the scene, so:

3. In the **Scene pane**, select the newly created object. It will be called 'plane'. (If you don't see the **Scene** pane, from the **Window** menu select **Panes (Tabs)** then **Scene**.)
4. Click on it again and a cursor will appear. Press **Backspace** on your keyboard and type in the name 'Floor'. Press **Enter**.

Now that you have a floor, add a wall using a similar series of steps:

5. From the **Create** menu, select **New Primitive...**
6. Press **Accept** to accept the same settings as above.

This creates another plane that is the same size as the floor. You can't see it, though, because it's overlapping the floor. You'll fix that by standing it on its side so that it becomes a wall.



- In the **Scene pane**, select the newly created object. (It will be called 'plane 2'.)
- Rename it to 'Wall' using the steps above.
- In the **Parameters pane**, set the **X Rotate** value to 90. (If you don't see the **Parameters** pane, from the **Window** menu select **Panes (Tabs)** then **Parameters**.)

If you zoom out, you'll see that the wall is upright but is in the middle of the floor.

Now you'll push the wall back towards the rear edge of the floor. This will give you more space in your studio:

- In the **Scene pane**, select the **Wall** object.
- In the **Parameters pane**, set the **Z Translate** value to -500.

This pushes the wall back by 500 cm (5 metres).

Applying shaders to the floor and wall

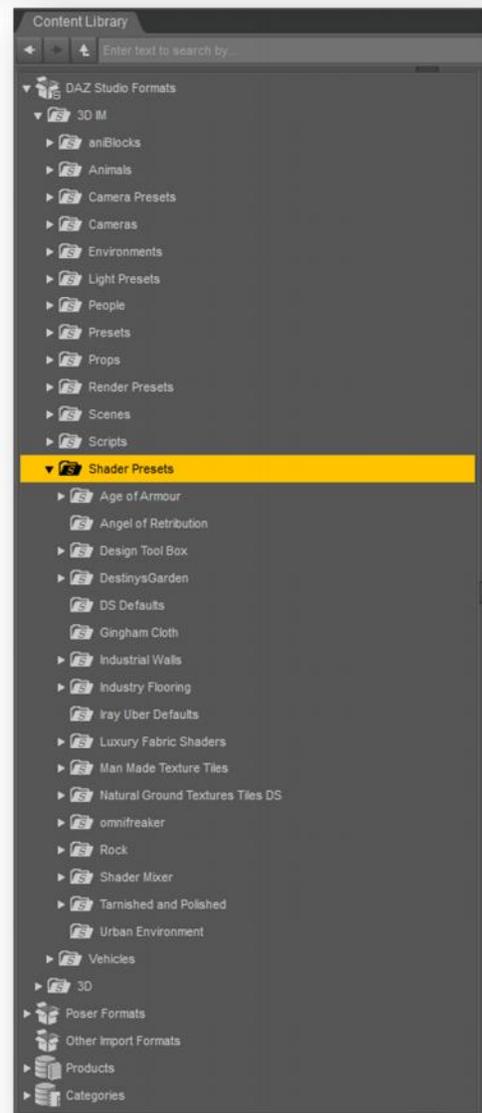
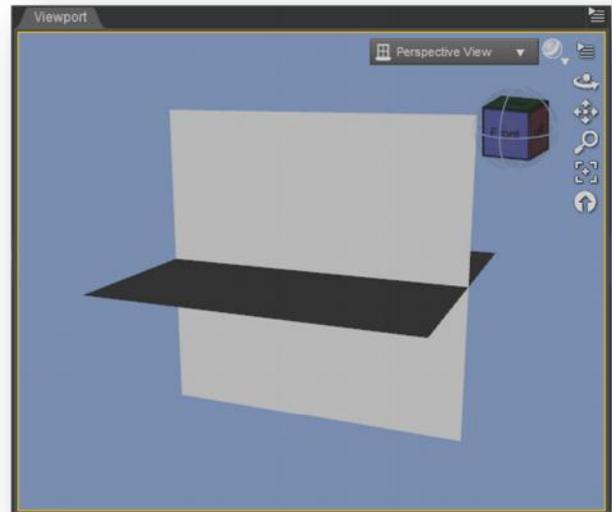
Neither the floor nor the wall looks very convincing. At present they just look like bland, grey planes. Fortunately, Daz Studio supports **shaders**. A shader is a small program that draws a repeating pattern upon a surface. For example, you could have shaders that make a surface look like wood, stone or grass.

You can view the shaders available to you like so:

- In the **Content Library** pane, open the **Daz Studio Formats** item. (If you don't see the Content Library pane, from the **Window** menu select **Panes (Tabs)** then **Content Library**.)
- Open the **My Library** item. (This may have another name.)
- Open the **Shader Presets** item.

This will reveal a collection of shaders organised into folders.

Your Content Library pane will be different to the one shown here. Don't be concerned.



When you first download Daz Studio, it doesn't provide many shaders. Fortunately, you can buy a wide variety of shaders from the **Daz Store**:

www.daz3d.com

The Daz Store home page.

