

Wedding Planning



**A guide to what you must know when
planning your special occasion**

Brought to you by

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Cherished Memories Forever

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Foreward

In today's society most couples are choosing the versatility of a civil ceremony in the place of your choice. Civil ceremonies are conducted by a trained and authorized civil celebrant.

This eBook has been developed to assist you in planning your ceremony and provides you guidance and information relating to the legalities, as well as the nice to have features of your wedding.

We have attempted throughout this document to answer as many of the questions that people have when planning their wedding. However if you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at Chris Brember Celebrant services and we will be more than happy to provide you some assistance.

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What you must know

It is important that your wedding reflects your own personality and style. Under the laws of the Commonwealth of Australia, a couple is not able to lodge a Notice of Intended Marriage without the assistance of an authorized religious or civil marriage celebrant. This document may be lodged up to 18 months before the ceremony date, but no later than one calendar month before the wedding day. Prior to the wedding you will also need to provide birth certificates if you were born in Australia and, where applicable, evidence of termination of previous marriage. If born outside Australia, an overseas passport or birth certificate is acceptable for identification.

For further information, see the [Attorney General's website](#). Remember, if you do not have a good understanding of English, then a translator must be present at the wedding. To contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) phone their toll free number: 131 450.

Planning your wedding

Regularly asked Questions

What do I need to do first?

Once the excitement of your engagement has passed, the planning should begin. It is recommended to select and book your chosen Celebrant as soon as you know the date, time and location. This way you will be guaranteed the support and will have the opportunity of working with a professional to plan your day.

How much notice needs to be given prior to my wedding date?

The Marriage Act requires at least one calendar month's notice. However, you should book the Celebrant immediately as there are limits to the number of weddings that can be accommodated.

How do I lodge a Notice of Intention to Marry?

Your notice of Intention to Marry will be filled out with assistance from your celebrant at your first meeting. In preparation for this meeting, it is important to bring with you:

- Birth certificates – if born in Australia this must be provided under government laws.
- Death certificate if relevant
- Divorce certificates if previously married.

If a person was born overseas and is unable to obtain their birth certificate then their overseas passport is acceptable or a Commonwealth Statutory Declaration can be prepared for them if they have neither passport or evidence of birth.

Should we have music?

This is a personal preference but music does add to the occasion. Usually on arrival, during the signing and after the presentation of the married couple interludes of music can be played to continue the festivities of the celebration with your guests. It is important that you talk to your venue about any restrictions they may have and with your celebrant to coordinate this.

How do I sign the register?

Your full maiden name will be the one used to sign the register. If divorced or widowed, your previous married name signature is required if you are the bride. Signatures on all documents must be an exact match.

How long does the ceremony take?

Depending on the content and your preference. A short ceremony would be 10 – 15 minutes and a longer ceremony anywhere from 20 - 45 minutes.

Can I have my children give me away?

Anyone can 'give the bride away', including children.

How much does a celebrant charge for a wedding ceremony?

Fees vary from celebrant to celebrant but it is important that you are comfortable with your celebrant and the fee prior to committing. There is no industry standard however a qualified celebrant would charge from \$400 plus to cover all the time spent in coordinating the lodging legal documents for the couple.

Where do celebrants perform ceremonies?

In all locations throughout the state and the country but of course the more travel and the greater amount of time involved, the costs will increase accordingly.

Can I have cultural aspects built into my ceremony?

You most certainly can. The Marriage Act is specific about the necessary content that is required to be included in your ceremony and provided that they are in your ceremony all other content is open to your specific requirements.

How do I change my name once I am married?

