

TOP 10 TIPS



FOR PLANNING A

STRESS FREE WEDDING

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WELCOME



Hey! Thanks for downloading my Top Tips for Planning a Stress Free Wedding Guide. Not only have I photographed over 200 weddings over the past 11 years (I know right?!) I also host the All Things Weddings podcast, a podcast all about wedding planning and helping couples to make the most of one of the most memorable days of their lives. After getting married myself in May 2023, I saw the other side of wedding planning and it was eye opening. We hired a venue for the weekend and hosted a DIY intimate celebration. It was amazing, however there were definitely a few stressful times and things I would have planned better if I could go back. I have taken all this knowledge and experience and put it into this guide. If you are looking for a relaxed wedding photographer for your wedding, [get in touch here](#) and let's chat about your plans. Enjoy!

Let me start by saying, the absolute MOST IMPORTANT point and the way you will enjoy your wedding the most... give yourself the time, space and ability to be yourselves. You will see most of the points below focus on this key aspect and for good reason. If you are able to relax and be yourselves you will find the whole day and planning process less stressful, more fun and have less regrets afterwards.

PLANNING & STAYING ON BUDGET

"Probably one of the biggest stress points in life, money, money, money! (sing the ABBA song in your head). Weddings can quickly get out of hand when it comes to spending and almost all couples will have a budget, but how do you know where to start? My advice would be to create a list of your must have 'things', for example, a venue that fits X number of people, accommodation on site, everything in one place or the ceremony must be at the church where your whole family has been married. Do you want to do a more DIY garden party wedding or a fancy stately home? If you have no idea, start by looking around a few venues or just scrolling through Instagram or TikTok and you will quickly start to gel with a few types of venues / vibes.

Legally the cheapest (roughly) you can get married for in England is £186*. *I have based this on a wedding at York registry office for just the couple, 2 witnesses and on a weekday. Heading to your local registry office with two witnesses and that's it, you are married! All the food / drinks / party and people are not essential. However a lot of couples these days get married to celebrate with friends and family and use it as an excuse to see everyone you love in one place and just have an amazing time. So get a rough budget and a few ideas of the style you want and then start researching (the fun part).



TIMELINE & FITTING EVERYTHING IN WHILST RELAXING

You don't need a clipboard and a headset mic going all Monika from Friends (be prepared for a lot of 00's tv and film references, I apologise in advance) but a good timeline and plan is not only for the super organised and stressed people. Having a good plan will make you much more relaxed in the final weeks and on the day itself.

Whether you have a wedding planner, a co-ordinator as part of your venue, or you are doing everything yourselves, you should have a say over your timeline. The day will go quickly (obviously) and anytime you waste stressing about what happens next or organising is going to take you away from the fun. I could write an essay on timelines and in fact [I have a podcast episode on it here.](#) For now, here are a couple of tips for times to consider.



Think about how long you want between your ceremony and going in for food. During this time you may need to fit in confetti, formal group photos, couples photos, canapes, drinks and actually saying hello to everyone. I would always recommend allowing an hour and a half as a minimum for this period.

Evening food; if you are eating a large meal as a main at like 3 / 4pm do you really want more food at 8pm? Also, if you are doing a first dance, often your guests will join you straight after. If you stop the music for food it can take a little while for the dance floor to get going. Some options would be to eat between band sets, a natural lull or use something like a pizza truck and trickle the evening food through as people want it. Evening guests may be hungrier and want to eat earlier than the day guests.



COMMUNICATION WITH GUESTS & SUPPLIERS

Let me just say, your guests will cause you stress! People cancelling at the last minute, going to the wrong venue, forgetting something important and for some reason making that your problem!

If you have supplied all the useful information in one easy to find location you can just send that to anybody who asks you a question. Information to include:

- **Addresses for all venues, including What Three Words and any useful information about the entrance**
- **Parking for all venues on the wedding day**
- **Transport options such as buses / taxi numbers**
- **If you have any specific dress code**
- **Are guests going to have to walk through a field to get to your tipi or marquee / is the ground soft? I have seen a lot of stilettos stuck in grass in my time.**
- **Timings, add the key times for the day, if guests go to check in or have a pre party nap you don't want them missing the speeches or dancing.**

Wedding websites are popular and allow you to complete all your information and then just send links to your guests. They are easy to update and you don't need to resend the information every time you change something.

Some popular options are:

<https://gettinhitched.rocks/wedding-websites>

<https://www.squarespace.com/>

<https://www.rileygrey.com/>



MORE ENTERTAINMENT = LESS STRESS

If you are anything like me then chances are a big stress for you on the day is making sure everyone is having a good time. Having entertainment planned or things to do ensures everyone is kept busy and happy and allows you to relax.

