



Wedding Photography Tips and Suggestions

Scheduling time for your photographs

Make sure you schedule ample time for your photographs. One of the most common mistakes I've seen in wedding planning is not leaving plenty of time for the photographs that you want. You have a few different choices when planning time for your photographs, and each have pros and cons. You will have to decide what will work best for your special day. Remember, great photography takes time!

Suggestion 1: Sit down and make a list of all the group shots that you want and list everyone that is to be in each shot. Keep in mind that it will take anywhere from 2-10 minutes per pose, depending on the number of people in the shot. Come up with a shooting schedule and try to stick to it and try to make sure that everyone knows what shots they are to be in. Trying to round up people for formal group shots can be the most challenging part of the day. Remember that the photographer does not know who your friends and family members are, so it is very helpful to have a friend or family member who is not part of the wedding party around to help with the group shots.

Suggestion 2: Schedule the majority of the wedding party shots before the wedding. There are a couple of disadvantages to this: one, the wedding party will have to be dressed and ready to go about 1 hour before the wedding ceremony is scheduled to start and two, the bride and groom will see each other in their wedding clothes before their trip down the aisle.

Suggestion 3: Schedule 1-2 hours between the end of the ceremony and the start of the reception for the majority of the formal shots, including photos with family and friends and shots of the bride and groom. If you are worried about what to do with your wedding guests between the ceremony and the time you arrive at the reception, schedule a cocktail hour at your reception venue and make sure your guests know that you will not be there until after your photos are complete. Remember that your wedding is about you, and your guests will understand if you take some time to record special moments. After the receiving line, have a friend or family member gather the people you want in your photos and announce to the rest of your guests that they can proceed to the reception venue for a cocktail hour while you complete your photos. If extra guests remain for the formal shots it will likely take longer and make some of the people in your photographs uncomfortable getting their picture taken in front of a large audience. Start with the larger group photos first and encourage people to head off to the reception after their turns in front of the camera are over until just the bride and groom remain. The bride and groom should take some time alone with the photographer before heading off to the reception. These are your first moments alone as husband and wife and a time when some special photographs can be produced.

Suggestion 4: Move to a different location for some of the bride and groom shots. Choose a special place that you can stop at on the way to the reception.

Suggestion 5: Schedule a "Trash the Dress" shoot with your photographer. This is a special session for the bride and the groom that takes place after the wedding. It gives the bride another chance to put on her wedding dress and get some fun and romantic photographs of her and her groom. Many photographers include this special session as a part of their regular packages or it can be added as an extra. This is a great option if the bride and groom don't want to schedule a lot of time for their photos on the day of the wedding.

Suggestion 6: If you decide to do wedding party shots before the wedding ceremony, schedule some of that time for a special moment between the bride and groom where they see each other in their wedding finery for the first time.



Other Tips for Planning Your Wedding Photographs

Make sure you feel comfortable with your photographer. Communicate often with him/her and make sure they understand what photos are important to you and what you expect from them at your wedding.

Ask your photographer if they are available to come to the rehearsal. This allows the photographer to start planning shots and to study the lighting, as well as plan for any special moments that may occur during your ceremony.

Tear photos out of bridal magazines that illustrate the type of photography style that you are looking for and show them to your photographer. Other resources for photo ideas are your photographers image gallery and bridal web sites. Study these photo ideas and try to carry and position yourself in similar ways while having your photos taken. The more the photographer must direct you, the more awkward you will feel and it will show in the images.

If you are looking for photojournalism-style wedding photography, don't stop and pose when you sense the camera pointed at you. Though they may not realize it, people tend to tense up or act differently when they know they are being photographed. This can make your photographs look posed and unnatural. Unless your photographer is giving you specific direction, the best thing you can do is relax, be yourself, and act as if the photographer is not even there.

Make sure your photographer knows about family dynamics. If there are sensitive relationships, such as divorce or animosity between relatives, be honest about them with your photographer ahead of time. This can help both you and your photographer avoid some uncomfortable moments.

When planning your exit, avoid using bird seed or lavender, as these will just look like dust in your photos. Use sparklers, bubbles or flower petals instead. If you plan on using sparklers, which can make for some really fun photos, make sure you have plenty of lighters available.

Ham it up! If you are relaxed and having fun, your photos will reflect that. Be yourself and soak up every moment. It's your day, enjoy it!