

## WEDDING PLANNING TIPS

Now that you are some way to choosing your photographer, I thought it may be helpful to share some tips and ideas with you that I've picked up during the many weddings that I have been to. If you have read the advice section of my website or been in touch with me by phone we may have already discussed and planned some of the points, but I've found that it often helps to have this as a reminder.

### Planning of the Day

It is a good idea now to think about when you will eat during the day. You may prefer to have breakfast and lunch at your usual times, but you also need to think about the people who have travelled a long way. In general, a church ceremony will take just under an hour before you are outside again and able to receive all those hugs and kisses that your guests will want to lavish on you. Think about how long it takes to get to the reception, and whether you will be having a receiving line before you sit down. I suggest that you have at least an hour and a half, preferably two hours between arrival and going in to eat or to receive your guests. This will allow me time to take some fabulous shots of the two of you, a few groups, and candid photographs of you and your immediate families as you chat to your guests. I don't want to take up your entire time with photographs, as that might mean that you don't get to speak to some guests at all if they leave after the meal. This brings us on nicely to:

### What guests hate about wedding photographers

So many people have been to a wedding where the photographer takes absolutely ages. Everyone gets bored, hungry, thirsty and fed up, so what's the answer? Firstly, don't have a huge list of group photographs. If you do, we will probably take ages too, as there is always somebody in the loo or at the bar when they are needed! Everyone else is in place, but I can't press the shutter until the missing person is found. To arrange groups does take time. As a general rule, 5 groups will take about 20-30 minutes, depending on the size of them. Of course, you don't have to have any group photos at all, but if you do, the more people in them, the more scope there is for somebody to be elsewhere. So, if you do want group photos, it is always a good idea to choose some:

### Efficient Ushers

Ushers never quite seem to know what to do apart from handing out the Order of Service. It is helpful to you if you choose ushers who between them will know both sides of the families and friends. At the reception, I will need their help to go and get anybody who is required to be in a group photograph. I hate having to stand and shout for people, so please tell them what will be expected of them. They need to be able to exert a bit of authority and get things moving when necessary.

### Be firm with others about when to be ready by

Before the wedding day I will have a chat with you to work out where I will be and at what time. I tend to start wherever the bride is getting ready, then move to the groom and best man prior to the ceremony. I will ask you to be ready by a certain time. If you are not running on time, then I can't take the required photographs. I sometimes find that the groom is ready, but that the best man hasn't even arrived or that the bride is ready, but the bridesmaids haven't had their hair or make-up done. Bearing this in mind, it is a good idea to allow plenty of time for:

### Unforeseen hold-ups

What happens if there is a traffic jam on the way back from the hairdresser, or if the best man has nipped off to the hotel to arrange a 'surprise' on your wedding night? If you have to get back from anywhere it is wise to allow far more time than usual. The last thing you want on your wedding day is to be stressed because you are running late.

### Chaos and tension in the house

To be avoided wherever possible! If you think that you will need your space in the hours before your wedding, say so! If there are a lot of people fighting for the bathroom and all trying to get dressed at the same time, then tension could rise, especially if the house or hotel room is not large. There will be shoe boxes and clothes bags all over the place. Be diplomatic, but make your feelings known in advance before you burst into tears or shout at someone.

### Provide written directions

Ensure that guests who are travelling from a distance have clear directions about how to get to the ceremony. The same applies to getting to the reception if it is elsewhere. It may be worth including a map with the invitations. One thing you may wish to consider is putting the ceremony time on the invitations as 15 minutes earlier than it actually is - you wouldn't believe the number of guests who creep in late to wedding ceremonies.

### Keeping Clean

This bit is for the bride! Every bride wants to arrive at the ceremony looking spotless; however, the very colour and nature of bridal wear means that every single speck of dirt will show. Accept this! It is highly unlikely that anyone other than you will notice anything, so try not to let it spoil the occasion. When choosing shoes think about how they will look if they get wet. I will do all I can to endeavour that nothing gets marked before you make your grand entrance, but unless it is pouring with rain I will be taking photographs at various outdoor locations. This will inevitably mean that you pick up the odd mark or two! Please don't worry about this - the most important thing for you is to:-

### Enjoy your Day!

I will do all I can to help you enjoy your wedding day, and when you come back from honeymoon you can re-live it again when you see your photographs. Meanwhile, if you have any queries or ideas, please feel free to contact me, and I'll do my best to help.

Best Wishes

Marc

For more help and advice visit  
[www.marcgodfreeweddings.co.uk](http://www.marcgodfreeweddings.co.uk)



## Wedding Planner

### 18-12 months to go

<input type="checkbox"/>	Set a date for the wedding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set a budget and identify who is paying
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide what type of wedding ceremony you would like
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book your wedding venue and meet with the officiate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book reception venue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Setup a dedicated email address for your wedding plans
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit wedding fairs to get ideas and inspiration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book a professional photographer!  Your photos will be the only lasting memory you will have to remember your big day so it is extremely important to get it right. Make sure you book a professional - anyone can point a camera and take a photo but will they know how to compose the image? A good wedding photographer will get beautiful photos under <b>any circumstances</b> (inconsistent lighting, bad weather, camera failure etc) and deliver high quality photographs every time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organise wedding insurance      For my clients I can arrange cover from just £53


