



THE 10 COMMON DAY WEDDING DAY TIMING MISTAKES

1. NOT SCHEDULING ENOUGH TIME FOR HAIR & MAKE-UP



When your hair and make-up team tell you what time they'll need to start hair and make-up on the morning of your wedding, you'll probably think they're crazy. But you should trust them when they tell you how much time they will need. Believe us, you would much rather have too much time with them than not enough.

In order to relieve some of that wedding morning stress, have the hair and make-up team come to your house or hotel room the morning of the wedding if possible. It takes away the stress of traveling to or from the salon and allows your bridesmaids to immediately get into their dresses when their hair/make-up is done if need be.

Your first instinct is to think you should go last with hair and make-up. Ignore this instinct. Your hair and make-up might take the longest and, let's be honest; it's the most important. So be sure to go first or second (especially if you have a large bridal party). Don't worry; the hair and make-up team will stick around to do finishing touches before you leave the salon or after you put your dress on if they're at your hotel.

Plus, going first gives you the opportunity to actually drink that mimosa and relax with your girls instead of stressing about whether or not there is enough time to do your up-do.

Also, be sure to tell all of your bridesmaids exactly how much their hair and make-up will cost. You'd be surprised how much time can be wasted with bridesmaids scrambling around looking for extra cash or their checkbooks. More than likely, they're expecting to pay for this themselves, just be up front with them and you'll definitely save yourself time and stress

2. ATTENDING YOUR FINAL DRESS FITTING ALONE



This may seem like a small detail, but you'd be surprised how much time it can take to get you into your dress. Dresses can be complicated – buttons, lace-up backs – and your mom and/or bridesmaids will probably need some insight from your seamstress about how exactly to get you into it.

If you go by yourself (or with someone who will not be there on the morning of your wedding day), even if you try to take notes and remember exactly what you were told at the shop, it's still going to be difficult to explain. So, bring along your mother, your sister, your maid of honor, all your girls if you want to. Make sure they know not only how to get you into your dress but also how to bustle it if there is a train. And, if your dress has buttons all the way down, head over to the craft store and get a crochet hook to help with those notoriously small button holes that can be a challenge for newly-manicured fingers to button alone.

3. NOT HAVING EVERYONE GET DRESSED EARLY ENOUGH



When should your bridesmaids get dressed? Before you do. What about your mother and father? Same answer. Ideally, about half an hour before you do. Why? So that they are gathered around while you're getting your dress buttoned/zippered, not in their jeans and tank tops in the pictures. Also, so that when your father sees you for the first time in your dress the photographer can capture Dad's reaction while he's looking his best. And, most importantly, so that once you're ready everyone else is too and you can jump right into picture time.

4. TOO MUCH DISTANCE

Too much time between where you want to get ready and the ceremony location:

You have probably dreamed of getting ready for your wedding in your childhood bedroom since you were a little girl. Most of the time, this is totally possible since the church or ceremony location is close to your parent's house. But if it's a long distance (an hour or more), it's not always worth the time and stress to travel on the morning of your wedding day. Between traffic and the added time and expense to transport you and your girls, you'll probably be wishing you had decided to get ready at a hotel by the church. Save yourself the stress; get ready in a place near the ceremony.

Too much distance between the ceremony location and the reception location:

This stresses everyone out – you as a couple, the guests, and your vendors. There's no doubt that you have found the most beautiful places for both events of your wedding day, but do your best to make sure they are not over an hour's drive away from one another. This is especially true if it's important to you to have your guests attend both the ceremony and the reception since many will opt out of the ceremony if there's such a long drive in between. Even for those who do attend both, the distance can really bring down everyone's energy level and make the day seem too long.

