

# Planning Your Wedding Timeline

ALISONHEFFINGTON.COM

THURSDAY, JUNE 27TH  
4:30 pm



Christy to arrive & go over the location of all purchased items  
Alison / AJ  
Patrons / Wedding  
Card Box  
Flowers & Prisms  
Sign-in holders & Seating  
Umbrellas & Banners  
Photobooth & Lounge  
Trophies & Flyers  
LED lights & Banners  
Setup for Restrooms  
Cake Platters  
Food for extra bubbles  
Platters for post  
Marriage License  
A To La Lune Events

4:45 pm

Wedding Ceremony Rehearsal  
2567 Mesa Crown Road Fallbrook, CA 92028  
A To La Lune Events

FRIDAY, JUNE 28TH  
9:15 am

Hedges installed on side of house & for restrooms  
Install being confirmed  
A Geranium Street  
A To La Lune Events

10:00 am

Classic Party Rentals on the side of house  
Install being confirmed  
A Classic Party Rentals  
A To La Lune Events

11:00 am

Restrooms installed & decorated  
Shake will call restrooms on Thursday morning  
A Diamond Provides  
A To La Lune Events

*Alison Heffington*

\*TIMING CONFIRMATION

# Intro

One of the biggest wedding struggles brides share with me going into our first meeting together is that they don't know where to even begin with planning their wedding day timeline! What time should they start getting ready? What time should the ceremony start? How long do receptions normally last? How many hours of photography coverage should I get?

There are so many little moving pieces when it comes to planning your timeline which is what makes it so confusing for a lot of people! I work with all of my brides one-on-one to create a custom timeline for their wedding day that their planner or coordinator can build off of, but sometimes they've already made decisions (such as the ceremony start time) before we get the chance to chat. So the earlier you know these tips for planning your timeline, the better!

Your photographer needs certain amounts of time allotted to each portion of the day in order to capture everything in a way that tells the whole story of your wedding! It takes time to capture all those images you've been envisioning, so keep reading for some general guidelines to keep in mind when planning your timeline!





## CHECK THE SUNSET TIME

Because natural light looks the most beautiful in photos, you'll want to keep the sunset time in mind when planning your big day! An easy way to check this is to Google sunset [YOUR WEDDING DATE].

In the summertime, the sunset is sometimes as late at 8:30 pm, so there's a ton of flexibility with your ceremony time! Winter weddings, however, can be a little bit trickier because the sunset is MUCH earlier, requiring an earlier ceremony.

I recommend planning your ceremony to begin AT LEAST two hours before sunset. So if sunset is at 7:30 pm on your wedding date, plan for a 5:30 pm ceremony. This means the light will be softer during your ceremony (so you don't have a bunch of harsh shadows on your faces!), and you'll still have time to get beautiful images after the ceremony! If your ceremony is longer than 30 minutes or so (or you're getting married at a different location than where you're having the reception), you'll want to move the ceremony time up even further.

Sometimes with a first look, you can plan for an even later ceremony start time as long as you're willing to get all of your photos done ahead of time! We'll talk more about first looks later in this guide!

## GET A REALISTIC TIMELINE FOR HAIR & MAKEUP

The main cause of timelines getting thrown off on a wedding day occurs because of hair & makeup running over schedule. I once had a wedding where the bridesmaids took an extra two hours to finish getting ready, and even though we were able to make it work (and even still started the ceremony on time!), it caused a lot of stress for the bride!

Talk to your hair & makeup artist(s) and let them know how many girls will need hair & makeup, as well as a general idea of what you'd like them to do (since some hair styles can take longer than others to complete).

They should be able to give you a time estimate and even bring other stylists along with them to speed things up!

I also recommend setting a hard stop time on your timeline. So let's say that, after talking to your planner and hair & makeup artist, you determine that you should be done with everything by 12 pm. Consider placing a hard stop at 12:30 so you know that if things take longer than intended, you still have that little bit of buffer time until you absolutely HAVE to be finished!

This also means that you need to give time for your bridesmaids to put their dresses, shoes, and jewelry on, so don't forget to include some time for that when you're determining your hard stop time!





## DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO DO A FIRST LOOK

While doing a First Look isn't the most traditional thing, it is becoming much more common! In fact, MOST of my brides decide to do a First Look because you get much more portrait time on the wedding day, you can get to your reception faster after the ceremony, and you get some one-on-one time with your spouse!

In some cases, like winter weddings where the sunset time is really early in the day, doing a First Look can be super important! Since most couples want the beautiful, natural light portraits on their wedding day, doing a First Look can be a great option to avoid having all of your wedding portraits done with flash or other artificial lighting.

If you decide not to do a first look but your wedding is in the winter with an early sunset, you may want to opt for more photography coverage so you don't have to compromise images of important things like getting ready or your grand exit!

I think First Looks are amazing (my husband and I did one on our wedding day too!). You can read more about why I love first looks [here!](#)



## CREATE A FAMILY PHOTO SHOT LIST

One of the most time-consuming parts of the wedding day is often family formal photos! That's because there's usually a lot of people to keep track of. To keep things from getting a bit chaotic or taking up a ton of time, I highly recommend making a list of all the family photos you want ahead of time and giving it to your photographer. You can also ask someone from each side of the family to help keep things running smoothly since your photographer or planner probably doesn't know everyone!

I recommend sticking to just 10-15 groupings for family formal photos in order to keep things moving. Other groups of family members (like all the random cousins!) can be photographed during the reception when time isn't as much of a concern!



# Sample Timeline

I recommend a minimum of 8 hours of photography coverage for most weddings which is why that's what's included in my photography collection. Eight hours is typically enough time to cover all the main events and tell the whole story of your day! Some weddings will need more coverage time (like if your ceremony and reception aren't at the same venue), but this will be a good place to get you started!

The sample timeline below is for a wedding with 8 hours of coverage time with a 7:30pm sunset time!

2:30-3:15	Bridal details & getting ready
3:15-3:45	Bridal prep ( <i>getting into your dress, putting on jewelry, etc.</i> )
4:00-4:15	First Look
4:15-4:45	Bride & Groom portraits
4:50-5:20	Wedding Party portraits
5:30-6:00	Bride in hiding ( <i>so your guests don't see you before the ceremony!</i> )
5:30-5:50	Untouched reception details
6:00-6:30	Ceremony
6:30-7:00	Family photos
7:00-7:30	Sunset Bride & Groom portraits
7:30-10:30	Reception
10:30	Grand Exit

I've had several brides in the past use that exact timeline above and it worked beautifully! This insures that I have plenty of time to capture all those gorgeous images you've been dreaming of, and it gives your planner or coordinator a great starting point to add onto for your timeline to keep things moving!



# I can't wait to chat details with you!

Thank you again for inquiring with me, and I'm so excited to talk more about your wedding day and get to know you & your fiance! One of my favorite things about my job is getting to serve brides just like you and make all your wedding dreams a reality! Feel free to browse the links below to learn more about me, see my recent work, or get even more wedding planning tips!

*I can't wait to connect with you soon!*

*Alison  
Heffington*

\*TIMING CONFIRMATION