

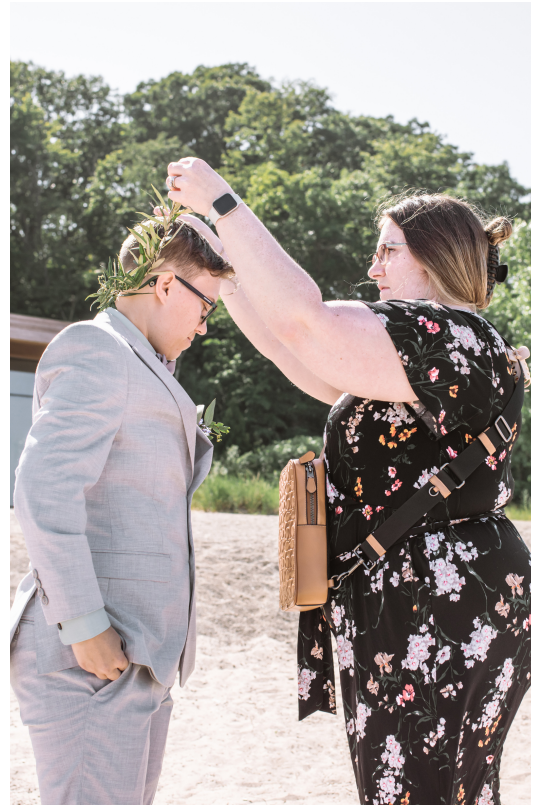


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YOUR GUIDE TO A  
Stress-Free Wedding Day Timeline

# Welcome!

Wedding day timelines - the thing that keeps most of us up at night when thinking about our wedding day. We want to help calm those nerves and all the big questions you have about the infamous timelines. We want you to be able to enjoy your entire day knowing that you have done everything in your power to make your wedding day smooth + stress free. Add these tips to your toolbox , and get ready for your special day!



Your main content goes here. Feel free to use long paragraphs, or break them up into shorter ones with subheadings.

Adding graphic elements can also give detail and depth to a text-heavy document. Be as creative as you want! Use whatever will help get your main discussion points across.







# Where to Start?

Start with the sunset, of course!

Knowing what time the sun sets during your wedding day can help you plan for so many things and allow you to get those perfect golden hour and sunset photos we all love so much!

If you are having an outdoor ceremony - you will want to know when/where the sun will be for ceremony (we want to make sure our guests can see!) and cocktail hour.

Let's say the sun sets at 7:30 PM (true for early September in Chicago!) - we will want to be outside for golden hour around 7:00. Aim for your Reception to start at 6:00 (doors open, grand entrance, welcome, etc.) so dinner can be served at 6:30. By the time you are done eating, you can go outside for photos and be back inside for your special dances!

Sun sets earlier than that? No problem! We can take time during cocktail hour or begin right after the ceremony (best for those who want a sunset ceremony!). Your photographer and coordinator can help you identify all of the best options for what is happening on your wedding day.



## Consider a First Look



We get it - “what about the tradition of not seeing each other before the wedding?!” What will my grandma say?!” Well, grandma doesn’t need to know... and the first look gives you more time in your timeline! I am sure you are thinking - “How would that even work? There are the same hours in the day no matter what!” If we are able to do photos before, we can have upwards of 3 hours instead of just cocktail hour and whatever time you are able to dedicate to photos during the Reception (usually only a couples minutes). **Let’s compare:**

### **With First Look:**

8:00 AM Hair and Makeup  
2:00 PM Get Dressed  
2:45 PM First Look/Couple Portraits  
3:30 PM Bridal Party Photos  
3:45 PM Immediate Family Photos  
4:00 PM Downtime  
4:30 PM Ceremony  
5:00 PM Cocktail Hour - *Couple attends cocktail hour!*  
5:05 PM Family Photos  
6:00 PM Reception

### **Without First Look:**

10:00 AM Hair and Makeup  
3:15 PM Get Dressed  
3:45 PM Separate Bridal Party Photos  
4:00 PM Downtime  
4:30 PM Ceremony  
5:00 PM Cocktail Hour  
5:05 PM Family Photos  
5:15 PM Bridal Party Photos  
5:30 PM Couple Portraits  
6:00 PM Reception



Other things to consider - family photos can take a *long* time. After the Ceremony, Cousin Joe may head right to the bar but he is in 5 photos! This adds 10+ minutes to the timeline, which will cause us to either rush through bridal party photos or photos of you and your partner. Before you know it, your entire cocktail hour is gone and you haven't even had a moment together just the two of you.