Your celebrant will issue you with your Certificate of Marriage. To change your name at Vic Roads or the Passports Office you will require a certified copy of your marriage certificate. This form is available from Births, Deaths and Marriages approximately two weeks after your wedding. The application form for this certificate is available from your local Post Office. There is a small fee payable to get this form. Remember if you are changing your name, you must change all legal documents which may include:

Below is a checklist:

- Wills
- Drivers licence
- Passport
- Car registration/ insurance
- Electoral Office
- Australian Tax Office
- Credit cards Bank, Building Society, Credit Union,
- Investment accounts
- Insurance policies/Superannuation (change your beneficiary to your spouse)
- Mortgages, rental agreements
- Council Rates
- Utility bills
- Library card
- Government agencies
- Memberships: health clubs, local clubs, frequent flyer, etc.
- Doctor, dentists, health care professionals
- Blood donor card
- Accountant, solicitor, etc
- Work - personnel office for pay slips, taxes, super.

Legalities

The Australian government has various requirements that must be met to ensure a successful ceremony. These include:

Notice of Intended Marriage

This form is available from your celebrant or the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. It can also be downloaded here. It must be lodged with your celebrant within 18 months of the wedding, and no later than a clear calendar month before.

Birth Certificates

Birth Certificates or Extracts must be shown. If a person was born overseas and is in possession of an overseas passport this may be accepted. Where a person is unable to provide either a birth certificate or an overseas passport then a Statutory Declaration must be completed explaining why a birth certificate cannot be provided, also stating where and when the party was born and providing details of any alternative identification.

A Decree Absolute or Certificate of Divorce

This is required if you are divorced. You can complete the Notice of Intended Marriage prior to the divorce but the marriage cannot take place until after the divorce. The Decree Absolute or Certificate of Divorce must be produced prior to the marriage.

Death Certificate

Death Certificate or extract is necessary if you are widowed.

Working with a Celebrant

It is very important that a ceremony will be created to reflect your relationship, your dreams, your desires and your beliefs. Your Wedding Day can be casual or formal, traditional or contemporary. A Civil ceremony provides you the flexibility to choose your own ceremonial location, time and day. It is important to remember and ensure that your ceremony is the most important part of the event of marriage as this is where you both declare your love for each other and unite as one.

Since the inception of the Civil Marriage Celebrant Program in 1973, many couples have been married in a variety of locations, themes and styles. Some couples like to face their guests while exchanging vows, and using a civil celebrant allows this flexibility.

Choose your civil celebrant wisely and your wedding ceremony will be perfect. He or she will personalise the ceremony to your individual taste and be able to advise you on so many other aspects of your wedding. Set up an obligation free meeting with your choice of civil celebrant so you may be sure that she or he will collaborate with you and observe the Attorney General's Code of Practice before you contract them. Do this as soon as you are clear on your wedding date. Don't leave it too late to contract with an authorised celebrant as they are usually booked well in advance and having the right celebrant for you will contribute to the beauty and enjoyment of your special day.

Finally, do not be tempted to organise a surprise wedding. This is when one member of the couple wants to 'surprise' the other party by organising and then presenting them with the complete ceremony as a romantic gesture but without their knowledge. As the consent of the 'surprised' person cannot be assumed and the Notice of Intended Marriage, signed by both parties has not been satisfied, the validity of these marriages may be challenged.

Wedding Planning

Your celebrant will meet with both of you either in your home or at a mutually convenient location. This initial meeting will be to discuss your wedding requirements and explain the required legal formalities. If you decide on using Chris Brember Celebrant services, a booking and second meeting will take place to complete the required legal paperwork. I will present to you samples of ceremonies, readings, poems and vows that can be used as we build your ceremony or inspire you to write your own.

Working with Chris Brember Celebrant Services

As your celebrant I will work together with you to create a unique ceremony that is meaningful for you and your partner. Family members can participate in the ceremony by delivering a reading or a poem. Whatever you choose to include, draft copies will be sent to you for approval. You will have unlimited contact support via email or phone until the draft copy is finalised and up to your wedding day.

The Rehearsal

A rehearsal at the location of the wedding should take place either a week prior or at least 2 days before the wedding date. This is where we will rehearse the entering of the bridal party and the positioning. At this point we will discuss any final preparations and complete the legal paperwork to declare that you are free to marry. Final payment to conduct the service is also required at this meeting.