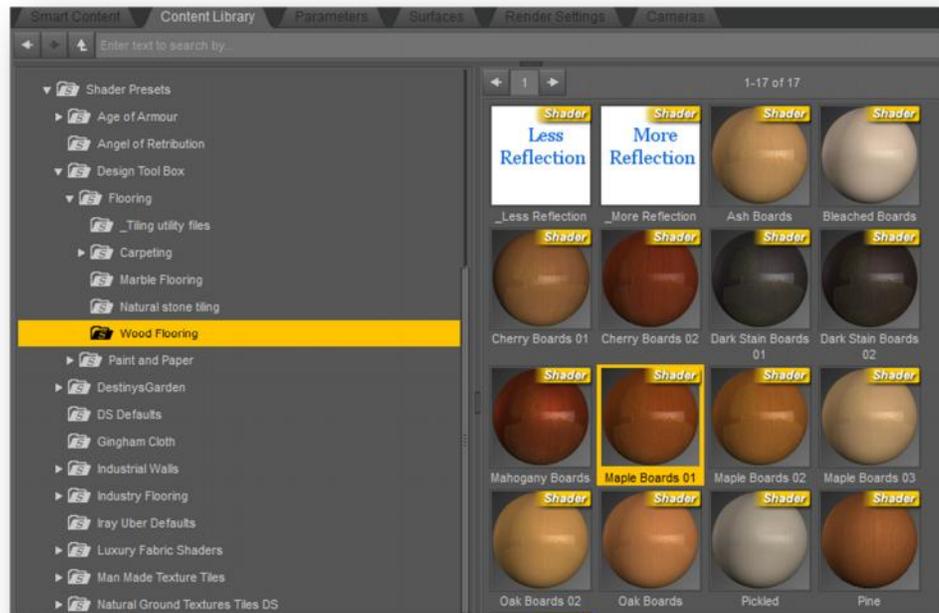
www.daz3d.com/shaders

The shaders section of the Daz Store.

If you don't yet have any suitable shaders to apply to the floor or wall, skip ahead to the next chapter of this tutorial. You can apply the shaders later, and the remainder of the tutorial will be unaffected.

Now let's apply a shader to the floor:

1. From the **Tools** menu, select the **Surface Selection** tool.
2. Click on the floor object in the **Viewport** (the main window).
3. In the **Content Library** pane find the shader that you wish to apply and double click on its icon.



In this example, I've used a shader

*product from the **Daz Store** called 'Design ToolBox'. I've applied the shader named 'Maple Boards 01'. There is nothing special about this particular shader, so feel free to complete the tutorial using the shader of your choice.*

Using a similar series of steps, apply a shader to your wall surface:

4. From the **Tools** menu, select the **Surface Selection** tool.
5. Click on the Wall object in the **Viewport**.
6. In the **Content Library** pane find the shader that you wish to apply and double click on its icon.

In this example, I've applied a shader named 'Slate 05'.

Clearly this is a great improvement.

There are a couple of problems, though with the particular shaders shown here that you may (or may not) be experiencing with your own choice of shaders.

The first is that the slate tiles on the wall are far too large. Fortunately, this isn't really a problem because the Viewport pane is only showing a *preview* of your image. When you render your image, the slate tiles will be a more reasonable size. (See the image below.)

The other problem is that the slate tiles have been applied vertically, rather than horizontally. (That is, they're taller than they are wide.)

Of course, if you've chosen a different shader you may not have this problem now. You may experience something similar with other shaders in future, though, so it's worth understanding how to fix the problem.

Skip the following two steps if you're using different shaders to those shown here.

Fortunately, fixing this problem is easy: you just rotate the wall by 90 degrees:

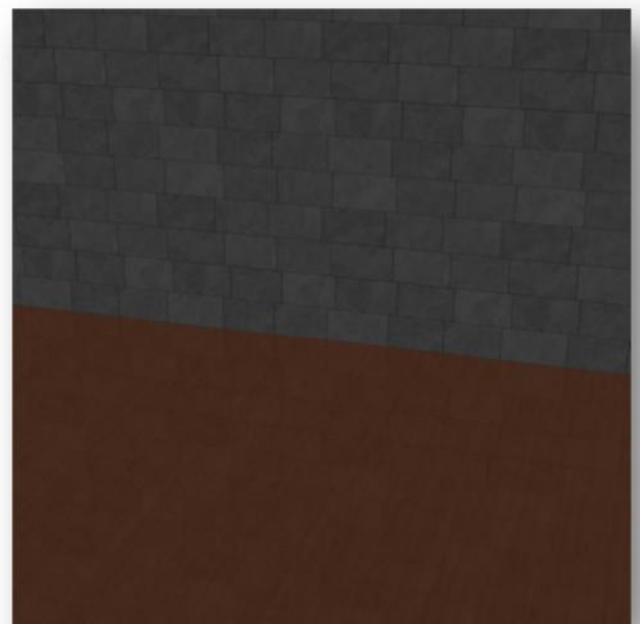
1. In the **Scene pane**, select the **Wall** object.
2. In the **Parameters pane**, set the **Z Rotate** value to 90.

This rotates the wall so that the tiles are in a more pleasing orientation.

