

# Alleviating prewedding stress

As anyone who has gotten married can tell you, the months leading up to a wedding can be a time of stress as well as happiness. There's just so much to think about and do.

While wedding jitters are about as common as weddings, there are ways to make sure the anxiety doesn't get out of hand.

- Don't be afraid to admit you're upset. Tell your partner what's bothering you, whether it's a serious question about your relationship or a relatively trivial worry that you'll be speechless when it's time to say your vows.

If you try to keep the stressful feelings to yourself, you'll only transfer them to something else, such as getting overly irritated by a late appointment or a run in your stockings.

- Share the wedding responsibilities. If you're the bride, don't assume you have to do everything yourself. That idea is old-fashioned as well as exhausting.

Ask your fiancé to join you in picking out a reception hall and registering for gifts. He can write a share of the thank-you notes and handle all of the honeymoon arrangements.

- Keep a calendar of everything you have to do. This kind of master plan gives you the secure feeling that you're not forgetting something crucial.

Also, gather any business cards, fabric swatches or magazine clippings you accumulate all together in one place — either a wedding planner made for this purpose or a simple manila envelope. Organization has the magical effect of reducing anxiety to a manageable level.

- Have a system for each task. Say you're doing your invitations. First, see if the task can be broken down into steps. (You have to address the envelopes, stuff them, seal them and stamp them.) Then decide how you'll tackle each step: how long should it take and who will do it?

Next, set a completion date (invitations should be mailed six weeks before the wedding). Finally, take action by setting a time and a place to begin.

- Pace yourself — don't plan to scout for receptions the same day you have a report due at work. You'll make it through those prewedding months if you promise yourself you won't tackle more than one major job a day.

- Guard your health. Don't let a hectic schedule keep you from eating right or often enough. You'll feel even more jittery from the weakness that results from a drop in blood sugar.

Be sure to get enough rest and exercise, too. Did you know that exercise increases the body's level of norepinephrine, a substance that gives you a feeling of calm and well-being?

If sleep eludes you at night because you have too much on your mind, try the time-tested soothers: a hot bath, warm milk or a back rub.

# Wedding Details: A one-year planner

Planning can be fun if you pace yourself. Set a target date for each step — and hold to your schedule.

## A year to 3 months before

Decide where you want to be married and, in general terms, the type of service and reception you want. Set a firm budget. TARGET DATE

Set the wedding day and time. Reserve the church or room for the service and rehearsal. TARGET DATE

Meet with your pastor or religious adviser at least six months before your wedding date. Register for pre-wedding counseling as early as possible. TARGET DATE

Reserve the place for the reception and the date with the caterer, if one is needed. TARGET DATE

Decide on and invite your attendants and have the groom invite his best man and ushers. TARGET DATE

Decide on the total number of guests and how they will be allocated among you, the groom, and your families. Collect the list. Put the names and addresses in a card file. TARGET DATE

Select and order your wedding gown, headpiece, veil, shoes, and lingerie. TARGET DATE

Select and have your attendants order their dresses, headpieces, and shoes. TARGET DATE

Help your mother to select a dress. Describe it to the groom's mother and suggest a range of color choices for her dress. TARGET DATE

Order the invitations, announcements, and stationery for your thank-you notes. TARGET DATE

Choose musicians for the ceremony and reception, a florist and a photographer. TARGET DATE

Shop for your trousseau and going-away outfit. TARGET DATE

Order your wedding rings. TARGET DATE

With your fiancé, choose the clothing for the men. TARGET DATE

Choose a reliable store with a bridal gift registry. With your fiancé, meet with a staff member to select china, linens, cookware, etc. TARGET DATE

Discuss plans for the rehearsal dinner. If the groom's family will host it, give them a list of people you'd like to invite. TARGET DATE

With fiancé, plan your honeymoon; make reservations. TARGET DATE

## About 2 months before

Address the invitations. Mail 4 to 6 weeks in advance. TARGET DATE

Use your card file to note acceptances and regrets and to record gifts. Write thank-you notes as soon as possible. TARGET DATE

Ask hostess of rehearsal dinner to mail her invitations. TARGET DATE

Make housing arrangements for out-of-town attendants and guests. TARGET DATE

Select gifts for your attendants, and discuss with your fiancé his gifts for the groomsmen. TARGET DATE

Make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up. TARGET DATE

Meet with the caterer, florist, and musicians to work out final details. TARGET DATE

Arrange transportation to the ceremony and reception for the wedding party. Check on parking facilities for guests. TARGET DATE

Have your formal wedding portrait taken 4 weeks before the wedding. Schedule the final fitting for your dress and make plans to have your hair done. TARGET DATE

Give the photographer a list of the people and groups you want in your album. TARGET DATE

Check format and deadlines, then submit wedding announcements to the papers in your own and your fiancé's hometowns. TARGET DATE

Make final, detailed plans for the rehearsal, ceremony, receiving line, order of dancing, seating plan, and time schedule for the reception. Write place cards, if needed. TARGET DATE

Have the final fitting for the attendants' dresses, have shoes dyed, agree on make-up, jewelry and stockings. Decide where and when they should dress. TARGET DATE

Ask the groom, groomsmen, and fathers to be measured at the shop you've chosen. TARGET DATE

Arrange for a floater policy to insure the wedding gifts. Arrange for their transportation to your new home after the wedding. TARGET DATE

With your fiancé, have your blood tests and get the wedding license. TARGET DATE

Address and stamp announcements. Ask someone to mail them after the wedding. TARGET DATE

Give the caterer the final count. TARGET DATE

Arrange a display of your gifts and invite friends to stop by to see them. TARGET DATE

Give your attendants their gifts at a luncheon or the rehearsal dinner. TARGET DATE

Pack your going-away clothes. Make up an emergency kit of extra stockings, needle and thread, etc. Have both taken to where you'll be changing. Ask someone to take care of your wedding clothes and return rented clothing after the wedding. TARGET DATE

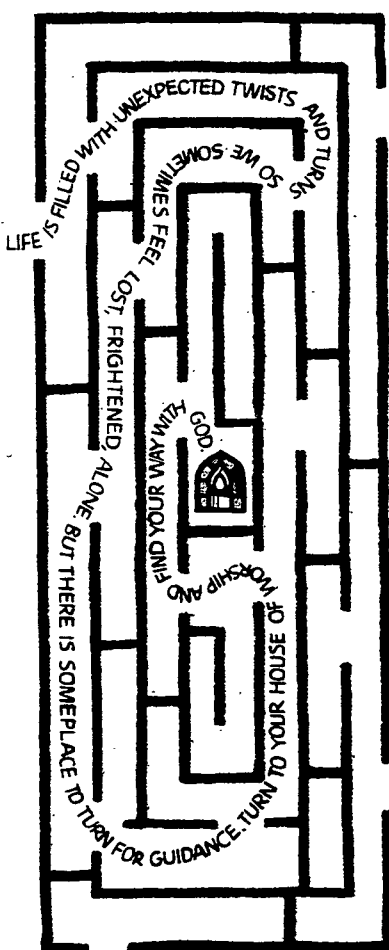
Pack for your honeymoon. Arrange for your luggage to be placed in the car you will drive away in. TARGET DATE

Give the ushers the list of guests for reserved seating. TARGET DATE

And the day of the wedding

Leave time to dress in a leisurely way. Have a wonderful time!

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