The Wedding Day

I will arrive 45 minutes prior to the ceremony at the wedding location. At this time I will check the necessary requirements, set up the table and chairs required for signing of the marriage certificates, chat with the groom and bridal party, liaise with your wedding planner, musicians or venue coordinators, and greet the Bride on her arrival. At the conclusion of your ceremony I will present you with your marriage certificate.



Wedding Vows

Your vows are considered to be some of the most important words that you will ever say to each other.

There are traditional vows applicable to every religion but many couples choose to write their own as an original and personal expression of the love they have for each other. Always keep the vows simple and honest, as they are a commitment of your life together. For more suggestions and ideas for wedding vows, talk to your wedding celebrant or check the internet, but the most traditional and well known vow is:

I, _____ take you, _____ to be my wife/husband;
To have and to hold from this day forward,
For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health;
To love and to cherish as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow and promise

Wedding Etiquette

You don't have to follow tradition when it comes to wedding etiquette but there are certain rules of engagement that shouldn't be overlooked.

When proposing, who should you ask first, the love of your life or her father?

It's no longer necessary for a man to ask his prospective father in law for the daughter's hand in marriage, but the bride's parents should be told first, as a courtesy, especially since in many cases they're the ones who will pay for the wedding.

You've said 'yes!' and are now engaged to be married. Who should know first?

If it's a first marriage, then it's important that the bride's family is the first to be told, and then the groom's parents. But, if either of the engaged couple is widowed or divorced, then it's wise to make sure that any children from either parent are told first. Former parents-in-law should know of this union to be, especially if children (i.e. the in laws grandchildren) are involved. Many older people become distressed if they find out about an engagement through hearsay or worse, the newspaper. The best way to tell children and close family is face to face. Children need to be given time to take this news on board and should be told separately from grandparents or other relatives, particularly if you feel they may have some difficulty in accepting the news. If the family is separated by distance, then depending on the age of the children, a note or a phone call is the best way to inform them. A luncheon or dinner party can be an excellent way of gathering the rest of the family and close friends together to make the announcement to them all at once. If you include both sides of the family, it's also a great way for everyone to meet before the wedding. An announcement in the newspaper is usually done by the bride's parents or by the bride herself if there are no parents involved.

What should the bride's family pay for?

The bride's family will usually pay for; hire of a venue, hotel or reception house; caterers; drinks; the wedding cake; flowers for the church, reception and bridesmaid; bouquets; car hire from bride's home to the ceremony and from the ceremony to the reception house, or hotel, unless this is one of the items that the groom or his parents have suggested they pay for; the organist, choir or soloist at the ceremony itself; the music at the reception (band or DJ); the printing and mailing of the wedding invitations; any newspaper announcements; both engagement and wedding photographs

What should the groom's family pay for?

Traditionally the groom's family has not been involved, but in recent years, it has become common practice for the groom's parents to either pay for the purchase of liquor for the night, pay the cost of all music at the reception or, in some cases offer to pay half of the reception costs - particularly if they have an extended family and know they will be inviting more than half of the guests.

What should the groom pay for?

The groom would usually pay for: any church fees, the bride's wedding ring; the bride's bouquet; a wedding gift for the bride; button hole flowers for himself, his best man and the ushers; the marriage licence; transport from the ceremony to the reception house or hotel; corsages for his mother and the bride's mother; gifts for his attendants, best man, groomsmen and ushers; gifts for the flower girls and pageboys if there are any; and gifts for the bridal attendants or bridesmaids.

What should the bride pay for?

Traditionally, even the bride's gown was bought by the bride's parents and some families still prefer to do this, however, depending upon circumstances, many brides today choose to purchase their own gown. Sometimes, the bride may offer to pay for half of each bridesmaid's dress or dressmaking costs and provide their dress fabric or accessories. If wedding rings are to be exchanged, the bride also pays for the groom's ring and she will usually buy a gift for the him



Planning an Outdoor wedding

The beauty of the natural environment appeals to many couples. The choice to have an outdoor wedding offers a less formal environment than a traditional church wedding for many couples looking for peace and tranquillity.