Here's a render of the room so far:

Your image will look different to this, of course, if you've used different shaders.

The beauty of shaders is that they can turn two planes into a room with very little effort.



Rendering your image

Prior to version 4.8 of Daz Studio, renders were almost always done using the **3Delight** rendering software that's built into Daz. Version 4.8 introduced a second renderer call **NVIDIA Iray**.

It's worth noting that some shaders available in the Daz Store may work well with both renderers, others with only one.

As 3Delight is the more established choice, that's the renderer used to create the images in this tutorial, but feel free to experiment with both. (If you're not sure which to use, you'll probably find the 3Delight renderer to be the simpler choice.)

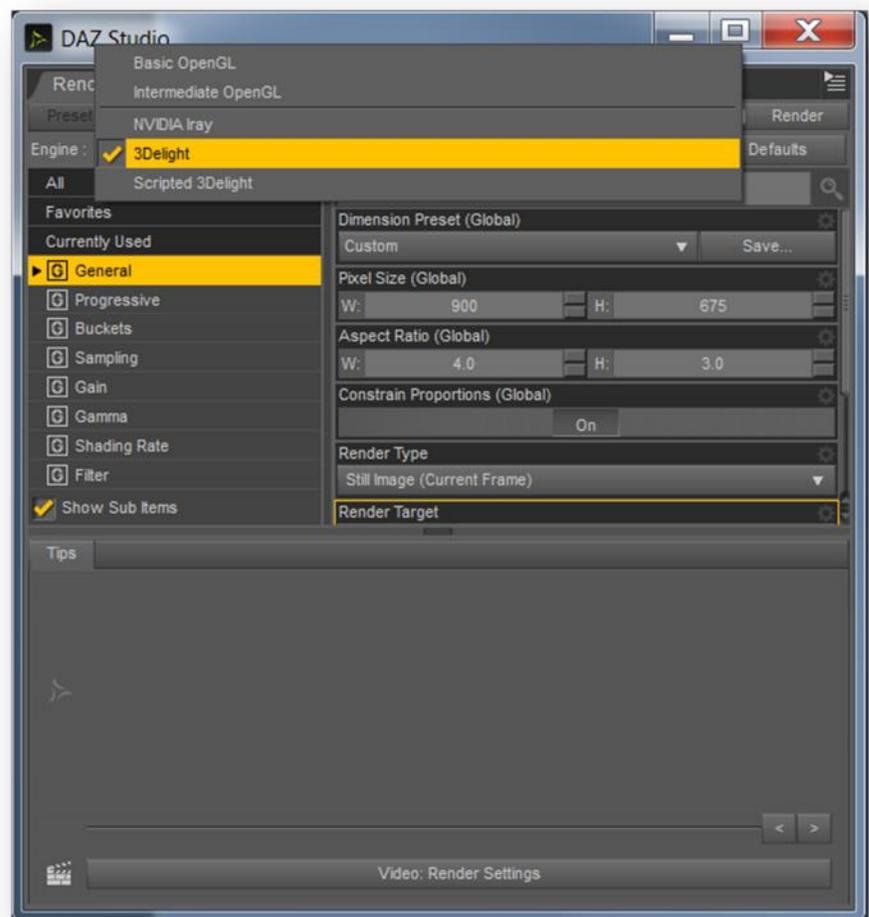
You can choose which renderer you wish to use like so:

1. In the **Render Settings** pane from the **Engine** popup menu select **3Delight** or **NVIDIA Iray**.

If you don't see the **Render Settings** pane, from the **Window** menu select **Panes (Tabs)** then **Render Settings**.

To perform the render:

1. Enter the desired size for your render into the **W** (width) and **H** (height) fields.
2. Click on the **Render** button at the top-right of the **Render Settings** pane, or select **Render** from the **Render** menu.



2. Adding the subject character

Having created a simple photography studio, your next task is to add, style and pose your subject.

You can add a figure to your scene using the **Smart Content** pane or the **Content Library** pane. This tutorial will use the former as many new users find it simpler. Feel free, though, to use either.

1. In the **Smart Content** pane, select the **Figures** category. (If you don't see the Smart Content pane, from the **Window** menu select **Panes (Tabs)** then **Smart Content**.)
2. Right-click on the figure that you wish to use, and select **Merge into Scene**.
3. In the **Smart Content** pane, select the **Wardrobe** category.
4. Right-click on the clothing items that you wish to use then select **Merge into Scene**. Do this for as many items as you wish.

In the example shown here, I've used the figure 'Genesis 2 Base Male' and added the clothing items 'Newport Shirt' and 'Newport Pants'. Your scene will look different to this, of course, if you make different choices. That's fine.

Feel free to add hair to your figure. Keep in mind, though, that hair (particularly long hair) increases render times.

You now need to pose your character:

1. In the **Scene** pane, select the figure. ('Genesis 2 Male' in my case.)
2. In the **Smart Content** pane, select the **Poses** category.
3. Right-click on your preferred pose then choose **Merge into Scene**. This will apply the pose.

In this example, I've applied the pose 'Base 18'.

Of course, you can pose the figure manually if you prefer. Alternatively, you can start with a supplied pose like this one then make your own adjustments to it.



