



5 tips for keeping calm before the ceremony

Your day has arrived! 18 months of precision planning has led you to this moment. 120 excited guests are seated in your carefully selected venue and are waiting to see the blushing bride. 4 beautifully groomed bridesmaids and 2 cute-as-a-button flower girls have just headed off down the aisle towards your husband-to-be that is nervously waiting for you. You take a step towards him from the back of the church, clutching onto your father's arm but your legs turn to jelly, your bottom lip starts trembling and you can feel the hot tears welling up in your eyes. Soon mascara is running down your face and a red rash has erupted across your chest. Not exactly the grand entrance of your dreams! It's a funny thing, stress. It can take hold of you when you feel like you've done everything possible to evade it! But it doesn't have to be like this.

It's not unusual to experience wedding day jitters. The months leading up to the wedding have no doubt been an emotional rollercoaster and just because it's your wedding day and the planning has stopped, it doesn't mean that it automatically grinds to a halt. The elation, nerves, tears and joy that you have experienced over the past few months will also be very much present on your wedding day – it's what makes us human after all. But instead of turning into a quivering wreck and passing out with the heightened emotions of the day, take control! Follow these easy step by step stress-busting instructions and allow yourself to enjoy a stress free day.

1. Ensure you have allowed plenty of time to get ready. Preparing your hair, applying your make up and getting dressed cannot be done in half an hour so leave lots of time for your transformation. Running around trying to get dressed whilst undoing your curlers and rubbing in foundation is asking for trouble. More than likely, a pot of nail varnish will be spilt on your beautiful dress or you'll slip with your mascara wand and poke yourself in the eye! Take time to enjoy the experience. Have a bubble bath first, relax with a glass of champagne (just one!), eat a proper breakfast, employ the services of professional hair and make up artists to feel truly pampered. Don't feel rushed.
2. Accept that you feel nervous; it's only natural. Accepting the feeling instead of worrying about it is halfway to moving past the sensation. If you can, delight in the feeling – you're experiencing those butterflies

because you're about to marry the man you love – that's a unique sensation!

3. Take lots of deep breaths before you walk up the aisle. These will help to slow down your heart rate and centre yourself. Listen to the sound of your breath and let it calm you.
4. Remember that everyone there is happy and that they love you. They've come to share your joy and witness the union of two people in love that are special to them. They're not there to criticize or judge.
5. Finally, as you walk down the aisle, focus your gaze on your husband-to-be. It can be quite overwhelming seeing so many faces staring at you, so just keep your gaze fixed on your man and this should help you remain calm. Plus you want to see his face as he sees you for the first time; you're bound to dazzle him with your radiance and beauty.

There are steps you can take before the wedding that can help reduce stress levels on your big day. Being well prepared will help minimise nerves. Ensure that all suppliers know when they are arriving and what they should be doing. Draw up a schedule beforehand which details what is happening and when, then send them to all vendors and your wedding party. Preparing a bridal emergency kit that will deal with unforeseen disasters will also help to reduce stress. A kit containing items such as water, nail varnish, headache pills, wet wipes etc will provide reassurance as you know there is something in your box of tricks to cope with every eventuality. If your planning skills are a little rusty or you feel overwhelmed by the thought of organising a wedding, call in the professionals. A reputable wedding planner will alleviate stress and help you every step of the way.

Finally, enjoy every second of your day; take it all in (that includes your nerves!). Expect the unexpected. Accept that things may go wrong but try to maintain a sense of humour, a positive attitude and nurture your inner calm; this will help you see the day through from start to finish.