If you are lucky, you may have your own beautiful garden or know someone with one who is willing to host your wedding. Otherwise there are a large number of public parks and gardens, many close to the city centre and each with their own special character, to choose from. If you have chosen a public garden, you will need to advise the local council up to three months in advance to avoid conflicting venue arrangements and arrange for any permits which may be necessary.

The Council parks have designated sites that may be booked (sometimes for a fee). To marry in any of the parks, you must talk to your relevant City Council. When choosing a garden, whether it is private or public, make inquiries as to any restrictions. All commercial venues have some state government restrictions imposed on them. You should also inspect the grounds, taking particular note of the following points.

Things to consider for an outdoor wedding:

Access and parking

Check that parking is adequate for a large number of guests. While off street parking and on street parking is legal, ensure you are not encroaching on neighbours' privacy by blocking their driveways or parking on their land. Also ensure that the wedding party's transport, whether it be bridal cars or a horse and carriage can manoeuvre safely inside the grounds. Also check for parking and meter time restrictions.

Friendly for children and the disabled

Ensure the gardens are wheelchair, pram and disability friendly. Wedding guests often include the very young and the elderly so this is an important point. Consider whether guests will be able to disembark close to the ceremony site. It can also prove worthwhile to ask for a mud map of the area to send with your invitations.

Noise

Passing traffic noise has spoilt many a wedding. Ensure the ceremony site is well away from the road and if possible not able to be seen from the road. Some motorists have been known to show their appreciation by tooting their horn or shouting their congratulations! While these are lovely thoughts, they may not be appropriate during your ceremony. Ask whether the public will be allowed on the grounds while your service is in progress; ensure any noise from waterfalls or fountains is not overpowering; enquire whether your celebrant or church leader has a public address system (especially useful in large gardens).

Power

Is a power point available for stereo systems or any other electrical appliance required for your ceremony?

Chairs and tables

These are required for both the signing of the registry as well as for your guests. It's a good idea to ask how many are available and ensure you can use them on the day.

Cigarette disposal

Cigarette butts on the lawn are a nightmare for both garden lovers and photographers. Strategically placed pots and planters filled with sand can help curb this problem. New council laws may restrict smoking altogether so remember to check them.

Confetti

Ask whether confetti is allowed in the garden - often, rose petals or genuine potpourri, colourless bubbles or other more appropriate biodegradable material can be substituted for traditional confetti. The use of traditional or cheap potpourri confetti is widely discouraged because the dyes run. Similarly, metallic confetti is dangerous as it is sharp and reflective. Silk petals get into mowers and rice can hurt so check these as well.

Dogs

For couples wanting their dog in their ceremony or simply attending, a garden wedding can be the only option. However, remember to ask whether your dog will be welcome, as some gardens may have strict prohibitions.

Water hazards

If ponds, fountains, lakes or other water hazards are located within the grounds, it's a good idea to advise parents before the wedding and ask them to take responsibility for their children's supervision. Also, remember that garden owners will appreciate children not running through, stepping on or hiding in garden beds.

Public Liability

Check the garden owner has public liability insurance.

Cover

Enquire about alternate facilities with cover in the case of rain. Also, check for shade cover, especially if the ceremony will be held at a time when there is no natural shade.

Photography

Is the garden a photographer's paradise? Ask the garden owner about unique features and request that your photographer visit the site before the day.

Lighting

Is floodlighting available for night use?

Music

Remember that musicians must have a shaded or covered area that protects both them and their instruments from the elements. Also check accepted noise levels and council approvals that are needed. Restrictions such as a 75-decibel noise level, time restrictions such as a 10pm curfew and the number or type of musicians and use of amplifiers may also apply at your venue.

Water

Enquire if garden owner will supply drinking water and glasses as an extra service. Otherwise purchase bottled water for guests. This is particularly important for summer weddings.

Reception/catering

Some gardens provide a reception or catering service, others allow reception and catering on their grounds and others are merely service venues with no reception or catering facilities.

