

Careful planning will help you keep pre-nuptial jitters under control

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 fiance 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.



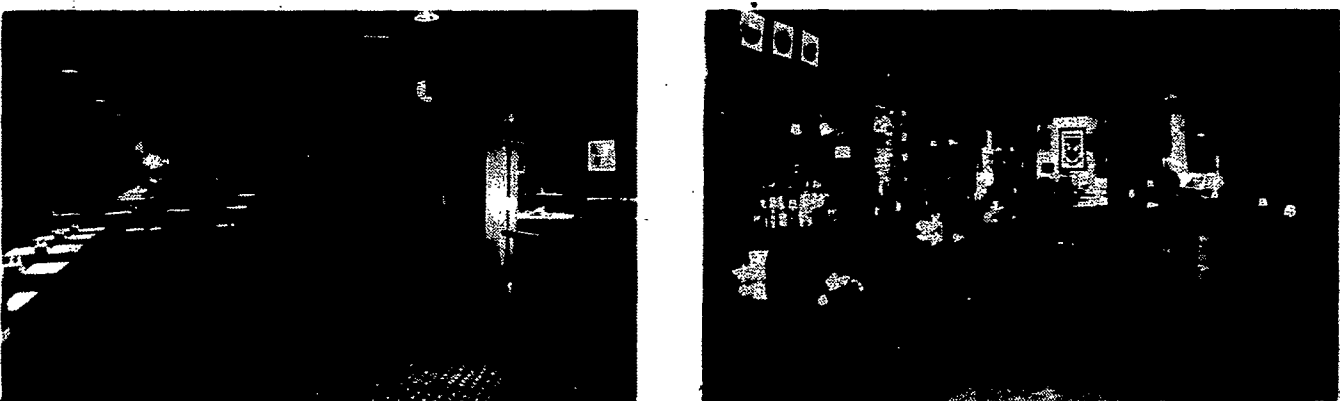
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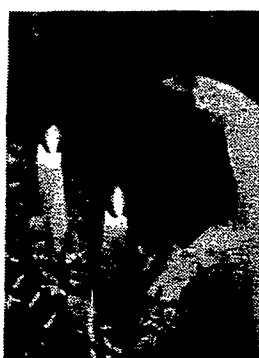
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