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# 2022 Weddings

## Your wedding timeline guide

Here's a 12-month timeline for couples getting ready to say "I do"

Wedding planning involves many movable pieces that ultimately need to come together on the big day. Planning is typically a months-long process, and adhering to certain monthly benchmarks can help couples stay the course.

Brides magazine offers that the perfect engagement period is 12 to 14 months, which affords ample time to get organized and work with vendors. With that in mind, here's a 12-month timeline for couples getting ready to say "I do."

### 12 months out

At the start of the planning process, establish your budget, hire a wedding planner (optional), choose the wedding party, pick a date, and start to assemble a cursory guest list. This also is a great time to begin touring venues to get a feel for potential ceremony and reception locales.

### 11 months out

Now is the time to get a firm handle on the theme and scope of the wedding. Start picking wedding colors and overall design. Also, interview and hire vendors, such as photographers, bands and videographers. These vendors tend to book up quickly as wedding season draws near, so it's never too early to book them.

### 10 months out

This is a good time to start shopping for a wedding gown because it might take some trial and error to find the perfect dress. You also can start shopping for wedding party attire at this time. Check with formalwear vendors to see how long it will take for the gowns to arrive in the shop for alterations. If you haven't already done so, be sure to book the wedding venue.

### 8 months out

Reception halls may have their own schedules, but you should think about setting your menu at this time, including deciding if you will host a seated dinner, a buffet or something else.

Eight months out also is a good time to finalize the guest list and send save-the-date cards.

This also is a good time to visit stores to create registry gift lists.

### 6 months out

Meet with potential florists and other vendors, like

transportation companies and hotels, to secure these arrangements. Your place of worship also may require certain classes or preparatory meetings, so be sure to inquire about these.

Meet with a makeup and hair stylist and book a trial. Choose attire for groomsmen and give them a deadline for fittings and orders. If you will not be getting married in a place of worship, hire an officiant at this time.

### 4 months out



Grooms traditionally arrange the honeymoon, so this is a fine time to get those travel plans in order. If you need passports, you should secure them as early as possible, and no later than four months prior to the wedding to ensure processing times. Book cake tastings and order the cake if it is not part of the venue food and beverage package. If you haven't already done so, the bride should have an initial gown fitting, and wedding invitations should be ordered at this time.

### 2 months out

Secure your wedding license and buy wedding party gifts. Address and mail the wedding invitations. Undergo a second gown fitting and work with the seamstress for the final fitting date just before the wedding. Finalize any song selections with the DJ or band.

The final details will occur in the last weeks before the wedding. Buy all the small accessories and items, undergo final fittings and check in with all vendors for final payments and to ensure they are on schedule. Notify the reception hall of the final guest count.

Once the wedding day arrives, couples who have done their best to stay on schedule can relax and have a great time with family and friends.

*Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

## Did you know?

The flower experts at ProFlowers say pressing flowers can preserve them for years to come. Flowers can have sentimental value, particularly those received as gifts or those that were part of momentous occasions, like weddings. Fresh flowers have finite life spans unless measures are taken to preserve the blooms. The flower experts at ProFlowers say pressing flowers can preserve them for years to come. While flower lovers can invest in a flower press, other heavy objects also can be effective at pressing flowers. Start by choosing flowers that are either still in bud form or are freshly bloomed. Dry the flowers out as quickly as possible to prevent browning. Place the flower between two pieces of white, nontextured paper. Then place all within the pages of a book. Depending on the size of the book, you may be able to press more than one flower at a time. Place other books on top to weigh down the book with the flowers inside. Change the moisture blotting sheets every few days. After two to three weeks, the flowers will be completely dry and flat. Remove the flowers carefully using tweezers or fingertips. Store the fresh flowers in a cool, dry place or consider framing them in a shadow box.

*Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

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### Picture perfect wedding day photography tips

These picture pointers from industry insiders can help couples put their best smile forward. Few things document weddings more effectively than photographs. Carefully curated wedding albums and portraits hung on walls serve as daily reminders of a couple's special day.

Photography is often left in the very qualified hands of professional photographers. However, couples can pitch in to make their photos really pop. These picture pointers from industry insiders can help couples put their best smile forward.