Marquee

Ensure grounds are sufficiently large for a marquee, if it is required, to be erected and facilities available for caterers. Most importantly, ensure the garden and facilities can remain open for the length of time you require, so any midnight revellers can party on – even private gardens have to abide by government regulations.

Garden walks

Enquire whether guests may explore the gardens. Many people enjoy the tranquillity and beauty of well cared for gardens, and your guests may appreciate the opportunity to explore at their leisure. This is a perfect activity while the photography session is in progress or to fill any spare time before leaving for the reception.



Beach weddings

Living in a country that boasts one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world, it's no wonder many Queensland couples choose to get married on the beach. Like garden weddings, beach weddings are much less formal than traditional church weddings. For many couples, marrying on the beach is a natural choice as it reflects an important part of their lives together. A beach wedding is also bound by restrictions and considerations. As well as the points relating to garden weddings (insert link), couples choosing to marry on the beach should remember the following:

Planning

People wanting to get married on the beach must consult their local council for permission.

Consider the tides!

A particularly high or low tide may not be desirable for both practical and photographic reasons so consider where you'd like the water to be during the wedding and plan around it. If you haven't already set the wedding date in concrete, you can probably choose your ceremony time and find a date where the tides will coincide. Your photographer and videographer can help you decide what tide will work best. Tide books are available at bookstores, sports and fishing outlets.

The Sand

A fantastic feature of the beach is the sand. Unfortunately for most marriages on the beach, the only good thing about sand is that it is usually white and not likely to do much material damage. But remember, sand will get into everything and if there's a breeze, or a definite wind, it will whip around your ankles and sting your eyes. If it is raining, there can be puddles or even small rivers running down the beach. Always plan alternative arrangements and have a way of telling everyone at short notice. Sand is particularly hard to walk on while wearing heels. You've probably already accounted for this in your choice of bridal wear but it's a good idea to also mention it to your guests.

Sand can also be a problem for prams and wheelchairs so consider this when choosing the particular beach and where on the beach you will be married.

Remember that for the duration of the ceremony you and your guests will be standing in the sun. You could suggest on the invitations that your guests bring umbrellas.

Your Guests

Children should be well supervised around all water areas. Unlike the church, the beach provides children with plenty of reason to run away to something more interesting. If children are attending and if you don't want your guests chasing their children down the beach during the ceremony, you should ensure all parents are aware of the dangers and distractions and will mind their children. If many children are attending, you may choose to organise a child minder.



Intimate weddings

Not everyone wants a large wedding. For some couples, their wedding is a private moment they want to share with only their closest friends and relatives. For others their friends and family are a long way away. Being small expands your choice of locations. There are lots of wonderful restaurant venues with their own personality and atmosphere that have delightful settings where you can hold the ceremony, enjoy pre dinner drinks and then sit down to a high quality contemporary style dinner. Some restaurants even offer private dining rooms or secluded outdoor areas such as gazebos which can be individually decorated to suit your theme. Remember to match the size of your party to the size of the restaurant.

Many couples are looking for a low-key wedding or it is their second marriage so they are not limited to a time or day of the week. This gives them the versatility to take advantage of mid-week specials and minimum numbers and costs do not restrict them. In fact, not only are restaurants more flexible, but all wedding specialists are fairly negotiable on mid week packages. Availability is also not so much of an issue as it is on weekends. There is no need to book as far in advance and you are more likely to get the date you want. Brunch or lunch following a simple registry office ceremony is a lovely idea or even consider your dates and book a mid-week night prior to a public holiday.

It is a good idea to trial the restaurant before the wedding. You must visit the restaurant to discuss your requirements and the menu with the chef. Check the restaurant is experienced in catering for weddings. All meals will be required to be served at the same time and so they must be able to handle your requirements. It is wise to check references from couples who have had their wedding there.



Waterfront weddings

Delightful waterfront venues give your wedding an extra dimension and peaceful ambience. Water has always been a symbol of peace and romance so why not continue the water theme through to the table decorations. Fishbowls with live goldfish, float bowls filled with sand and shells or using food dye in the water of clear vases are a lovely alternative to traditional table centerpieces. In many cases, the link to water is a continuation of the bridal couple's lifestyle or profession – a love of sailing, swimming or diving. Perhaps the marriage proposal was made at the beach or on the water somewhere special.