3. Adding ambient light

Daz Studio's default light

You may think that your scene doesn't currently have any lights in it. After all, the Scene pane only has three objects in it: Floor, Wall and Genesis 2 Male.

Actually the Scene *does* have a light. It just isn't shown in the Scene pane. When you first create a scene (File > New), Daz creates a simple light that is positioned at the same point as the camera and pointing in the same direction as the camera. As you move the camera, the default light moves with it, so that the scene is always evenly lit. The default light is why your existing renders have not simply been black scenes.

As soon as you add any other light to your scene, the default light is removed. If you remove all of your lights, the default light reappears.

If the default light exists and is so effortless to use, you might wonder why you should bother adding other lights. Well, the default light is very basic. For example, it doesn't cast a shadow, and you have no way to alter its colour or intensity. Adding your own lighting manually will make your renders substantially better.

Lighting like a photographer

Lighting your scene can be a complicated and frustrating business if you just randomly add lights without knowing what you're doing. A good discipline is to mimic the lighting that a real scene would have.

In this tutorial, you're going to add four lights:

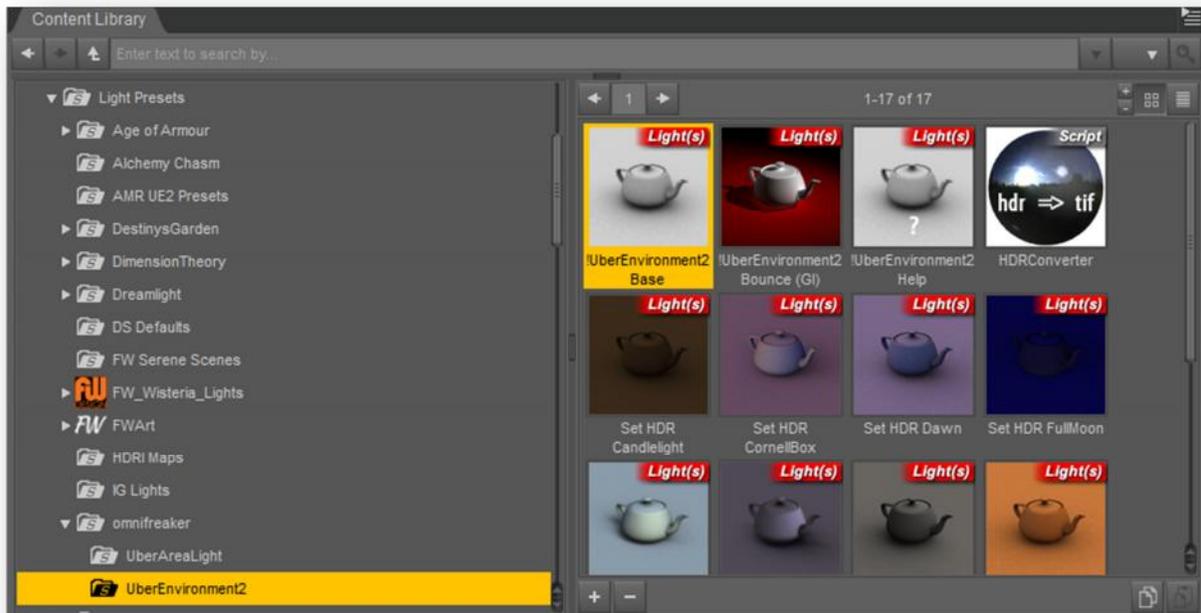
- The **ambient light** will provide low but even light across the entire scene.
- The **key light** will be the main light drawing attention to your subject.
- The **fill light** will be used to prevent any part of the figure from being too much in shadow.
- The **rim light** will add a halo around your figure.

Adding ambient light with *UberEnvironment2*

As noted above, an ambient light is used to provide low but even lighting across the entire scene. In Daz Studio, this is best accomplished using the *UberEnvironment2* light. You can add it to your scene like so:

1. In the **Content Library** pane, open the **Daz Studio Formats** item.
2. Open the **My Library** item. (This may have another name.)

3. Open the **Light Presets** item.
4. Open the **omnifreaker** item and select **UberEnvironment2**.
5. Right-click on the icon **!UberEnvironment2 Base** and select **Merge into Scene**.



If you render your scene you'll see that it's substantially better lit than it was before.

You may find the image to be a little **grainy** or **noisy**. That's to be expected. You'll soon fix this by altering a quality setting.

The UberEnvironment2 light has provided an even light across the entire scene.

As good as this is, the UberEnvironment2 light isn't designed to be the only light in your scene. It works best when supplemented by other lights such as a key light and a fill light.



Adding an environment map

Before adding more lights, though, let's alter a few of the settings of your UberEnvironment2 light:

1. In the **Scene** pane select **UberEnvironment2 1**.
2. In the **Content Library** pane right-click on **Set HDR Studio** and select **Load**.

Nothing will have happened to your preview image in the Viewport. If you render your image, though, you'll see that it has a strong orange tint to it. What's happened here?