**Leave ample time**  
 A carefully orchestrated timeline can ensure photos are the best they can be. Why? Because a couple who is relaxed and not overwhelmed will notice that attitude translates to their photographs. When planning wedding timelines, couples should leave ample opportunities for getting dressed, chatting with the wedding party and going through various photography settings to grab great photos, advise the experts at Martha Stewart.

**Put together a short list**  
 The photographer will have his or her ideas of which shots to cover, but a couple with specific goals in mind should relay that information to their photographer. For example, if a grandparent is getting up in years, request some solo photos of that person so you can look back on happy times together. Certain couples want to be snapped posing with a beloved pet. Putting that on the list helps ensure it will happen.

**Enlist a family photo coordinator**  
 If the photographer does not have his or her own assistant, recruit someone who is assertive to help wrangle everyone for the family shots. Attempt to get family photos when family members are relaxed but not too far rumbled by dancing or having a good time.



**Play your style safe**  
 A wedding day is not a time for the bride or groom to try a dramatic new style, according to photographer Amanda Lamb. Resist the urge for a daring cut or color. It's also likely not the place to try out new facial hair or heavy makeup. A couple unaccustomed to the way they look may be shy in front of the camera.

**Delve into the details**  
 Prepare wedding details, like gowns, shoes, accessories, etc., in advance to save time once the photographer arrives, suggests Desi Mendoza, a pro from Dez and Tam Photography. Invest in a beautiful hanger for the wedding gown as well, because you may want to photograph that on its own.

**Learn to pose**  
 Couples can practice posing in front of mirrors to get a feel for body positions that put them in their best light. A photographer's advice in regard to posture is invaluable as well. Create space between arms and the body and learn how to angle the body so you look your best.

Photos will capture wedding day memories forever. Couples can put themselves in the best positions for success by following some photography guidelines.

**Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection**

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### Wedding tools make planning easier



The internet makes vetting vendors and reading reviews that much easier, but wedding-related apps also can simplify wedding planning.

Ensuring an event goes on with minimal hiccups takes patience and thorough planning. This is especially true for weddings, when many elements must merge together for a memorable day. Today's couples have a bevy of new resources at their disposal to facilitate wedding planning.

The internet makes vetting vendors and reading reviews that much easier, but wedding-related apps also can simplify wedding planning. The following are some top picks as culled by Wedding Shoppe, Inc., The Knot and Lifehacker.

- **Wedding Spot:** Couples can search for their ideal wedding venue based on location, budget, styles, and capacity. The website enables users to plan their ideal weddings and get cost estimates based on guest list and options. Users also can access discounts and exclusive deals.
- **Wedding LookBook:** This app enables couples to browse through thousands of dresses, accessories, jewelry, and much more. The app will help customers find products in their area.
- **Shutterfly:** This photo, invitation and image-sharing tool can be an inexpensive place to create save-the-date stationery, invitations, and photo memory books.
- **Appy Couple:** This app and website helps couples manage their budgets, timelines, wedding parties, and seating charts, while also allowing them to share photos. There is a free version and basic packages that allow access to more features.
- **iWedding Deluxe:** In addition to managing timelines, to-do lists and vendors, this app offers inspiration ideas for gowns, manages and tracks gifts, and offers first dance suggestions from iTunes. However, it is only available to iPhone users.
- **AllSeated:** This tool can help couples figure out seating arrangements by creating 3D floor plans of the event, and couples can pull contacts from email and social networks to establish a guest list. If floor plans are unavailable in their database, they can be drawn.
- **The Knot's Marketplace:** With the click of a button, couples can search for wedding vendors in all different categories, read reviews, and directly connect with those businesses.
- **HitchSwitch:** Brides or grooms who may be changing their names can do so in one convenient place. Three different packages cater to various name-changing needs.
- **Vistaprint:** These stationery specialists offer an array of services, from cards to invitations to personalized envelopes. Once a design is chosen, Vistaprint will offer add-on suggestions for coordinating items, helping to create a cohesive look for the festivities.

Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

### How to take the hectic out of your wedding day

There are various ways to ensure the vibe of the big day is happy and not hectic. Weddings are among the most complex events many people will ever plan. Couples often try to go the extra mile in an effort to make the day memorable for themselves and their guests. That pressure can make a wedding day feel a little frenzied. Thankfully, there are various ways to ensure the vibe of the big day is happy and not hectic.