Whatever your reason, choosing a waterfront venue gives you an opportunity to get close to the water that is not usually available. It provides an ideal aspect for photographs so you may be able to save time after the ceremony by not having to go to another location. Often venues also have a pontoon so you can actively participate with the water. It would be delightful to arrive by boat or even to seal the union with a display of fireworks on the river or bay. Alternatively, to fill the gap between the ceremony and the wedding, why not send the guests on a cruise to arrive back in time to coincide with the arrival of the bride and groom. As a brilliant finale, time your wedding perfectly so you can sail off into the sunset!



Winery weddings

If you are looking for something a little different to a function centre, think about a winery where guests will feel a million miles away from anywhere. Wineries can provide privacy and create a sense of seclusion for guests to totally relax and enjoy fine wine, food and service. Many offer on-site facilities for an exclusive wedding ceremony, with the vineyard as a backdrop or a water feature as just some of the options available. Arrange a wine tasting for your guests as a themed alternative to traditional pre-dinner drinks. Alternatively, arrange for a brunch or lunch reception to take full advantage of the picturesque views and surroundings.

Restaurant styles within wineries range from classic fine dining to modern Australian, Mediterranean or authentic rustic cooking. Talk to your wedding coordinator about arranging boutique-style quality wines to match the menu or even a degustation menu. The ability to arrange all of this at wineries is ideal for couples wanting a one-stop wedding venue where there is no need to travel from the ceremony to a photographic location and then on to the reception. Although great all year round for weddings, the vines are at their best October to April so booking well in advance is recommended. Also, check with the individual winery as some wineries do offer off-season ceremony locations such as a lakeside setting.



How to ensure you get great photos.

Make sure you build a rapport with your chosen photographer - Being comfortable with the person taking your photos is an important factor when making your decision on who to hire. When personalities mix well, it becomes obvious in the photos.



Selecting reliable wedding transport

You're not alone if all these choices make your head spin. Fortunately many brides find their partners are more than willing to organise this aspect of your wedding planning. It's a task that many grooms share with their best men and other groomsmen. Just make sure he knows any criteria you consider essential (such as will a wedding gown fit in it) before he sets out.

Arrangements to and from the wedding ceremony usually only differ in that afterwards the bride and groom will travel together. Except for horse-drawn carriages, separate vehicles are traditionally used for each bridal party. Couples usually share with flower girls and page boys. A popular alternative is for the groom and rest of the bridal party to travel to the ceremony in stretch limousines, while the bride travels with her father (or whoever is 'giving her away') in a vintage car or a horse-drawn carriage. Consider the following points carefully to avoid a 'wedding day transport' disaster:

- ✚ When using a professional, ensure they are registered with the Department of Transport. Ask to see their accreditation certificate as you will not be covered by personal third party insurance if they are not registered;
- ✚ It is an offence for a lay person to drive their own vehicle and receive payment or reward for their services as they are not covered by third party insurance, properly registered, or licensed. Similarly, you should know that people who are members of car clubs cannot accept any remuneration and are only able to use their vehicles for immediate family;
- ✚ Professionals will work out the most direct route suitable to the church, reception, and photo locations. They will ensure the entire bridal party will be on time and will help to settle pre-wedding nerves;
- ✚ Book well ahead for professional wedding cars and carriages, probably just after you've booked your church, gardens or reception venue. Most companies have a booking form, which will ask for all the relevant details required on your special day;
- ✚ Ensure the drivers have directions to the church, reception and photography locations;
- ✚ Wedding processions are traditionally slow, civilised and elegant. If this is what you desire make sure your driver understands;
- ✚ If you're planning to be late or early, ensure instructions are given to both drivers and other involved parties;
- ✚ Ensure your drivers are organised at least one hour prior to the wedding. This allows for any last minute problems or hold-ups;
- ✚ Don't forget to book a honeymoon transfer at the end of the reception. This does not need to be the wedding car. A limousine is an ideal choice as cabs are often hard to find late at night;
- ✚ Allow for the potential of things going overtime so discuss the length of time allocated to driving time, photography etc. As many professional drivers have other commitments they must leave for, this will ensure the cars are booked for the appropriate length of time.