The UberEnvironment2 folder contains eight **environment maps**. These are images that alter the ambient light's colour and intensity based on direction. They are:

- Set HDR Candlelight
- Set HDR CornellBox
- Set HDR Dawn
- Set HDR FullMoon
- Set HDR KHPark
- Set HDR Kitchen
- Set HDR SoftBox
- Set HDR Studio

3. Right-click on the first of these environment maps then select **Load**. Now render your image.
4. Repeat the previous step for each environment map. Which ones do you like?

The images shown here use the CornellBox and KHPark shaders.

If you wish to remove the environment map and do without one, the easiest strategy is to delete the UberEnvironment2 object from the scene and insert a new one.

Your rendered image changes greatly depending upon which environment map you apply. Environment maps are an easy way to



achieve sophisticated lighting with a few clicks.

Before proceeding, apply the CornellBox environment map to follow along with the tutorial:

5. Right-click on **Set HDR CornellBox** and select **Load**.

Quality settings

The UberEnvironment2 folder also contains five quality settings. These affect the **grain** or **noise** that appears in your rendered image. They are:

- Set Quality 0XLo
- Set Quality 1Lo
- Set Quality 2Med
- Set Quality 3Hi
- Set Quality 4XHi

As you might expect, higher quality settings take longer to render. You can change the quality setting like so:

1. In the **Scene** pane select **UberEnvironment2 1**.
2. Right-click on the first of the quality settings, and select **Load**. Now render your image.
3. Repeat the previous step for each quality setting. How long did each render take?

The UberEnvironment2 Environment Sphere

1. In the **Scene** pane select **UberEnvironment2 1**.
2. In the **Parameters** pane set **Scale** to 2%.

This will reveal a small sphere, called the **Environment Sphere**, at the feet of your figure in the **Viewport**.

3. In the **Parameters** pane set **X Translate** to 50 and **Y Translate** to 20 to move the sphere to one side and up a little.

Environment maps often have a bright side and a dark side. By rotating the environment sphere you can change the direction from which the light strikes your subject.



The **CornellBox environment map** shown here has a lighter blue side and a darker red side. If you rotate it, your rendered image will look quite different:

4. In the **Parameters** pane set **Y Rotate** to -90.

The environment sphere now has its lighter blue side lighting the left of your figure. The darker red side is lighting the other side.

When you render the image, you'll see that the left of the figure's face is thus lighter.

This image is pleasantly moody but too dark. Remember, though, that you rarely use an **UberEnvironment2** light by itself. You'll soon add a key light and fill light to brighten up your subject.

Before proceeding, let's replace the CornellBox environment map with the brighter **KHPark** map:

1. In the **Scene** pane select **UberEnvironment2 1**.
2. In the **Content Library** pane right-click on **Set HDR KHPark** and select **Load**.

The KHPark environment map is commonly used in Daz renders. One side of this image has a very bright spot simulating sunlight. By rotating the image you can control the direction of the light in your render.

3. In the **Parameters** pane set **Y Rotate** to -90.

The environment sphere now has the bright spot on the left. When you render the image, you'll see that the left side of your figure's face is brighter.

Also the shadow cast on the floor is now coming from the left.

As noted earlier, environment maps are an easy way to achieve sophisticated lighting with a few clicks.



The UberEnvironment2 Environment Mode

The UberEnvironment2 light has an important setting called the **Environment Mode**. It can be set as follows:

1. In the **Scene** pane select **UberEnvironment2 1**.
2. In left-hand side of the **Parameters** pane select the **Light** item.

In the right-hand side of the pane is a popup menu labelled **Environment Mode**. It has six values, three of which are commonly used. Their effects on the render are shown here:



Ambient (No Ray Tracing)



Occlusion w/Directional Shadows
(the default)



Indirect Lighting
w/Directional Shadows

- **Ambient (No Ray Tracing):** No shadows will be cast by the objects in your scene. (Look at the floor in the leftmost image above.) This is a less realistic type of light, but the scene will render quickly.
- **Occlusion with Directional Shadows:** Shadows *will* be cast. Furthermore, by rotating the bright spot on the environment map you can change their direction. This is the default environment mode.
- **Indirect Lighting with Directional Shadows:** In addition to movable shadows, the light will also bounce off nearby surfaces causing light to hit your subject from more directions. This provides brighter and more realistic lighting but renders more slowly.

In the example images above, there seems to be little difference between the latter two images. Complex scenes will often yield significantly better images, though, when you choose indirect lighting.

UberEnvironment2 Intensity

The **Intensity** setting can be used to alter the overall amount of light contributed to your scene by the UberEnvironment2 light. You'll adjust this later after you've added another light to your scene.