#### Hire a wedding planner/coordinator

Leaving the nitty gritty to a professional wedding planner takes a lot of pressure off of couples. The renowned wedding resource The Knot says wedding planners are clued into everything there is to know about a wedding and they can be tapped to take care of just about anything on couples' to-do list.

#### Consider a package deal

All-inclusive resorts are popular vacation spots because variables like entertainment, lodging, food, drinks, and more is all taken care of, leaving vacationers with little to do other than show up and relax. Couples can apply that same approach on their wedding day. Host the ceremony and reception at the same site, which takes the potentially problematic issue of getting guests to and fro out of the equation. Some venues may even provide in-house vendors like photographers and florists. Such vendors' familiarity with the venue reduces the risk of surprises that can derail wedding day schedules.

#### Pick your priorities

Avoid getting bogged down on a million details by making a list of your priorities when planning. Couples can revisit this list a couple of days before their wedding so they remember what's most important to them on the big day. This refresher can ensure couples don't get too concerned if minor issues arise during their big day, helping them remain calm and keeping a focus on all the fun to be had during the day.

It's easy for couples to feel a little overwhelmed on their wedding day. Some simple strategies can take the hectic out of couples' wedding day and ensure they keep their focus on one another and their loved ones.

Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection





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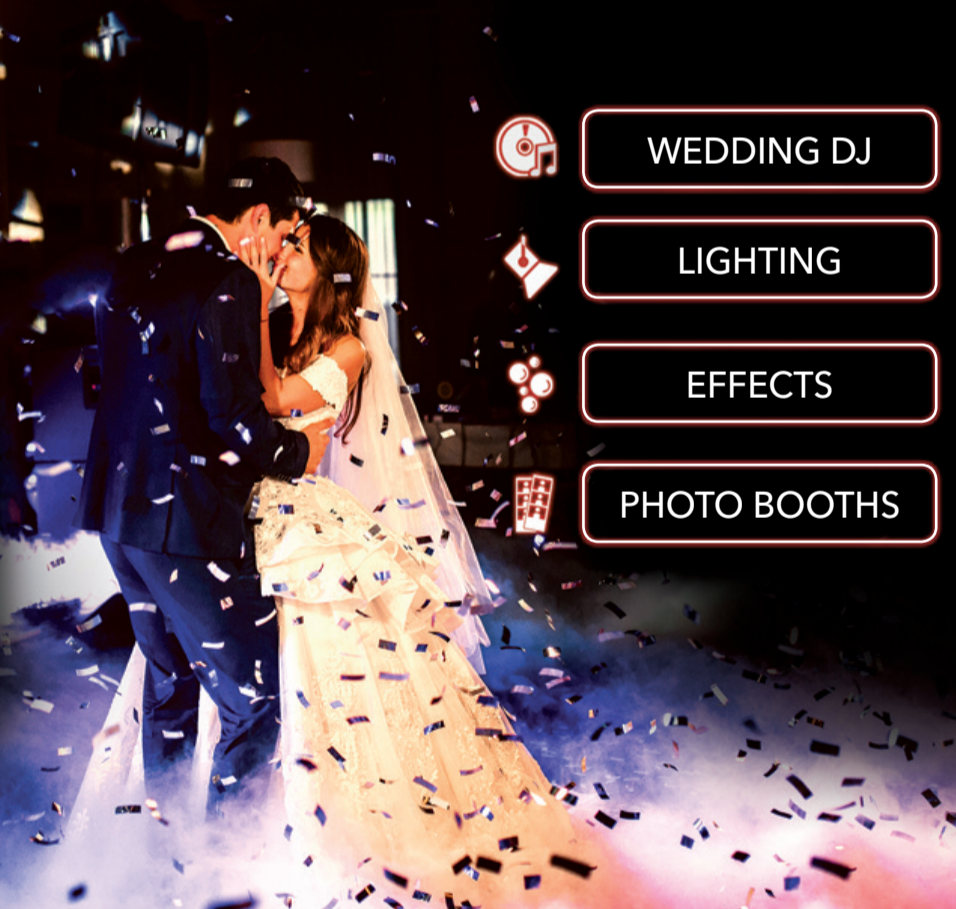
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### Dos and don'ts of caring for wedding and engagement rings

The cost of jewelry only underscores the importance of learning how to care for it and preserve its value.