All of your guests being distracted also allows you to take your time going around and chatting. Otherwise you can get bombarded. It also limits the queue at the bar. Some ideas include;

- **Musician(s) / band**
- **Garden Games ie giant Jenga**
- **Magician**
- **Something I haven't seen but would love to, Nerf gun fight or water fight?!**



HELLO LLAMA



STOP THE HANGER

Everyone is less happy when they are hungry right?! Whether it's nerves, not wanting to disturb any makeup or just a lack of options, it's not uncommon for couples to forget to or not eat on the morning of their wedding and then not eat until the main meal which can be pretty late. So don't forget to grab plenty of canapés if you are having them, or smuggle a bounty in with you (I don't get the hate for Bounties).

I always ensure I leave any group photos or couples photos until well after you have had some canapes and drinks. However sometimes your time line or other photographers ways of working means you don't get to eat straight away. My top tip is to ask your caterers to put aside some canapes for you.



GROUP PHOTOS

As you can imagine I have a lot of knowledge on this part of the day. I have seen every way of doing it (probably) so hopefully these tips will save you any stress.

Discuss together as a couple who your must have formal group photos are, if you want any at all. Assume each group will take 5 minutes, accounting for having to find people, arrange them etc. So if you have 10 group photos that's 50 minutes from your day! The reality is it's much quicker than this usually but it's a good guide. I would say aim for just a few groups, for example: Couple + any parents, both family sides and the wedding party. This covers all the main people. You can obviously add friends groups if they are important. If this is a super important part of the day for you then it's fine, just be sure to allow enough time in your schedule for it.

Always chat to your photographer before the day about group photos. They will have a good idea of what is possible in the time and they can help guide you with it. Pick someone from each side of the families as well to be the photographer's helper, someone loud ideally and that knows a good amount of the people there. They can help round the next group up whilst the photographer takes the other group photos. Ask your photographer to bring multiple copies of the group photo list so it can be shared with the helpers.

Don't feel too much pressure from family here, if everyone wants a photo, before you know it you have missed the canapés and welcome drinks and you are being called in for speeches! The day goes very quickly so spending 2 hours on group photos might not be the best use of the hours, or it might be if they are super important to you. Consider what photos are going to be important for you in 10 years time.

My style focuses more on capturing things as they happen but I also don't want to miss a really important group photo. Communication is key here to make sure you end up with the formal photos you want and the time to relax and enjoy that amazing just married feeling.





DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

Something will go wrong, hopefully nothing major, but timings will slip, a zip might break and the UK weather is a guessing game even in the summer. You can only plan so much and then you just need to enjoy the day whatever happens. Just always think, you are getting married, celebrating with your favourite people in the world and all your planning is finally over. It's time to enjoy and party!

Of course do everything you can before the wedding to plan for any issues. Buy some umbrellas if the weather looks at all like it might rain, maybe some wellies if you want to save your shoes and still get photos outside and refer to tip 3 and 9!



TRANSPORT



If I could say just one thing that seems to stress people out more than anything it's transport. This is especially the case if you have multiple venues. From parking to getting everyone to leave the ceremony venue and get to the reception venue, this is key if you are doing group photos at the reception venue or confetti for example. You don't want to be waiting whilst everyone arrives. Something like hiring a bus for all the guests can work really well and add a fun element to the day. It's always worth chatting to all your venues about parking, checking what three words and having as much info as possible to pass onto your guests.

If you do organise a bus for everyone then I recommend having someone with a list of people to check off. This stops anyone being left behind at any venues.



MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

People (usually) love to feel like they are helping and involved. Delegating can take a weight off your shoulders. Jobs like drying the flowers before leaving for the ceremony, helping to direct guests, I have seen guests helping with parking, moving flower arches from the ceremony to the reception and any small tasks that gives you less to think about. If you have a wedding planner then this is obviously not really something you need to worry about.

I always say it's a good idea to have a dedicated point of contact on the day, like a best man / maid of honour, friend or whatever whose number you give to the venue, florist, cake maker or anyone else. This way if any issues arise you are not being called and stressed. You don't need to be getting ready and at the same time speaking to the cake maker about where the cake needs to go or hearing about someone running slightly late!



PICKING SUPPLIERS



When you first start wedding planning it can be overwhelming, there are an unlimited amount of options and it's all very exciting. However when you start to book suppliers, picking ones you trust will help with your stress levels. You don't need to worry about them at all and you can trust that they will deliver what you are expecting (and more!). The last thing you want in the build up to your wedding is to be chasing suppliers, have unexpected issues and having worries about them on the wedding day itself. Speaking or meeting with your suppliers before booking, checking reviews, choosing suppliers based on recommendations etc are all going to help.





HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

Well that's a lot of words! Hopefully useful words though and if even one of these tips helps save a little stress for you as you plan and enjoy your wedding then I count it as a win.

If you have any questions on wedding planning drop me an email info@scottcarneyphotography.com or a DM on Instagram <https://instagram.com/scottcarneyphotography>

Check out my wedding planning podcast for weekly tips like these and stories from real weddings <https://www.allthingsweddingspodcast.com/>

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