

Wedding Prep Guide

Timeline prep: My approach to working photography into your timeline in a way that maximizes the opportunity for more genuine and cinematic photo opportunities. I prefer to minimize highly structured portrait blocks in favor of relaxed time with each other and your guests. My ideal layout for Couple's/Newlywed portraits is 2-3, 15 minute blocks of time at different points of the day. This provides maximum variety and keeps clients from getting "photo fatigue" from spending large chunks of time posing for photos. For wedding party and family formals I take a similar approach and aim to take no more than 30 minutes total for wedding party photos (both sides), and 30 minutes for family portraits.

I will work with your wedding planner to align photography needs with their master timeline.

Accessibility for you and your guests:

Accessibility is such an important part of making your wedding comfortable and enjoyable for you and your guests. Take time to think about the needs of your guests and if there are any accessibility concerns, and work with your planner to address them. If you have accessibility concerns for yourself, or for guests that may interact with the photo team please let us know. I am happy to set up a call to go over needs and plans!

Inclimate weather plans (including HEAT):

A rain plan and a heat plan are not optional in the mid-atlantic, unfortunately. And the latter of the two is far more uncommon, and far more important. It is critical to have a plan on how you will protect yourselves and your guests from weather and elements and ensure everyone's safety.

Getting Ready: Instructions and checklist:

to streamline the process of photographing your details it is always helpful to have all of your detail items gathered and tucked in one place (a shoebox works great for this). Ideally, both partner's details will be gathered together. When we are done photographing them we can deliver them to their prospective owners for the rest of your prep.

Checklist:

- Attire (and hanger if you have a special hanger)
- Rings (all of them)
- Shoes (if you would like them to be photographed)
- Other misc. Jewelry
- Cufflinks
- Bowtie
- Full invitation suite and other paper goods

- Other sentimental items you would like to have photographed (i.e. vow books, family heirlooms, etc.)
- *we will gather personal florals when they arrive from your florist. If your florist offers “styling blooms” as an add on to your floral package we always welcome them as props.

Location Considerations:

When choosing a location to get ready on the morning of your wedding consider:

- a room with big windows and lots of natural light
- Space with neutral decor that won't give a harsh color cast (i.e. red carpet gives a red color cast)
- If you and your partner are getting ready in separate spaces, try and make them close-ish together

First Look: The decision to do a first look is very personal and many couples feel strongly one way or the other. Ultimately we are by your side whatever you choose to do, but want to also give you all the options to consider.

There are many benefits to a first look the least of which is more time for photos and a more relaxed timeline, and the best of which is the time you get to spend together before the festivities really kick off. Couples who choose to do a first look typically get 35-40% more couple portraits, and we also usually are able to do all the wedding party portraits and some family portraits before the ceremony, leaving very few portraits to take after the ceremony.

If you would prefer to wait and see each other at the aisle that will be beautiful too and there are plenty of timeline options for that more traditional route.

The Unplugged Ceremony: An unplugged ceremony is a favorite among photographers and has many benefits.

First, it encourages your guests to be fully present with you during your ceremony.

Secondly, it ensures that in your ceremony photos won't be filled with rogue cell phones, ipads, and unnecessary cameras.

It is easy to make your request with a sign as guests enter but I also recommend having your officiant make an announcement, which ensures that all your guests get the message.

Formal Group Portraits:

Group portraits will immediately follow your ceremony and will consist of family as well as your wedding party (if those weren't done pre-ceremony). When you receive your pre-wedding questionnaire from me there will be a section where you will make a shot list of all the groupings you would like to have portraits of. Each group photo typically takes 2-3 minutes, so keep that in mind when deciding how much time you would like to allot for formal group portraits. My advice is to keep your list between 10 -12 groupings so we can be efficient and get your family and friends off to the party without fuss.

To help group portraits run smoothly, have your officiant announce at the end of the ceremony that family and wedding party members need to stay for portraits while everyone else is dismissed. Please also designate a person who is familiar with each family to help corral people if necessary. This can be a close family-friend who is familiar with everyone, or a member of the wedding party.

Tik-Tok and other trends:

It's so hard to look away from the trends but I'm telling you, unfollow the wedding accounts and skip the scroll. The FOMO is real and it will save your mental health leading up to the wedding. It's also a huge time-suck during a wedding day to stop and film tik-tok videos etc. *with that being said* we still live in a digital age and I understand the desire for that iphone footage. If you would like BTS iphone footage let me know and I can share what my assistant takes throughout the day!

