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Photo Pose Books For Comic Artists

by [Kat Avila](#)

"I want him doing this in that position. Where can I find a reference pic?" You may have torn up straight and gay porn magazines for body doubles. Or flipped through stacks of anatomy, bodybuilding, and martial arts books searching for the iron chest and washboard stomach posed just right. Or reread comics to see how your favorite artists drew it.

I know the pose I'm looking for. I need to find it quickly. That's when photo pose books come in handy. Sure, there are well-illustrated aids like Graphic-sha's ***Manga Pose Resource Book*** series, but I want to bring forth my own interpretation from real-life models.

Evaluating a pose book, one must consider:

1. Size of the photos and clarity of reproduction,
2. Types of poses (static or active; classic, mundane, or contortionist; nude or clothed),
3. Body types represented by the models (includes gender, ethnicity, age, muscle tone),
4. Single shot only or 360-degree rotation of pose, and
5. Angles of shots (waist-level, overhead, below waist-level).

The books I mention are overwhelmingly of Japanese origin, not surprising given the huge amateur comic artist base in Japan and the market that caters to it.

My favorite book is from a B&W series published by **Bijutsu Shuppan-sha** and supervised by illustrator Hisashi Eguchi.

Couples #1 891: Basic Pose (ISBN 4-568-30051-7) has an illustrated cover based on one of the photos within. The two college-age models have great chemistry. They are shot nude and clothed in the same positions in a studio setting.

The book is divided into standing poses, sitting poses, and recumbent poses. Each part consists of 8 to 10 descriptively labeled sections in English(!), e.g., "Hand in Hand," "In Your Arms," "Bear Hug," "Snuggling," "Pillowing His Head," and "All Over You."

Generally, a section consists of a 360-degree nude layout complemented by a 360-degree uniform or formal wear layout and casual wear layout, which become underwear and pajama layouts in the more intimate sections. Nudes are shot waist-level and from about 30 degrees overhead.

Other **Bijutsu Shuppan-sha** books I have are **Couples #2 437: Daily Pose** (ISBN 4-568-30052-5) and **Moving Pose 1223** (ISBN 4-568-30048-7). The latter is part of a set featuring only female models (the others are **Basic Pose 1152** and **Daily Pose 1007**). **Couples #2** has domestic, recreational, and outdoor settings.

Another favored B&W series is the **Combat Action Pose Collection** published by **SNK**. **Combat Action Pose Collection 3: Costume-Play** (ISBN 4-906436-99-4) has hot-looking babes with lethal bare hands, pistols, carbines, rifles, poles, and rapiers looking to kick someone's ass. The content headings are "Beauty & Elegant," "Funny & Vamp," and "Active." Outfits range from a wet suit to a zippered and padlocked leather mini. The models sport widely different hairstyles and wigs. Sorry, guys, no nudes. The 360-degree layouts are photographed at waist-level, overhead, and below waist-level.

Combat Action Pose Collection 4: Boys (ISBN 4-87777-001-1) has a similar format and more guns, but with cute and handsome male models. The content headings are "Break," "Slash," and "Explosion." Additional weapons found in this book are Japanese swords, a telescopic cosh, wooden saber, spiked-head truncheon, and M60 machine gun. Outfits include

contemporary casual and rock wear, military wear, suits, kimonos, and tough guy and psycho guy leather wear.

Yet another series is a four-volume color set published by **Maarsha. Vol. 1** (ISBN 4-8373-0284-X) shows high-speed photo sequences of three men and one woman jumping, kicking, punching, slapping, dodging, and tumbling. The woman's hair is a little past her shoulders and she sometimes wears different length skirts, so it's educational following how her hair and skirt move and look in the action sequences.

Vol. 2 (ISBN 4-8373-0286-6) shows people engaged in everyday activities. You see high-speed photo sequences of people walking, waving hello, talking on the cellular, running in fear, sitting, relaxing, going to bed, getting dressed, hair flipping, and so on. **Vol. 3** includes animals, which is why my sister didn't buy it. **Vol. 4** (ISBN 4-8373-0290-4) is the ever-so-coveted hands book, with hands engaged in activities such as wiping away tears, gesturing, opening a can of soda, blowing a kiss, and even choking someone.

At this point, you may be wondering if there are any U.S. photo pose books for comic artists. **Antarctic Press** has **Posefile Reference**, vols. 1 and 2, which come in CD-ROM editions, too. The books are laid out similarly to the Japanese B&W pose books. While the reproduction quality could have been better and there are no nudes, you do get a wonderfully different body type with the bulkier American male models.

There are a number of general human figure photo reference books and CD-ROMs. I like Erik A. Ruby's **The Human Figure: A Photographic Reference for Artists** (ISBN 0-442-27148-4). The two main models have ideal body types for my male and female protagonists. A section has shots cataloguing physical differences of other models. If I am looking for fallen figures, John Cody with Ron Tribell's **Atlas of Foreshortening: The Human Figure in Deep Perspective** (ISBN 0-471-39696-6) has been helpful.

Photo references for clothing could make another 1000-word

article, but I would like to mention the wildly inspirational ***Gothic & Lolita Bible*** and the somewhat-tamer-but-still-cool ***gap PRESS*** fashion collection magazines published in Japan.

The aforementioned books are not cheap. If you're lucky like me, you have a comics fan sister you can share books with, and you live across the street from a library. Happy drawing!



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