



Wedding Tips by AC Ellis Inc.

Hello, and welcome to the wonderful ease of knowing you've hired a great photographer and you can focus on your other planning.

We thought since we've seen the planning stages of more weddings than you want to know we would share some tips with you. Now some of these you might have already found on the internet, but we're going to give you the perspective of a photog and past bride. So read away and let us know if you have any questions. We hope these help in your planning. And always remember it's your day, so if you don't want to take our suggestions don't.

These are just to help.

If your vendors don't call you in the week prior to the wedding, call them and confirm all the details.

Don't be afraid to ask to see any images from any of these tips. We would love to share with you.

Also check the blog for some of these tips accompanied with images. The tips are in their own category easy to find.

Cory Ann and Maria

Timing

Adhering to a wedding day time line is of utmost importance. If you are running late, there is a high probability you will not get the photographs you want. Please be conservative when scheduling wedding day activities, and assign a personal attendant or family member with helping you to run on schedule.

My ideal time line if I were to get married again would be to schedule my photog to be there for the end of the getting ready, the finishing touches of make-up and hair, the dress getting on, the shoes, etc.

Then I would see my dear Andy for the first time as I walk down the aisle. No reason to wait all that time hiding the dress and all that to see each other early. However, if lighting required that we see each other beforehand in order to get the other images I wanted I would go to a location and have him meet us there while the photo hung back and captured it. Maybe a park or cool urban or environmental location.

Then we would do some group and family formals real quick like, then we would head off with our photog for about an hour or more to get some sweet stuff of just the two of us. Then we would make our entrance, dance, eat and mingle.

That's what I would do. You decide how you want yours to flow, what is important to you. Me it was pictures and would be again in a heartbeat, I was so frustrated that people wouldn't leave when we were trying to do some alone images. I'd assign a bossy assistant to take care of it if I did it again.

It's your day, work us into it however you see fit. Please let us know if you are interested in additional hours as soon as possible.

If you desire outside images please schedule these for 1 - 1.5 hours prior to sunset. If you schedule them in the noon day sun you will not get the images you want. Lighting is important!



Your Private Session

Scheduling some time for your own private session is very very important. I will assume that since you have hired me you are not only wanting the formal image at the alter of the two of you. I'm willing to bet you want some kick ass image of the two of you that is art and can hang on your wall for years.

If this is the case... schedule the time. Private time. You will have already gone through and e-shoot with me and know how I work, be comfortable in front of the camera and such. Well this wonderful flow and trust we have created is immediately hindered by all of the family, friends and bridal party watching your session.

You can kick everyone out. But let me tell you this doesn't typically work. Your best bet is to tell them to not show up until after. Let them know they are not to be at the location until after your session. Or to go to some other obscure location. It can be a pre planned location or it can simply be us finding something interesting. Either way schedule some private time to get this images or you simply won't have them.

Guest Photographers

It's not your parents and friends with their point and shoots that I am addressing. This is in reference to all your family and friends who are amateur photographers.

You have hired me to capture your day and it is best if you let me do just that. I do my best during formals to allow people to get some images too, but I will ask people to stop if they are distracting the subjects or firing their flash while I am trying to shoot. I move quickly during formals to get them done. If we are stopping after each grouping to let friends and family get their images then we are likely to run late. So if I ask them to stop it is not to be mean or that I don't like them taking the same image, it is because I want your images to be the best they can and for your day to run as smoothly as possible. You do not want to spend 2 hours doing formals and neither do I.

Your contract is clear in that I am the only photographer and I will not tolerate others trying to build their portfolios by shooting over my shoulder and photographing the scene that I have found or set up. If they are off doing their own thing and not disturbing the flow we will all be happy. This section of the contract also applies to videographer or DJ's carrying still cameras. Let your other vendors know that they must put their still cameras away. We do not want them hindering me doing my job.

During the recessional and processional guests love to step into the aisle and get that one great shot of you. Unfortunately this is when I'm trying to get that one great shot and they are often hindering that. So if you want a good idea to keep them back is to put some kind of block on the end of the aisle like tulle or a runner like rose petals.



Attire

Dresses:

Make sure they fit properly. A properly fitted dress will not cause you to have extreme amounts of armpit or back fat/skin hanging over. Strapless dresses should be held up through your midsection, not above your breasts.

You do not want to be tugging on your dress all day and you definitely do not want to fall out or show anyone something you shouldn't. To help keep your dress to your skin pick up some Hollywood tape. This is not intended to hold your dress up, but to keep it to your skin for those dipping and bending moments.

If you have a few extra rolls or something like many of us do try products like spanx. They work great to smooth everything out and come in a variety of sizes and styles for many uses. Tuli carries a similar product and many stores around the country do also.

Veil:

Yes they can look lovely blowing in the wind. But alas they always fall out. So do whatever you want, you don't have to wear it all day, just let me know and we'll work with it either way.

Tux/Suit:

Since black is the typical color of the tux don't forget to bring a lint roller. When picking up the tux's be sure to check sizes and that all parts including the cuff links are included. I have seen this messed up a number of times.

Formal/Group Images

These are an important tradition and I am happy to do them. However, they need not take forever or be boring.