Jewelry is a key component of weddings. The financial resource CreditDonkey notes that, in the United States, the average amount spent on an engagement ring is \$5,500. Jewelry costs can add up, especially when adding in the cost of wedding bands, which can cost as much as \$1,000. The cost of jewelry only underscores the importance of learning how to care for it and preserve its value.

The best way to maintain jewelry depends on the makeup of the rings. The online jewelry guide Jewelry Notes says gold rings without gemstones can be cleaned effectively with only soap and water. Simply prepare a solution of lukewarm water and mild dish soap in a small bowl. Soak the rings for 20 to 30 minutes. Use a soft brush or cloth to clean the jewelry of dirt. Rinse the residue under clean water.

Rings with diamonds can be treated similarly with a mild soap-and-water solution. The Diamond Information Center also says to soak the diamond ring in equal parts cold water and ammonia for half an hour and let it air dry. Brand name jewelry cleaner also is another good option. This method only should be used with diamonds; ammonia can't be used with other gemstones.

Maintaining jewelry also should include twice yearly visits to a jeweler who can check the prongs and make sure the setting is not loose; otherwise, the diamond can become dislodged, according to Martha Stewart Weddings.

Avoid touching diamonds and other gemstones as much as possible when putting rings on and taking them off. Precious stones often are magnets for dust, dirt and body oil, according to Taylor Lanore, diamond consultant and engagement ring designer for Lauren B. Fine Jewelry and Diamonds. Grab the ring by the band.

Use discretion when wearing rings while engaging in hands-on activities. Activities like cleaning dishes, moving furniture, gardening, or diving through waves at the beach warrant caution; otherwise, you risk damaging or making jewelry unnecessarily dirty. Store the ring in a safe location until you can safely wear it again.

One of the most important steps to safeguard wedding and engagement rings is to insure the jewelry. The description of the ring, its cut, carat weight, metal, and other information offered through a certified independent jewelry appraisal will be needed to insure the ring. Take a close-up photo of the jewelry as well. Other items like laser inscription or a home security system can qualify jewelry owners for discounts on insurance. Consumers also can add a jewelry rider to a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy.

These are some ways to care for wedding jewelry. Always consult with a jeweler before attempting to clean items made of various materials.

Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



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### 5 ways to make your diet more nutritious

Healthy eating should be a goal all year long. Choosing nutrient-rich foods at the grocery store is a great way to accomplish that goal. The American Heart Association says research suggests the standard American diet is energy-rich (calorically heavy) but nutrient poor. Nutrient-rich foods are those that are high in minerals, vitamins and other nutrients that are vital for health without too much added sugars, sodium and saturated fat. Such foods include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein sources that can serve as the building blocks of a nutritious diet. These tips can make incorporating nutritious ingredients even easier.

1. Read nutrition labels

The Nutrition Facts label included on items sold in North America is a significant source of information. Consumers may only read the first few lines, but it's best to read the entire label before deciding whether or not to purchase a given product. Some foods may feature endorsements on their packaging and the inclusion of such labels indicates they're healthy choices. For example, the American Heart Association's Heart-Check mark indicates the product aligns with their recommendations for an overall healthy eating plan.

2. Choose more whole grains

Whole grains are low in fat and high in fiber. They're also a smarter source of carbohydrates because they contain complex carbs that keep a person feeling fuller longer. Try to avoid products labeled as "enriched," as they've had the germ and bran removed from the grain to produce a smoother texture, which means they need to be fortified with nutrients.

3. Eat dark, leafy greens

Green vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, and plant-based omega-3 fatty acids. Kale, spinach and collard greens can be added to soups, stews, scrambled eggs, and salads for a powerful punch of nutrition.



4. Pick pulses

Pulses are essential to plant-based diets, but they also can be enjoyed by meat eaters. The Global Pulse Federation says pulses, which include foods like lentils and chickpeas, are rich in protein and fiber and low in fat. They also contain complex carbohydrates that take longer to break down. Research shows pulses can lower blood cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and help with weight management.

5. Go with skim or low-fat dairy

Dairy products are rich in calcium and vitamin D, but those nutrients may come at the cost of saturated fat. Choose reduced fat dairy options in recipes and when snacking.