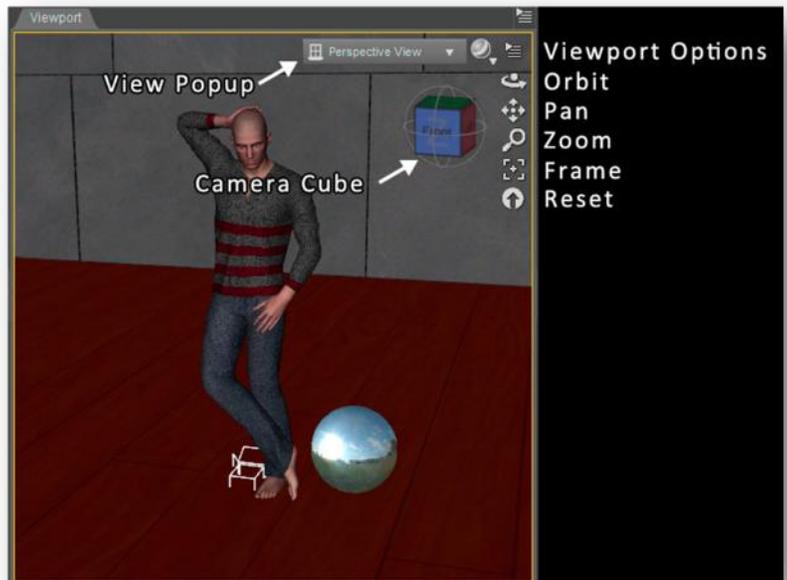
4. Adding a key light

Off-camera lighting

Photographers shooting a portrait rarely use the flash built into their cameras. Rather, they use **off-camera lighting**. That is, they have one, two, three — or even more — lights mounted on light stands and placed around the studio.

This chapter will begin the process of adding such lights to your scene.

Before you continue, though, use the illustration at right to familiarise yourself with the names of a few objects in the Daz user interface as they'll be used in the instructions that follow.



Adding a key light

The main light illuminating your subject is called the **key light**. Daz Studio provides a light called the **Spotlight** that is well suited to acting as a key light. Let's add one to our scene:

1. From the **Create** menu select **New Spotlight....**
2. In the name field enter 'Key Light'.

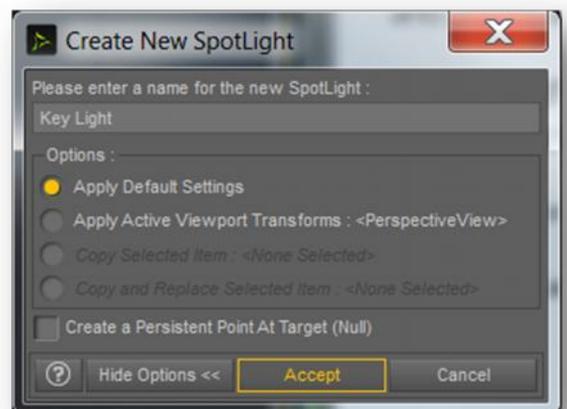
Remember: it's a good idea to name all the objects in your scene as you go.

3. Select the option **Apply Default Settings**, and press **Accept**.

A new spotlight object will appear in your Scene pane and in your Viewport.

4. From the **Window** menu select **Viewports** then **Side by Side**.

This will divide your viewport into two halves, each of which can be looking at a different part of your scene.



5. Click on the **View Popup** control on the *right*-hand pane of your **Viewport**, and choose **Key Light** from the popup menu that appears.

The left-hand pane continues to display the view through the **Perspective Camera**. This shows how your scene will look when it's rendered.

The right-hand pane of your viewport now displays what the key light is pointing at.

At present it's probably pointing at the wall. Let's make it point to your figure:

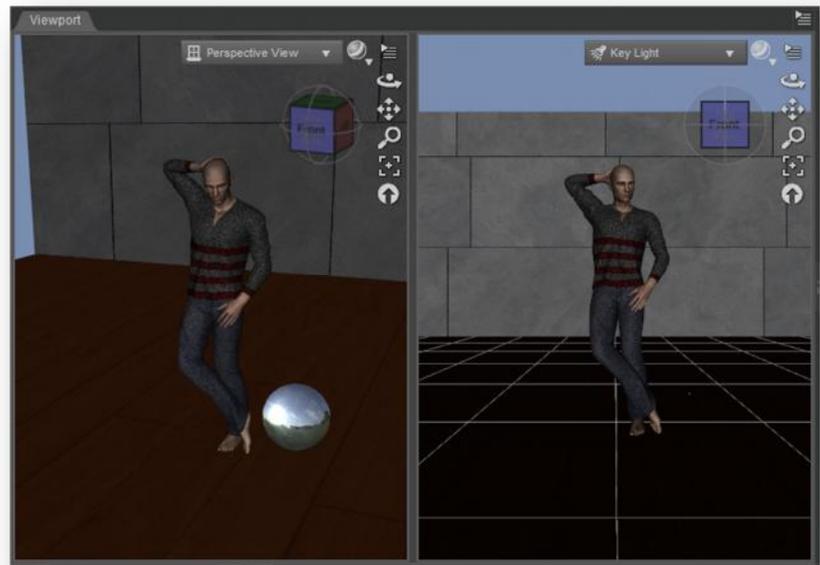
6. Select your figure (Genesis 2 Male) in the **Scene** pane.
7. In the *right*-hand pane of your **Viewport**, click on the **Reset** then the **Frame** controls.

The right-hand pane should now be looking directly at your figure. In other words, the key light is pointed directly towards (and illuminating) the front of your figure.

If you now render your figure, you may see an error message like this one. If so:

1. Click on **OK**.
2. Click anywhere in the left-hand pane of your viewport.

You should now be able to start a render without any problems..