Top 10 Tips on everything for Marriage Success!

Top 10 Tips to a great wedding

Tip One

Don't drink too much alcohol on the day – it's a long day and you will be making speeches, dancing the bridal waltz, and doing a number of other things where you may need your wits about you.

Tip Two

Plan early.

Tip Three

Map out a timetable of everything you need to do, and stick to it.

Tip Four

Get everything in writing. This includes quotes, booking confirmations, descriptions of goods ordered and lists of services booked.

Tip Five

Keep everything together so nothing gets lost or forgotten.

Tip Six

If the planning is getting on top of you both, take time out. Take a mini holiday away from the stress of it all, and remember all the reasons why you're getting married.

Tip Seven

Be careful on your hen's or buck's night - it's a special night for you and your friends, but don't forget the reason you're there.

Tip Eight

Expect some wedding day nerves; they're normal for both of you. Wedding day nerves are similar to those you may get before doing a presentation or a speech - something that makes your heart race and your hands shake. The trick lies in managing the nerves, and recognising that they are simply your body's way of preparing for something special. Take a warm bath, a long walk, or even treat yourself to a massage to help you relax and calm your nerves.

Tip Nine

Grooms should plan a surprise for their bride on entering the wedding night suite. It could be a bed covered in roses, a bottle of champagne and two glasses next to a bubble bath, or some beautiful lingerie.

Tip Ten

Re-confirm everything to ensure there will be no hiccups on the day.

Top 10 Tips to a successful marriage:

Tip One - Communication

Whether it's a simple conversation about how your day was, or a more in-depth conversation of how you're feeling, make sure the lines of communication are always open between the two of you, and if you're going to argue, argue fairly. Don't ever bring up the past, and don't go to bed fighting.

Tip Two - Being a realist about marriage

As great as love is, life is not a romance novel, and every relationship comes with its own obstacles and challenges that need to be overcome. Hold each others hand and get through the tough times together, and remember to enjoy the ride.

Tip Three - Honesty and loyalty

You cannot have love without trust. If you don't trust your partner now, then you need to consider whether you ever will.

Tip Four - Commitment

By looking at life realistically and communicating any concerns you may have about the future, you can establish an understanding of each others needs and openly and honestly commit to the relationship. By remembering that marriage is a commitment, a relationship can grow through the ups and downs of life.

Tip Five - Friendship

If you can say you would want to be friends with your partner, whether you were together or not, is a step in the right direction. Lust and romance can eventually become less important in the relationship, but friendship really helps with building the strong foundation for a long lasting marriage.

Tip Six - Time alone

At the beginning of a relationship you are happily loved up, and doing romantic things together such as going to the movies, and talking for hours on end, but once there are children, and mortgages involved, it may seem like the last thing you both want to do. Even if it's the last thing on your mind, you **MUST** make time for each other.

Tip Seven - Sacrifices

Sometimes in a marriage, there will be times when one of you will need to make a sacrifice for the sake of the other's happiness. If one or both parties are self-centered and unable to compromise on anything but their needs, it can lead to resentment. At the time a sacrifice is made, it may seem big, but in the long run, the happiness of your partner will prove to be worth the compromise.

Tip Eight - Financial partnership

Finances can prove to add stress to relationships and is the number one reason for divorce. Understanding the roles you both play when it comes to household finances is something that should be established early in the relationship and discussed regularly. Whether one of you pay all the bills, or both wages go to the mortgage, and you live off the overdraft, make sure that both parties are happy with the arrangements, and express any concerns you may have before agreeing to anything.