These are just some of the ways individuals can make their diets more nutritious.

Story Courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

### Healthy habits that can become part of your daily routine

A person's habits can have a strong impact on his or her overall health. Unhealthy habits like smoking and living a sedentary lifestyle can increase a person's risk for various conditions and diseases. On the flip side, healthy habits like eating a nutritious diet and getting enough sleep can bolster a person's immune system and reduce his or her risk for various ailments.

Some healthy habits, like daily exercise, can be time-consuming. Busy adults may not have time to exercise vigorously each day, though the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services urges men and women to find time for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. But not all healthy habits take up time. In fact, adults can incorporate various healthy practices into their daily routines without skipping a beat.

· Take the stairs. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator can have a profound effect on overall health. According to Duke University, climbing just two flights of stairs combined per day can contribute to six pounds of weight loss over the course of a single year. In addition, a study from the North American Menopause Society found that stair climbing can help postmenopausal women reduce their risk for osteoporosis and help them lower their blood pressure.

· Drink more water. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that water helps the body maintain a normal temperature, lubricates and cushions joints, protects the spinal cord and other sensitive tissues, and helps to rid the body of waste through urination, perspiration and bowel movements. Adults who are thirsty can choose water over soda or other sugary beverages. The CDC notes that sugary beverages like soda and sports drinks contain calories but little nutritional value, making water a healthier way for individuals to quench their thirst.

· Go for daily walks. Walking benefits the body in myriad ways. For example, the Harvard School of Public Health notes that women who walk 30 minutes per day can reduce their risk of stroke by 20 percent and potentially by 40 percent if they walk briskly. In addition, researchers at the University of Virginia Health System found that men between the ages of 71 and 93 who walked more than a quarter mile per day had half the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease as men who walked less. A 15-minute walk around the neighborhood each morning coupled with a 15-minute walk after dinner can help adults dramatically improve their overall health.



· Eat more greens. Eating more greens is another healthy habit that doesn't require a major overhaul of an individual's lifestyle.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture notes that dark green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, are rich in vitamins A, C, E, and K. The Mayo Clinic notes that vitamin E alone can help people maintain their vision and promote a healthy reproductive system while also improving the health of the blood, brain and skin. The USDA also notes that green vegetables contain very little carbohydrates, sodium and cholesterol. Adults won't have to reinvent the dietary wheel to incorporate more greens into their diets, and the results of doing so can have a significant, positive effect on their overall health.

The right habits can help people live healthier lives, and such habits need not require any major life changes.

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The town turns green for the annual 4-day *Irish Festival* in March, which is one of the city's most known and well-loved events.

The *Fire In The Sky* provides old fashioned fun for all ages with children's games, a picnic in the park and fireworks over Shamrock Lake to end the day. During June and July the *Summer Concert Series* provides free musical entertainment in the City Park alongside the *Clare Farm & Arts Market*. The grand finale to summer events is the *Old 27 Motor Tour Overnight Stop* in downtown Clare and the *Clare Brewfest, "A sampling of Michigan's finest craft beers."* The beginning of the holiday season is celebrated in Clare with a *Christmas Celebration* each December.

At the center of Harrison is Budd Lake, a 175-acre all sports lake. Try your hand at catching one in the Annual Budd Lake Fishing Derby held each June, usually on the Saturday of Father's Day weekend. Wilson State Park, on the shores of Budd Lake, is a favorite with campers. The Clare County Fair has taken place in Harrison every summer since 1883.

The Annual Frostbite Winter Festival will take place in Harrison February 10-13. There will be an ice fishing tournament, a polar dip, turkey bowling and much more. Harrison offers a spectacular Fourth of July Celebration, with a parade, demolition derby and fireworks.

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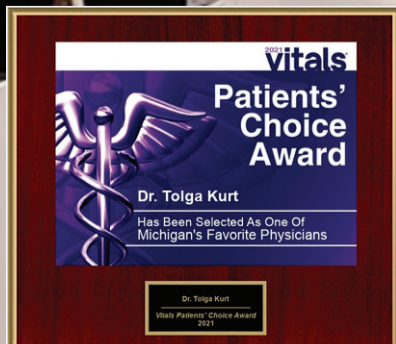
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