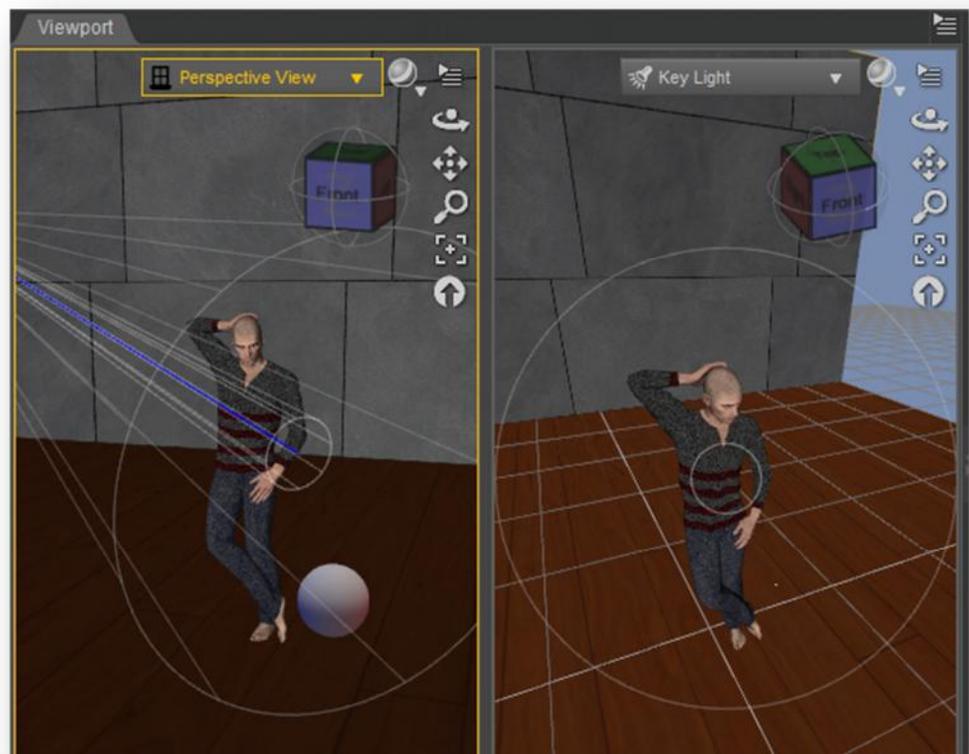
Positioning the key light

Adding a key light has greatly improved your image. It's certainly much brighter than it was with only the ambient light provided by UberEnvironment2.

It does have an obvious problem, though. See that big splash of light on the back wall? It's kind of distracting.

Portrait photographers will often place the key light to one side of the figure, rather than directly in front. The key light is also often also placed high and looking downwards.

1. In the **Scene** pane, select the **Key Light**.
2. Use the **Camera Cube**, **Pan**, **Zoom** and **Orbit** controls in the *right*-hand pane of your **Viewport** to place the **key light** a little to the left of the character, positioned high and aimed downwards.



Render the image now, and you'll see that you've eliminated the bright splash of light on the back wall.

You've also created a nice shadowing on the figure's face. Notice how the left-hand side is bright and the right-hand side is in shadow.

Photographers appreciate an effect like this, enthusiastically using words like **contrast** and **drama** to describe it.

You may feel that the right-hand side of the face is too dark, though. That's why the next chapter will add a **fill light** — a weaker light aimed at the other side of the figure.

Adding shadow

Before we do that, though, we're going to fix a glaring mistake. The key light that we just added isn't casting a shadow.

There *is* a soft shadow on the floor, but that's being provided by the UberEnvironment2 light. (If you turn off the Key Light in the Scene pane, that shadow will remain.)

We have two lights in our scene now (ambient and key), so we should expect two sources of shadow:

1. From the **Scene** pane, select the **Key Light**.
2. In the left-hand side of the **Parameters** pane, select the **Shadow** item.
3. In the right-hand side of the **Parameters** pane change the **Shadow Type** popup to **Raytraced (Software Only)**.

Now render your scene and you'll see a new shadow on the floor. (Your choice of floor shader may affect how prominent this shadow appears.)

At this point you may wish to rotate the environment sphere of the UberEnvironment2 light so that the two shadows overlap. Alternatively, you can rotate your key light.



This new shadow is realistic, but you may find it a little distracting. There are two easy things we can do to change this. One is to adjust the intensity of the shadow like so:

4. In the right-hand side of the **Parameters** pane change the **Shadow Intensity** to **50%**.

The shadow is now less prominent.

The other thing you can do to make the shadow less distracting is to zoom and rotate the camera so that less of the floor is visible. Photographers call this **framing** your subject.

5. Use the **Camera Cube**, **Pan**, **Zoom** and **Orbit** controls in the *left*-hand pane of your **Viewport** to position the camera so that less of the floor is visible.

Remember that you do this in the *left*-hand pane of the Viewport as this is where you have your camera view. (The right-hand side is the view from your key light.)