Outfit changes!: If you are planning an outfit change mid-reception make sure to let us know so we can plan for the time it will take for you to change and then make sure we can get some fun vibey photos of you in your second outfit during the reception. We'll want to schedule in 5 minutes for some quick portraits after you return from your outfit change.

The Grand Exit:

Everyone loves a good grand-exit photo and there are many options to choose from. I've seen confetti (biodegradable please), bubbles, sparklers, ribbons, and butterflies to name a few.

For couples who want the pictures and none of the fuss I recommend a faux exit. With a faux exit all you need is to round up your wedding party and sneak outside for a few minutes to stage that exit and get those fun photos.

If you know you definitely want to end the night with a spectacle we can work with your planner to make sure your guests will be coordinated for your exit, and your photography coverage will extend the necessary amount of time to cover your departure.

Dealing with difficult people and uncomfortable family dynamics:

Everyone's family is unique and comes with its own challenges. Weddings are also stressful and can create pressure cooker situations so it is important for your vendor team to all be on the same page if anyone is anticipating potential difficulties from family members. When discussed ahead of time we can come up with a plan on diverting potential conflicts to ensure you have the wedding day you deserve, free of unnecessary stress. Please reach out about any concerns you have about family members or guests!

Kids in wedding parties: Around here we know that naps are *sacred*. If you have little ones in your wedding party please be prepared to incorporate them into your photos between naps. I promise you that having a baby or toddler skip a nap will NOT result in more or better photos with them. Sleep is key and 3 photos with a happy baby is way better than 20 photos of a screaming one. We will get them into photos whenever they arrive well rested.

Pets at weddings:

I love dogs with my whole heart and have two of my own as you probably know. I have also seen many nervous dogs suffer through weddings and it always pains me to see anxious dogs and frustrated dog parents trying to make dogs behave and sit for photos.

If you are determined to have your dog or any pet present at your wedding I implore you to truly think about the impact of the event on your pet's nerves. If they do great in crowds and at events that's awesome! But if you know they have a tendency towards anxiety please think carefully about how important it is to have them at your wedding. A good alternative is bringing them to your engagement session for a lower-key experience where you'll still get photos with them.

If you've decided to have your pet participate in your wedding consider hiring specialized dog care from a company that specializes in pet care during weddings. Here are some recommendations:

<https://pawfectforyou.com/about>

<https://www.dogwoodacres.com/wedding/>

<https://furryventurespetcare.com/>

Gallery Delivery Timelines:

Wedding galleries take ~6 weeks to deliver starting the first week-day after your wedding (if you get married on a Saturday your gallery should be delivered, depending on film development timelines. If your gallery is running behind for any reason I will let you know, but I strive to deliver all galleries within that 6 week timeline.

Album selection tips:

Choosing 45 images out of a gallery of 900 photos is a daunting task, I know! But there is a formula to follow that can make it easier to complete your selections. When galleries are delivered I divide them into sections automatically, so you get to see “getting ready”, “wedding party”, “reception” etc. all grouped together in chronological order. Use this to your advantage and work from the mindset of compiling a selection of photos that tell the complete story of your wedding - not just choosing your favorite images from the day.

Work through each section and choose 5-6 favorite images from each section of the day. Don't forget to choose photos that represent each partner. It's possible you can choose fewer images for certain sections such as wedding party and family portraits.

If you are still overwhelmed and just want a dependable list of photos to choose here you go: Please note every wedding is different so these are just suggestions.

Getting Ready: 2 photos of each partner getting ready, 2 candid photos, and 2 details photos (a ring photo and a flatlay) (8 total)

First look and pre-wedding portraits: 3 first-look photos, 3 portraits (6 total)

Wedding Party: 1 photo of whole wedding party, 1 photo of each partner's side (3 total)

Family: 1 photo of both partners with both immediate families (1 total)

Ceremony: 1 Precessional for each partner, 1 each partner reading vows, 1 ring exchange, 1 kiss, 1 recessional/aisle kiss (8 total)

Post-ceremony portraits: 1 wide shot, 1 full body, 1 cropped in detail

Cocktail Hour: 4 candid

Reception: Entrance into reception, 1 photo of each person giving a toast (2-3), 2 photos of guest reactions, 1 photo of each special dance (2-3), cake cutting, 2-3 guest dancing candid (12 total)