Before: If you have your formals taken before you are able to go to your reception quicker. If you choose to do them before you need to schedule them 2 hours prior to the start of the ceremony to be cleared out beforehand.

After: If you have your formals taken after you do not need to worry about late arrivals, you will be better able to allocate your time by not having to clear the area and sit and wait for an hour before the start of the ceremony. You can get a later start on your prep. You can wait to see each other at the altar, which leads to more emotional ceremony images.

I supply you with a recommend list of a maximum of 15 groups. This entire list takes no longer than 45 minutes. I am currently working to narrow this down to 30 min. Don't be afraid to do your formals on-location or someplace other than the altar. The majority of my past couples much prefer their formals that weren't taken at the altar.

If you choose to do them on-location keep in mind the time of the day. In harsh sun-light you will need to find some consistent shade. Broken shade from trees in the nearby park is not enough. Your best doing these just prior to sunset or



Ceremony

Different Churches and Officiants have different rules for photography. It is your responsibility to know these and provide them along with a contact to me. I will also confirm with the officiant on the day of the wedding.

If your officiant will allow me onto the altar it is important that you let me know your thoughts on this. Recently I was allowed to photograph from the front of the church and the altar. I had been leery in the past to ask and of course to be there, but *WOW*, these were some of the best ceremony images I have ever gotten. I can't believe how much better they were because I was allowed to be up there. If you would like to see the difference, please ask and I will be happy to show you.

Keep in mind that I understand and respect the religious aspect of the ceremony. In no way will I become obnoxious and troublesome. This approach just allows me to capture so much more of the emotion shared by the couple and by the family.

Please provide me also with a copy of your program prior to the ceremony so that I may review the agenda. And let me know of any special happenings.

Reception

Head Table:

The head table is almost always located against a wall and you are left to find some way to make it look nice. The best location and most beautiful backdrop come from putting your table in the center of the room. Trust me.

Meals:

Be sure to get an accurate time line from your caterer. It seems more often than not the meal seems to set things back and puts couples in a bind to get their after dinner activities done.

I do not require that you feed us, but during dinner I will get the details and then will get a bit to eat. You want me to stay fresh.

You have a couple of options; select to feed us and seat us in the dining room with a clear view of the head table and family tables so that we won't miss any action, select not to feed us at which time we will be absent for a short time to regenerate to finish photographing your beautiful day.

Slideshows:

I know that many people are doing slideshows and being the picture person I am... I love them! However you need to remember it is illegal to reproduce your images, so if you would like your engagement images in your show, please please, just ask and I will be happy to prepare and release them to whomever is creating the show when given enough time.

Also this is a great time for images, another reason we love them.



First Dance:

Some of the best images are during your first dance. It seems you are able to get away and have some time to yourself, even if all eyes and my big black camera are on you. Be sure to enjoy it. To make your images better have your family and friends line the dance floor to make a lovely backdrop.

Ask your dj not to announce that this is a great time for pictures. I know this and I'm who you hired to do it. Often I have had to ask family member and friends to move off the dance floor as they are in all your images taking the attention away from you.

One of the wedding tips on my blog is about the first dance. It is a wonderful treat to simply enter your reception and go straight into the dance. If the catering staff is taking too long to get dinner served you won't run out of time with me before getting these important images. As I state in the blog it's great also because the guests are all still there, paying attention to you and it makes for some wonderful images.

Cake and Flowers

Cake:

I hear it all the time that "I don't like cake." So I wonder, why must you have the cake eating shot if you aren't going to enjoy it. Like every other aspect of your day, do it only if you want to. I'm not going to force you.

If you are going to cut the cake and feed it to each other be sure to position the cake table where there is a nice background/ wall, etc. If this isn't available then when you cut the cake do it with your back to your guests. It really does make a nice background.

Let your caterer know if you want them to cut the cake or if they are going to do it. This is usually done after you finish your dinner so that it may be taken away and served to your guests.

And don't forget to feed your photog some cake, she likes it a lot and craves it in the off-season.

Flowers:

When you select your flowers keep in mind that you are going to have to carry them all day and that you will want to see you and your dress through them. So something large and heavy will mostly likely become cumbersome very quickly. Easy to hold and lightweight are the key for your bouquet.

The boutonnières go on the left side. As do corsages. It is always good to assign someone to do this job so that you do not have to worry about it.

Have your flowers delivered to where you are getting ready so that I may get some images of them during that time and if we stop on the way to the church to take pictures you will have them.



A List of things you may find useful

- Safety Pins
- Bobby Pins
- Shout Wipes
- Wet Naps
- Deodorant
- Breath Mints (not gum)
- Paul Mitchell Awapuhi Moisture Mist® or some-

thing similar to freshen up

- Oil absorbing pads
- Sewing Kit and white thread
- Super glue
- Scissors
- Baby Powder or Gold Bond (helps on your inner thighs and your shoes)
- Water
- Food
- Hollywood or clothing tape
- Numbers to all your vendors, bridal party and family programmed into your cell phone and printed.
- Needle nose pliers for closing your bustle hooks (if needed)
- Crochet hook for button dresses