5. NOT PLANNING OUT TIME FOR FAMILY PICTURES



Family pictures are important. Your wedding day is probably one of the few times in your life that you will have this particular group of family all in the same place at the same time. You definitely want to get photos of them all together. That being said, as you probably know from many family parties, gathering everyone together can be a challenge if it's not planned out. So, how do you avoid the chaos? First, decide how large you want the groups to be (just immediate family? aunts and uncles? all of the cousins?) Then, let them all know ahead of time (at the rehearsal dinner or the week before the wedding) when and where the family photos will be taken. We recommend scheduling this immediately following the ceremony if you're not doing a "First Look" and about an hour before the ceremony begins if you are. This way, family members look their best (pre-partying) and it saves the trouble of having to round all your family members up once the reception begins, which can be a difficult task.

Lastly, select a few close family members (preferably ones that don't also happen to be in the wedding party), to help round up the family on the day so that you don't have to. Also, if you have a particularly large or diverse family, don't be afraid to make a list and give it to us. That way we can even rattle off the names of the family members you would like in

the picture to make sure they are all there, know all the groupings you would like and make sure that you don't forget that important picture you wanted with your godmother.

6. CUTTING IT TOO CLOSE WITH THE LIMOS



Limos can be expensive, especially when you're probably paying by the hour. So your instinct might be try to cut back and avoid paying an extra hour, praying that it will work out. However much you may think you're going to save by cutting it close, it's not worth it. You don't want to be in the back of your limo staring at the clock and wondering if you're going to have to find cash to give the limo driver if you end up going ten minutes over time.

7. NOT SCHEDULING TIME TO MINGLE WITH YOUR GUESTS



It's a scenario we have seen far too often at weddings we have attended as guests ourselves: a bride staring longingly at the dance floor knowing she won't have much time for dancing because she has to go table-to-table and talk to her guests all night long. This is almost always because she didn't schedule enough time to greet her guests earlier in the day, by

doing a receiving line and/or join her guests for cocktail hour. Instead, her first chance to talk with her guests is during dinner or once the dance floor opens up, leaving her with little to no time to get out and dance with her new husband beyond the first dance. Of course, you want to see your guests and thank them for coming to celebrate with you but if you make sure that the reception is not the first time they get to talk to you, you'll save yourself the frustration of hearing your favorite song and not getting to show off your moves on the dance floor.

8. TOO LITTLE TIME BETWEEN THE CEREMONY AND THE RECEPTION



This is probably the biggest and, unfortunately, most common mistake brides and grooms make. We know what you're probably thinking; "I can't do that to my guests! What are they going to do during that three hours in between?" Two things: first, you're probably overestimating how much time is in between. The average ceremony is about an hour long and if you're doing a receiving line*, that usually takes up at least another 20-30 minutes. Then you factor in the time it takes to travel, whether or not your guests have to check in to a hotel, etc. and you'd probably be surprised that the amount of time they'll have in between is probably far less than you originally thought.

Secondly, most guests don't really mind. If they have attended a lot of weddings in the last few years, they've probably gotten used to having time to kill. Plus, a lot of the women will use this chance to wear something less dressy for the ceremony and then glam up a bit for the reception. Most importantly, having ample time between gives you the opportunity to get tons of pictures and even select an additional location (besides the church or reception venue) to go for pictures if you would like. It's a great way to have fun with your wedding party and even have some quiet moments for just the two of you before the party gets started.

A small side-note about receiving lines. They can be a great way for you to get to greet your guests and give them a chance to congratulate and hug you (leaving you with more time to dance at the reception rather than having to spend so much time at each table of guests.) So then why are they sore spots for photographers? Because they make our jobs incredibly difficult when there isn't enough time scheduled for taking pictures. When a bride and groom have only scheduled an hour between the ceremony and reception and the receiving line has taken up 30 minutes of that time, the photographer is still expected to create just as many amazing pictures, but now in half the time. So if you want to do one, go for it. Just make sure you have plenty of time between to ensure that you won't have to be rushed, and neither will your photographer. And if you don't want to do one, that's fine too. Just be sure to include a note in your ceremony program or have your officiant announce it. Otherwise your guests will be waiting outside the church for you and end up stopping you to chat anyway.