### 12-9 months to go

<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose and order your wedding dress
<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose and order your bridesmaids dresses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide on the number of guests to invite to the ceremony and reception
<input type="checkbox"/>	Send out "save the date" cards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Draft your wedding invitations - remember to incorporate images from your Engagement Shoot for that personal touch

### 9-6 months to go

<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan and book your honeymoon (remember to book time off work)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book wedding transport (cars, horse and cart etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book florist and order flowers (bouquet, button holes, bridesmaids, venue decorations etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book reception entertainment (DJ, band, musicians, singer etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book wedding caterers

## 6-3 months to go

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Confirm arrangements/service with your ceremony officiate (If you have arranged a civil ceremony, give notice of the marriage to the Superintendent Registrar)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Groom to organise suits for himself and his party  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Order wedding stationery/invitations - don't forget to use a photo from your Engagement Session  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Write a gift list or join a wedding registry. Remember Marc Godfree Wedding Photography Voucher scheme online  |
|                          | <p><a href="https://www.marcgodfreeweddings.co.uk/wedding-packages/photography-gift-vouchers">https://www.marcgodfreeweddings.co.uk/wedding-packages/photography-gift-vouchers</a></p>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Order your wedding cake  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Identify accommodation for guests  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Book a consultation with your photographer to decide on the essential photos on the day, such as group photos of immediate family, extended family, friends etc.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finalise your guest list for ceremony and reception - prepare a "reserve" list in the event that some of your guests cannot attend   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Book a toastmaster (if applicable)   |

## 3 months to go

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Send invitations including your gift list and details of Marc Godfree Wedding Photography online Voucher scheme. Make sure you have an RSVP date                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Book your Pre-wedding photo shoot - images from this session or your Engagement Session can be used for your Guest Signing Board/Book or presents for friends/family on the big day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose wedding party/going away outfits   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Arrange your final dress fittings   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose and order your wedding rings   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Buy your wedding day lingerie and garter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finalist your honeymoon arrangements such as vaccinations, passport/travel visas and holiday insurance.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Plan Stag & Hen parties   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Book wedding night accommodation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Book guest accommodation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Agree menu with caterers  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prepare personalised vows (if applicable)   |

## 8 weeks to go

- Attend your Pre-Wedding Photo Session and decide on the photo to be used for your Guest Signing Board/Book
- Finalise your "must have" photo list
- Choose gifts for wedding party. Parents/bridesmaids love personalised gifts so perhaps a framed photo of you both from your Engagement or Pre-Wedding session
- Have a dress rehearsal with Hairdresser and Beautician
- Confirm and print your order of service
- Arrange ceremony and dinner rehearsal

## 6 weeks to go

- Arrange consultation with Photographer to view your Pre-Wedding photos
- Agree on your "must have" photos and timings for the day (your photographer will help you with the timings aspect)
- Arrange a viewing consultation with your Photographer to view all your beautiful wedding photos
- Send name change forms
- Make / order favours
- Buy your marriage licence

## 4 weeks to go

- Chase up non-receipt of RSVPs
- Send invitations to reserve guest list
- Groom, Best Man and Father-of-the-Bride to write their speeches
- Venue visit for any last minute changes

## 2-3 weeks to go

- Give wedding attendants/ushers their list of duties and wedding day schedule. Appoint someone to assist in the gathering of people for the group photos
- Provide caterers/venue with a final number of attendees
- Draft a seating plan and send to wedding stationer
- Collect wedding rings
- Have final dress fittings
- Hold wedding rehearsal
- Wear in wedding shoes and remember to remove any labels from the bottom of the shoe
- Arrange for your cake to be delivered to the venue
- Arrange for your bouquet, bridesmaids flowers and button holes to be delivered to you and for any decorations to be delivered to the ceremony/reception

## 1 week to go

- Pay all outstanding suppliers and re-confirm all arrangements
- Collect wedding parties outfits
- Make a list of the contact details for all suppliers and appoint on the day assistants to aid with deliveries etc
- Pack for your honeymoon or wedding night
- Have your final hair and make-up practice

## 1 day before

- Have a spa day and really pamper yourself! Have a manicure and pedicure
- Have a dinner for any out of town guests to mingle before wedding

## THE BIG DAY

- Congratulations - your Big Day has arrived - Enjoy it!
- Your photographer will arrive for the bridal preparation
- Give yourself and your bridesmaids plenty of time to get ready in the morning
- Wear a blouse or a cardigan that can be unbuttoned to ensure you don't mess your hair up when getting changed into your dress
- Ensure that the Bride is the first one to get ready in case the time slips as this way she will remain calm and relaxed.
- Ensure you have a change of shoes for your outside photographs - just in case it rain and the ground is muddy (I always take a pair of wellington boots just in case!)
- If the wedding dress has fiddly buttons, make sure someone is available to help fasten these. Bridesmaids may have false nails and might be unable to help you.
- Groom - remember to take the labels off your new shoes and don't forget your socks!
- Make sure all the men wear their button holes on the same side
- Best Man - don't forget the rings!

## The day after

- Best Man and Bridesmaids to arrange for return of any rental items

## After your honeymoon

- Share your password for your online photo Gallery with friends/family
- Write thank you cards

For more help and advice visit  
[www.marcgodfreeweddings.co.uk](http://www.marcgodfreeweddings.co.uk)



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Your notes:

Lined area for notes, featuring horizontal dashed lines and a large, faint watermark of the 'M' logo in the center.