When it comes to deciding on your first look, I don't want you to think about other people's thoughts on your wedding day and what the traditions "should be". I want you to think about what you want to spend your time doing and how you want to be feeling. Do you want to be rushing around and constantly surrounded by people the entire time? Or do you want to be able to relax a bit, take a step back, and be able to enjoy more of your day?

# Hire a Planner!

## OR COORDINATOR/MANAGER



I know, I know, us saying you need a Wedding Planner/Manager is like McDonald's saying "you want fries with that?" - but hear us out.

Working with a Planner is a sure way to know that your wedding day will logistically make sense, and that you will be able to enjoy your special day as much as possible, and to the fullest extent. When you don't have someone like us on your vendor team, all these day-of tasks and problems fall to your parents and Maid of Honor who also want to be enjoying your day with you. If your venue has a venue coordinator and you think that they will be doing the same things as a Wedding Planner/Manager - well that is unfortunately incorrect. Venue managers are solely focused on things running smoothly on their end. They aren't concerned with what is going on outside of their four walls. They aren't going to drive to Target to get you table numbers, they aren't going to give you the belt off your pants because a groomsman forgot theirs, and they most certainly are not going to be meeting you outside venue operating hours to work with your schedule.



We are here to make sure that everything is taken into account on your wedding day - when you're having lunch, when you're getting dressed, when touchups are - and how we can pivot to make sure we can accommodate for someone running late or the need for more photos because the lighting is *perfect*. Having a Planner on your team also helps your other vendors be able to do their job more easily. Don't believe us? This is what Mei Lin (she/they) has to say about working alongside WBD as a photographer: "Communication leading up to the day was made easy and everything that I needed as a fellow vendor was taken care of before I even needed to ask. Not only was the team so professional, it made working with them fun as well. It was a great working environment where it really felt like everyone wanted to work together to give our mutual clients the best experience possible."

## Build in Buffer Time!

The absolute best thing you can do when planning your timeline is leaving gaps in between everything. You never know when someone will need a bathroom break or just 5 minutes to breathe. A good rule of thumb is to plan everything in 5 minute increments (5 minutes to do something vs. 3 minutes), and to always plan extra time for photos. If you ended up not needing the time - great! Now we have an extra 5-10 minutes to actually have that potty break without feeling stressed out.





# Timeline

## ONE LOCATION WITH FIRST LOOK



## MORE

# Timeline

## TIPS

- **MORNING**  
Set appointment time slots with your hair and makeup artist. Make sure the Marrier is not last to go so their appointment is not rushed!
- **AFTERNOON**  
Before photographers arrive, tidy up the bridal suite and make sure that any detail items are set aside. Choose delivery for lunch or plan for someone to pick up and drop off!
- **PRE CEREMONY**  
If you are doing a first look, get dressed about 3 hours before guests arrive to ensure plenty of time for photos!
- **CEREMONY**  
Make sure all of your bridal party has their bouquets, that nothing is in their pocket, and are ready to walk down the aisle 5 minutes before show time!
- **COCKTAIL HOUR**  
Use this time to spend 1 on 1 time with your Partner, or partake in cocktail hour! This is a great moment to get Golden Hour and sunset photos as well.



## BONUS: HOW LONG TO PLAN FOR PHOTOS??

BRIDE PREP, GETTING READY, + DETAILS : 1.5 hours

GROOM PREP : 30 minutes

FIRST LOOK : 30 mins

BRIDE + GROOM PHOTOS : 30 mins

WEDDING PARTY PHOTOS : 30 – 45 mins

FAMILY FORMALS : 30 mins



We hope this gave you some things to consider as well as a starting point when considering your timeline. A great vendor team will be able to help you build and execute an incredible day and even better experience.

Keep in mind that as you plan, it is always best to overestimate the amount of time needed!

Happy Planning! Xx- WBD Team

THANK YOU!

If you are interested in hearing more about our services, vendor recommendations, or a timeline deep dive, please do not hesitate to reach out!

We love working with brides at any stage of their wedding planning process.

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