Tip Nine - Parent together

You've been together for a while and decided to start a family. Before long you have a beautiful newborn in your arms, and you have to decide how to raise your child the best you possibly can. Sometimes people forget that you are an 'us', and that two people created this wonderful

bundle of joy, and both are likely to have an opinion on how to raise the new addition. It is probable that you were both raised somewhat differently, and have different ideas on how to raise a healthy child. It is important to discuss how you both feel about education, discipline, religion and healthcare before having children, so you can come to an understanding and agreement on what is best for your child and your family.

Tip Ten - Acceptance

You fell in love with your partner for everything they are - good and bad. You have accepted that they are not perfect, as yourself. You have realised that, as much as they do things to annoy you, you would not want or expect them to change. If you dive into marriage, hoping you can change someone, you may be heading for disappointment.

Top 10 Tips for the Bride to be

Tip One

Starting six months prior to your wedding day, have a facial once a month to ensure a radiant complexion.

Tip Two

Adopt a healthy eating and regular exercise regime. Also, remember to drink lots of water and herbal teas.

Tip Three

If you are spray tanning for your wedding, trial the product or professional service first to be certain you are going to like the end result. A bad spray tan can look tragic, whereas a good one looks fabulous.

Tip Four

Do not neglect your hands and feet. Frequent manicures and pedicures are a must. Clean your engagement ring and any other jewellery you will be wearing.

Tip Five

Check your wedding gown fits perfectly prior to it leaving the store. Ensure all beading is sewn on securely, zips work and, if needs be, somewhere for you to hang your train so you are free to dance the night away. Another pearl of wisdom is to also try on your gown with the undergarments you intend to wear on your wedding day to ensure they fit perfectly under your dress.

Tip Six

If you are wearing a strapless gown, take your bra off at least three hours before the photographer's arrival on your wedding day. Bra strap marks stay embedded in the skin for a long time and look unsightly in photographs.

Tip Seven

Delegate a trouble-shooter with good people and organisational skills to oversee and deal with any unexpected hitches on the day (touch wood). You do not need the added stress.

Tip Eight

While getting ready do not forget to eat. Pack straws and organise bite-size portions of food to be available so eating and drinking will not spoil your make-up.

Tip Nine

Confirm flowers, hair and make-up artists at least a month before your big day.

Tip Ten

The beauty preparations before the wedding ceremony and celebrations are a very important part of your day. Enjoy all the pampering and attention. Have some Rescue Remedy (available from all good health food shops) on hand in case you need to calm nervous butterflies. Make sure you have a compact and lipstick for touch-ups.

Top 10 Tip for the Groom to Be

Tip One

For those final touches, be careful not to choose an aftershave that is overpowering.

Tip Two

Once you have selected the colour and style of your suits, you and your groomsmen can make an evening of getting measured up. Remember to do this about three months prior to the wedding to guarantee you get what you want.

Tip Three

If purchasing your suit ensure there is sufficient time for any necessary alterations to be done.

Tip Four

If hiring a suit, choose a hire company you feel can offer you expert advice and a wide range of styles, as well as fitting rooms to try them on – ensuring the correct cut and fit for you and your groomsmen.

Tip Five

Try on your actual hire suit at least two days prior to the wedding to check the colours, sizes and quality of the garments. If you have changed size for any reason, this allows time for adjustments, as well as time to fix any minor faults such as a missing button or a loose thread.

Tip Six

To look your best, organise a haircut and/or beard trim one week prior to the wedding for a more natural appearance. Also, treat yourself to a manicure so your hands look nice for your new wedding ring.

Tip Seven

If possible, shave early in the morning of your wedding day to ensure any irritation settles prior to the wedding

Tip Eight

Do not organise your bachelor party for the night before the ceremony – you may need your “beauty sleep”. Instead, plan some group activity, such as golf, with your groomsmen as a way to relax before on the morning of your wedding.

Tip Nine

Accessories that need to be purchased such as shoes, socks, shirts and ties should be done so at least two months beforehand. Be sure to have your shirt professionally pressed.

Tip Ten

Similarly, it will be a long day, so do not be tempted to start celebrating before the ceremony. To ensure you have a stress free day, delegate any last minute tasks to a reliable friend.