Now that we've got a closer look at our figure, it seems that there's too much light hitting the left-hand side of his face. That bright **hot spot** near the ear is something to be avoided.



Balancing light levels

A good first step to balancing our light levels is usually to reduce the intensity of the UberEnvironment2 light:

1. In the **Scene** pane select **UberEnvironment2 1**.
2. In left-hand side of the **Parameters** pane select the **Light** item.
3. In right-hand side of the **Parameters** pane set the **Intensity** to 50%.

This has reduced the excessive light level and our render is coming along nicely.



5. Adding a fill light

Positioning the fill light

A fill light is a weaker light designed to remove overly harsh shadows that may have been created by the key light. You may have one or two fill lights or none. It's very much a matter of personal taste.

A common strategy, though, is to place a fill light like so:

- Place it on the opposite side of the figure to the key light.
- Place it at around half the height and angled a little upwards.
- Set the intensity at around one-third to one-half of that of the key light.

Adding the fill light

Let's add one to our scene:

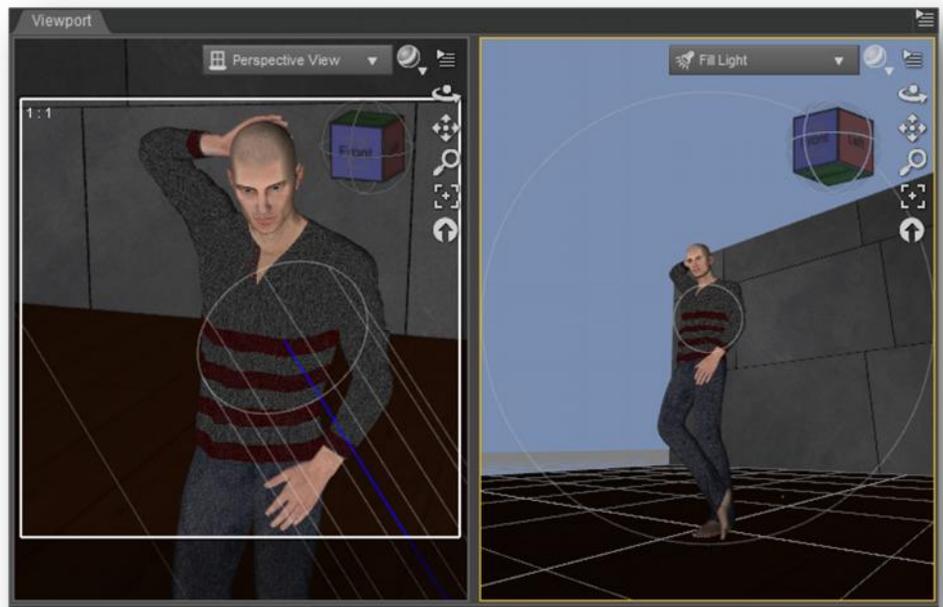
1. From the **Create** menu select **New Spotlight...**
2. In the name field enter 'Fill Light'.
3. Select the option **Apply Default Settings**, and press **Accept**.

A second spotlight object will appear in your Scene pane and will also appear in your Viewport. Now let's position it as described above:

4. Click on the **View** **Popup** control on the *right-hand* pane of your **Viewport** and choose **Fill Light**.

The right-hand pane of your viewport now displays what the fill light is pointing at. Let's make it point to your figure:

5. Select your figure (Genesis 2 Male) in the **Scene** pane.



6. In the right-hand pane of your **Viewport**, click on the **Reset** then the **Frame** controls.

The key light is now pointed directly towards (and illuminating) the front of your figure.

7. In the **Scene** pane, select the **Fill Light**.
8. Use the **Camera Cube**, **Pan**, **Zoom** and **Orbit** controls to place the fill light to the right of the figure, around waist height and aimed a little upwards.

Balancing light levels

Now let's lower the intensity of the fill light:

1. In the **Scene** pane select **Fill Light**.
2. In left-hand side of the **Parameters** pane select the **Light** item.
3. In the right-hand side of the **Parameters** pane set **Intensity** to 35%.

Render the image now, and you'll see that you've lessened the shadow on the right-hand side of the image.

There's still a pleasing contrast, though, between the lightness of the two halves of the face.

The final image here is unchanged except that the **KHPark environment map** has been replaced with the **CornellBox environment map**.

You might find the darker, moodier lighting preferable.

Positioning lights well and setting their relative intensities pleasingly will require some experience. Daz Studio allows you to gain this through pleasant hours spent just 'playing around'.



6. Where to from here?

Rim lights

Portrait photographers will often put a light in the scene that is positioned behind and to the side of the subject. This is called a **rim light**, **back light** or **kicker** and is designed to provide a halo of light around the edge of the subject. (It can be particularly effective at illuminating hair.)



The Viewport shows the Rim Light positioned behind the figure.



With the other lights turned off in the Scene panel, the Rim Light (Intensity = 150%) provides an obvious halo of light.



With all of the lights turned back on, the Rim Light adds a touch of sophistication.

Add other objects to the scene

The Daz Studio store provides lots of objects that you can add to your scene if you wish to make it more complex.

Enjoy letting your imagination loose!

Cheers,

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Where's my watch?