9. NOT DOING A "FIRST LOOK"



They're becoming more popular, but there are still a lot of couples that shy away from seeing one another before the ceremony. We totally understand your apprehension. You're thinking that if you see one another before the ceremony it will be less emotional when you walk down the aisle. Not true. A lot of our couples have done "First Looks" and we can say with complete certainty that we have never seen the couple less emotional when they see each other walking down the aisle. It's usually exactly the opposite. When they see each other during the "First Look" it's usually teary-eyed about how amazing they both look, how amazed they are that the day has finally arrived. Then when they see each other during the ceremony, the tears start to flow, each of them realizing that the walk down the aisle means that this is all actually happening: they are about to be married. How could you not get emotional?

"First looks" should especially be considered if you're in any of the following situations:

Your Ceremony and Reception are at the Same Location

Why? Because you have probably picked a gorgeous location that is perfect for both events of your day and you want to be able to actually enjoy the grounds as much as your guests, soaking in the views while you stroll around sipping champagne. When the ceremony and reception are at the same place, the end of the ceremony is inevitably going to flow directly into cocktail hour. Your guests have nowhere else to go and your venue is going to want to keep them entertained.

The idea of leaving all of your guests right after the ceremony to head off for pictures will probably seem incredibly difficult. Even more, leaving yourself with only an hour to do all the pictures of the two of you, your family and your wedding party is WAY too tight. So, if you see each other before the ceremony you can take the majority of your pictures (possibly even all of your family and wedding party pictures) ahead of time, leaving you with plenty of time to greet your guests and actually eat some of that delicious cocktail hour food. Of course, if you want to grab a few shots directly after your ceremony you can do that too. But getting most of the pictures done beforehand is a great way to ensure that you will have that same relaxing experience as all of your guests.

You Don't Want a Large Gap of Time Between the Ceremony and the Reception

If the idea of having two or three hours between the end of your ceremony and the start of cocktail hour is way too much for you, you don't have to do it. But you're probably still going to want amazing pictures and the best way to make this possible is to give your photographers the time they need to make that happen. Most photographers will say they need about an hour minimum to photograph the bride and groom and wedding party and then about 30 minutes for family photos (depending on the size of the family). If you do the first look, you can schedule all that time before your guests even arrive at the church making sure the time in between the end of the ceremony and cocktail can be much shorter, without jeopardizing any time for photos.

You're Getting Married Before Daylight Savings Begins or After it Ends and You Want Pictures Outside

Why? One word: light. It's the photographer's best friend. Let's say you're getting married November 12, one week after daylight savings time ends. Sunset for that day is scheduled to be about 4:45pm. Your ceremony is supposed to start at 3pm and end at 4pm. That leaves you with about 45 minutes of daylight for pictures, assuming you don't do a receiving line and jump right into taking pictures the minute the ceremony ends. Again, WAY too tight. If you do a "First Look," you can select a location for your pictures, gather together your wedding party (and even family if you would like) and ensure that your Fall wedding still has plenty of pictures with the foliage even if the sun sets a bit earlier than it did a few weeks before.

10. FAILING TO GIVE YOURSELF A "CUSHION"



Ask just about any of your married friends or wedding vendors and they'll almost all agree that weddings hardly ever start on time no matter how well you plan. Believe it or not, that doesn't have to be the end of the world. Not if you make sure to have some extra time scheduled throughout your day. By padding your schedule a bit you won't have to stress if your ceremony starts ten minutes late or if your priest's homily goes on way longer than you anticipated. You won't have to cut short a conversation with your favorite cousin because you have to jump in the limo you only have for twenty more minutes. This is your wedding day; a day you only get to live once and you definitely want to savor each and every moment. So why not schedule time to ensure that you will have extra moments? Time when you can just sit back, relax and soak it all in. We even suggest that couples set aside some time for just the two of you, time to just enjoy officially being husband and wife. Believe us, you'll be very glad that you did.

